

# LOSS

**A Guide For Young People  
By Young People**



# THIS BOOKLET WAS CREATED BY

George Atkinson	Coralie Freeston
Rebekah Baxter	Kieran Humphreys
Karl Bird	James Jones
Charley Bonham-Dare	Ryan King
William Crompton	Michael Kurt
Liam Dadds	Jordan Munns
Jacob Dawson-Smith	Lewis Slade
Grace Ellis	Zachary Trigg
John Ellis	Maria Waters
William Ellis	Carl Wood

This booklet has been created by students from Southend YMCA's Southchurch Vocational College (SVC) programme, working in collaboration with the Motivate team as part of the European funded ACT project with support from LOSSuk.

*Photos credit: Michael Kurt, William Ellis and Carl Wood*

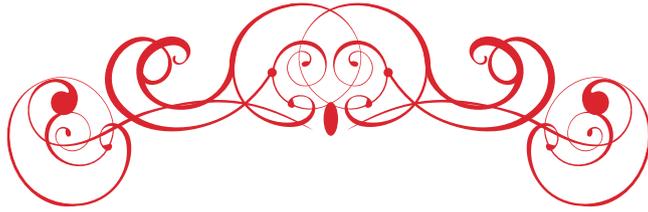
**Southend YMCA** works with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 in Southend and the surrounding areas, dedicated to improving the lives, education, aspirations and prospects for their future.

**SVC** provides work-based learning to young people aged 16-19 who have learning or emotional needs. We help to improve their chances of building a positive life and provide opportunities for them to reach their full potential.

**Motivate** is Southend YMCA's flagship volunteering programme, working with young people aged 16-25 to run community-based projects in Southend, Basildon, Castle Point and Rochford.

**LOSSuk** supports children, young people and families who have experienced a significant loss and enables them to live, not just to exist.

**The ACT network** (ACT) is a project selected under the European cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG IV, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). ACT commits to local change by making access to culture possible for all. This network also fosters innovative exchanges and multidisciplinary art and culture events.



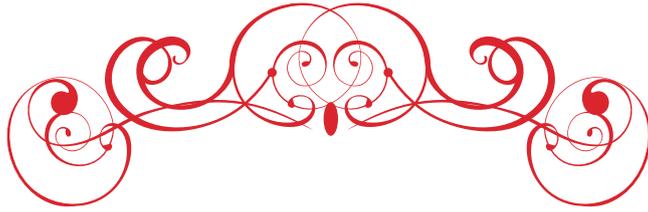
## BEKI ALI DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this booklet to our friend, Beki Ali, who was sadly taken from us on 3rd December 2013, aged 16.

Despite his life being so short, Beki made a lasting impression on all those who met him. His happy personality and beaming smile meant he could light up a room just by walking through the door.

Beki loved sports, in particular rugby and football, both of which he played at school. He was a keen Arsenal supporter. Beki loved singing and dancing – even if it was just to the music in his head!

Beki, although you are no longer with us, you will never be forgotten.



BEKI ALI  
11.01.97- 03.12.13

BEAUTIFUL  
ELEGANT  
KIND  
INTELLIGENT



# INTRODUCTION

Following the loss of their friend, the young people of SVC wanted to help others by sharing their own grieving process in this book.

As we approached creating this book we decided that there is no right or wrong answers when it comes to how people experience bereavement.

Every single person is unique and so every individual experiences a completely different way of coping with the death of someone significant in their lives, regardless of their age or gender.

After looking at a few theories to base this book on, the young people chose the *Seven Stages of Grief* model by Jennie Wright (2011), as a basis to give structure and form to their thoughts. This has helped them to come to the conclusion that the real experience of bereavement is not something that takes place one step at a time, but it can jump between stages, return to stages, and multiple stages can take place at once.

This is an expanded version of the *Five Stages of Grief* theory by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1967) and emphasises the importance of human emotion during each phase. It helped the young people by giving more words and descriptions to explore their own experiences and emotions relating to grief.

The stages are:

- 1. Shock & Denial**
- 2. Guilt & Pain**
- 3. Anger & Bargaining**
- 4. Depression, Reflection, & Loneliness**
- 5. The Upward Turn**
- 6. Reconstruction & Working Through**
- 7. Hope & Acceptance**

The hope for this book is that those who read it see how these different stages affect others and so, by knowing that, find what they are experiencing is a normal part of the grieving process.

comes as a shock and  
it still hurts very deeply. No matter how prepared  
you are for the death of a loved one, it still  
you think  
you are for the death of a loved one, it still

**- Billy Graham (Evangelist)**

## SHOCK AND DENIAL

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. At some level you may believe that the loss has not happened, in order to avoid the pain. The shock that you feel provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.



*"Shock is orange because it is bright and you can't ignore it." - Grace Ellis*



*"The shock of loss creates this imbalanced effect of other emotions flowing wildy in different directions." - George Atkinson*

The feeling of shock when you lose someone  
Can leave a terrible feeling inside  
It feels like you want to give up all hope  
But you know that giving up is the worst thing you can do

You might have lost someone  
But they are always looking down on you from a better, safer place  
If you keep a strong hold on all the memories that you have shared  
The vision will never fade away

