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GRIEF AND LOSS MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS

Ages 3 - 7

Charlotte's Web (2006): Wilbur the pig is scared because he knows that eventually he'll end up being served for dinner. Wilbur forms a plan with Charlotte, a spider that lives in his pen so that he won't end up being anyone's dinner.

Discussion Questions:

1. How is the cycle of life discussed in this movie?
2. Which character do you relate to the most? Why?
3. How did you feel while watching this movie? What made you feel that way?
4. What did you learn about friendship?
5. How do the characters in the movie mourn Charlotte's death? How did you mourn the death of your person?

Finding Nemo (2003): A widowed clownfish chases his son halfway around the world.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Marlin was so afraid to let Nemo swim in the open water?
2. Do you think that experiencing the death of someone you love can make you feel overprotective of others you are close to?
3. What does this movie teach you about friendship?
4. Have you ever been separated from a parent or caregiver before? If so, what was that like for you?
5. What character do you most relate to and why?

The Good Dinosaur (2015): A young dinosaur must find his way back home after a rainstorm kills his father.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Arlo's dad pushed him to safety instead of making sure he was safe first? Who is your protector? Who makes sure you are safe?
2. How did you know Arlo's father had died? What did they do with his body?
3. Why do you think Arlo felt guilt after his father died? Did you feel guilty after your special person died?
4. Arlo has dreams/visions of his dad when he needs him. Do you dream of your person?
5. What did you learn from the movie? Did you like the movie? Why or why not?

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Ages 3 - 7 (continued)

Inside Out (2015): A beautiful story about handling big feelings.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the movie, memories are stored in golden balls. Do you have memories you wish were not stored at all?
2. What feelings live inside your head? What feelings from the movie do you most relate to?
3. In the movie, Friendship Island fell. Did your friendships change after the death of your person?
4. In the movie, Riley's parents and her hockey team came to help because of sadness. Who has helped you when you felt sad?
5. Have you ever had a big change? What was that like for you? Do you think people expect you to feel a certain way?

Inside Out 2 (2024):

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think Anxiety talks so fast and tries to take control?
2. Have you ever felt like you were not the same person you used to be? What was that like?
3. Why is it important that all of the emotions work together?
4. What are some things you can do when you feel anxious, nervous, or overwhelmed?
5. What is one thing this movie taught you about feelings?

Up (2009): A grieving widow and young boy become reluctant adventurers together.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the movie, the baby died before it was born. Do you know someone who has lost a baby? Do you have a brother or sister who died before they were born?
2. When Ellie died, Carl didn't want to leave his home. Is there a place you didn't want to leave because you felt you were leaving your person behind?
3. Ellie and Carl never got to go on their adventure. Is there somewhere you wish you could have gone with your special person? If so, where would you go?
4. Do you have photos of your person? Have you made a memory book or a photo book to remind you of them?
5. How did you feel when you saw Carl throw out his belongings? Do you feel attached to things that belonged to your person?

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Ages 3 - 7 (continued)

Onward (2020): Original, heartfelt sibling adventure about love and loss.

Discussion Questions:

1. One of the hard things about grief is that the memories we have start to fade. Often we forget things we never thought we would, like the sound of our person's voice. Has that happened to you?
2. For Ian, the magic happened when he believed in himself. What are you capable of when you believe in yourself?
3. Did you have a chance to say goodbye to your person? If you did, did you make the choice not to? Is that something you regret or do you know that decision was right for you?
4. Was your person sick before they died? Did their illness scare you?
5. If you were to make a to-do list with your special person, what would be on it?

Moana (2016): A young girl struggles to find her identity and purpose after the death of her grandmother.

Discussion Questions:

1. In the movie we see Moana struggling between wanting to lead her people and wanting to follow her heart. What do you think is Moana's biggest challenge?
2. What other losses does Moana experience other than the death of her grandmother?
3. How is death and burial talked about in your culture?
4. In Moana's search for identity, what does she discover about herself?
5. How do the different characters in the movie cope with their grief?

Ages 8 - 12

Coco (2017): A young boy travels to the land of the dead to find out the family secret of his great grandfather.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is Miguel on a mission to find his great-grandfather?
2. What did you learn about death in the Mexican culture? Do you wish Canada had a yearly celebration to remember our dead? Why or why not?
3. Miguel believes his family is cursed because of his great-grandfather's choice to leave his family to pursue a music career. What do you think is the real curse that has befallen his family?
4. What can we learn about forgiveness and love from this movie?
5. The importance of family is a big theme in this movie. Do you think family bonds are valued as much in Canadian culture? What about in your family?

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Ages 8 - 12 (continued)

Bridge to Terabithia (2007): A young boy faces the death of his best friend.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the significance of Terabithia? What does it represent?
2. If you could cross a bridge into a magical land to see your person again, would you? If so, what would you say to them? What would you do with them?
3. The death of a friend can be just as significant as the death of a family member. Do you think that is portrayed in the movie?
4. How is Leslie's death talked about in the movie? How were you told about the death of your special person?
5. Friendship is a major theme in the movie. What makes the friendship between Jess and Leslie so special? Why is friendship important?

