



GRIEF AND TRAUMA RESOURCES

Families for Safe Streets confronts the epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been impacted by crashes. Comprised of individuals who have been injured or lost loved ones, FSS was founded in 2014 in New York City and is growing as a national movement with chapters across the country.

This curated list includes recommendations from FSS members on grief and trauma resources (e.g., books, podcasts, support groups and more) that they have personally found to be helpful. **Have something to add to the list? Submit your suggestions [here](#).**

Table of Contents

[Loss of a loved one](#)

[Self help](#)

[Memoir](#)

[Fiction](#)

[Journaling](#)

[Mindfulness Practice](#)

[Impact of trauma](#)

[Parents who have lost a child](#)

[Books](#)

[Online support groups](#)

[Resources for children](#)

[Injured in a crash](#)

[Self help](#)

[General Podcasts](#)

[Support groups & organizations](#)

[Traffic safety activism](#)

Loss of a loved one

Self help

[Bearing the Unbearable, Love, Loss and the Heartbreaking Path of Grief](#) by Joanne Cacciatore

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia); and Judy Kottick (NYC)
- Laura: This was one of the first books I read after Emily was killed. Joanne Cacciatore is a grief expert, and she also lost a daughter. The chapters are small, so I found it easy to read, a bit at a time.

[It's Okay That You're Not Okay: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand](#)

by Megan Divine

- Recommended by Nani Lavin (San Francisco Bay Area): The author debunks the culturally prescribed goal of returning to a normal, “happy” life and replaces it with a healthier middle path that rebuilds a life alongside grief rather than seeking to solve or overcome it. She includes mindfulness practices and guidance for managing stress, improving sleep, and decreasing anxiety.

[Grief Prints](#) by Radha Stern

- Recommended by Stephen Bingham (San Francisco Bay Area); Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal); and Debbie Kahn (NYC)
- Steve: Compassionate and practical guidance for supporting and helping a friend or loved one who is grieving. The author, who lost her son to a violent crime, writes that grief is like fingerprints - everyone grieves in their own way - but compassionate support from family and friends is a constant that can support this journey.
- Jeri: Extremely helpful book to share with friends and family members to assist them in understanding the intense pain of loss and what to say and what not to say.

[On Grief and Grieving, Finding the Meaning of Grief through Five Stages of Loss](#) by Elisabeth

Kubler-Ross and David Kessler

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia): A classic grief book

[Walking With Those Who Weep](#) by Ron Williams and Don Williams

- Recommended by Michele McLaren (NYC): This book for me helps those who want to help others that are grieving. It also highlights things that we ourselves can do to cope through our own grief as we strive to help others.

[The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have](#): by

Mark Nepo

- Recommended by Liz Martinez (NYC): Simple practices designed to help people live the life they want by being present for the life they have.

[Man's Search for Meaning](#) by Viktor Frankl

- Recommended by Debbie Kahn (NYC): After my only child, Seth was killed in 2009, I didn't know who I was anymore. I was shaken to my core and went through an existential crisis. This book helped me.

[Finding Meaning, the Sixth Stage of Grief](#) by David Kessler

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia): My husband and I attended a three day grief workshop in February 2020 in the Berkshires with David Kessler, a grief expert for years. We find all of his work helpful. He is honest and caring, and also lost his son. He says he now wishes he could go back and speak with all of the parents he counseled before he lost his son.

[The Power of Meaning – Finding Fulfillment in a World Obsessed With Happiness](#) by Emily Espahani Smith

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal): This wise, stirring book argues that the search for meaning can immeasurably deepen our lives, and that it is far more fulfilling than the pursuit of personal happiness

[Channel Kindness: Stories of Kindness and Community](#) by Born This Way Foundation reporters & Lady Gaga

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal): Empowering stories of hope, love and kindness that help to get you through the rough patches.

[The Survivors Club – The Secrets and Science that Could Save Your Life](#) by Ben Sherwood

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

[Anyway: The Paradoxical Commandments: Finding Personal Meaning in a Crazy World](#) by Kent M. Keith

- Recommended by Nani Lavin (San Francisco Bay Area): The good you do may not work but do it anyway. This book helps to have faith that good and constructive things can still happen after devastating loss - and sometimes you have to have blind faith and 'do it anyway.'

Memoir

[A Death in the Family](#) by James Agee

- Recommended by Rebecca Sonkin (NYC/Detroit): Agee was awarded a posthumous Pulitzer for this autobiographical novel about his father being killed in a car crash when the author was a little boy. The book is obsessed with language and I'd argue the book is anti-"accident." Unsparring in its depiction of the destruction of a young family's domestic happiness. I prize the book's authenticity and honesty about what it means to

lose a beloved family member in such a sudden and violent way. (I understand that many may not.)