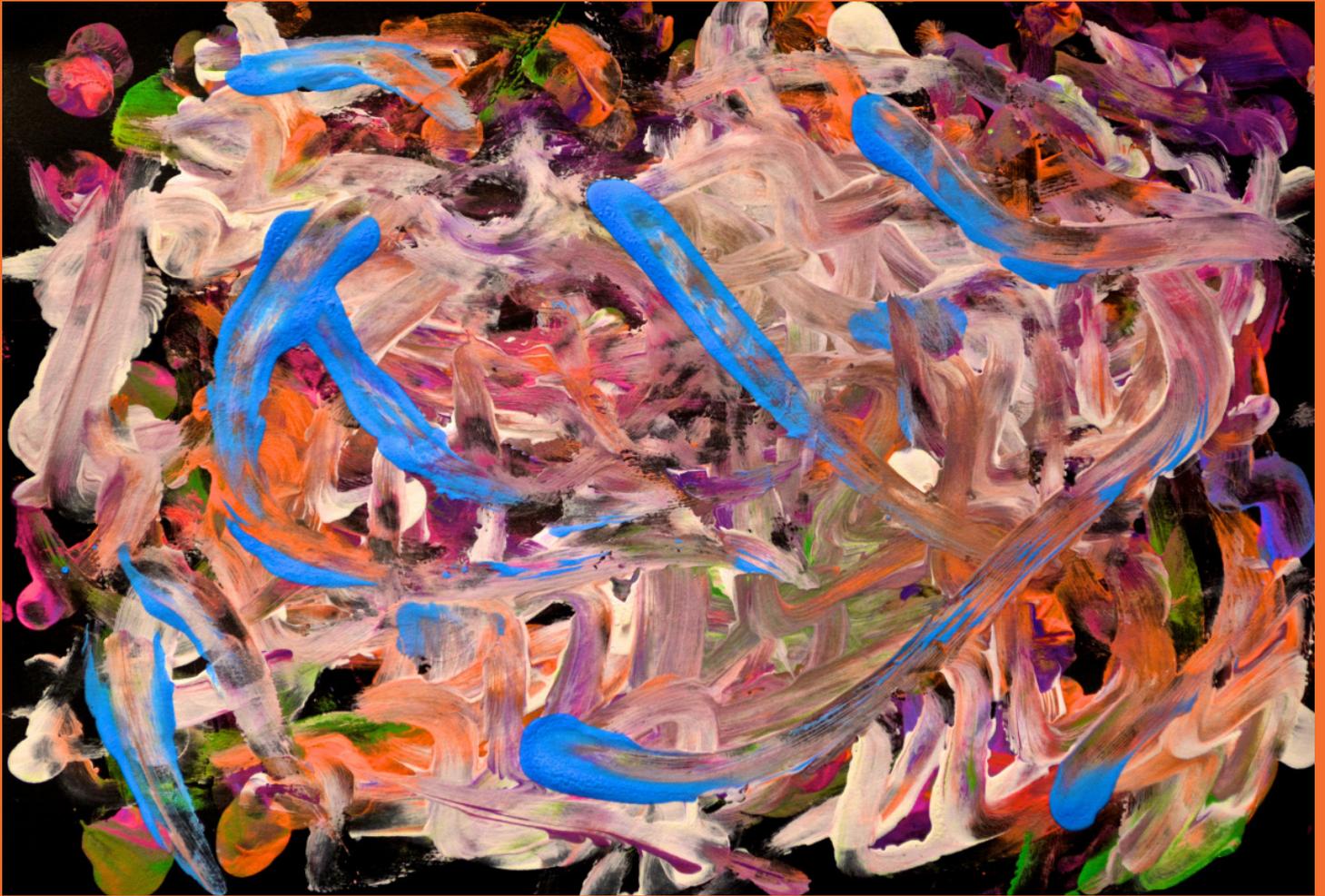
As long as you keep a strong faith  
That is all you need to pull yourself through  
From the dark depths to a brighter, happier place

Once you have gotten to the happier place  
It feels like nothing can stop you

You've grasped onto the memories for the entire length of your journey  
So never give up on hope

Stay strong and continue on your journey  
To pull through from the bad place

John Ellis



*"You feel like being on autopilot and your mind takes over your body." - John Ellis*

Finding out about your loss  
At first you don't want to believe it  
It all goes quiet for a moment  
You've got to realise that you're not going  
to see them anymore

Some people immediately cry  
Some people just stay silent  
Some just get angry  
There is no wrong way to act when something like this happens

Sometimes people go down the wrong path  
For some people it sinks in a few days or months later  
You shouldn't put your walls up  
The worst thing to do is not talking about how you feel

You're not alone

Grace Ellis



*"All of these colours represent confusion. You don't know what feelings to feel. You could feel shock, pain, guilt, anger and depression all at once, and there isn't one word for feeling like that." - William Ellis*

Shock is feeling something deep down inside

It felt like a strike of lightning in my heart

It felt like a knot in my stomach

It felt like I was going to crack apart

It felt like pain inside

**Maria Waters**

EMOTIONS IN MY HEAD

- *Collaborative piece*



it's a black wall, it's a thief.  
Guilt will confine you,  
torture you, destroy you...

**- Dave Grohl (Singer)**

## GUILT AND PAIN

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with a feeling of unbelievable pain. Even though this may be the hardest thing you have ever experienced, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not hide it, avoid it or escape from it with alcohol and drugs. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.



*"The empty heart shows the feeling you have after you realise that you cannot see the person you care about anymore." - Liam Dadds*



*"Experiencing the piercing pain and suffering." - George Atkinson*



*“Guilt is like being trapped and you can’t get out. You feel angry, alone, worried and scared. You want to find out what happened. But, I wasn’t there. I feel like it should have been me and not him.” - Zachary Trigg*

Unexpressed emotions will never die; they are buried alive and will come forth later in uglier ways.

