

will traverse such things as:

Who went missing?

Under what circumstances?

What explanations do they have as to why the person went missing?

How they have coped with the person going missing?

Past relationship with the person?

Kind of support that was offered?

What they have found most difficult to cope with?

Whether religious/spiritual faith/support has been important to them?

A narrative methodology is being used to examine the transcripts.

Holly Prigerson has given permission for us to adapt her Inventory of Traumatic Grief<sup>20,21</sup> (now referred to as the Inventory of Complicated Grief – Revised) by inserting ‘missing person’ in the place of ‘death’. Following the interview, participants will be asked to complete the inventory questionnaire with the aim of discovering whether these families fit into the dimensions of the Traumatic Grief Inventory.

### The first interviews

The interviews conducted so far have involved mothers, fathers and siblings of missing people. Those families interviewed have, all but one, had a son go missing. The other missing person was a Vietnam veteran whose body was subsequently found in his car in another state. His wife said that while finding him was a relief it also raised more questions about her husband. In two of the families there were arguments over a period of time prior to the son going missing. Mental ill health (bipolar disorder) was evident in three of the young missing men, and drugs were also involved in a number of cases. Stories told by members of one family varied, revealing the different ways in which gender and age affect emotional impact and coping strategies.

It is hoped the research will provide the basis for a more effective way of helping families as they face the reality of the ambiguity of living with a person missing. ●

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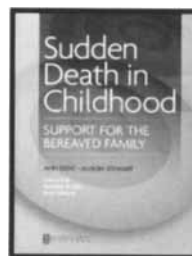
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## BOOK REVIEW

### Sudden Death in Childhood

Support for the Bereaved Family

Ann Dent, Alison Stewart



Oxford, UK:  
Butterworth  
Heinemann  
2004  
225pp  
£22.99 pb  
0 75065 646 8

This book is aimed specifically at nurses and midwives in both hospital and community settings. It is most attractively laid out and written with great respect and compassion.

The opening chapters look at bereavement in the context of family life, and this is followed by a very good overview of different theoretical models. Bereavement issues are then considered from the perspective of

the various members of the family: parents, other children, and grandparents. The final section covers ways in which professionals can support the bereaved, both immediately and over time.

This is a comprehensive, wide-ranging treatment which includes some topics that are not usually mentioned, such as the taking of photographs. Complicated grief is referred to very briefly, but then presumably this is unlikely to be the focus of the intended audience.

I thought this book was excellent and have not come across anything that covers this subject as well for the intended audience. It would be useful for anyone who is offering support to those bereaved by the sudden death of a child, particularly those whose main job is not bereavement care. ●

David Trickey

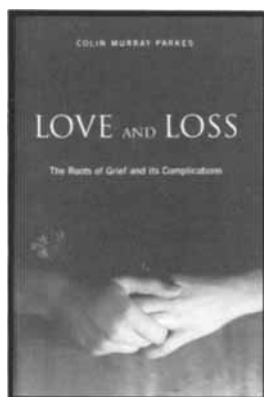
Chartered Clinical Psychologist

## BOOK REVIEWS

# An important new study of attachment and grief

## Love and Loss

The Roots of Grief and its Complications



Colin Murray Parkes

Hove, E Sussex, UK/ New

York: Routledge

2006

340pp

£34.95 hb

ISBN: 0 41539 041 9

**ECHOING AND EXTENDING HIS EARLIER STUDIES** of grief in adult life, Colin Murray Parkes now offers clinical evidence in *Love and Loss* of attachment styles and other vulnerabilities of childhood which persist into adult life, and the relation of these to the clinical complications of loss.

The author's method of study is retrospective and controlled by comparison groups and matching in some analyses. His data comes from a large clinical sample of 278 individuals who had been referred to him by a general physician, often with problems related to a loss. The patients were asked to complete a Retrospective Attachment Questionnaire (RAQ) before the first visit.

The RAQ covered a range of items. Participants were asked about early attachment to parents, parental separations and deaths, childhood illnesses and other adverse experiences, as well as coping style and several dimensions of emotional distress in the individual's recent adult life.

Conclusions from the analyses are presented in clear, eloquent narrative. Technical details and analyses are located in appendices, where readers can study them or not. The author helpfully uses figures to illustrate associations among variables and also provides engaging, concrete, clinical examples to illustrate concepts. More importantly, wise judgment pervades the text on essential and fascinating questions of developmental, interpersonal, and clinical behaviour.

