

Grief Observed: Using Movies to Move through Grief

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Movies and DVD rentals that dramatize others coming to terms with their pain may serve as a valuable tool to help you and your family members move through the grieving process.

Getting in touch with the painful feelings of grief and releasing blocked or pent-up emotions by having a good cry can be cleansing and stress-reducing. Movies can be an effective tool in addressing certain [grief issues](#), especially when your selections are made consciously and deliberately.

Before you see or rent a movie, take time to read the film's description and reviews to help you decide whether watching it will support you at this point in your [grief journey](#). Pay attention to whatever feelings and reactions come up for you while watching it, and let yourself cry if you need to. If you're not comfortable doing this alone, ask a trusted friend or family member to watch the movie with you, and discuss it together afterward.

In this spirit, this list of movies for those in mourning is offered, categorized by the aspect of [grief](#) primarily addressed in a given film or DVD.

Mystical Experiences

You Meet in Heaven (2004) with Jon Voight, Ellen Burstyn
Northfork (2003) with James Woods, Nick Nolte
Dragonfly (2002) with Kevin Costner, Lisa Banes
Waking the Dead (2002) with Billy Crudup, Jennifer Connelly
A Rumor of Angels (2000), with Vanessa Redgrave, Ray Liotta
Sixth Sense (1999) with Bruce Willis, Haley Joel Osment
City of Angels (1998), with Nicolas Cage, Meg Ryan
Titanic (1997) with Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet
Truly, Madly, Deeply (1996), with Juliet Stevenson, Alan Rickman
Untamed Heart (1993), with Christian Slater, Marisa Tomei
Ghost (1990), with Demi Moore, Patrick Swayze
Always (1989), with Richard Dreyfuss, Holly Hunter

Guilt

Departures (2008) with Masahiro Motoki, Ryoko Hirose
Moonlight Mile (2002) with Jake Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman
A Rumor of Angels (2000), with Vanessa Redgrave, Ray Liotta
Sixth Sense (1999) with Bruce Willis
Philadelphia (1993) with Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington
Ordinary People (1980) with Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore

Spiritual Reaction to Loss

Sixth Sense (1999) with Bruce Willis
Wide Awake (1998) with Joseph Cross, Timothy Reifsnyder
Shadowlands (1994) with Anthony Hopkins, Debra Winger

Finding Professional Help

Ordinary People (1980) with Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore

Understanding Different Grieving Patterns in Your Family

The Descendants (2011) with George Clooney, Judy Greer
November Christmas (2010) with Sam Elliott, John Corbett
Rabbit Hole (2010) with Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart
Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
The Boys Are Back (2009) with Clive Owen, Laura Fraser
Departures (2008) with Masahiro Motoki, Ryoko Hirose
Eye of the Dolphin (2007) with Carly Schroeder, Adrian Dunbar
Boynton Beach Club (2005) with Joseph Bologna, Dyan Cannon
Angel in the Family (2004) with Meredith Baxter, Ronny Cox
Finding Neverland (2004) with Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet
Straight from the Heart (2003) with Teri Polo, Andrew McCarthy
In America (2002) with Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton
Moonlight Mile (2002) with Jake Gyllenhaal, Dustin Hoffman
Marvin's Room (1996), with Meryl Streep, Diane Keaton
Little Women (1994), with Wynona Ryder, Susan Sarandon
My Girl (1991) with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis
Steel Magnolias (1989), with Sally Field, Shirley MacLaine
Beaches (1988), with Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey
Terms of Endearment (1983), with Shirley MacLaine, Debra Winger
Ordinary People (1980) with Donald Sutherland, Mary Tyler Moore

Writing As A Way of Expressing Grief

Finding Neverland (2004) with Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet
About Schmidt (2002) with Jack Nicholson, Hope Davis

Loss of A Child

November Christmas (2010) with Sam Elliott, John Corbett
Rabbit Hole (2010) with Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart
Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
An Unfinished Life (2005) with Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez
On a Clear Day (2005) with Peter Mullin, Brenda Blethyn

From Surviving to Transcending Your Grief

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2012) with Judi Dench, Tom Wilkinson
The Descendants (2011) with George Clooney, Judy Greer
November Christmas (2010) with Sam Elliott, John Corbett
The Boys Are Back (2009) with Clive Owen, Laura Fraser
Up (2009) with Edward Asner, Jordan Nagai
The Secret Life of Bees (2008) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson
An Unfinished Life (2005) with Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez
On a Clear Day (2005) with Peter Mullin, Brenda Blethyn
Finding Neverland (2004) with Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet
If Only (2004) with Jennifer Love-Hewitt, Paul Nichols
In America (2002) with Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton
About Schmidt (2002) with Jack Nicholson, Hope Davis
Life As a House (2001) with Kevin Cline, Kristin Scott Thomas
Angela's Ashes (2000) with Andrew Bennett, Joe Breen
Good Will Hunting (1999) with Robin Williams, Matt Damon
Life (1999) with Eddie Murphy, Martin Lawrence
Message in a Bottle (1999) with Kevin Costner, Robin Wright Penn
Nicholas' Gift (1998) with Jamie Lee Curtis, Alan Bates
Simon Birch (1998) with Ian Michael Smith, Oliver Platt
Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994), with Hugh Grant, Andie MacDowell
Shadowlands (1994) with Anthony Hopkins, Debra Winger
Corrina, Corrina (1994) with Whoopi Goldberg, Ray Liotta
A River Runs through It (1992), with Robert Redford, Brad Pitt
Whose Life Is It Anyway (1991), with Richard Dreyfuss
Brian's Song (1971), with James Caan, Billy Dee Williams
How Green Was My Valley (1941)