**- Sigmund Freud (Neurologist/Physician)**

## ANGER AND BARGAINING

Pain gives way to anger, and you may lash out at people and unfairly blame them for the death. It is important to try to control this, as this may result in permanent damage to your relationships. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion. You may ask, “Why me?” Or try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair (“I will never get angry or drink again if you just bring him back”).



*"This shows that we let our anger build up and every now and again we erupt."  
- Lewis Slade and Jordan Munns*



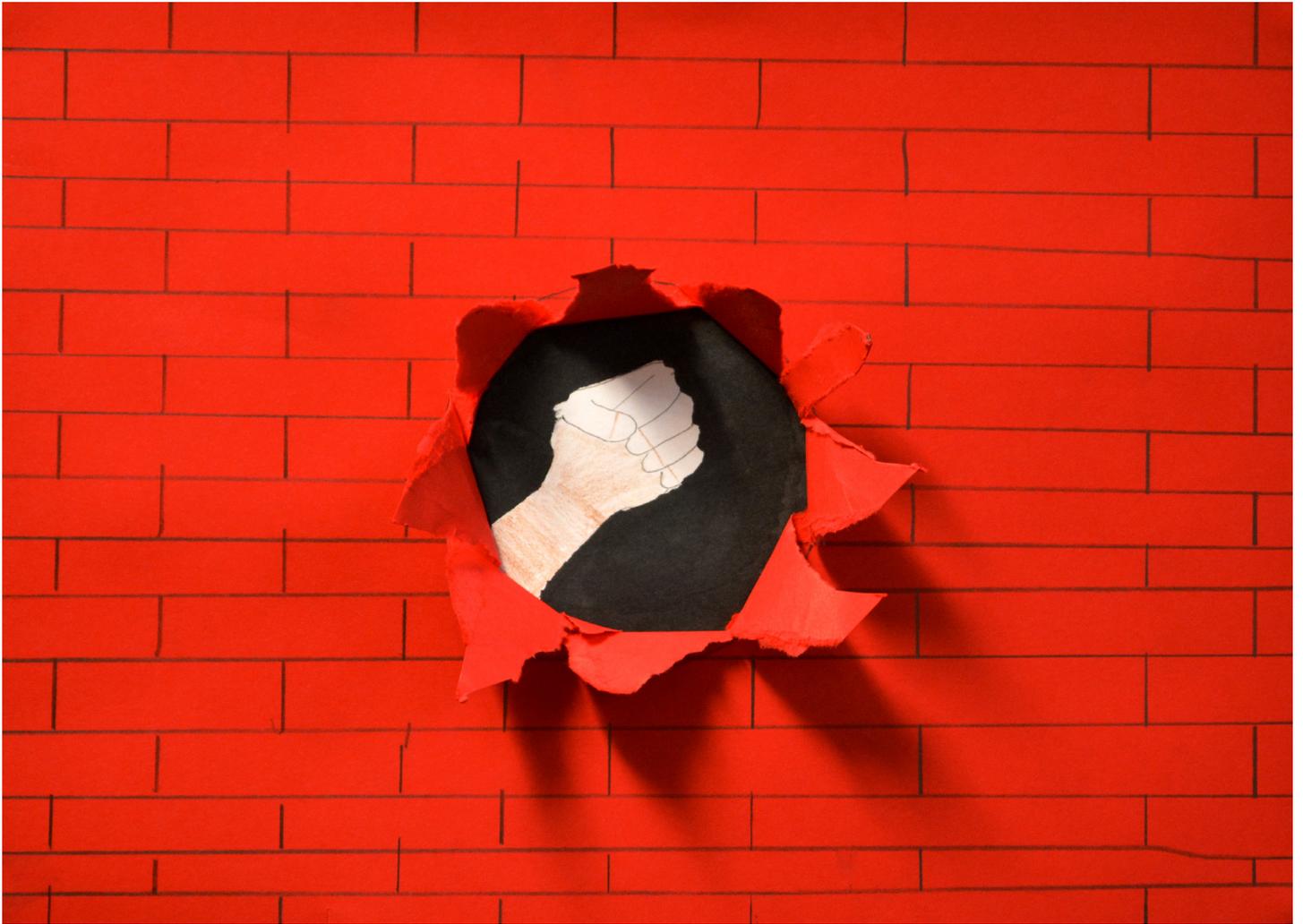
*"A volcano is like anger; there is no warning when it erupts." - William Ellis*



*"This shape shows an explosion. When you're angry it is difficult to control your emotions as you don't know how to control each emotion at the same time." - Grace Ellis*



*"Colour of confusion, everything is all over the place. You do not know how to feel." - Liam Dadds*



*“This piece demonstrates someone letting out their anger. Anger is red because people get red in the face. They let anger build up, and to let the anger out people punch a wall and then they are not red in the face anymore because they are more relaxed.” - Ryan King*