*Love and Loss* contains insight into the nature and origin of the acute and enduring clinical complications of loss, with separation anxiety and its permutations as central elements. It also sets a welcome agenda for future research. Dr Parkes' accomplishment is creative and incomparable.

The book is accessible to anyone. My recommendation is to read it.

**Selby Jacobs**

Professor of Psychiatry, Yale University, USA

Colin Murray Parkes has led the field in exploring and explaining the nature of loss and grief since his early research in the 1960s and 1970s. His latest publication follows the tradition of his previous writing in breaking new ground and will undoubtedly become part of the canon of literature on attachment and grief.

*Love and Loss* combines the researcher's quest to validate a number of questions and propositions about the connections between attachment and response to loss, with the insights and experience of the practitioner. Parkes' impressive study provides some new perspectives on the nature of attachment as developed in childhood, its effect upon the capacity (or not) to trust both oneself and others, and the influence this has on adult relationships and responses to bereavement. It moves beyond rigid definitions of attachment styles and responses to loss, and

examines the multiple and interconnecting factors which influence attachment and our capacity to find coping strategies when a 'love' relationship is lost.

Parkes pays particular attention to the disorganised attachment style which demonstrates an ambiguity/tension between anxious and avoidant styles of attachment. He also looks at disorders of attachment and how they might be prevented and treated. Throughout the book these issues are explored through case studies which give instructive examples of the theoretical perspectives.

This is a book for all students of loss, grief and bereavement. I really enjoyed reading it and would want to encourage practitioners who may be daunted by the obvious research bias to engage with the deeply pertinent insights which will help enlarge their understanding of the people for whom they care. *Love and Loss* is the impressive outcome of a dedicated empiricist and a warm humanitarian. ●

**Linda Machin**

Visiting Research Fellow, Keele University

## BOOK REVIEWS

## Trying to make sense of death

**A Star for Bobby**

Helen Keenor

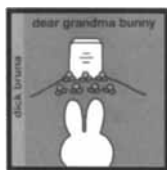


London: Bosun  
Publications, 2005  
28pp  
£4.99 pb  
0 95469 321 3

Written for SANDS (the UK-based Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) by the mother of a two-year-old who had experienced the neonatal death of a brother, it features the death of a little bird soon after it is hatched from the egg, mourned by his sister and brother hatched simultaneously. Like many books for children that anthropomorphise, it makes impossible demands on the credulity of any child above the age of two. These neonates ask 'Has he died?' – rather surprisingly, since death is a concept not available to human children until they are much older. Mummy and Daddy bird do not attempt to explain what death is, the assumption being that the baby birds know. A grave is made (with the help of other animals) and the siblings are told that a star is shining in the sky with love for their brother. I cannot recommend this book.

**Dear Grandma Bunny**

Dick Bruna



London: Egmont Books,  
2005  
26pp  
£3.99 hb  
ISBN 1 40521 901 7

**When Goodbye is Forever**

Lois Rock



Oxford, UK:  
Lion Hudson, 2004  
28pp  
£4.99 pb  
ISBN 0 74594 879 0

Both these books tackle the subject of the death of a grandmother. The Bruna one is part of a large series of simply written and illustrated books (Miffy books) for young children on a wide variety of subjects. This one tells in rhyme of grandma's death last night, that she is no longer breathing, of her burial in a woodland in a softly lined coffin, of the

sadness of all, and of Miffy's putting flowers on the grave like grandma's garden. It would be useful for young children as a stimulus to talk about death.

Rock's book is beautifully illustrated by Sheila Moxley and talks about the goodbyes we say throughout our life, about the pain of the permanent goodbye of death, although it goes back on this message and the message of the title by ending 'They will only be a little time out of sight, for God's love will gather us together for all eternity'. This could be a useful book for the religious family, but I think it is a little too hasty to dismiss the dead person and reassure the young child for whom it is written. 'Into the empty space of goodbye will come the memories of happy times. Just as morning follows night and spring follows winter, there will be new beginnings: new people to meet, new things to do.'

