

ENDINGS

1



Caregiving 

ENDINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“In the English language there are orphans and widows but there is no word for the parent who loses a child.”

Jodi Picoult

Reflection

Why do you think there is no word for parents who have lost children? How do you make sense of that absence?

Action

Find or create an image, a dance, or a song to describe a parent who has lost a child. Find or create something that would help that parent begin to heal.

ENDINGS

2



ENDINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Sometimes it’s hard to tell how fast the current’s moving until you’re headed over a waterfall.”

Kimberly McCreight

Reflection

Have you ever been caught in a crisis or frightening situation that you didn’t see coming? How did you get through it?

Action

It’s important to keep your wits when dealing with an emergency. With a partner or in a small group, write down five things you can do to keep your head above water in a crisis.

ENDINGS

3



ENDINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Real, honest, complete love requires letting go.”

Rita Said

Reflection

Do you agree that we have to let someone go to truly love them? Is this true for your children? For your friends? For your partners?

Action

Take a handful of something that slides through your fingers—like water or sand. Close your eyes and hold that handful close. Then open your eyes and let it go. Write about how it felt to hold on, and how it felt to let go.

ENDINGS

4



Caregiving 

ENDINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“When one person is missing the whole world seems empty.”

Pat Schweibert

Reflection

There are many ways that someone can be missing. Is there a difference between a permanent absence and a temporary one? Is it different when you know where someone is? What is it like when you know when they will be back?

Action

Draw an outline of someone who is missing from your life. Inside the outline, draw or write the ways that you feel their absence. Around the outside, put images or words that help you cope with the loss.

UNCERTAINTY

5



Caregiving



UNCERTAINTY

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Waiting is painful. Forgetting is painful. But not knowing which to do is the worst kind of suffering.”

Paulo Coelho

Reflection

How would you rank the pains of waiting, forgetting, and not knowing?

Action

Take something that reminds you of someone important to you. Decide whether to put it somewhere that you will look at it everyday, such as a mirror, or somewhere hidden and out of sight. Talk about how you decided.

UNCERTAINTY

6



Caregiving 

UNCERTAINTY

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Home’s where you go when you run out of homes.”

John le Carre

Reflection

What do you think it means to go home when there is no home?

Action

Design a home without physical form. Choose colors for the rooms. Choose sounds. Choose smells. Why did you make the choices you did for each room?

UNCERTAINTY

7



Caregiving



UNCERTAINTY

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“You can never love people as much as you can miss them.”

John Green

Reflection

What do you think this means? What is the relationship between loving and missing someone?

Action

Make two columns on a sheet of paper. Put “missing” at the top of one and “loving” at the top of the other. In five minutes write as many words as come to mind for each column. Is there any overlap?

UNCERTAINTY

8



Caregiving



UNCERTAINTY

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Sometimes letting go is the hardest thing imaginable, yet holding on is even harder.”

Toni Sorenson

Reflection

Can you think of a relationship that would be harder to hold onto than to let go? Is it a relationship that's good for you? Is it one that you should let go?

Action

With a partner act out a scene of letting go of a bad relationship, then of holding on to a good relationship. Trade places. Discuss the feelings that came up in each case.

BEGINNINGS

9



Caregiving



BEGINNINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“I only accept your mistakes and flaws to the degree that I accept my own.”

Vironika Tugaleva

Reflection

Do you agree? How would accepting flaws in yourself affect your ability to accept them in others? How would not accepting your own flaws affect your ability?

Action

In three minutes write the flaws you see in yourself that you would want someone to accept. In another three minutes write the flaws that you accept in someone you love. Are any of them the same?

BEGINNINGS 10



BEGINNINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Cry. Forgive. Learn. Move on. Let your tears water the seeds of your future happiness.”

Steve Maraboli

Reflection

Do you feel that people sometimes need a good cry? In what way could tears of sadness water seeds of happiness?

Action

Across the top of a paper write S-A-D-N-E-S-S. Use those as the first letter of words you associate with happiness.

BEGINNINGS

11



Caregiving



BEGINNINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart”

Rainer Maria Rilke

Reflection

Feelings are sometimes complicated, like puzzles or mysteries. Are you patient with your feelings? Do you try to solve them?

Action

Write a list of five things that bother you today about yourself, and five things that bother you about the world around you. Put the list away for a month. When you pull it out, notice how many things have changed or stayed the same, and whether anything you did made a difference.

BEGINNINGS 12



Caregiving 

BEGINNINGS

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“The garden is growth and change and that means loss as well as constant new treasures to make up for a few disasters.”

May Sarton

Reflection

Have you found new treasures in your life? Were there losses that made room for them? Was the gain worth the loss?

Action

Plan a garden; it doesn't have to be a big garden, or a real one. Choose a space near where you live. What would you have to clear away to make space? What would you plant?

RENEWAL

13



Caregiving 

RENEWAL

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“We never know the love of a parent until we become parents ourselves.”

Henry Ward Beecher

Reflection

People often say that parenting is the hardest job in the world. Did you imagine you knew more about parenting or caregiving before you began than you do now?

Action

With a partner or in a small group, talk about the advice you wish someone had given you about being a parent or starting your work as a caregiver. Do you think you would have listened? Could you listen now?

RENEWAL

14



Caregiving 

RENEWAL

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“She took a step and didn’t want to take any more, but she did.”

Markus Zusak

Reflection

Have you ever kept going when you wanted to stop? Are you glad that you did? Or do you wish you didn’t?

Action

Create a map from where you are to someplace you have to be or go. Include the roadblocks that might make want you to stop. Add detours or different routes if you think those would be helpful or interesting.

RENEWAL

15



Caregiving 

RENEWAL

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“While grief is fresh, every attempt to divert only irritates. You must wait till it be digested, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it.”

Samuel Johnson

Reflection

During times when you were grieving, how did you feel when someone tried to distract you from your feelings? Did that change? If so, how long did it take?

Action

Create a list of five things that helped you during your grieving process. With a partner, talk about how they helped and how you found them.

RENEWAL

16



Caregiving 

RENEWAL

Mind

Body

Heart

Soul

“The terrible pain of loss teaches humility to our prideful kind, has the power to soften uncaring hearts, to make a better person of a good one.”

Dean Koontz

Reflection

Have you changed after losing someone? Have you seen someone else changed by a loss? Was the change for the better?

Action

How would you want to be different because of a loss you've experienced? Set yourself a resolution to make that change.