# FACES OF EMOTIONS

- *Collaborative piece*



HAPPY



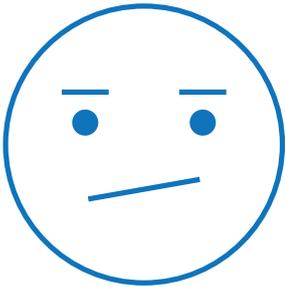
SAD



SILLY



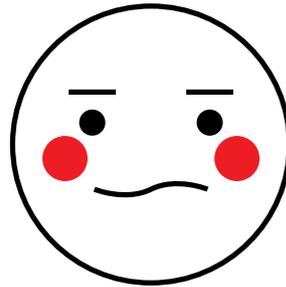
BORED



WORRIED



PROUD



EMBARRASSED



SURPRISED



FRUSTRATED



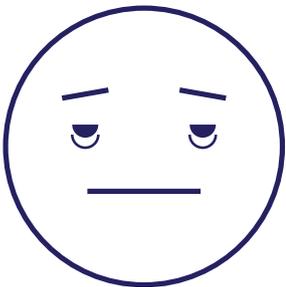
SICK



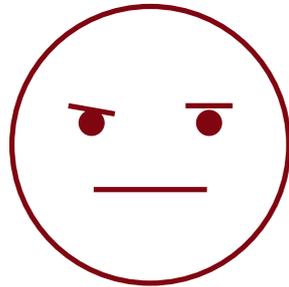
PLEASED



AFRID



TIRED



DISSATISFIED



RELAXED



ANGRY

A friend who can be silent with us in a moment of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing...not healing, not curing.... That is a friend who cares.