Loss of a Spouse, Partner or Significant Other

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2012) with Judi Dench, Tom Wilkinson
The Descendants (2011) with George Clooney, Judy Greer
A Single Man (2009) with Colin Firth, Julianne Moore
The Boys Are Back (2009) with Clive Owen, Laura Fraser
Up (2009) with Edward Asner, Jordan Nagai
An Unfinished Life (2005) with Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez
Brokeback Mountain (2005) with Jake Gyllenhaal, Heath Ledger
My Life (1993) with Michael Keaton, Nicole Kidman
Love Story (1971) with Ali MacGraw, Ryan O'Neal
Unfinished Song (2012) with Terence Stamp, Vanessa Redgrave

Loss of A Child

November Christmas (2010) with Sam Elliott, John Corbett
Rabbit Hole (2010) with Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart
Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
An Unfinished Life (2005) with Robert Redford, Jennifer Lopez
On a Clear Day (2005) with Peter Mullin, Brenda Blethyn

Loss of A Parent

The Descendants (2011) with George Clooney, Judy Greer
Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
The Boys Are Back (2009) with Clive Owen, Laura Fraser
Sunshine Cleaning (2009) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson
The Secret Life of Bees (2008) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson
Death at a Funeral (2007) with Matthew Macfadyen, Peter Dinklage
Eye of the Dolphin (2007) with Carly Schroeder, Adrian Dunbar
The Savages (2007) with Philip Seymour Hoffman & Laura Linney
Two Weeks (2006) with Sally Field, Ben Chaplin
Garden State (2005) with Zach Braff, Natalie Portman
In Her Shoes (2005) with Cameron Diaz, Shirley MacLaine
Big Fish (2004) with Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney
My Girl (1991) with Dan Aykroyd, Jamie Lee Curtis

Loss of A Friend

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel (2012) with Judi Dench, Tom Wilkinson
Catch & Release (2007) with Jennifer Garner, Timothy Oliphant
The Bucket List (2007) with Jack Nicholson, Morgan Freeman
Mrs. Palfrey at the Claremont (2005) with Joan Plowright, Rupert Friend
Brokeback Mountain (2005) with Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal
Wit (2001) with Emma Thompson, Christopher Lloyd
Tuesdays with Morrie (1999) with Jack Lemmon, Hank Azaria
Four Weddings and a Funeral (1999) with Hugh Grant, Andie McDowell
Nicholas' Gift (1998) with Jamie Lee Curtis, Alan Bates
Philadelphia (1993) with Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington
Beaches (1988) with Bette Midler, Barbara Hershey
Brian's Song (1971) with James Caan, Billy Dee Williams
Midnight Cowboy (1969) with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight

Loss of A Sibling

Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
Charlie St. Cloud (2010) with Zac Efron, Charlie Tahan
The Secret Life of Bees (2008) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson
Walk the Line (2006) with Joaquin Phoenix, Reese Witherspoon
Ray (2004) with Jamie Foxx, Kerry Washington
In America (2002) with Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton
Little Women (1994) with Winona Ryder, Gabriel Byrne

Traumatic Loss

Rabbit Hole (2010) with Nicole Kidman, Aaron Eckhart
Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
Reign Over Me (2007) with Adam Sandler, Jonathan Banks
Missing in America (2006) with Danny Glover, Ron Perlman
In The Bedroom (2002) with Tom Wilkinson, Sissy Spacek

Loss of A Pet

Marley and Me (2008) with Jennifer Aniston, Owen Wilson
My Dog Skip (1999) with Frankie Muniz, Diane Lane
Where the Red Fern Grows (1974) with Stewart Peterson, Beverly Garland
Old Yeller (1957) with Fess Parker, Dorothy McGuire

Suicide Loss

Remember Me (2010) with Robert Pattinson, Emilie de Ravin
Sunshine Cleaning (2009) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson
The Secret Life of Bees (2008) with Dakota Fanning, Jennifer Hudson

Anticipatory Grief

The Descendants (2011) with George Clooney, Judy Greer
November Christmas (2010) with Sam Elliott, John Corbett
Wit (2001) with Emma Thompson, Christopher Lloyd
Tuesdays with Morrie (1999) with Jack Lemmon, Hank Azaria
Brian's Song (1971) with James Caan, Billy Dee Williams
Love Story (1971) with Ali MacGraw, Ryan O'Neal