

A person wearing glasses and a light-colored sweater is sitting in a wooden chair, reading an open book. They are positioned in front of a fireplace with a warm fire burning. The scene is dimly lit, with the fire providing the primary light source. The background shows a dark wood mantel and a patterned curtain.

THOUGHTS  
*for the*  
LONELY NIGHTS  
*a conversation about grief*

Doug Manning

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InSight Books, Inc  
Oklahoma City

# Thoughts for the Lonely Nights A Conversation About Grief

**Doug Manning**

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# Introduction

When I first began writing about grief there were very few books on the subject. Now there are thousands of helpful books available. These books seem to fit into three categories. Some are personal experiences describing a very personal grief journey after the loss of a loved one. Some are explanations of the grieving process. Still others are clinical studies about grieving written for professionals who give counsel to those in grief.

I hope this book will be different. There will be some shared experiences used to illustrate. There will be some brief descriptions about the grieving process, but not in any detail. Most people in grief will have access to books that do a great job in these areas. This book will concentrate on the impact of grief. The feelings, questions and needs felt during the struggle to survive a loss.

I call this *Thoughts For The Lonely Nights* because I envisioned sitting with you in a room late at night and simply having a conversation. I wrote out what I would say on certain elements of grief and then left room for you to write out what you would say back. This makes the book somewhat like a journal of your grief but not as formal as the usual journal. My hope is we will produce a written conversation about your grieving experience. The best part of this book will be either written or spoken by you, not me.

Thank you for the opportunity.

*Doug Manning*

## **Section I**

# **Feelings**



# Lonely to the Bone

Grief, by its very nature, is lonely. Lonely, by its very nature, produces grieving. People in grief feel a loneliness that goes to the bone.

Friends are wonderful and you could not make it without them but they cannot make the lonely go away.

A mate can hold you in the night and cry as you cry, but the lonely does not go away.

Family can be devastated along with you, but it is still lonely.

The loneliness may be difficult for you to understand. “Why am I so lonely? I share how I feel, I don’t hide my pain, I talk about my loss, and still the loneliness goes to my very soul.”

And you may get angry about the loneliness. “My mate, of all people, should understand how I feel, and should touch all the right spots and fill the dark places. If he/she can’t, do we really have anything going on in our lives together?”

And, the struggle can dominate your time and energy. You may spend your time either thinking about how lonely you are, or trying to find a way to make it go away.

And, worst of all you may end up deciding you are weak and are just holding gigantic pity parties for yourself, that you should stop feeling sorry for yourself and get on with living. The telling and the fussing do no good, it is still lonely.

## Feelings Too Deep

You are lonely because you are faced with the impossible task of explaining feelings and the only tools you have to do that with are words. There is no way that can be done. How can anyone explain a feeling? Can love be described in words? Can fear? Can anyone describe how it felt the first time they held their newborn? Neither can you describe how you feel now.

You want to.

You need to.

And you will try with all of your might.

But words are not adequate for the task.

## Caught Between Words

Even when we try to explain our feelings, we often get blocked by the lack of words to use. A mother told me her son had died as a result of a gun going off during a party. She said she had a terrible struggle with the word “accident.” To her an accident was the result of some act of nature or a car wreck. Every time she would say she did not call it an accident, everyone would immediately ask if she thought it was murder. This became increasingly troubling to her and blocked her progress in grieving. She visited with one of her son’s friends who had been present at the party. When she told him she had a hard time with the word accident he sighed and said, “Me too.” She began to heal that day. Someone else had the same struggle and could not explain how he felt.

## Still Good News

Hearing that the loneliness will not go away does not sound like good news or words of comfort, but this news can be a great deal of help and comfort. Accepting that there is really no way to get rid of the loneliness can help you focus your energy on dealing with it instead of desperately seeking a cure. This news can help couples accept that their mates cannot fully understand how they feel. Then they can concentrate on finding other ways to give and receive support.

You can then spend your effort on understanding yourself, exploring your feelings, and learning that you are normal. Then you can concentrate on

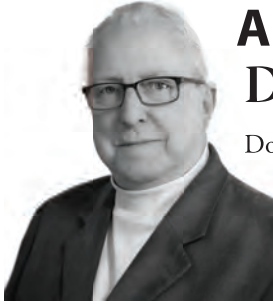






A series of horizontal ruled lines for writing, spanning most of the page width.

*Grief is a very anti-social state.*  
–Penelope Mortimer



## About the Author

### Doug Manning

Doug's career has included minister, counselor, business executive, author and publisher. He and his wife, Barbara, were parents to four daughters and long-term caregivers to three parents.

After thirty years in the ministry, Doug began a new career in 1982 and has devoted his time to writing, counseling and leading seminars in the areas of grief and elder care. His publishing company, InSight Books, Inc., specializes in books, video and audio productions specifically designed to help people face some of the toughest challenges of life.

Doug has a warm, conversational style in which he shares insights from his various experiences. Sitting down to read a book from Doug is like having a long conversation with a good friend.

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### Selected Resources from InSight

*Building Memories: Planning a Meaningful Funeral*

*Grief's Second Mile: Beyond the First Year*

*Journey of Grief* DVD (also available streaming on Prime Video)

*Lean On Me Gently: Helping the Grieving Child\**

*The Power of Presence: Helping People Help People* Book or DVD

*Sacred Moments: A Minister Speaks About Funerals*

*Special Care Series (also available in Spanish)*

*Thoughts for the Holidays\**

*Thoughts for the Grieving Christian* book/journal or CD

\* Also available as e-Books from your favorite vendor

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