

Grief Healing Workbook



About the Author

Julie Cluff is a grief coach and a leading specialist in grief education. She's the founder of Build a Life After Loss, a company dedicated to providing uplifting and skilled grief support and education. She's an inspirational speaker, the host of the popular Build a Life After Loss podcast, the leader of the online community True Hope Club and trainer in grief coach education. She developed the Hope Model of Healing and the 5 Foundations of Growth to assist those who are grieving in their journey to healing.

In addition to training manuals, Julie authored the book *Miracles in the Darkness* in which she shares her personal story of tragic losses and hope-filled recovery after the divorce from her first husband, the suicide of her brother, and the death of her two youngest children in a car accident on Mother's Day. She's a frequent radio, podcast, and television guest.

Julie is the loving mother of 6, wife to Ron and grandma to 10 beautiful grandchildren. She and Ron live with their puppy Scout in Lehi, Utah. She loves reading, playing the piano, playing tennis and spending time with her fun, rambunctious family.

Links:

website: buildalifeafterloss.com

free webinar: buildalifeafterloss.com/gift

facebook: Build a Life After Loss with Julie Cluff <https://www.facebook.com/buildalifeafterloss>

instagram: [@buildalifeafterloss](https://www.instagram.com/buildalifeafterloss)

Disclaimer: This program is educational and self-directed. It is not meant to be a substitute for professional mental health therapy. If you are experiencing clinical depression or clinical anxiety or another mental disorder, we recommend that you seek the appropriate mental health support. You are responsible for your own feelings and decisions as it relates to this material.

Introduction

If you're reading this book, chances are you've experienced a loss. I too have lived through the pain of loss and grief which is why I'm here to support you.

I was recently rereading some excerpts from my book *Miracles in the Darkness: Building a Life After Loss* and I was remembering that excruciatingly painful period of my life after my daughter Carrie and my son David died in a car accident. (To listen to my story, visit <https://www.buildalifeafterloss.com/post/1> or you can read the full account in my book *Miracles in the Darkness*.)

This is what I wrote about that time of grief, guilt and shame after the accident.

"I was so consumed with self-reproach that I rejected any attempts of soothing. I was in no position to comfort another and witnessing my husband Ron's pain only increased my self-hatred. After all, I concluded, I was to blame for our suffering." (*Miracles in the Darkness*, pg 48)

"I blamed myself for every difficulty in our life. If Ron was stressed, it was my fault. If the kids were struggling, it was my fault. That's how I viewed my world." (ibid., pg. 55)

"I did not want to exist anymore. Living and breathing felt forced on me. Each morning I would wake up wishing I hadn't. I wondered why I survived the accident. I was convinced that everyone's life would have been far better had I died too." (ibid., pg. 60)

My condition was dismal, my pain incomprehensible and yet I was able to eventually recover and rebuild a life that I love through time and persistent effort.

In May 2020, I read someone's post in a group for bereaved parents. She expressed the agony of child loss and her despair. To offer hope, I shared my feelings about my experience with rebuilding.

This is what I wrote:

"Hi wonderful parents! This is the week my children died 13 years ago on Mother's Day in a rollover accident and I was driving the car. Carrie was 10. David was 8. The pain was worse than anything I could imagine. I kept asking myself how can a person possibly live with this much pain! It was excruciating! How can I survive? How *will* I survive?

"But I had things to live for, so I had to figure out how to live. The problem is I thought I had to change the situation to feel better, but I didn't. I couldn't change the situation! NOTHING was going to bring Carrie and David back. NOTHING!

"Little by little I reentered life. I learned how to live again. I learned how to appreciate what was in front of me. I learned how to think differently about what happened. I

learned to forgive myself.

“The very first anniversary of their death my older daughters surprised us by flying home from college to spend that painful weekend with us. That weekend I learned I could grieve and feel joy! I sat in church with my children who were still with us and I allowed myself to feel so grateful to be a mother – to be the mother of my living kids and my kids who went to heaven ahead of us. I allowed myself to feel joy. It changed the way I felt about Mother’s Day. This horrible day that could have been horrible the rest of my life changed into a day of tremendous love and gratitude.

“Overtime, I began to allow more joy. I allowed the sadness. I allowed all of it to heal my broken heart. I allowed God to reign. I stopped arguing with him. I accepted his will for me, for my kids, for everything. I completely reframed my thinking around everything that happened. Now I truly believe life happens for us.

