



Think about something that you used to really cherish, but no longer have (it might be something as simple as a cuddly toy you had when you were small, or a jumper that you really liked).

Can you remember what it felt like to no longer have that thing?

**LOSS**

Think about something that is really important to you right now. What would it feel like to have it taken away from you?

## Loss of sense of smell as marker of COVID-19 infection

For some of us, our sense of loss is very raw. Others might not be feeling a great sense of loss at the moment. Maybe you are grieving for the loss of social time, or for the loss of a job in your family. Perhaps you are feeling like you have lost your purpose, or maybe you are really struggling with the loss of freedom.



DESPAIR GUILT DISBELIEF CONFUSION  
NUMBNESS  
OVERWHELMED REGRET FEAR RESPONSIBILITY  
ANGER LONELINESS  
RELIEF JEALOUSY

When we experience loss – whether that is loss of freedom, or loss of something special to us, or loss of a person close to us - we might go through a range of feelings.

Think about a time when you have experienced loss.  
*Which of these feelings do you identify with?*

# PSALMS ABOUT LOSS

**137** By the rivers of Babylon we sat down;  
there we wept when we remembered Zion.  
2 On the willows near by  
we hung up our harps.  
3 Those who captured us told us to sing;  
they told us to entertain them:  
"Sing us a song about Zion."  
4 How can we sing a song to the LORD  
in a foreign land?  
5 May I never be able to play the harp again  
if I forget you, Jerusalem!  
6 May I never be able to sing again  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not think of you as my greatest joy!

You could also look at [Psalm 88](#), which explores ideas about loss.

The book of Psalms in the Bible is a book of songs or poems written by various authors. The Psalms express praise for God, but they also express anger and sorrow and frustration.

In Psalm 137 the Israelites had been taken into exile to Babylon, away from their homeland. They were grieving for their land and their former way of life.

What is your reaction to this Psalm?  
How would you describe the mood/feelings of the author?  
Why do you think this is in the Bible?

Sometimes we may feel our deepest emotions should be hidden from God, especially if we are feeling negative towards him.

We may feel that we 'ought' to be full of hope and happy. But psalms like 137 and 88 show that it is OK to express our deepest despair to God, even if we don't have much faith left.

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The writers of the Psalms trusted that God was in charge, even when they were feeling despair. They wrote Psalms based on exactly how they were feeling at the time.

We will all be feeling different things. For some of us, our sense of loss will be making us feel angry, for others, we may be feeling more confused. Some of us may be feeling hopeful that we will come through our grief.

*Challenge: Write a psalm about how you are feeling right now. You can be honest about your feelings and what you are thinking. It doesn't have to be a wonderful literary masterpiece, just an expression of what is on your heart.*

## PSALMS TO ENCOURAGE US THROUGH LOSS

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;  
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

9 Fear the LORD, you his holy people,  
for those who fear him lack nothing.

10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,  
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

11 Come, my children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

12 Whoever of you loves life  
and desires to see many good days,  
13 keep your tongue from evil  
and your lips from telling lies.

14 Turn from evil and do good;  
seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are attentive to their cry;  
16 but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,  
to blot out their name from the earth.

17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;  
he delivers them from all their troubles.

18 The LORD is close to the broken-hearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Although some of the Psalms explore anger and despair, others focus on the hope the writer has in God.

These Psalms, like the verses from Psalm 34 here, show that the writers believe that they are not alone, even when they are experiencing suffering and loss. Here the writer says that God hears those who call out to him and that he will respond.

*If you trust in God, how can you be encouraged by these verses? What do they remind you about God?*

*If you are not a Christian, if God is real how would you want him to respond to the loss that you are feeling? What would you want to say to God?*



The LORD is close to the broken-hearted  
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

*Psalm 34:18*

## **Father God**

Thank you that we don't have to hide our feelings from you. Thank you that we can express what we are really thinking and you will listen.

Please help us to cope with our sense of loss – whether big or small. Help us to seek the support that we need from others. Help us to know how to support each other in our loss.

Thank you that you are close to the broken-hearted and those who feel crushed by the weight of their grief.

**Amen**

Why not ask God to help you to cope with your feelings about the things you have lost.

## WHERE CAN I GO FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

If you are grieving the loss of someone you love, there are some really helpful resources available.

Church Army have produced an excellent booklet called [Death, Grief and Hope](#).

In it they signpost other charities and organisations that support those who are experiencing grief, including:

- <https://www.childbereavementuk.org> - Helping families to rebuild their lives when someone close to them dies.
- <https://youngminds.org.uk/> is another great source of support. Here you will find help with bereavement and other worries you may have during the pandemic.

This video on the BBC website is really good in exploring what happens to our grief over time:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/stories-43227108/why-grief-is-not-something-you-have-to-get-over>



These are some suggestions we looked at in a tutor time earlier this year, about how we can support grieving people.

If you'd like to hear Nancy Guthrie explaining these points further, she has the following video on her website:

<https://www.nancyguthrie.com/what-grieving-people-wish-you-knew>

## WHAT MIGHT HELP GRIEVING PEOPLE?

In her book *'What grieving people wish you knew about what really helps (and what really hurts)'* Nancy Guthrie explores how we can love grieving people well. She summarises 4 main points.

1. It is really important that we “just show up”. Being there for someone who is grieving is really important because grief is very lonely. Don't worry about not knowing what to say – you cannot say the *perfect* thing. You can't say anything that will make it ok.
2. Don't compare the person's grief to anyone else's loss. When we are grieving we need our grief to be acknowledged, not compared. It can feel like we are making their loss smaller by comparing it. We need to listen more than we talk!
3. Talk to the grieving person about the person who has died. Grieving people want to hear the name of the person who has died. They want to hear specific memories of that person. They might cry, but talking about the person has allowed that person to release some of the tears inside.
4. We need to give grieving people time and space to be sad. We don't need to cheer them up or get them 'over their sadness'.

