



# Memories, Grief, and COVID 19: Helping Children Deal With Loss

*"Mommy - why can't we go to Uncle Bob's house for Thanksgiving?"*

*"I'm sorry Billy, but we can't go to your grandfather's funeral."*

*"I know that your grandma is sick, but we can't travel to see her right now honey."*

**Do these statements sound familiar?**

With crushing numbers of COVID-19 deaths in the United States, the questions above have become not only more prevalent, but also part of the new normal that continues to evolve each day. As we now move into the holiday-laden fourth quarter, the grief for those lost loved ones is now front and center. When you have lost a pivotal family member the holidays can be that much tougher, especially if you are a child.

"Children can be hit the hardest during this time of year, especially when you add to the grieving process the distance that COVID has thrust on us all," says **D.H. Cermeño**, author of new children's book ***Coffee and Cedar: Finding Strength From Memories***. "Add to this the fact that they are not in their normal routine, can't go to school, play as freely as possible - and the whole situation can be overwhelming. In these uncertain times, families who are looking for pillars of strength should be turning to their memories. These memories of our lost loved ones provide children tent poles of stability and allow reflection and emotion to come forward."

Cermeño is not alone in this truth. There have been numerous memory studies over the years that illustrate the power memories have to alter our feelings, and also to help change our world view and perception of the realities that surround us - however harsh they may be.

"Personally speaking, there were three influential men in my life that were instrumental in providing me strong examples of not only strength but also confidence," says Cermeño. "When I think about the children out there right now that are suffering because of the distance that the pandemic is placing on the world - I want to share my story so they can feel more connected. Especially at this tender time of the year."

Cermeño suggests that during this onslaught of holidays at the end of 2020, helping your child focus on the traditions that have been passed on from older generations will truly make all the difference. "Sparkling memories through the senses is a great way to bring back those great memories. It could be hot apple cider, the smell of a pipe, old photographs, songs, or movies. All of these are great ways to keep the memories, and even traditions, of loved ones that have passed to the forefront," Cermeño shares.

It's important to remember that while separation is tough, separation without the view to see a beloved family member again can be devastating. Especially when you are considering a traditional holiday gathering. Use these opportunities to pass the memories down to the next generation to keep them alive. You will not only be able to help with the grieving process during these challenging times, but also bring you closer to your child.



### About D.H. Cermeño

Speaker and multi-award-winning author of *Rising Sunsets and Coffee and Cedar: Finding Strength From Memories*, Mr. Cermeño frequently lectures on his writing at both public and private events and fundraisers. He completed his undergraduate work in Communications at Loyola University New Orleans; holds an MBA from the Crummer Graduate School of Business at Rollins College; and has led the marketing departments for such major entertainment/hospitality corporations as Disney, Hard Rock, and Marriott.

### Questions to Ask D.H. Cermeño:

- What is a great way to help grieving children who feel disconnected during the pandemic?
- What role do the senses play in keeping holiday memories alive for children?
- What member of your family showed you the power of memories that still resonate with you today?
- How can sharing the wisdom of struggles benefit generations?
- What memory of your own inspired your writing of *Coffee and Cedar: Finding Strength From Memories*?

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