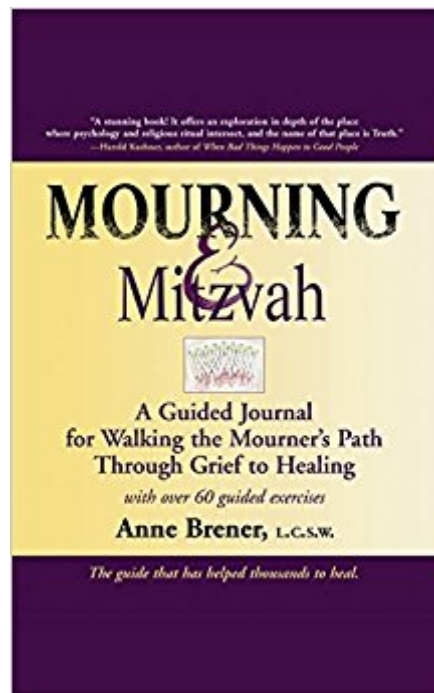


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# Mourning & Mitzvah 2/E: A Guided Journal For Walking The Mourner's Path Through Grief To Healing



## Synopsis

"It is hard to work through one's grief when there are so many cover-ups and so many different kinds of denial at work within the culture. And that is why this book is of so much importance. Anne Brener has crafted a walkway through the valley of the shadow of death. The walkway has thorns and bramble bushes on it but it leads to the other side, beyond grief, for those who are willing to stay the course. Keep this book for time of need and do the grief-work in which it instructs us and you will see that this long and wise heritage of ours still has the power to speak, to heal and to comfort •even in our time." •from the Foreword by Rabbi Jack Riemer

For those who mourn a death, for those who would help them and for those who face a loss of any kind, *Mourning & Mitzvah* teaches you the power and strength available to you in the fully experienced mourning process. When the temple stood in the ancient city of Jerusalem, mourners walked through the gates and into the courtyard along a specifically designated mourner's path. As they walked, they came face to face with all the other members of the community, who greeted them with the ancestor of the blessing, "May God comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." In this way, the community embraced those suffering bereavement, yet allowed for unique experiences of grief. In this new and expanded edition of a modern classic, Anne Brener brings us an innovative integration of Jewish tradition and modern professional resources. It gives spiritual insight and healing wisdom to those in our own time who mourn a death, to those who would help them and to those who face a loss of any kind.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Jewish Lights; 2 edition (May 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1580231136

ISBN-13: 978-1580231138

Product Dimensions: 7.5 x 1.9 x 22.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars • See all reviews • (32 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #293,393 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #242 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life #318 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Death #556 in Books > Self-Help > Relationships > Love & Loss

## Customer Reviews

"Mourning and Mitzvah" by Anne Brener has been so much of a help to me! I couldn't find any literature to guide me through the mourning process, as American society barely acknowledges death any more. Nor do we have any organized mourning customs to help those who grieve through their pain--as past generations in this country have had. This book, though written primarily for those of Jewish faith, helped me more than anything written from my own Catholic religious tradition. Other books I had read suggested keeping a journal or meditating on different aspects of life with the one lost. Trouble is, that "keeping a journal" or "meditating" without guidance when one isn't used to doing these things, can be more confusing and painful to someone who is grieving than doing absolutely nothing at all. And it was in this situation I found myself. This book gently guides the mourner through a series of easy to follow steps to keeping a journal, meditating, performing little ceremonies like lighting candles for the loved one--things that I found immensely comforting. At the same time, however, I was able to go deep within myself and confront the pain of my loss...and work through it, to a point where I was more able to cope with life, and motivate myself to continue living. Anne Brener's book has been a wonderful help in this time of mourning. I am most happy to recommend this book to anyone who is confused and frightened like I was. "Mourning and Mitzvah" is a beautiful guide on the road back from darkness to light.

After the death of my mother last month, I was engulfed with intense feelings of sorrow, guilt and regret -- levels of emotion that I had not felt with the death of other close relatives. To help come to terms with this inner turmoil and a weak network of support, I read many books: Jewish and Buddhist Spirituality, Death and Dying and psychologically-oriented (10 at last count) and found moments of solace with most. At the same time, I started my own grief journal as an outlet for my daily angst. However, my thinking and emotions were in chaos (normal at this stage of mourning). Then I discovered Mourning and Mitvah where I found a means to blend spirituality and psychology in an active, organic way. Anne Brener's beautifully written book created a forum to explore Jewish thought and ritual (I was raised a secular Jew) where I could interact through the use of many thought-provoking guided exercises. The process orientation of the work constructed a comforting, safe path to follow on my own terms. Even though written from a Jewish perspective, I recommend this book for those from other religious or no religious traditions. There is a global spirituality and psychology infused in the thoughts and concepts of Mourning and Mitvah. I have even discovered a nascent desire to re-investigate Judaism. I know I am at the beginning of my mourning and still feel extreme shifts in emotional states but I will continue to use this book as my lifeboat for this very unhappy voyage to self-discovery and consolation.

It is hard work to grieve. This book and its exercises help on this difficult process. Through 60 journaling exercises, you are asked to express how you feel, based on the belief that painful emotions and sorrowful feelings can't change unless they are expressed. This book helped me in the expression of that feeling. The other realization from this book is that you still have a relationship with the person that is gone. Like any relationship, this one is special (perhaps the most special relationship) and needs work so you don't idealize nor the reverse. It is not necessary to be Jewish to use this book. But do perform the exercises and the rituals (including the Kaddish). My only criticism is that the book should have included complete Hebrew and English versions of the Kaddish and others key prayers. May you find peace.

When my spouse was taken I found myself entering a deep depression. My life, my very existence was turned upside down. I did not understand the oath taken so many years ago at our marriage - "Until death do we part". Now I do. My Rabbi gave me a copy of Anne Brener's book and after about a month I started to browse through it. It only took a few hours to realise this book was a friend - it addressed my feelings and has helped me continue my life. I hope that in time I will heal - I know so much more about our relationship now. I bought Rabbi a half dozen copies so he could give them to others who need this guidance. Thank you Anne!

Get this book. Can be: read out-of-order; in small chunks; worked through mentally or on paper; put down for a few days/weeks while you're processing your grief; appreciated by Jewish folk as well as by the non-Jewish person, by the spiritual as well as those who are not so inclined. In the most difficult of situations, Mourning and Mitzvah offers comfort for the bereaved. The author speaks from her own experience: her sister died in an accident only months after their mother's suicide. Mourning and Mitzvah helped me to cope after the deaths of my father- and mother-in-law (hers was a suicide; both died the same day). I've given copies as gifts to others in my Survivors of Suicide group, to a woman whose brother-in-law murdered her sister by running the sister down with his car, and to a family whose young son was killed in a freak accident while on vacation. Almost all have let me know what a help this book has been. Since I give away my personal copies, I now order two at a time. Please get this book for yourself and/or for your loved ones who are grieving; keep extras on hand. Mourning and Mitzvah will be appreciated much more than any covered dish you could get or give.

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