Hugo (2011): In the year 1931 in Paris, an orphan who lives in a train station tries to solve a mystery related to his father's death.

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes Hugo and Isabelle's friendship so special?
2. Why is the automaton so special to Hugo? Did your person leave you something special or important?
3. In what ways is the train station a refuge for Hugo?
4. What happened to Hugo and Isabelle's parents?
5. Who is the villain in this story? Who is the hero?

The Lost Husband (2020): Romantic drama focused on how to move forward after a loss.

Discussion Questions:

1. Children often exhibit "acting out" behaviour when grieving. What evidence of this do we see in the movie?
2. Two of the main characters are grieving different types of losses-a loss due to death and one due to divorce. How does each loss impact Libby and O'Connor?
3. For children especially, secondary losses can be even more difficult to deal with than the primary loss. What secondary losses is the family experiencing?
4. How is the father's death talked about in the movie? Do you think adults talk openly with children about death? Why or why not?
5. How does the loss impact other relationships?

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Ages 8 - 12 (continued)

We Bought a Zoo (2011): A recently widowed father buys and renovates a zoo with his children.

Discussion Questions:

1. Did your family change after the death of your special person? If so, what changes did you experience?
2. In the movie, we see how each member of the family expressed their grief in different ways. Did you have that experience of grieving differently than someone in your close circle?
3. Do you think children and teens grieve differently than adults? Why or why not?
4. What did the family learn from restoring the zoo?
5. It's common knowledge that animals can be therapeutic for people. What evidence of that do you see in the movie?

Ages 13 - 18

All The Bright Places (2020): Two fragile teens -- one still hurting from a devastating loss, the other struggling with both internal and external upheaval -- meet, fall in love, and attempt to help one another heal.

Discussion Questions:

1. One thing I noticed the movie shows is that people tend not to "get over" the loss of a loved one in a time frame that society expects. Has this been your experience?
2. Laughter really is a great antidote to pain. What evidence of that did you see in the movie? Do you agree?
3. Why do you think that sometimes teens don't get the mental health support they need?
4. What role did Finch play in Violet's life? What did he teach her?
5. The impact of sibling loss is underrepresented in society. Why do you think the death of a sibling is not discussed as much as the loss of a parent or the loss of a child?

Charlie St. Cloud (2010): Charlie struggles with survivor's guilt after his little brother is killed in a car accident.

Discussion Questions:

1. If you could see the people you know who have died, would you want to?
2. Why do you think Charlie could not drop Sam's baseball glove in his grave?
3. Is there a special place you like to go to spend time with your person?
4. What memories connect you to your person?
5. The death of a sibling is not as common in media as the death of a parent. Why do you think that is?

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Ages 13 - 18 (continued)

My Sister's Keeper (2009): A young girl struggles with her role as her sister is dying from leukemia.

Discussion Questions:

1. Anna and Jesse have grown up with their sister Kate's illness. How do you think living with a chronically ill family member has impacted their lives?
2. This movie poses an ethical dilemma: is it right to use one child in order to save another? What do you think?
3. In the movie, we see Jesse setting fires. What do you think is the reasoning behind this?
4. Why does Kate ask Anna to sue her parents for medical emancipation? How did that impact Anna's relationship with her family?
5. Do you someone who died from cancer? If so, did you know they were going to die? How did the knowing or not knowing shape your grief?

The Bucket List (2007): Two friends who are terminally ill set out to complete all the things they want to do before they die.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have a bucket list? If so, what do you want to do/accomplish before you die?
2. If you only had 6-12 months to live, would you want to know? Why or why not?
3. One of the "lessons" the movie teaches us is that death can be unexpected. Was your person sick before they died or was their death unexpected?
4. Why do you think people put off doing things that they dream of until it may be too late?
5. If you could make one more memory with your person, what would it be and why?

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close (2011): A young boy's search for meaning after his father dies in 9/11.

Discussion Questions:

1. How do women grieve differently than men in the movie?
2. How does grief affect Oskar's life?
3. Explain the significance of Oskar's father dying in the 9/11 tragedy
4. How does the movie show that grief is universal, regardless of how your person died?
5. Why does Oskar feel the need to hide his feelings from others? Have you ever felt that way?

Ages 13 - 18 (continued)

The Chronicles of Narnia (2005):

Discussion Questions:

1. Lucy is first to believe in Narnia, but is not believed by her siblings. How can grief feel similar to this?
2. How do the characters react to Aslan's death? What emotions do you notice?
3. Which character's jouney best reflects how you experience grief?
4. What does *Narnia* teach us about holding sadness and hope at the same time?
5. Is there a moment in the movie that helped you put words to feelings you have had about a loss or death?