“Someone posted they just wanted to die. I remember feeling that way in the early days. I remember feeling like life could not and should not exist as it existed right then. It’s a horrible place to be. It’s excruciating.

“Please, please get the support you need to live. Please open your heart to hope that there are better days ahead. I stand as testament that there are better days ahead.

“I love my life now. I live in joy and peace although not without struggle. I have purpose. There is a reason I’m still here. There is a reason *you’re* still here!

“Please be good to yourself! Be compassionate and loving to yourself! Remember you are loved and cared for. You are worthy of love and care. Practice believing it. Everything can change. How you feel today is not how you’ll feel tomorrow. Hold on! Stay in the fight. Believe that it’s possible tomorrow could be a better day.

“I love you and I believe in you and in your healing, because I’ve experienced it myself! Be good to yourself! You deserve your best care.” (Facebook post May 5, 2020)

Healing your grief is a journey worth taking. Despite the emotional wounds you’ve suffered because of loss, there is hope. This program is all about hope and the steps you can choose to take to heal your broken heart. We’ll provide the tools and the support to help you along the way. I’m glad you’re here. Let’s get started.

Love, Julie

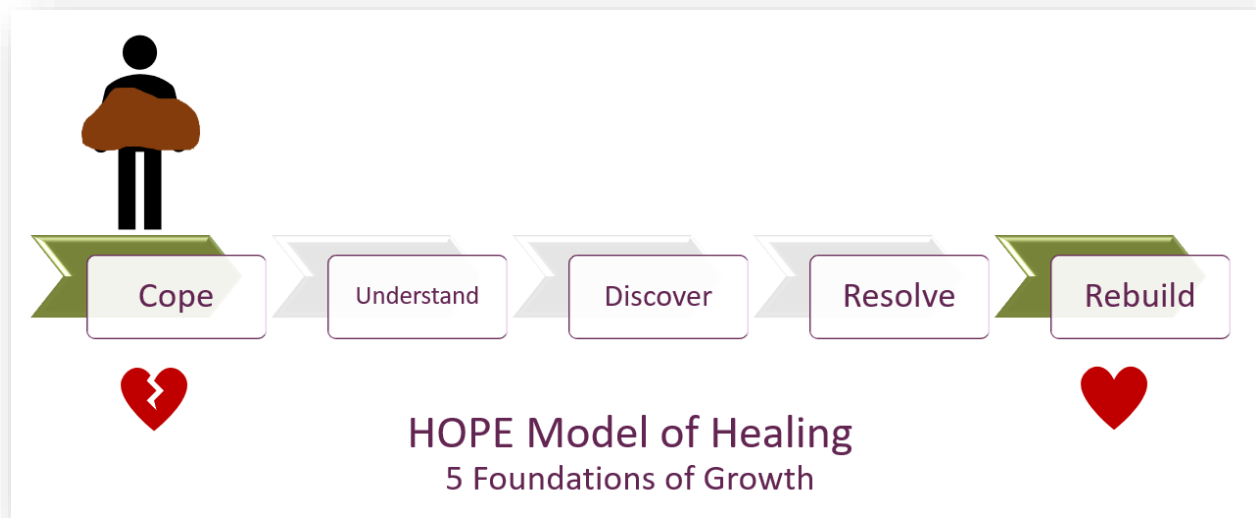
The Hope Healing Model includes the 5 foundations of growth. Each phase of healing will be presented in this program with specific information, tools, and action steps. The truths you integrate and the skills you develop will be a part of you for the rest of your life. You will use this knowledge and experience again and again as you navigate life's ups and downs.

In its simplest form the Hope Model of Healing looks like this.