[Men We Reaped](#) by Jesmyn Ward

- Recommended by Rebecca Sonkin (NYC/Detroit): Ward's memoir is about five young black men—friends, family—who died in their 20s or teens. Her beloved brother, who was killed by a repeat drunk driver, is one of them. She calls this a "rotten fucking story." I appreciate her anger and how open she is about it. I've often felt pressure to not be angry about my brother being killed by a speeding driver. Ward's book feels like permission to own what's just a normal human emotion. And then to do something about it. Included in the recent New York Times roundup of the top 50 memoirs of the past 50 years.

[The Year of Magical Thinking](#) by Joan Didion

- Recommended by Debbie Kahn (NYC): I love this book. It is beautifully written and so real. The author's husband died, and Ms. Didion talks about the confusion, the pain and the grief. I think it is helpful because it deals with the unexpected sudden death of her husband in real terms. I think it would help anyone going through a sudden loss.

[Wave](#) by Sonali Deraniyagala

- Recommended by Judy Kottick (NYC): This is a remarkable memoir about surviving the 2004 tsunami, which killed her husband, two sons and parents in Sri Lanka. One of The New York Times 10 Best Books of the Year, a Christian Science Monitor Best Nonfiction Book, a Newsday Top 10 Books pick, a People magazine Top 10 pick, a Good Reads Best Book of the Year, and a Kirkus Best Nonfiction Book

[Modern Loss](#) by Rebecca Soffer and Gabrielle Birkner

- Recommended by Judy Kottick (NYC): The authors have compiled a diverse collection of stories that explore many types of losses, from both well known writers and 'regular people.' There is also a [web site](#) and online forum with articles and events.

[Safe Passage: Words to Help the Grieving](#) by Molly Fumia

- Recommended by Judy Kottick (NYC): Short quotes that give voice to the suffering of grievers and inspiration for a path forward.

[A Grief Observed](#) by C.S. Lewis

- Recommended by Judy Kottick (NYC): A classic and beautiful exploration of grief, an 'honest reflection on the fundamental issues of life, death, and faith in the midst of loss.'

[Second Firsts – Live, Laugh, and Love again](#) by Christina Rasmussen

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal): A self-help and memoir written by therapist and crisis intervention counselor who lost her husband to cancer.

[Healing the Adult Sibling's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Brother or Sister Dies](#)

by Alan Wolfelt.

- Recommended by Debbie Kahn (NYC): 100 practical ideas to help process the passing of a sibling.. The principles of grief and mourning are clearly defined, accompanied by action-oriented tips for embracing bereavement.

[Think Positively – Inspirational Thoughts for Each and Every Day](#) by Jesse Sposato

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

[Find it in Everything](#) Photographs by Drew Barrymore

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal):
- A compilation of 10 years of heart-shaped objects that she has found and photographed.

Chicken Soup for the Soul Series

- [A Book of Miracles: 101 True Stories of Healing, Faith, Divine Intervention, and Answered Prayers](#) by Jack Canfield
- [Grieving and Recovery: 101 Inspirational and Comforting Stories About Surviving the Loss of a Loved One](#) by Jack Canfield
- [Angels and Miracles: 101 Inspirational Stories About Hope, Answered Prayers and Divine Intervention](#) by Amy Newmark
- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

Fiction

[Disturbances in the Field](#) by Lynne Sharon Schwartz

- Recommended by Judy Kottick (NYC): In a novel of captivating realism, Lynn Sharon Schwartz explores tragic loss and broken faith, the disconnection between one's expectations of life and what one gets.

Journaling

[Count Your Rainbows, A Gratitude Journal](#) by Jenny Mecher

[Mindful Journaling, Rewrite the Script of Your Life](#) by Tara Ward

Mindfulness Practice

[Grief Yoga](#) led by Paul Denniston

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia): He was a part of the workshop we attended with David Kessler. Grief Yoga can help get out the physical hurt.
- [Relaxed breathing techniques](#)

- [Grounding techniques to detach from emotional pain](#)
- [Calming skills](#)
- [Cultivating Resilience - Self Awareness Worksheet](#)
- [A Blessing for the Journey](#) poem of encouragement

Impact of trauma

- Trauma Stewardship TedTalk - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOzDGrcvmus&t=572s>

Parents who have lost a child

Books

[Disaster Falls](#) by Stephane Gerson

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia): Written by a dad who lost his 8-year-old son in a rafting accident. I find that books like this have me believe I am not alone in my suffering, and I want to see how other parents are dealing with their grief.