**The Fall of Freddie the Leaf**

Leo Buscaglia



Throrfare, NJ, USA:  
Slack, 1982  
32pp  
\$13.95/£8.50  
ISBN 0 80507 195 4

Recently reprinted as a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition, this is one of a series of books on the subject of love, by the late author. This one tells the story of two leaves on a tall tree. Daniel was Freddie's best friend and the wisest of all the leaves. He quells Freddie's fears at what is to come when summer turns to autumn ('fall') and when Freddie comes to rest finally in the winter snow 'he closed his eyes and fell asleep'. The tale is lyrical about the seasons and illustrated by beautiful photos of trees and leaves, but I do not think it would be suitable for a bereaved child of any age – the idea of leaves closing their eyes would be confusing at best!

**Mama's Going to Heaven Soon**

Kathe Copeland



Minneapolis, MN,  
USA: Augsburg  
Fortress, 2005  
32pp  
\$9.99/£5.99 pb  
ISBN 0 80665 122 9

The grandmother of two boys aged five and three wrote this book to help them understand the illness and impending death of their mother from breast

cancer. The story is told through the children, and articulates their bewilderment at mother's illness and the odd behaviour of visitors. Both parents talk to the boys about mother going soon to live with God and the angels in heaven and how the family cannot be together in heaven as yet but will always love and remember mother, and she them. The illustrations, by Elissa Hudson, are delightful, with a serene mother floating off to heaven with an angel on the cover but, as always with religious explanations, it avoids many of the questions children of this age would ask, or at least be thinking. A two-page addendum for parents, taken from another publication, on how to talk to children about death is more helpful. Some Americanisms may need explanation for a British readership.

So what do I recommend for the child whose carers want to help them with the tremendous problem of explaining death? Of those reviewed in *Bereavement Care*, I liked *A Story for Hippo* (Winter 2003; 22[3]: 44) to help with the death of an elderly grandparent; *Don't Despair on Thursdays!* and *The Sad Book* (Spring 2006; 26[1]:19) for helping children to name and understand various emotions which arise on bereavement; *Sam's Book* is helpful on the subject of cot deaths and *The Silver Swan* and *The Strong Little Tree* (Winter 2004; 32[3]: 45) for understanding the cycle of birth and death. The \*Heegard workbooks<sup>1,2</sup> are excellent for those working with bereaved children. For those who have to tackle a family suicide with children, *\*Beyond the Rough Rock*<sup>3</sup> can't be faulted. For younger children, *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney*<sup>4</sup> and *\*Badger's Parting Gifts*<sup>5</sup> have stood the test of time. Most of the religious (mainly Christian) books for bereaved children that talk about heaven, God and angels, I think beg more questions than they answer, but I have tried to review them fairly in past issues (Winter 2003) of *Bereavement Care* and here. ●

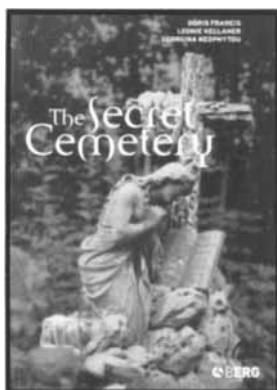
**Dora Black***Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist*

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Cruse Bereavement Care. Order on line at  
[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk); [info@cruse.org.uk](mailto:info@cruse.org.uk)  
or tel [0]20 8939 9540

# Cemeteries as a bereavement resource

## The Secret Cemetery



Doris Francis,  
Leonie Kellaheer,  
Georgina Neophytou

Oxford: Berg, 2005.  
320pp  
£55.00/\$99.95 hb  
ISBN 185 973 5924  
£18.99/40.95 pb  
ISBN 185 973 5975

If Mediterranean cemeteries are little cities, and American ones parks, the English cemetery is a garden. The authors show how Londoners construct, both materially and in their hearts and minds, the grave as a garden and a second home. Just as they may have popped in to see mum for a chat and a cup of tea while she was alive, they continue to do this as they tidy up the grave. Many urban grave-tenders live in rented flats without gardens: they see the grave as their only piece of real property, and it is literally their only garden.

While the book is essentially a work of academic anthropology, it is refreshingly free of jargon. It charts how work on the garden and commissioning the stone reflects both the initial year of mourning and a longer-term memory in which kinship is kept alive. And, while showing the specific characteristics of British grave tending, it also reveals diversity due to length of bereavement, type of loss, and religious affiliation (Jewish, Muslim, Greek Orthodox, as well as Catholic, Protestant and non-religious). The book does not claim to be able to generalise about cemetery behaviour in other parts of the UK or indeed the world, but it will stimulate readers from wherever to think about what the grave means to mourners.