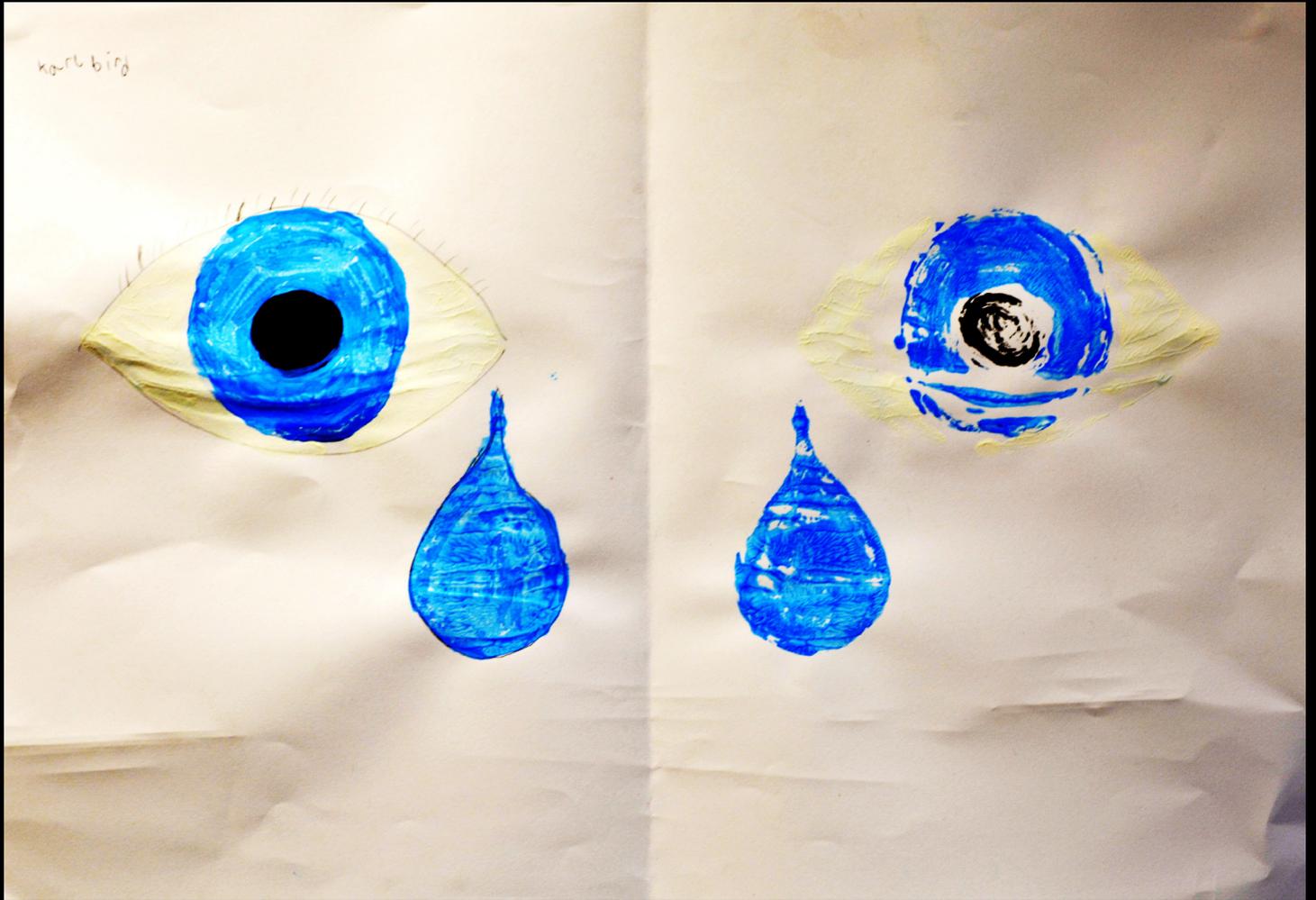
- *Henri Nouwen (Priest/Writer)*

## DEPRESSION, REFLECTION, LONELINESS

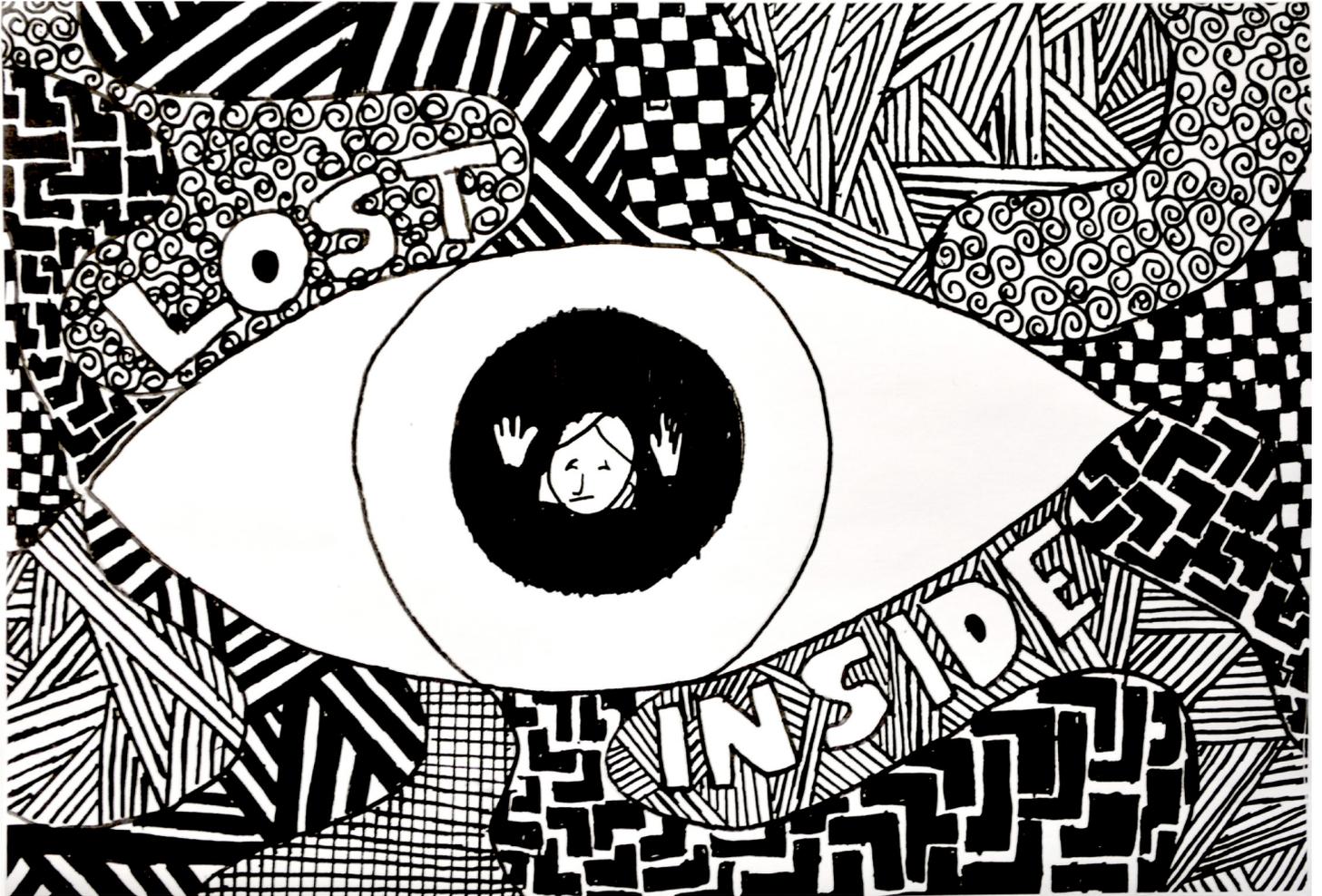
Just when your friends may think you should be getting on with your life, a long period of sadness will hit you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be “talked out of it” by people who think they are helping. Encouragement from others is not helpful to you during this stage of grieving. During this time, you finally understand the importance of your loss, and it depresses you. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your one special person, and focus on memories from the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.



