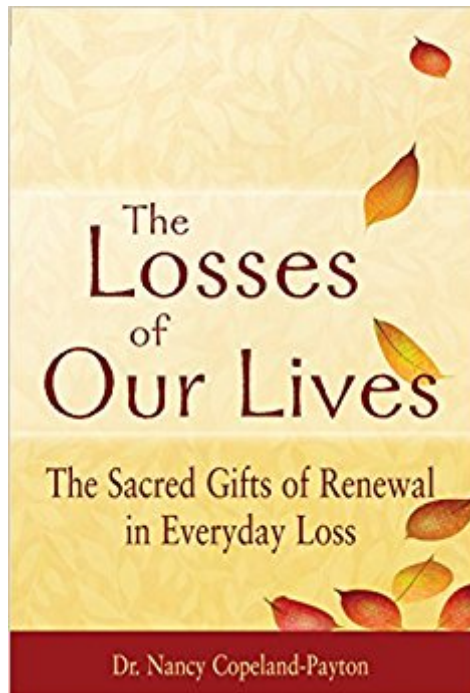


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# The Losses Of Our Lives: The Sacred Gifts Of Renewal In Everyday Loss



## Synopsis

Find hope and renewal in life's natural cycle of ordinary losses and new beginnings. "When we intentionally enter into our everyday walk through small losses, the terrain of larger losses, the valley of the shadow of death, is not totally unknown. It is not completely unfamiliar, alien, terrifying, for we have walked some of this way before with our lesser losses. We can journey through this valley of loss, for journey through it we must. And we can emerge markedly changed, but alive, on the other side." —from the Prologue

Going beyond loss as a problem to be resolved, a grief to be worked through, Dr. Nancy Copeland-Payton, a spiritual director and ordained clergywoman, reframes loss from the perspective that our everyday losses help us learn what we need to handle the major losses. Weaving in spiritual and classical themes, personal and scriptural story, Dr. Copeland-Payton shows us that by becoming aware of what our lesser losses have to teach us, the larger losses of our lives become less terrifying. Each chapter includes a spiritual practice and questions for reflection to help you:

- Mine the hidden depths of painful losses of things and places
- Traverse the devastating loss of relationships and the heart-wrenching death of people we love
- Overcome the steep, dark slopes of loss of beliefs and faith
- Venture past our fear of the losses of aging and our own death.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Capture[s] beautifully the paradox that the losses of our lives can become our gains. By weaving story, experience and faith — shows how our deepest hurts may be the soil that nurtures the

seeds of our transformation." — Sr. Clarissa Goeckner, prioress, Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, Idaho — "An extraordinary and wise guide in the treacherous terrain of loss." — Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman, author, *Jewish Visions for Aging: A Professional Guide for Fostering Wholeness* — "Walks us step by step through the stages of life ... helping us delve deeper into the meaning of gift and loss — inconsequential or catastrophic — when they are considered together." — Terry Taylor, author, *A Spirituality for Brokenness: Discovering Your Deepest Self in Difficult Times* — "Offers a way to reflect on loss that is integrative and practical. Invites the reader on a journey of depth and care." — Mary C. Earle, author, *Days of Grace: Meditations and Practices for Living with Illness* — "An extraordinarily wise, practical guide on how to develop a deep spirituality grounded in the matrix between the wounds of everyday life from birth to death and the longing for God as the sacred ground discovered in the everyday gifts of life." — Dr. Tyron Inbody, professor emeritus of theology, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio; author, *The Transforming God: An Interpretation of Suffering and Evil* — "[This] beautifully written and deeply pastoral book touched my soul as [the] stories melded with my stories to explore ever more deeply the fabric of gift and loss in our lives. To everyone who deals with losses — and that's all of us — I highly recommend it." — Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, president, World Alliance of Reformed Churches; visiting professor of ecumenical studies and global ministries, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Awaken to Life's Rhythm of Gift and Loss Based on her experience as a physician, hospital chaplain, and pastor, Dr. Nancy Copeland-Payton invites us to awaken to the losses of our lives--big and small--and embrace the wisdom each has to teach us about the deep mystery of God and the nature of living. Written for those experiencing loss and those accompanying them, this poignant and practical book shows us how to be attentive to the rhythm of gift and loss. It encourages us to venture deeper into our losses through practical exercises drawn from the world's major faith traditions. Exercises include: Breath Prayer--to ground us in the wonder of life Walking Meditation--to awaken us to the moment Examen--to mine our day for patterns of gifts and losses Sand Mandala--to remind us of the transitory nature of all material things Labyrinth--to walk the journey through gift and loss in our lives Accompaniment--to help us name and grieve our losses, and let them go when the time is right Lectio Divina--to show us how to listen with our hearts Guided Meditation--to lead us to interact with scripture in a deep, personal way "An extraordinarily wise, practical guide ... on how to develop a deep spirituality grounded in the matrix between the wounds

