

Information for “Living with Loss” Retreats

Thank you for your interest in our forthcoming bereavement support retreat. Here is some more information to help you decide whether this retreat is suitable for you.



To lose someone – or more than one person – can have a profound impact upon us. They are gone now, and we may feel heartbroken. This is particularly the case if he or she was our partner or child, or someone we depended upon or who depended upon us. On top of that, no matter the relationship, if their passing was sudden, traumatic or followed a long and difficult illness, we might find our grief is sometimes overwhelming.

The aim of this supported retreat is to better equip us to deal with our life-changing loss. We will face up to some of the spiritual, emotional and practical challenges of our grief, and then look at practical and creative ways to cope with our loss, as well as the hope that Jesus offers as we walk forward in our lives.

Abi May is leading the retreat, supported by her husband John.

CONTENT

The retreat is run from a Christian perspective, but this is presented gently and is not theological. Our focus will be on making the best of our life in the present. Led sessions include explanations, reflection prompts, creative and craft activities, discussions, times of reflection and prayer, and listening to music and inspirational readings.

The retreat is organised with plenty of time for personal reflection, handouts to work on individually, as well as an opportunity for participants to have individual prayer with the pastoral support team or retreat leaders. A selection of relevant books is made available to read during the retreat.

The content and flow of each retreat is slightly different, depending on the number of participants and particular interests.

In “Living with Loss” the topics we aim to cover include (depending on the duration of the retreat):

- Understanding grief, the physical and emotional impact of loss, and a Christian perspective on grief.
- Living with loss, models of recovery, dealing with our emotions.
- Honouring the memories of our loved ones, reflective activities
- Survival strategies for our life today, being kind to ourselves, getting through difficult times.

In “Living with Loss Retreat #2 – The Journey Onwards” we return in more depth to some of the topics from the first retreat, exploring in addition such issues as prolonged, intense and complicated grief; crises of faith; deeper emotions such as regret, guilt and anger; and problematic relationships. *(This Retreat is usually run as a smaller group with a maximum of 8 participants.)*

COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS PARTICIPANTS

“Surprised by how normal, low key and gentle the whole approach was. Could almost say I enjoyed it!”

[I learned] “that I am allowed to grieve as I want, not to be pressured by other people’s comments.”

“This was a first class retreat which I found extremely helpful. I will definitely do part 2.”

“I thought Abi led the sessions with sensitivity and compassion. It was obvious she had ‘been there’. I liked how she shared her story.”

“The sessions were well researched, delivered and well-paced.”

IS THIS RETREAT SUITABLE FOR ME?

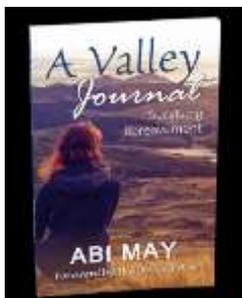
Generally, we recommend that by the time of the retreat, it will have been at least four to six months since your bereavement, although this is not a hard and fast rule. There is no upward limit; a loss from even decades ago isn't a barrier.

It is natural to feel nervous before attending a retreat on such personal topics. Please be assured that your privacy will be respected, and all activities are voluntary. If you'd rather step out of the room or skip a session, you are most welcome.

If you still have further questions, please contact us and we can arrange a callback with the retreat leader.

If you are ready to proceed with booking, then please go ahead. (Places are limited.)

If you decide to attend, we look forward to welcoming you.



Abi May's bereavement blog: www.avalleyjournal.co.uk

Facebook page: **Living with Loss**

A Valley Journal is a book by Abi May published in 2014 by Onwards & Upwards Publishers, and is endorsed by The Dove Service, a BACP accredited counselling service (<http://www.thedoveservice.org.uk>).

A Valley Journal and other books will be available at the retreat, or you can purchase them in advance from Waterstones or Amazon.co.uk