

WHAT ON EARTH DO YOU DO

When Someone Dies?

second edition



Trevor Romain

illustrated by Gabby Grant

free spirit
PUBLISHING®

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INTRODUCTION

Talking about death can be difficult and sometimes very upsetting. Lots of people don't like to talk about death. That can make it hard to share our feelings when we lose a loved one, a close friend, a pet, or someone we admire.

At the same time, we all hear a lot about death on the news because of illness, natural disasters, war, terrorism, crime, and other terrible events.

I wrote this book, and then updated it, because I know how hard it can be for people to deal with their feelings when they

are grieving. In the book I share ideas, suggestions, thoughts, and tips to help anyone who is going through a tough time after experiencing a loss, like I did when my father passed away suddenly.

When I found out my dad had died, I was so shocked that all I could say was . . . *wow*. I couldn't sleep. My stomach hurt, and I didn't want to eat. The whole world seemed different to me. When someone you love dies, it's normal to feel shocked, sad, confused, worried, scared, or a lot of other painful feelings.

I decided to write this book in honor of my dad, who taught me to write and draw and care about other people. After his death, writing in my journal helped me sort out my feelings and remember all the ways my dad was special. It gave me a way to feel more peaceful inside.

Most importantly, I wrote this book for you. If you've lost someone you care about, I hope this book answers the questions you have. I hope it gives you the words and strength you need during this painful time in your life. And I hope you believe me when I say that you won't always feel as sad and hurt and confused as you do now. You will feel better—maybe not right away, but in the coming weeks or months, *you will feel better.*

Trevor Romain



WHY DO PEOPLE HAVE TO DIE?

When we're born, we experience life. When our life ends, we experience death. Death happens to all living things on Earth.

Some people die when they're really old. Others die when they get very, very sick with an illness like cancer, heart disease, or COVID-19. Still others die from being badly hurt in accidents or natural disasters, or because of shootings or other violence. No matter how someone dies, family and friends of that person feel sad and upset.





My 14-year-old friend Vicki, who had cancer, was very wise. One time, we were talking about dying, and she told me something important. She said that people don't talk about death very often, which makes it harder to understand. And when we don't understand something, we're more likely to be afraid of it. Instead of being scared, talk to someone you love about what's on your mind.

Sometimes adults don't want to scare kids by talking about death, and that can leave kids feeling lonely and empty. If you want to talk about what you are experiencing, let adults know that it would help you to talk about your thoughts, feelings, and questions. It's also okay to tell someone you don't feel like talking at that moment if you would prefer not to.

AM I GOING TO DIE TOO?

If someone close to you has died, you might be afraid that you're going to die. It may help to know that most people live for a long, long time, and you probably will too.

You may also wonder if other people you love or care about are going to die. It's natural to worry like this. These kinds of fears might even keep you awake all night.

It's kind of like worrying about a monster in your closet. It can be scarier to lie in bed alone thinking about the monster than it is to open the closet and see what's really there. The best way to deal with something you're afraid of is to face it. How? Talk about it. Let somebody know that you feel frightened.



WHO CAN I TALK TO?

The adults in your life may be so upset about the death that they forget to talk to you about how you're doing. But the more you discuss the death, the less scary it becomes. If you're wondering who you can talk to, here are some ideas:

- a parent or another family member
- a neighbor or friend of the family
- someone at your place of worship, if you go to one
- your teacher or principal
- a counselor or youth group leader