

A GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING GRIEF,
REBUILDING YOURSELF AND RECONNECTING WITH LIFE



REBUILDING *after* LOSS

From pain to power,
one *step* at a time.

PERSONAL INSIGHT
UNDERSTANDING GRIEF
REBUILDING AFTER LOSS



To help you understand,
rebuild and reconnect
with life after loss.



WRITTEN FROM EXPERIENCE. CREATED WITH HEART.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. 

Eimear Stanley 

GRIEF COACH

Rebuilding After Loss

I wrote this book because I truly understand what it means to rebuild your life after a major loss.

Having lost both of my parents before the age of 25, grief has shaped so much of my life. For many years, I never believed I would become the person I am today or reach a place where I could begin rebuilding my life around everything I had lost.

My experience with grief began when I was 16, when I lost my dad extremely suddenly. One day, he was collecting me from school, and the next day, he was gone.

At 16, I was left trying to understand a loss that changed my entire world. I had emotions I didn't know how to process, yet life around me continued. I was expected to show up to school each day and carry on as normal.

But nothing felt normal.

There were days when I didn't want to get out of bed and nights when I cried myself to sleep, only to wake up the next morning, put on my school uniform and face another day.

Six years later, my life changed again when my beautiful mam was diagnosed with an aggressive form of brain cancer.

During my final year of college, I became her primary carer. Navigating college, caring responsibilities, fear and anticipatory grief was incredibly difficult.

I watched the woman who had raised me become completely dependent on me. The only way I can describe it is that our roles changed. She became like my child, and I became like her mam.

Grief is something I have always felt we don't speak about openly enough. Looking back, I realise how much I needed someone to help me understand what I was experiencing. I needed to know that grief could affect my emotions, relationships, identity and the way I saw my future.

This is why I created Rebuilding After Loss.

Understanding Your Grief

For a long time, I did not understand what grief really was.

When I first experienced loss, I thought grief was simply sadness. I believed that as time passed, I would slowly feel better and eventually return to the person I was before.

In the early days, I used to pretend that my dad was away on a business trip. Somehow, telling myself that he was just away made the reality of him being gone feel less painful. Looking back, I can see that this was my way of trying to cope with something that, at 16, I simply didn't know how to process.

But grief was far more complicated than I realised.

It affected my emotions, energy, relationships and the way I saw the world. Some days I felt deeply sad. Other days I felt angry, lost or completely numb. There were days when I laughed and felt okay, only to feel guilty afterwards.

For a long time, I also felt as though I was broken and would never be fixed.

One of the biggest things I have learned is that understanding your grief can help you become more compassionate towards yourself.

You are not going backwards because you have a difficult day. You are not grieving incorrectly because your experience looks different from someone else's. Nobody else is walking in your shoes.

Grief can change from day to day. Learning to recognise what you are feeling, what may be triggering those feelings and what you need in those moments can be an important part of rebuilding.

You don't need to have grief figured out. You can begin by meeting yourself with more patience, kindness and compassion.

Rebuilding Your Identity After Loss

One part of grief I was never prepared for was losing parts of myself alongside the people I loved.

After loss, so much can change your routines, relationships, priorities and even the future you imagined.

After losing both of my parents, I found myself wondering who I was now.

For so much of my life, I had been someone's daughter. One of the hardest things to come to terms with was knowing I would never experience that unique love my parents had for me in the same way again.

After losing my dad, I still had my mam. After losing her too, I found myself in a world where neither of my parents were physically here anymore.

I had spent so much time surviving, grieving and caring for my mam that I didn't really know who I was outside of those experiences. I had to slowly begin getting to know myself again.

This did not happen overnight.

Rebuilding your identity is not about becoming the person you were before. Loss changes us. I don't believe we simply go back to who we were, but I do believe we can discover who we are becoming.

For me, this meant learning what brought me happiness, setting new goals and understanding that building a future did not mean leaving my parents behind.

There is no rush to have all the answers. Start small. Ask yourself: What matters to me now? What brings me comfort? What would I like the next chapter of my life to feel like?

Remember, this is your story.

You are allowed to grow around your grief.

Reconnecting With Life After Loss

For a long time, I thought moving forward meant leaving my parents behind.

But how could I leave the two most important people in my life behind?

There can be so much guilt attached to living after loss. The first time you genuinely laugh, enjoy a holiday or reach a milestone can bring emotions you never expected.

I questioned how I could enjoy my life when my parents were no longer here to enjoy theirs. How could I travel, make memories or plan a future they would not physically be part of?

Over time, I understood something important: continuing to live my life does not mean leaving my parents behind.

They are part of who I am. The way I see the world, the values I carry, and parts of my personality have been shaped by them. My life continuing does not erase their place in it.

For me, reconnecting with life happened through small moments: saying yes to plans, travelling, setting goals and laughing with people I love. Deep down, I know this is what my parents would have wanted for me.

Some days, reconnecting with life might mean getting out of bed, having a shower, going for a walk, replying to a friend's message or cooking a wholesome meal. These things may seem small to someone else, but when you are grieving, they can be huge.

Moving forward and moving on are not the same thing.

I don't believe we simply move on from the people we love. We carry them with us as we move forward.

You can miss someone and still laugh.

You can have a difficult morning and still enjoy your evening.

You can wish they were here while still being grateful for the life in front of you.

You are still allowed to dream, make memories and experience happiness.

Most importantly, you are allowed to live.

Get Support

You do not have to navigate grief alone.

For a long time, I believed I had to be strong and deal with everything myself. This simply isn't true.

Support looks different for everyone. It might mean speaking openly with someone you trust, connecting with others who have experienced loss, joining a support group, speaking with a therapist or working with a grief coach.

The important thing is finding the support that feels right for you.

You deserve a space where you can speak openly about your grief, memories, difficult days and hopes for the future. Sometimes, allowing someone to walk beside you can be part of rebuilding after loss and help you feel safe, heard and seen.

Rebuilding After Loss

If there is one thing I hope you take from this book, it is that rebuilding after loss does not mean forgetting the person you love.

For me, rebuilding has meant understanding my grief, getting to know myself again and slowly giving myself permission to live.

I will always miss my parents. There will always be moments when I wish I could call them, tell them about my day or ask for advice.

But I have learned that grief and life can exist together.

Rebuilding happens through small choices, moments and steps. Some days, it may mean setting a new goal. Other days, it might simply mean getting through the day.

Both matter.

This is your grief.

This is your life.

And this is your story.

The people we love become part of who we are. We carry their love, lessons, memories and the ways they shaped us into every chapter that comes next.

Rebuilding after loss is not about building a life without them.