of everyday life from birth to death and the longing for God as the sacred ground discovered in the everyday gifts of life." --Dr. Tyron Inbody, professor emeritus of theology, United Theological Seminary, Dayton, Ohio; author, *The Transforming God: An Interpretation of Suffering and Evil*  
--This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

The rhythm of life which entails a flow between loss and gift is integral to the human condition. When we are visited by loss, often we focus on the pain we feel which blinds us to the beauty of the gift that accompanies it. Dr. Copeland-Payton explores the depths of this connection throughout the various stages of our lives. But this is not merely an intellectual exploration of the topic, rather an invitation to a deepened spirituality. Through practical exercises from the world's major faith traditions, she invites us to reflect on our own experiences in order to mine the wisdom they hold. As I journeyed through this book, I uncovered many blessings that arose from the very losses that caused pain in my life. I recognized how frequently I turned my attention to the loss and failed to identify the accompanying gifts, and I was challenged to look for them. Although Dr. Copeland-Payton is grounded in the Christian tradition, this book is not just for Christians. I highly recommend it to all those willing to explore the territory of the everyday losses of their lives that contain within them the seeds of renewal.

This book takes a subject from which we often retreat and helps us look at our varied losses in an uplifting way. Copeland-Payton has a beautiful way of painting pictures with words, expressing anew difficult concepts, and expressing the ways of a loving and universal God. Personal stories from her own life and the lives of others bring the chapter content alive, and are set apart not only in typeset, but because of a rich and varied background as a medical doctor, pastor and spiritual director, wife and mother, and from living abroad (including Iran). If one was to take seriously the nudging toward looking at our losses in a deeper way through the help of the suggested and fleshed out practices at the end of each chapter, one could find themselves returning to this book over and over and gaining new insight and direction each time.

I believe the best way to describe Dr. Copeland-Payton's work is to say parts of it made me very uncomfortable as I read them, and created that "churning" feeling deep inside my gut. That's a sure sign that we're getting to territory I don't want to discuss or think about. However, this is not the typical self-analysis type of work. It's written from a Christian and loving perspective, and one that makes the reader feel comfortable going where they might not want to venture. Dr.

Copeland-Payton's references to personal issues and losses makes it even more compelling. I highly recommend this book as a tool for anyone seeking a new perspective on the issue of "loss" in our lives, something we all have to deal with, but often are unprepared to do so.

All of the losses in our life make way for gains that we would have otherwise missed out on. The losses are necessary and bring growth. The first chapter of this had me in tears and left me with a good deal of information for reflection. My daughter is pregnant now and the first chapter looks at a baby in the womb and newly born and offers some very touching thoughts that I called my daughter to share. Subsequent chapters offer further insight and each chapter ends with exercises for reflection and exploration of your own life. The author's style of writing is very lyrical and easy to read. Her reflection exercises are thought provoking and inspiring. I look forward to her next book.

My favorite of the three grief books I've read so far. Contains practical advice, exercises you can do. I didn't find it overly religious at all, which for me was a plus. The word that comes to mind with this book is useful.

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