



Making Loss Matter : Creating Meaning in Difficult Times

By Rabbi David J. Wolpe



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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 to create meaning in difficult times.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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.)

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From Library Journal

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. Wolpe'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. AOI
Olga B. Wise, Compaq Computers Inc., Austin, TX

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From [Booklist](#)

Rabbi Wolpe quotes the Bible, the Talmud, the Midrash, and illustrious rabbis, scholars, and philosophers in examining different kinds of losses: love, home, youth, life, and more. He tells readers how to find faith, hope, and a purpose in life to help endure and survive difficult times. He writes about the importance of our homes and home life, of our dreams (from youth to old age), of our selves and self-discovery, of love, and of faith. He combines personal experiences with religious exegeses to advance his beliefs. Wolpe, author of four other books, addresses the reader with a keen sense of compassion and understanding. *George Cohen*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Melissa Chandler:

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