

Holding on to Love After You've Lost a Baby: The 5 Love Languages® for Grieving Parents

Gary Chapman and Candy McVicar

Chicago, IL – Every day countless families face the tragic news of the loss of a child. Whether through miscarriage, stillbirth, a disease, or an accident, losing a child is one of the most gut-wrenching losses a family can experience. How do you begin to move forward?

“You would think that somehow after years of hearing of tragic stories in the news, viewing shocking stories in social media, seeing countless people die in movies, and reading terrifying stories of people’s peril in the history of mankind, you would at least be a little prepared to deal with death,” says Candy McVicar, co-author with Gary Chapman of ***Holding on to Love After You’ve Lost a Baby*** (Northfield Publishing). “But nothing can prepare a parent for the death of their precious child. All those stories were not your story.”

McVicar, a grief and trauma specialist who serves as founder and executive director of the Missing GRACE Foundation, named in honor of her daughter, Grace, who was stillborn, and Chapman, author of the bestselling *The 5 Love Languages®* series, who has counseled many grieving parents, have joined together to give grieving parents and their family a guide through the darkness.

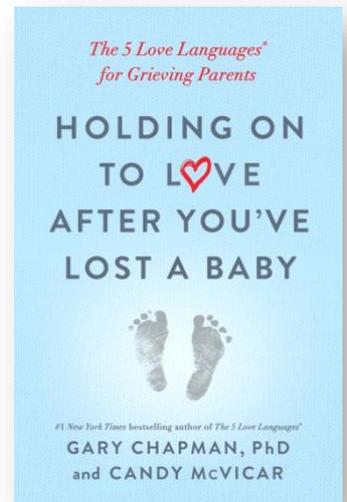
“The deep sense of loss does not evaporate with the passing of time,” says Chapman. “The journey can be extremely lonely, especially when the couple has little or no support from others. Life must go on, but the physical and emotional pain makes it difficult to muster the energy to keep walking.”

In ***Holding on to Love***, Chapman and McVicar walk couples through the grieving process, encouraging them in their marriage during this complex experience, and guiding them through a healthy way to grieve. They discuss the five love languages and how to use them with one another and with other family members as they support each other and begin to rebuild their lives. Things they discuss include:

- **Grieving the Loss:** How do you begin to grieve the loss of a baby you never knew outside the womb? Or, maybe your baby only lived a few hours or a few days. What does grief look like?
- **Loving Your Mate Well:** How can couples support one another as they grieve? How can the love languages help ensure that spouses care for one another in a meaningful way? Why do men tend to grieve differently than women?
- **Helping Others Grieve Well:** The loss of a child impacts everyone, including grandparents, siblings, aunts and uncles, and dear friends. How can families support these special people as they grieve? And how can the family best support the parents? How do you help children through the loss of their sibling?
- **Unexpected Gifts:** Is it possible for something good to come out of a tragic loss? How does God use our tears to bring hope to others?

“The more you invest now to heal your broken heart and come to a place of acceptance and peace, the better you will withstand the future storms of life,” says McVicar. “Inner healing requires your commitment to work at it and to be willing to release the unhealthy feelings that hinder your well-being. Healing and peace can transpire over a much shorter time period when you have a strong faith, supportive family and friends, and grief resources, and when you are making healthy choices.”

Holding on to Love After You've Lost a Baby by Gary Chapman and Candy McVicar
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Meet Gary Chapman and Candy McVicar

Gary Chapman, Ph.D. is the bestselling author of *The 5 Love Languages*® series and director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc. Gary travels the world presenting seminars, and his radio program airs on more than 400 stations. He has a passion for helping people form lasting relationships. He and his wife Karolyn, live in North Carolina. For more information, visit www.5lovelanguages.com.



Candy McVicar is an author, inspirational speaker, and devoted advocate for families who are grieving a baby or child. After experiencing the stillbirth of her daughter Grace, she founded and became executive director of Missing GRACE Foundation, whose mission is to provide support, resources, and education for families and professional care providers when there is loss of a baby, infertility, or adoption challenges. Candy has been a featured guest on Fox News, Focus on the Family and Building Relationships with Dr. Gary Chapman. She lives in South Carolina with her husband and their two daughters. To learn more visit www.CandyMcVicar.com.

Suggested Interview Questions for Dr. Chapman and Candy McVicar

1. Losing a baby or a child is a devastating loss. How does a parent begin to grieve and survive the anguish of such deep sorrow?
2. Candy, would you share your story and what happened with your baby Grace and your baby that you named Promise?
3. Was your faith impacted by what you went through?
4. What do you suggest to couples to help them love their mate well in the aftermath of a pregnancy loss or the loss of a child?
5. Can you explain how a couple can apply the love languages in their marriage during the grieving process?
6. Is it possible to take a break from grieving?
7. What would you suggest for someone listening who hasn't lost a child, but they know someone who is grieving their infant or child? How can we be a good friend to someone during this kind of loss?
8. What are some examples of things we should not say verses what would be helpful to say to someone who has lost a baby?
9. How can parents help their children who are grieving the loss of their sibling?
10. What suggestions do you have for the bereaved parents to help their grieving relatives – the grandparents, aunts and uncles who are also grieving?
11. Sometimes we “rate” the grief of others – you call this a “Grief-O-Meter.” Can you tell us about this and why is it problematic?
12. What are some unique challenges for parents who have had a miscarriage or stillbirth throughout the pandemic?
13. Candy, can you tell us how your nonprofit, Missing GRACE Foundation began and what kinds of resources and services the organization provides for families today?
14. What does it look like to “grieve well” and with hope?

