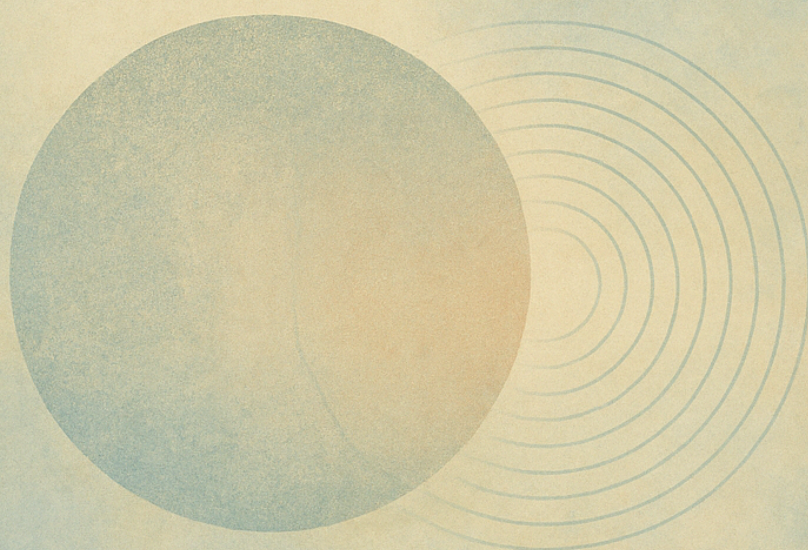


Exploring the Many Faces of Maternal Grief



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Healing The Void:
From CEN to Wholeness

The Many Faces of Maternal Grief

Motherhood brings joy, love, and connection—but it also brings grief. The losses are real: the body you once knew, your freedom, your friendships, quiet moments, and sometimes the joy itself. For those who grew up with Childhood Emotional Neglect (CEN), grief can feel amplified and confusing.

This workbook invites you to **explore 11 types of maternal grief** through journaling. Each section offers **three exploratory prompts** designed to help you notice patterns, uncover hidden feelings, and begin the process of compassionate healing.

You do not need to complete everything at once. Move at your own pace, and allow yourself to feel without judgment. This is a space for reflection, self-compassion, and connection to your inner life.

Practical Steps for Using This Workbook

1. **Create a Safe Space:** Find a quiet corner, a cup of tea, or a few minutes where you won't be interrupted.
 2. **Notice Your Body:** Before writing, take a few breaths, notice tension, and let your body settle.
 3. **Write Without Editing:** Let thoughts flow freely. Don't censor, judge, or correct—exploration is more important than grammar.
 4. **Reflect and Integrate:** After journaling, pause and notice what arose. Consider one small action, self-compassionate gesture, or micro-pause you can take in response.
 5. **Return Regularly:** Revisit the workbook as often as needed. Some griefs may feel stronger on certain days, and repeated reflection can deepen understanding and healing.
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Journaling Prompts by Grief

Grief for the Body That Changed

1. When I look at my body today, what feelings rise first, and where do I feel them physically?
2. How has my body cared for me and my child, even when I didn't notice or appreciate it?
3. If my body could speak, what would it want me to know about its strength, endurance, and resilience?

Grief for Lost Freedom

1. What freedoms do I most miss, and why do they matter to me beyond convenience?
2. Which aspects of freedom were tied to my sense of self, and which were tied to my independence?
3. What small actions could reclaim a sense of autonomy today, even briefly?

Grief for Constant Hypervigilance

1. When does my body feel most on alert, and what sensations accompany that state?
2. How might childhood experiences have shaped my tendency to be hypervigilant as a parent?
3. What cues, activities, or rituals help me notice safety and allow my nervous system to rest?

Grief for Lost Alone Time

1. How does the absence of solitude affect my emotions, energy, and sense of self?
2. What memories of alone time as a child come to mind, and how do they connect to my current longing?
3. What small, realistic ways could I carve out quiet moments for reflection or rest today?

Grief for Partnership and Intimacy

1. What do I most miss about intimacy with my partner, and why does it matter to me now?
2. How are my childhood experiences shaping my expectations or fears around connection?
3. What small gestures or practices could nurture closeness, even in brief moments?

Grief for Lost Friendships

1. Which friendships do I miss most, and what qualities of those connections nourished me?
2. How has motherhood changed the way I relate to friends, and what losses feel most painful?
3. Which new connections or potential friendships could help me feel seen and supported?

Grief for the Care You Never Received

1. When I care for my child, what emotions arise that connect to care I missed as a child?
2. How can I offer myself a small gesture of nurturing or validation today?
3. What internal messages about care and love are present, and how could I challenge or reframe them?

Grief of Responsibility (“This is my only chance to get it right”)

1. Which expectations of myself feel heaviest right now, and why?
2. Where do these pressures come from—past experiences, internalized voices, or current circumstances?
3. How might I allow myself to act with care while releasing some of the burden of perfection?

Grief for Other Possible Lives

1. Which “what if” life do I find myself missing most, and what longing does it reveal?
2. What qualities of those imagined lives could I bring into my present reality?
3. How does imagining these possibilities honor my dreams without diminishing the life I am living now?

Grief for Joy Itself

1. When I notice a fleeting moment of joy, what other feelings arise alongside it?
2. How does my relationship with joy reflect past experiences of emotional validation or neglect?
3. What would it look like to fully inhabit a moment of joy, even with its shadows or complexity?

Grief for the Grief

1. How do I react to my own grief—resistance, shame, frustration, or acceptance?
2. What does my grief want me to understand about my needs, boundaries, or emotional capacity?
3. How might I sit with my grief with curiosity and compassion, rather than judgment or suppression?

Closing Words

Healing from maternal grief is not about perfection or erasing pain. It is about **presence, curiosity, and compassion**. Each journaling session is a small act of self-care, a step toward understanding your needs, and a chance to offer yourself the validation and love you may not have received as a child.

Take your time. Return to these prompts as often as you need. Allow grief to speak, allow reflection to deepen, and notice the subtle moments of joy, connection, and self-compassion that emerge along the way.

You are not alone in this journey—and your grief is not something to fix; it is something to honor, explore, and integrate into the fullness of your life.

This free resource was created with care. If you found it helpful, feel free to share it with a friend. You can also support my work at:

<https://healingthevoid.kit.com/products/help-this-grow-pay-what-you-can>. Thank you!

For more reflections, prompts, and parenting guidance, visit fromcentowholeness.com.