[Once More We Saw Stars](#) by Jayson Greene

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philadelphia): Two year old Greta was killed in NYC by a falling piece of broken building. Dad Jayson writes about the circumstances and aftermath of losing their daughter. I find that books like this have me believe I am not alone in my suffering, and I want to see how other parents are dealing with their grief.

[Growing Up in Heaven – The Eternal Connection Between Parent and Child](#) by James Van Praagh

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

[How Much Big is the Sky: A Memoir of a Mother's Love and Unfathomable loss](#) by Sherry Chapman

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal): This is the story of a mother that lost her teenage son in a traffic crash.

[The Grieving Garden, Living with the Death of a Child, 22 Parents Share their Stories](#) by Suzanne Redfern and Susan K. Gilbert

- Recommended by Laura Fredricks (Philly); and Judy Kottick (NYC)
- Laura: This is an interesting book because different parents were given the same questions about their grief. Not all questions were answered by all of the parents. In the

beginning there is a section on who the parents are, and the circumstances of their child's death. I found it to be helpful, again to see how others are dealing with this grief.

[Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What It Costs Us](#) by Nancy Berns

- Recommended by Rebecca Sonkin (NYC/Detroit): Berns is a sociologist with a personal stake in the cause. Her son died very young. For her there is no closure. One idea that sticks with me is that she needs to continue being a mother to her son even though he has died. That's how I think of our work in FSS. Just because our beloved person is gone doesn't mean we forget or "move on" or stop advocating on their behalf. Her mix of the personal and rigorously academic gave me a lot of language to rebut 'get-over-it / that-was-a-long-time-ago' kind of aggression.

[His Father Still – A Parenting Memoir](#) by Tim Hollister

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

Online support groups

[The Sixth Stage of Grief: Helping Clients and Patients Find Meaning After Loss](#) led by David Kessler

- Kessler, a leading grief expert, shares a Zoom class, including one-on-one talks, and videos with "homework." Kessler has been featured in the New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Business Week, and Life Magazine, and on CNN, Fox, NBC, PBS, and CBS.

Resources for children

[A Kid's Book About Death](#) by Stephanie Cadet

- Recommended to Debbie Kahn for her sister to talk to her five-year-old daughter about Seth and grandma's death.
- Sesame Street Goodbye Mr. Hooper - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxlj4Tk83xQ&t=19s>

Injured in a crash

Self help

[The Long Run](#) by Matt Long

- Recommended by Dan Levinsohn (NYC)
- New York firefighter and 9/11 first responder
- Matt Long was a physical beast before his crash -- completing all kinds of marathons and triathlons. His life changed forever when he was struck by a bus while riding his bike during the 2005 New York City transit strike. He barely survived this horrific collision.

Though he had to adjust to a "new normal" and grieved his old lifestyle, Matt returned to endurance sports -- completing the New York City Marathon and even the Lake Placid IronMan post-trauma.

[The Book of Awakening: Having the Life You Want by Being Present to the Life You Have:](#) by Mark Nepo

- Recommended by Liz Martinez (NYC): Simple practices designed to help people live the life they want by being present for the life they have.

[The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma](#) by Bessel van Der Kolk

- Recommended by Kate Brockwehl (NYC): To my orthopedists my PTSD might be irrelevant, but van der Kolk's book has shown me how my healing from my physical injuries from being hit by a car and my PTSD are actually deeply connected. I found the book illuminating and also soothing.

[Channel Kindness: Stories of Kindness and Community](#) by Born This Way Foundation reporters & Lady Gaga

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal): Empowering stories of hope, love and kindness that help to get you through the rough patches.

[Think Positively – Inspirational Thoughts for Each and Every Day](#) by Jesse Sposato

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General Podcasts

[Open to Hope](#) hosted by Dr. Gloria Horsley and Dr. Heidi Horsley

- Dr. Gloria Horsley lost her son years ago, and Dr. Heidi Horsley is her daughter.

[Grief Out Loud](#) hosted by Jana DeCristofaro and The Dougy Center for Grieving Children and Families

- This is easy to listen to and helpful information on how to deal with grief.

[Terrible, Thanks for Asking](#) hosted by Nora McInerny

- This podcast may not be for everyone. Nora can be humorous, which I find to be fine. She speaks with all kinds of different people dealing with grief. Nora lost her first husband to cancer.

[Here](#) is a list of additional grief podcasts.