The 'secret cemetery' is secret in two

ways – mourners can be invisible to preservationists and teachers who see urban cemeteries as havens for wildlife, fresh air, and history; and the cemetery is invisible to those who see grief as located within the heart with little or no materialisation in space and place. So, this book is a real contribution to our understanding of bereavement – and to our understanding of homes and gardens!

**Tony Walter**  
*Director of Studies, MSc Death and Society, Bath University*

## Sorrow and Solace

### The Social World of the Cemetery

Philip Bachelor



Amityville, New York:  
Baywood, 2004  
200pp  
\$38.95 hb  
ISBN 0 89503 297 X

In this first full-length study of why Australians visit cemeteries, the cemeteries are revealed as 'crucial places of deep healing and growth'. Bachelor speaks from 25 years' experience of

**BEREAVEMENT BOOKS ARE TYPICALLY** based on one-to-one interviews indoors, in the mourner's home or the researcher/clinician's office. But, even in a society with relatively few prescribed mourning rituals, there is one site built for and regularly used by mourners – the cemetery. Though there are anthropological studies of tribal burial grounds and historical studies of Western cemeteries, there is a distinct lack of research into how mourners today use cemeteries. This trail-blazing book, whose publication some of us have been eagerly awaiting for some years now, breaks the mould, observing and talking to mourners in six London cemeteries.

managing burial grounds and from two specific visitors' and mourners' surveys. Australian cemeteries receive an estimated 32 million visitors annually. In Melbourne one quarter of visitors come for funerals; three-quarters for memorial reasons. Hence the pertinence of this book for *Bereavement Care* readers: it identifies the cemetery as a major resort or resource for many bereaved people.

It is family graves (parents and spouses) and the buried dead (not the cremated) who are the major object of visits (46% of the 127,000 Australian deaths in 2005 were buried). There is also a religious referent: Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, for whom ongoing relationships with the buried dead have long been traditional, compose half the visitors. Bachelor compares which groups of mourners visit more regularly, how long they stay, what they do. There are interesting observations on non-visiting and many fascinating quotations from interviewees.

Bachelor is attracted by the work of Parkes, Attig and Worden. Yet bereavement theories are not used systematically to interpret the experience, quotations or activities of grave-visitors. I would have liked to see the chapter on 'the place of the cemetery in contexts of grief' extended.

In the seventeenth century Marvell

## BOOK REVIEWS

wrote 'To His Coy Mistress'\*; that the grave was 'a fine and private place'. Philip Bachelor has established just how normative and sociable a place the contemporary cemetery can be. Whatever the residue of Protestant culture in the UK, the dominance of cremation here or the role of commercial firms, we also have a cult of the grave. Assessments of mourners' behaviour must henceforth include a clear consideration of this self-help, DIY method of coping with grief: visiting graves and cemeteries.

**Peter C Jupp**

*Founding co-editor of Mortality*

\* Marvell A. In: Donno ES (ed). *The Complete Poems*, Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1972.

### Memorials by Artists for Young People, Children and Babies A Practical Guide

Harriet Frazer, Hilary Meynell (eds)



Snape, Suffolk, UK: *Memorials by Artists*, 2005  
78pp  
£15.00 pb  
(inc p&p)  
095157 113 3

This unusual book contains good colour photographs of memorials that have been created and placed in a range of sites, along with careful, useful and moving commentary from the authors and others, mainly parents, who have lost a child. The memorials are mostly in the form of gravestones, but also plaques, stepping stones and seats. Some photographs are accompanied by the drafts of the design commissioned from artists in the small company or collective that has produced the book. So, in one sense this is a promotional effort, but it is much more.

Divided into 15 short sections, it is a sensitive guide for families bereaved of a child through the practical, but overwhelmingly emotional, task of creating a lasting marker for a young life. Several memorials are considered in some detail, including parents' accounts that chart the path from a sometimes reluctant commissioning to a stone-setting ceremony that seems to have brought consolation and some sense of a future. It is this movement from unique losses to more general advice that will, I think, make this a valuable book for at least some families. The sections giving guidance (on wording, involving other children, on the regulations, timing for completion and ceremonies) and illustrating how this has been interpreted and executed by particular families, are

brief and to the point. Cross-reference is often made between the text and many of the illustrations, inviting imaginative re-interpretations of the designs and the inscriptions. Importantly, this book, in its illustrations and moving commentaries, could inspire families experiencing loss of a child, to feel that a memorial project, seen through from inception to completion, with sensitive guidance from artists and letter carvers such as those cited here, could go some way to soothing and consoling parents and siblings and the wider family. ●

