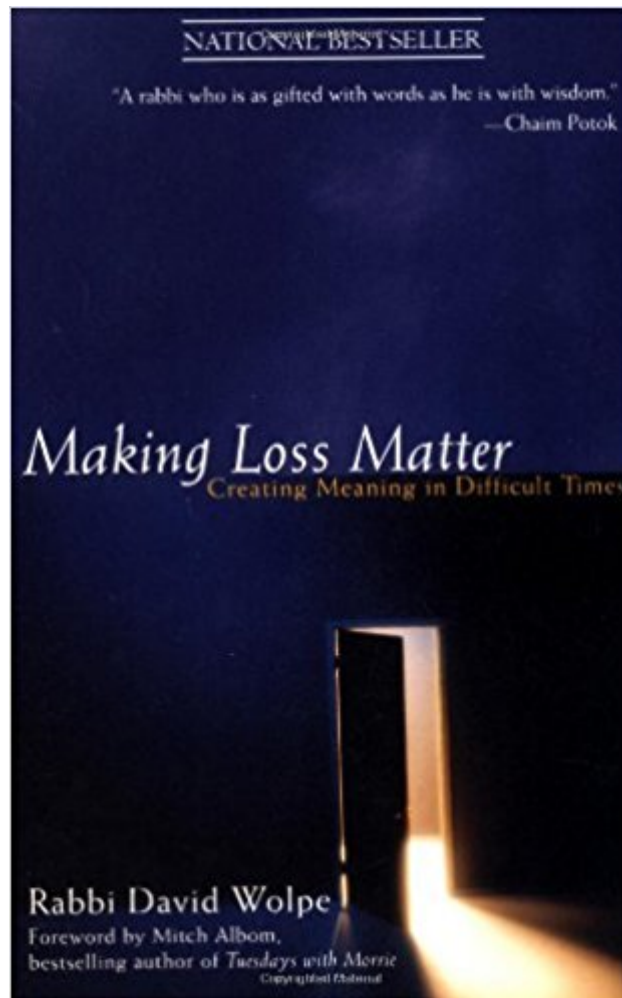




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Making Loss Matter : Creating Meaning In Difficult Times



Synopsis

Some losses are so subtle they go unnoticed, some so overwhelming and cruel they seem unbearable. Coping with grief and experiencing lossÂ overwhelms us in ways that seemÂ both hopeless and endless.Â In painful moments like these, we must make a choice: Will we allow the difficulties we face to become forces of destruction in our lives, or will we find a way to begin learning from loss,Â transforming our suffering into a source of strength?A theologian with the heart of a poet, Rabbi David Wolpe explores the meaning of loss, and the way we can use its inevitable appearance in our lives as a source of strength rather than a source of despair. In this national bestseller, Wolpe creates a remarkably fluid account of how we might find a way out of overwhelming feelings of helplessness and instead begin understanding grief in all its forms and learn toÂ create meaning in difficult times.

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Customer Reviews

Early in his book, Wolpe, rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, shares a sobering thought: "Losses are the stuff of life. They will not miss you, they will not steer around those whom you love." The author's search for meaningful ways to deal with loss came soon after his wife, Ellie, was diagnosed with cancer. He admits that his "life was suddenly full of shadows," and he feared that his vibrant wife might die. As Wolpe struggles with his fear of loss and with the daily crises brought by Ellie's illness, he realizes that facing loss requires courage and love. Although he had been writing this book before his wife's illness, her cancer gave him a new perspective on facing suffering. Wolpe uses personal anecdotes, ancient stories of suffering and joy, the sagacious parables of rabbis and

the wisdom of poets and philosophers to explore the nature of loss and the ways we can respond meaningfully to it. He notes that throughout life we experience a variety of losses, some trivial and others grave, such as the loss of home, dreams, self, faith, love and life. On the loss of dreams, for instance, Wolpe writes, "Dreams can ennoble us even when they fail.... Each dream can be a step on the ladder we climb in order to become the person we were meant to be." In order for loss to be meaningful, he contends, we must not run from it but incorporate its scars deeply in our lives, face it with faith and courage and celebrate the new identities that we derive from our experience. Although Wolpe really offers no new ideas about coping with loss, his easy manner and eloquent storytelling will help readers suffering from loss feel as if they have found a companion on their journeys. (Sept.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Rabbi Wolpe weaves together a finely constructed tapestry of biblical stories, Western and Eastern philosophy and literature, and incidents from his own life to explain how to deal with the pain of personal loss, whether of love, life, home, faith, or dreams. Rabbi Harold Kushner's *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* could be considered the predecessor of Wolfe's discussion of personal loss and ways to turn it into strength and hope. Both rabbis write in a clear, straightforward style, accessible to Jewish and non-Jewish readers alike. However, by stressing his own life and losses, Wolfe gives depth and meaning to concepts that might otherwise remain abstract and theoretical. Wolfe's strength is in showing how a caring and direct approach to dealing with losses can reenergize the human spirit and give us courage to continue living life to the fullest. Strongly recommended for general religion/spiritual collections in most libraries. AOlga B. Wise, Compaq Computers Inc., Austin, TX Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Up front I must confess that buying this book was a mistake. I never heard of it or the author. I am a great fan of the writings and videos of Mitch Albom. While ordering another book I spotted this book and Mitch Albom's name. The price was right so I bought it and learned upon arrival that he only wrote an introduction to the book. Upon reading the book I was delighted for the error. The Rabbi deals with so many questions of life. I was impressed with his handling of the fact that loss is part of life. As a child I think most of us feel that the good times will always be the same. Upon the transition to adulthood we find everything in time will change. I wish I could express my feelings about this book as eloquently as he writes. He is a Rabbi but he talks about his journey to his post,

doubting his faith and his return to beliefs, how without loss we wouldn't appreciate many moments in life to the same degree. I have been experiencing many of life's challenges (the loss of my 96 year old mother, Health and financial challenges) after reading the book I realized that perception of the problem is half the battle. He shares his feelings about his wife's cancer. I feel the philosophy, at least for me, is something to contemplate. It was at least refreshing to know that even clergy wrestle with many of life's mysteries. He does offer food for thought on how to address these questions. I am glad it is part of my library and I plan to order another copy to loan to friends.

I purchased my first copy of this several years ago, after a friend's mother died suddenly. Although not Jewish, he said the book helped him immensely with reconciling his loss. The book has since been passed to similar friends and acquaintances dealing with death and loss. I missed having my own copy and was pleased to see it was available again. I think that what Rabbi Wolpe emphasizes is that G-d is not in the event (death) but is in the response to the event. It's how we as individuals and community come together in the aftermath of loss to mourn and grieve, comfort and console, and, ultimately, to celebrate life. The loss we experience is real and painful and creates a void, but it is how we put it into perspective that allows us to move forward. I would strongly encourage this book to all, irrespective of your faith or religion.

I really enjoyed reading this book. I do not agree with all of the author's theology but it certainly gave me a lot to think about. Making loss matter covers many losses we experience through life, everyone would be able to identify with something discussed in this book. I was lent this book and I found it so helpful I purchased a copy to give to a friend. This is one book I would reread.

Extraordinary book to help me through unbearable loss. I highlighted sentences as I went along and I reread them. No other book could help me deal with it. This book is a Godsend.

A book written with much spirit, love and deep consideration and respect for the human condition.

Worth reading. Pretty insightful and thought provoking. It's a keeper. It's not a book to read in one sitting - read a couple chapters at a time... thinking it over... and read a couple more chapters. I would recommend it wholeheartedly

good read.

Excellent for all, as we have all lost, or will lose someone we love.

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