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Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us

By Nancy Berns



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When it comes to the end of a relationship, the loss of a loved one, or even a national tragedy, we are often told we need "closure." But while some people do find closure for their pain and grief, many more feel that closure does not exist and believe the notion only encourages false hopes. Sociologist Nancy Berns explores these ideas and their ramifications in her timely book, *Closure*. Berns uncovers the various interpretations and contradictory meanings of closure. She identifies six types of "closure talk," revealing closure as a socially constructed concept and a "new emotion." Berns explores how closure has been applied widely in popular media and how the idea has been appropriated as a political tool and to sell products and services. This book explains how the push for closure--whether we find it helpful, engaging, or enraging--is changing our society.



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Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What it Costs Us By Nancy Berns Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1094462 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Temple University Press
- Published on: 2011-08-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .80" w x 6.00" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 228 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"It is my great hope that Nancy Berns' wonderful book *Closure* will finally bring "closure" to that most misused and unhelpful term. This book is a "must read" for any one interested in the grieving process."

Kenneth J. Doka, Ph.D. Senior Consultant, The Hospice Foundation of America

"[C]ompelling...Berns wisely counsels us to find other language and perspectives for living with grief, and this lucid debunking of the current use of the word 'closure' is a breath of fresh air, recommended for both general readers and specialists."--Library Journal (starred review)

"[C]ompelling...Berns, who experienced a profound loss when she gave birth to a stillborn son, is here to reinforce what most of us intuitively know: feeling bad about losing a loved one never really ends. By commodifying the concept of closure in order to sell products and services, however, society has put pressure on us to conform to the prevailing 'feeling rules,' suggesting that disappointment, loss, and grief can and should come to an arbitrary end. Berns angrily dismisses this notion... VERDICT Berns wisely counsels us to find other language and perspectives for living with grief, and this lucid debunking of the current use of the word 'closure' is a breath of fresh air, recommended for both general readers and specialists." -Library Journal

About the Author

Nancy Berns is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Drake University in Des Moines. Her teaching and research interests are in areas of grief, death, violence, justice, and social constructionism. She is the author of *Framing the Victim: Domestic Violence, Media and Social Problems*.

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