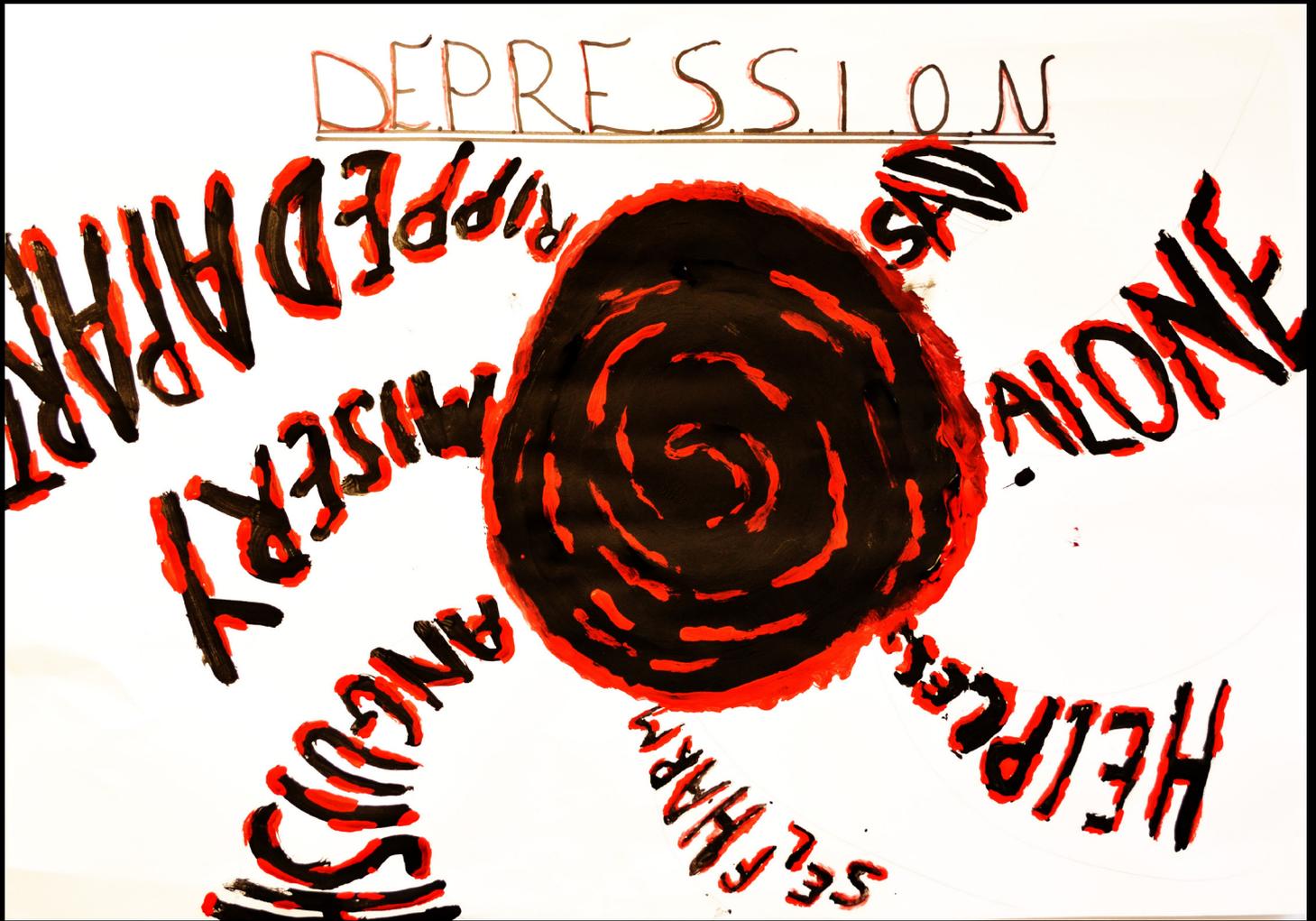
*"Depression is black because it covers you and you can't see, feel or think." - Grace Ellis*



*"Reflection on past memories." - Karl Bird*



*"Feeling lost inside and not knowing what to do anymore." - Charley Bonham-Dare*



*"If there is any advice I could give to someone who has experienced loss it is to talk to someone you know and trust. Don't bottle it up. Let it out." - Lewis Slade and Jordan Munns*

Your whole world just turns colourless for a while  
It just feels like you're watching the world pass by  
As if you were in a black and white film  
You lose interest in everything  
Nothing will interest you in the slightest

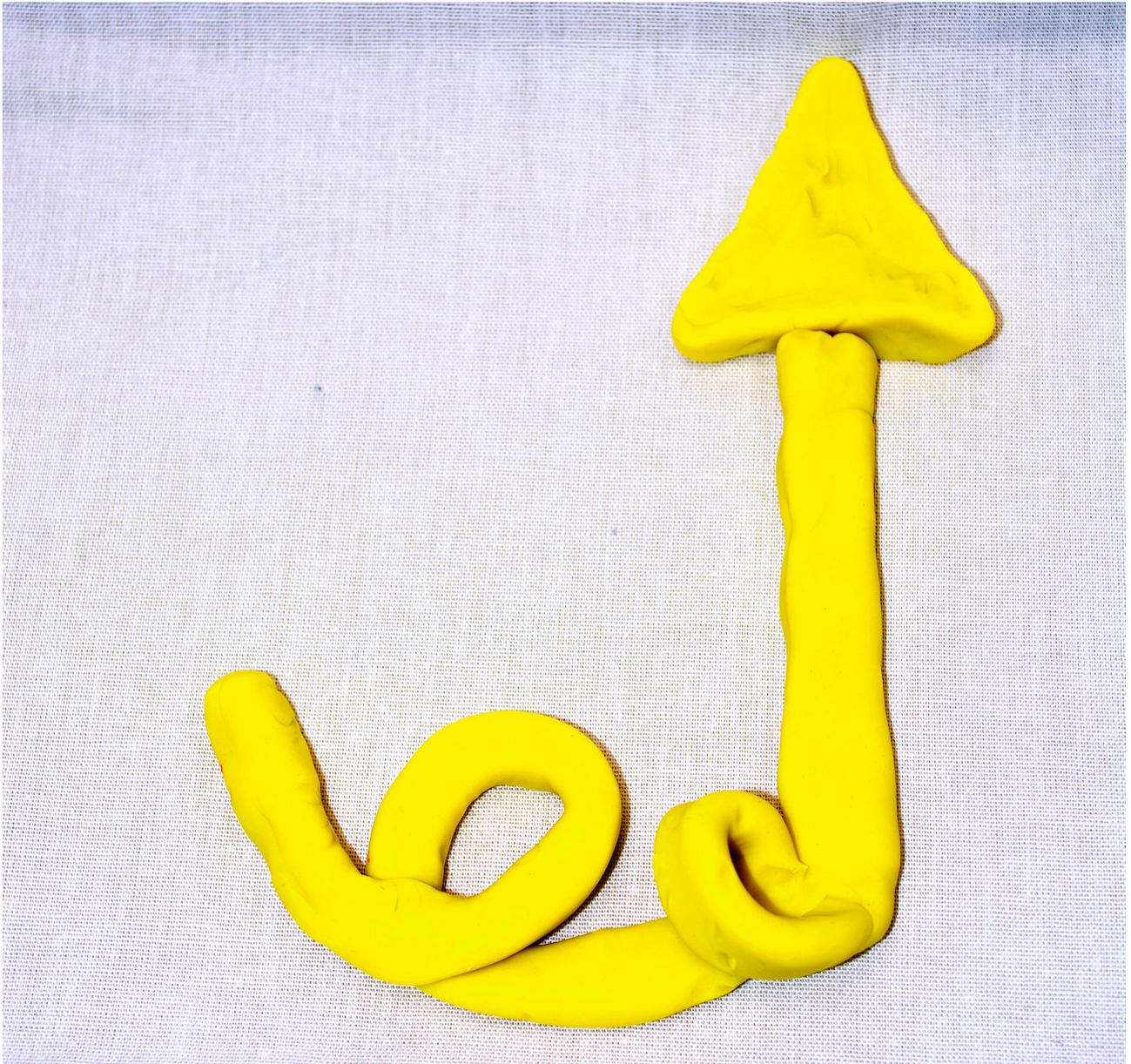
You're just tired  
Sometimes it takes your whole effort  
Just to get out of bed in the morning  
You always have a coat or jacket on  
You're so cold for a majority of the time

