

# 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 life as it is now, as well as the courage that our faith can give us as we go 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

“It is well worth (attending a Living with Loss retreat) no matter what your experience, or the length of time since your bereavement. You will not be pressurised in any way or at any time and you will find yourself in an environment which is supportive and kind, and where you can just be yourself. It will undoubtedly be helpful for you.” (Annette from Surrey)

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

“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.”

“Handouts were very helpful, information given too, as one can only take in so much at the time and it was good to have practical things to do. Abi’s illustrations and anecdotes were always relevant and illuminating. The sessions went by very quickly for me. At first I didn’t think the afternoon ‘craft’ / workshop type activities would work but I’m glad I joined in. There was a good atmosphere throughout – confidentiality respected, opinions valued, everyone was accepted. I was grateful for an opportunity to be prayed for.”

“I had no idea, really, what to expect this week. I am returning home feeling assured that I will survive and continue to take ‘small steps’ on my journey.”

## IS THIS RETREAT SUITABLE FOR ME?

Generally, we recommend that by the time of the retreat, it will have been at least four 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. You will not be expected to talk about personal matters if you prefer not to.

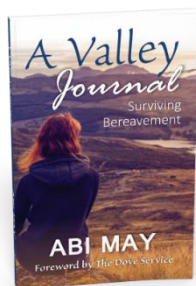
**If you still have further questions, please contact us and we can arrange a callback with the retreat leader.**

**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.**

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Abi May’s bereavement blog: [www.avalleyjournal.co.uk](http://www.avalleyjournal.co.uk)



**More details about Living with Loss retreats:**

<https://livingwithlossbereavementsupportevents.wordpress.com>

**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

Read: **Grief, a Journey Through the Seasons** (Cover article from Lee Abbey magazine):

<https://avalleyjournal.wordpress.com/2019/09/05/cover-article-from-lee-abbey-magazine-grief-a-journey-through-the-seasons/>