

How doodling and journaling helped a bereaved mother deal with her grief after her sons' suicide

Approximately 8 people in Australia die every day by suicide, that's 300 per year. 75 % of these deaths are males. If each person has 30 close relatives or friends that are directly impacted by their passing, that's 90,000 people per year directly impacted by very complex grief. How we manage grief, how it is assimilated into the rest of our daily lives, has a profound effect on a persons' continued mental well-being.



Six years ago, Zoe Strickland's son, Elliot, unexpectedly and unimaginably, took his own life near to their family home and her "universe tilted". The very next day – still traumatised and racked by excruciating early grief, she picked up a Sharpie pen and drew a picture.

It would become the first entry in a series of grief diaries – some 25 notebooks' worth – and the birth of her stick figure character, Doodle Lady.

Zoe started to share her sketches on social media. It seemed Doodle Lady reached other hearts and she was encouraged to publish. Zoe's first long awaited book, *To Grief With Love* is soon to be released - a compilation of her diaries and a lyrical and pictorial voyage through loss.

It is a uniquely formatted book, a “show and tell” of finding light in the darkness and peace after heartbreak. The pages are interwoven with emotive sketches, scribbled musings and poetry and quotes from other wisdom teachers. In bringing the work together, Zoe later added narrative, to proffer things that helped and things that didn't. The sketches show and tell the raw and relatable sorrow, pain and longing, but they also show steadiness, lightness of being, unexpected beauty in the numinous and most of all LOVE. Because, as Zoe says, “they sit side by side”.

The reader feels heard and understood in their journey

*“It's with humility and wobbly knees I publish my book. I wrote it for me - but I share it for us. I share *To Grief with Love* as a hug. I share to honour fragility and to connect in compassion with other wayfarers so they don't feel alone.*

To Grief With Love is a highly recommended and beautiful piece of work that offers compassion and comfort - an invitation to the reader to go gently, to tend and befriend grief, and to hope.

For full information about ZOE STRICKLAND her book and further media information visit www.zoestricklandpublishing.com