Suggested Interview and Speaking Topics for *Holding on to Love*

Here are some suggestions for topics you might consider for an interview with Gary and/or Candy:

Holding on to Love After You've Lost a Baby

The loss of a child is perhaps the worst loss that humans can experience. Whether a child is lost in the womb, at birth, or after a few years of life, the crushing grief changes a family forever. How do you move forward? How do you begin to cope with all that you're feeling? In this interview, Gary and/or Candy discuss the raw emotions that parents face when a child dies, how to begin to cope with the complex feelings of grieving, how to better understand your spouse and provide support, and how to use the five love languages in grief-appropriate ways.

Men, Women, and Grieving

It's no surprise that men and women grieve differently. Initially, after the death of a baby or child, a couple often cries openly together, shares raw emotions, clings to one another, and speaks freely of their love for their child. But, over time, a shift occurs and suddenly they're no longer on the same page emotionally. In this interview, Gary and/or Candy look at why men grieve a certain way, explain how to shift the grieving process into a new gear to attain deeper connection and healing, and share a series of questions for bereaved dads to consider as they walk the grief journey.

On Grieving Well

You placed a high value on the life of your baby, on the life of your child that died. You felt he or she was valuable and worth dying for. Are they worth living for? What about you? How do you grieve in a healthy way? In this interview, Gary and/or Candy share what it looks like to grieve in a healthy way, why grief involves the total person (emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual) and what it looks like to work through each area, and why you need to love yourself enough to grieve your way to health.

Helping Your Family Grieve Well

As you and your spouse are grieving, many other family members are grieving, too. Your other children have lost a sibling, your parents have lost a grandchild, and other relatives have lost a niece, a nephew, or a cousin. In this interview, Gary and/or Candy share how to deal with family that may not respond as you would hope, give insights for how to help your grieving loved ones, and explain how to extend grace to those who are not being as helpful as you would wish. They'll also discuss how to set expectations and put boundaries in place as you all work through the grief process.

Unexpected Gifts of Grace

Discover the "beauty for ashes" redemptive piece of your story—and how you might commemorate and honor the precious life of your baby or child or that of your loved ones. After years of heartache from layered losses, Candy managed to take that pain and created a beautiful legacy for her babies in heaven. She experienced a stillbirth, miscarriage, infertility, adoption failures, and the death of her relative and friend and yet persevered and found hope. Be encouraged by her inspirational story.

Praise for *Holding on to Love*

Losing a child is an unspeakable loss. Instead of holding your little one in your arms you have suddenly become part of a club no one would ever want to join. How do you navigate the pain? How does your marriage survive such grief? Candy has been there, and in this book, she will tenderly walk you down a path to healing, hope, and love.

Sheila Walsh

Author of *Praying Women* and *It's Okay Not to Be Okay*

Grief speaks a language all its own, and this book provides one of the most thoughtful and compassionate approaches to ministering to those who are grieving.

Holding on to Love After You've Lost a Baby is a book you will pick up time after time as you walk with people through their darkest days and guide them to that Light at the end of the tunnel.

Jentezen Franklin

Senior Pastor, Free Chapel,
New York Times bestselling author

As a pastor, I've walked many families through the process of grief. However, as a dad I had no idea how to face it for myself. It is hard to fathom, but my wife and I have gone through sixteen pregnancies in total, resulting in eight healthy children and eight waiting for us in heaven. Each time there was grief. Each time required facing fear. And each time God's miraculous love brought healing. As I turned the pages of *Holding on to Love After You've Lost a Baby* , I experienced the healing grace of the Lord. I highly recommend this book. Consider resourcing your church, counseling ministry, and mom's groups with copies of *Holding on to Love after You've Lost a Baby* to have on hand to gift to people grieving.

Jayme VanGelder

Senior Pastor of The House Church

What a refreshing truth to help bring healing to hurt! This is a book that should be read by every pastor, teacher, counselor, doctor, mother, and friend. Though I have raised 19 beautiful children, my heart still often feels the loss of our four miscarried babies that are in heaven. No one prepared me for the months of tears and the emptiness that I felt. Though amidst an army of loving family and friends, there was still a loneliness that gripped my heart. How I wish this book had been available those many years ago! What a joy and encouragement it has been to read it now. When the unthinkable happens—the loss of a child—our world turns upside down! Candy McVicar and Gary Chapman walk us through the challenges, the emotions, and even the relational issues that accompany this unexpected and devastating loss. Now there is hope for the hurting mom or dad, for the grieving friends and family who want to comfort but feel so helpless. I know this book will be a welcomed and treasured source of wisdom as you journey through this storm or as you help someone else through this painful road toward healing.

Kelly Jo Bates

Mother to four precious babies in heaven and nineteen wonderful children. Kelly, her husband Gil, and their family appear on *Bringing Up Bates*