Something as simple as watching the television  
Yeah, the telly is on and working  
But you just stare  
You're not taking in any information

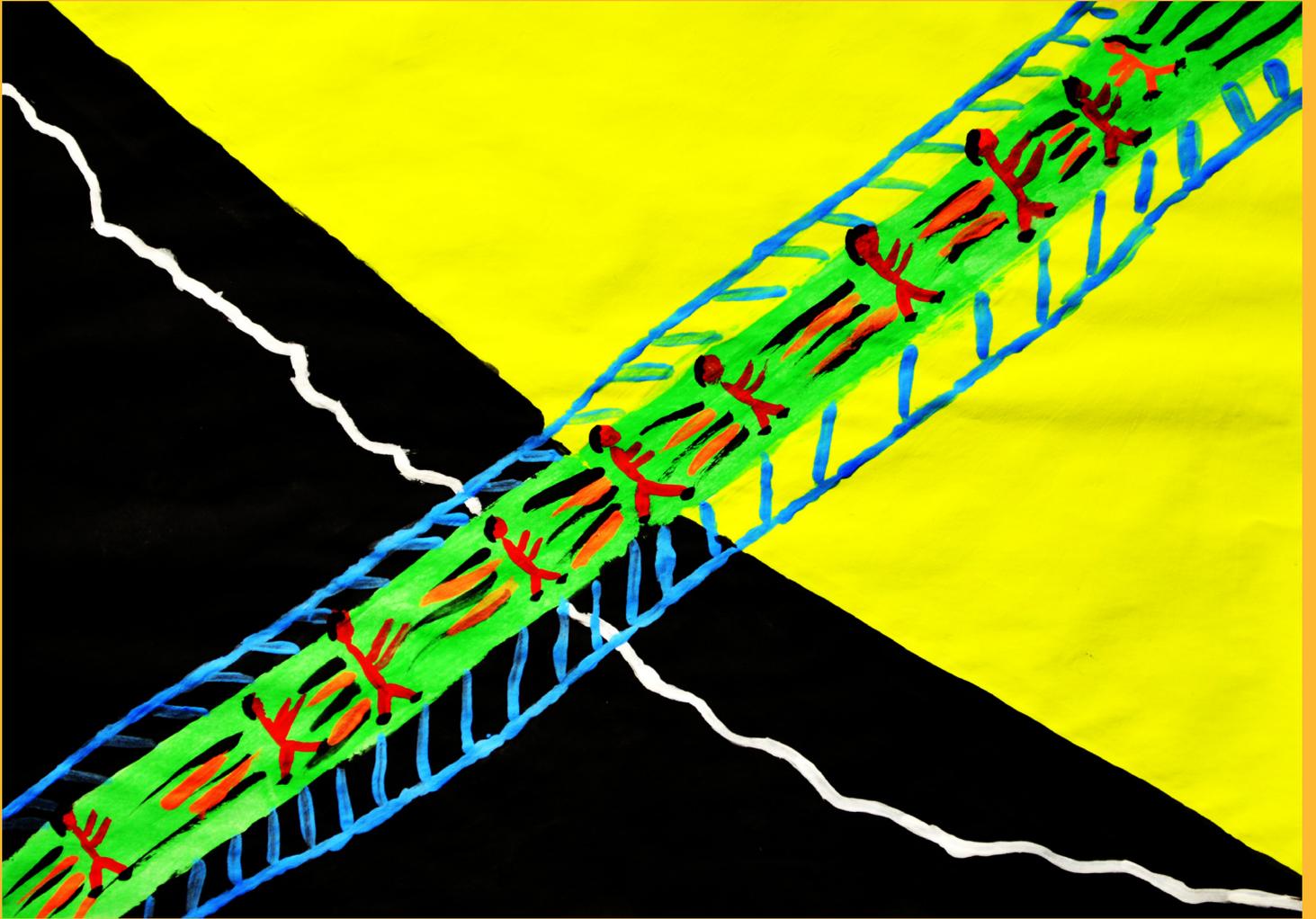
Some people don't believe there is such a thing as depression  
Yet, thousands of people suffer from it

Grace Ellis





*"Sometimes you feel like you're going round in circles but eventually there is a way up and forward." - Jordan Munns*



*"There is hope for a person who is willing to move from black to yellow."  
- Rebekah Baxter*

When people lose their friends  
They feel there is no more hope in their lives

The black colour is when people do not want to move  
They remain locked in emotions