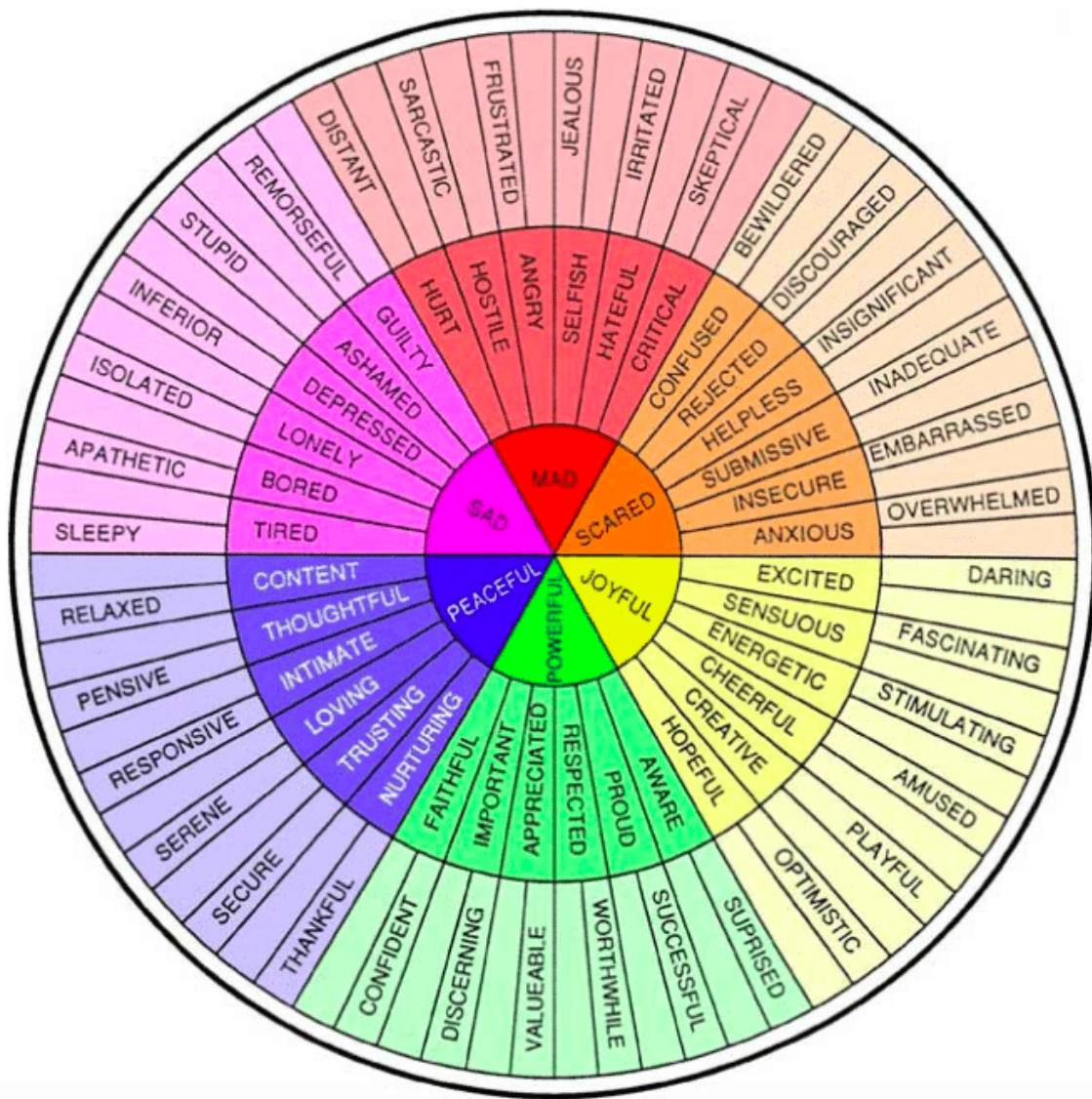


This workbook and program will provide the details of what each phase looks like and how to apply it. We'll start with preliminary information which will lay the foundation and then we'll dive into each phase of healing. The actual experience of each phase is not linear. However, in this program each phase will lay the groundwork for the next.

Without the structure of the model, we try to cope and then rebuild, completely skipping the important pieces in between. Going from coping to rebuilding without the important steps of understanding, discovering, and resolving makes rebuilding very difficult. This approach is seldom successful because we bring so much pain into the rebuilding phase.



Ultimately, most people get discouraged trying to rebuild while carrying so much grief with them that eventually they give up and decide they must stay in coping and live with the pain of grief for the rest of their life. But with time, proper understanding, tools and effort, you can let go of the pain of grief and gain wisdom, increased joy and a greater sense of confidence and purpose.



Emotions Wheel

Being able to name your specific emotions helps you to better navigate thoughts and feelings.