**Leonie Kellaheer**

*Principal Research Fellow, London Metropolitan University*

### The Grieving Child

A Parent's Guide (2nd edn)

Helen Fitzgerald



New York: Fireside/  
Dover, Kent, UK,  
2003  
179pp  
\$13.00/£10.99  
0 671 76762 3

Fitzgerald focuses on the effects of bereavement on children and young people within the context of the parent-child relationship. She grounds the text in her experience of bereavement and the challenges she faced as the parent of young children. Children's emotional and behavioural responses are explained, with helpful tips on how parents can comfort their children. She includes a range of activities to help children express their feelings and which most parents could develop within their repertoire of play. She gives sensible advice on how to introduce the facts of death during a child's early years and how to encourage children to explore issues relating to death through play and conversation. She underlines the value of keeping the conversation going, being open with bereaved children and giving them choices.

There are some limitations and debatable points, including Fitzgerald's premise that all families are happy. There is more than a hint of *Little House on the Prairie* in her picture of family life. Nowhere in the text does she address the issue of children living with abusive or neglectful parents. Similarly there is no mention of children who have had anxious or ambivalent attachments. She assumes that the family fits the two birth parents and their children format, but the shape of families and the nature of family life have changed significantly in the last 20 years and Fitzgerald's view has not kept pace.

Her commonsense approach is refreshing, her writing style is very readable and the cross referencing makes it easy to form connections throughout the text. I recommend the text with the above reservations. ●

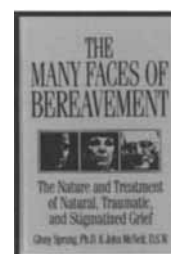
**Peta Hemmings**

*Senior Practitioner, Barnardo's Orchard Service*

### The Many Faces of Bereavement

The Nature and Treatment of Natural, Traumatic and Stigmatised Grief

Ginny Sprang, John McNeil



New York: Brunner  
Mazel, 1995  
201pp  
£26.95 hb  
0 87630 756 X

There are some insights in this book for the discerning reader but, overall, it is poorly presented and unattractive to read as the theoretical approach at times lacks the warmth, empathy and sensitivity needed, especially for those working with the more difficult types of bereavement. The authors also remain obscure as their professional background and experience is never identified.

The main text is divided into three sections: death by natural causes, traumatic grief and stigmatised grief. The authors usefully define the terms relating to these contexts at the outset but emphasise the multi-faceted nature of grief. Their review of traditional models of grief is somewhat sparse and dated but their critical discussion of early models, which identified the stages of grief, form a good introduction to Worden's model which empowers the bereaved person to become more active in accomplishing the tasks of mourning.

A comprehensive list of factors to consider when attempting to assess a person's grieving process is given, which may well be of use to a student new to this subject. Anticipatory grief and more generic societal changes which impact on the mourning process are dealt with sensitively. The vignettes which illustrate diversity are welcome, restoring some feeling for the human aspects in a largely theoretical text. 'Parental grief' is a useful section which demonstrates the need, emphasised by the authors throughout, for good assessment.

Introductions given to topics raise expectations that are not always fulfilled in the text. The section on traumatic grief and grief associated with

community disasters is disappointing in today's context. This field has developed greatly through research and experience and continues to suggest new models. For such a recent publication, the discourse on DSM IV is also somewhat dated. The chapter on murder is sparse but deals well with the psychosocial impact of the judicial processes. The section on drunk driving fatality has helpful information on the vocabulary used in such circumstances and I found the comments on society's attitudes constructive and thought-provoking.

For the treatment of traumatic grief the authors advise two dimensions: assessment and treatment, followed by maintenance and support, and this division could be helpful for the clinician deciding on a long-term treatment plan. The discussion on psychometric tools is helpful but rather academic in approach. The same criticism could be levelled at the models which are produced by the authors and reproduced throughout the book.

Finally, the authors look at research into the needs of the bereaved based on the perceptions of

the bereaved themselves, and here the book regains some sense of real people which will be welcomed by the reader. There is more, much-needed humanity in the descriptions of those who experience disenfranchised grief, eg after a suicide or AIDS-related death, though the vicarious traumatising that can result is dealt with rather superficially, given the difficulty of these situations. ●

**Marion Gibson**

*Consultant in Psychosocial Management,  
Accredited Counsellor.*

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