Support groups & organizations

Evermore Director of Grief Support Centers

- A national nonprofit dedicated to improvement bereavement care. Has a listing of support organizations nationally.

Trauma Survivors Network

- Recommended by Michele McLaren (NYC): As a survivor of trauma, this group helped me tremendously through their different classes and Peer Support Groups.

The Compassionate Friends

- Recommended by Stephen Bingham (San Francisco Bay Area): The world's largest self-help bereavement organization.

Truck Safety Coalition

- Recommended by Stephen Bingham (San Francisco Bay Area); Advocates

Institute for Safer Trucking

- Recommended by Stephen Bingham (San Francisco Bay Area): Advocates for safer trucking practices and provides monthly support groups.

Soaring Spirits

- Recommended by Laura Keenan (San Diego): International organization that provides peer-based grief support programs for widowed men and women, including retreats provided regionally called "[Camp Widow](#)".

Dinner Party

- A community of 21-45 year olds who have each experienced the loss of a parent, partner, child, sibling, other close family member, or close friend.

Grief.Com led by David Kessler

- Kessler, a leading grief expert, provides virtual groups, activities and events.

Gift of Life

- Information about organ and tissue donation.

Open to Hope Foundation

- Provides online videos and other services to help individuals find hope after loss.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving

- Has a large online library of brochures on coping with loss and injury in English and Spanish and includes

Traffic safety activism

[A Deadly Wandering – A Tale of Tragedy and Redemption in the Age of Attention](#) by Matt Richtel

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal), Aly Geller (San Francisco Bay Area).
- Jeri: About my good friend Reggie Shaw who killed two people while Reggie was driving, and texting and he served time in jail.
- Aly: The book shares the compelling story of Reggie Shaw, a distracted driving offender who faces his crime, works to change distracted driving legislation, and commits himself to educating others about the devastating effects of distracted driving. Matt Richtel (who also won a Pulitzer Prize for his [NY Times series on distracted driving](#)) also explains the science of attention and why multitasking is a myth.

[Right of Way: Race, Class, and the Silent Epidemic of Pedestrian Deaths in America](#) by Angie Schmitt

- Recommended by Aly Geller (San Francisco Bay Area): A much-needed re-framing of traffic violence as a preventable epidemic. Traffic violence barely registers with the media and wider culture, and disproportionately affects immigrants, the poor, and people of color. The book discusses a culture of victim blaming and dismissing crashes as inevitable ‘accidents,’ and focuses on the public health crisis for which we have the tools but lack the will to use them. Schmitt argues for a new approach to infrastructure and policy that prioritizes safety and equity over speed and convenience.

[Street Fight: Handbook for an Urban Revolution](#) by Janette Sadik-Khan

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

[Traffic: Why We Drive the Way We Do and What it Says About Us](#) by Tom Vanderbilt

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal); and Debbie Kahn (NYC)

[Not So Fast: Parenting Your Child Through the Dangers of Driving](#) by Tim Hollister

- Recommended by Jeri Dye Lynch (SoCal)

[The Revolution Will Not Be Motorized: Moving Towards Non-Motorized Spatiality](#) by Peter Freund

- Recommended by Miriam Fisher (NYC): I am sharing an essay written by my late husband, Peter Freund, that appeared posthumously in the journal *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, including the accompanying tribute to his thinking and transportation activism, fitting for FSS and Transportation Alternatives. He and I became involved with

transportation issues after I was seriously injured by a taxi in 1984, in a coma, with permanent spine and other injuries. I just had a 3rd back surgery very recently, September 8, so the physical and psychological wounds are still fresh and raw. Many of the transportation issues he addresses are very prescient with the restructuring and rethinking transportation, congestion, and public space during the current pandemic. I wish he could have heard the current dialogue about dismantling the car culture that has dominated our streets -- he was so passionate and outspoken about this. Less cars, less accidents, more safety for all.

[Keep Kids Alive](#)

- Website recommended by Michele McLaren (NYC): This website is led by Tom Everson. The mission of Keep Kids Alive Drive 25 is "To make streets safer for all who walk, cycle, play, and drive." Tom also has a podcast which is included on the website where he speaks with families of those who have lost loved ones due to traffic violence.

[Impact Teen Drivers](#)

- Website recommended by Aly Geller (San Francisco Bay Area): Website and educational organization educating teenagers and parents about safe driving. Programming includes peer educators, classroom curriculums, teen-parent workshops, and engaging, teen-relevant videos and other educational tools.

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info@familiesforsafestreets.org | familiesforsafestreets.org | 844-377-7337

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