There is hope for a person who is willing to move from black to yellow  
To get to yellow, the person has to cross the green bridge  
Which is surrounded by blue colour that  
Protects anyone who wants to cross the bridge  
From falling into the dark

**Rebekah Baxter**

EMOTIONS BOTTLED UP

- *Collaborative piece*

**DON'T  
BOTTLE  
UP YOUR  
EMOTIONS**



**SPEAK TO PEOPLE YOU TRUST**

our journey.  
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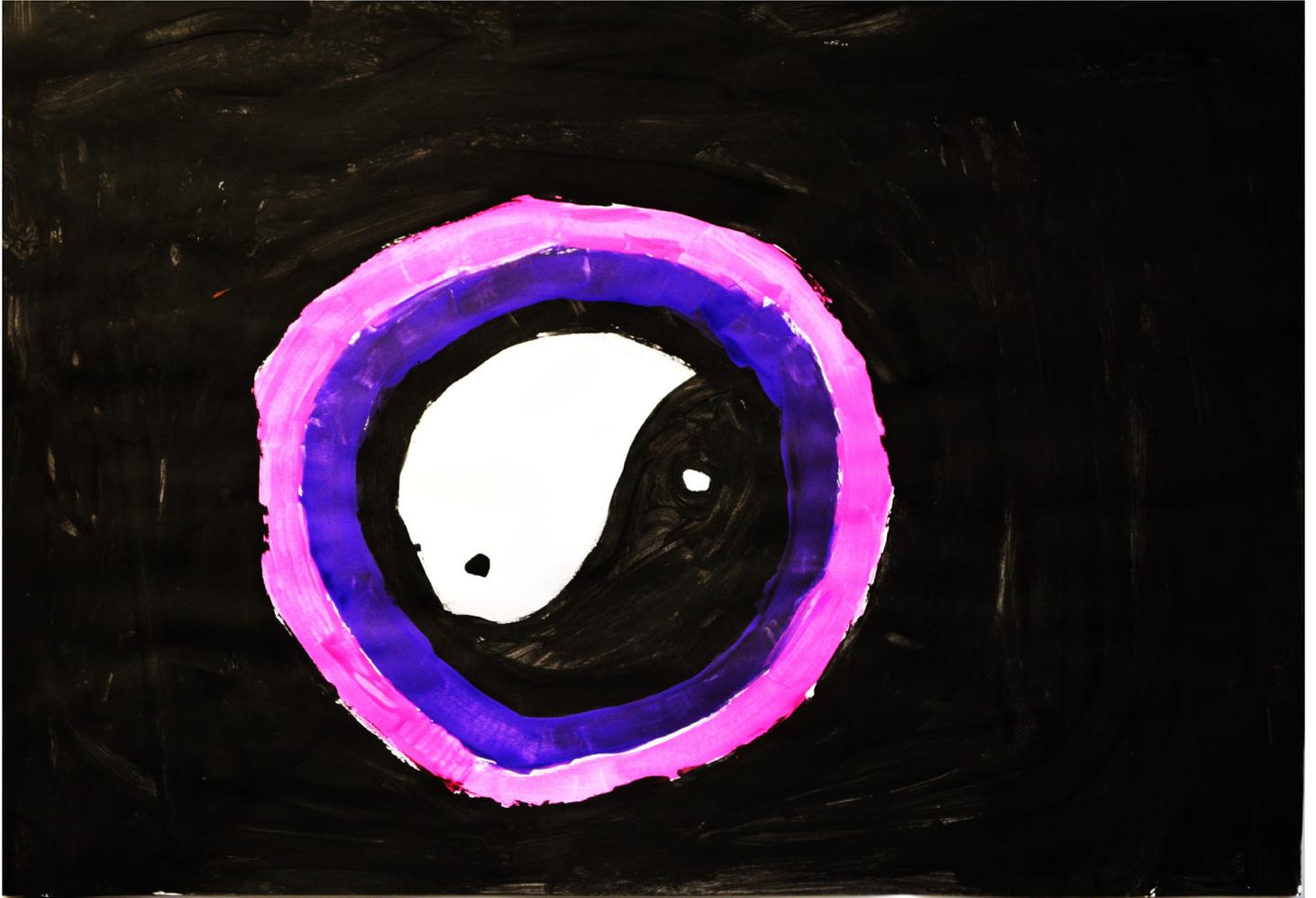
*- Kenji Miyazawa (Writer/Poet)*

## RECONSTRUCTION AND WORKING THROUGH

As you are able to do more, your mind starts working again, and you will find that you can find solutions to problems posed by life without your special person.



*“This shows that we rebuild our lives step-by-step.” - Jordan Munns*



*"Balance, remembering the dark times and light times." - Liam Dadds*



*"Reconstruction of the broken spirit." - Charley Bonham-Dare*



*“Reconstruction is sometimes a slow process.” - John Ellis*

Reconstruction is sometimes a slow process  
But at the end of it, it can be the best feeling in the world  
You have achieved so much and gotten so far

You can picture this as a ladder  
Each step that you take gets you closer to feeling on top of the world  
You have friends and family to help you up if you slip

If you push yourself to reach higher and higher  
Your worries will begin to fade away  
Inside you feel really great like nothing can pull you down

You have risen above so much and as you reach the final steps  
You can remember something that has sentimental value to you  
And before you know it you have reached the finish

John Ellis

**The journey of a**

**thousand miles**

**begins with one step.**

**- Lao Tzu (Philosopher/Poet)**

## HOPE AND ACCEPTANCE

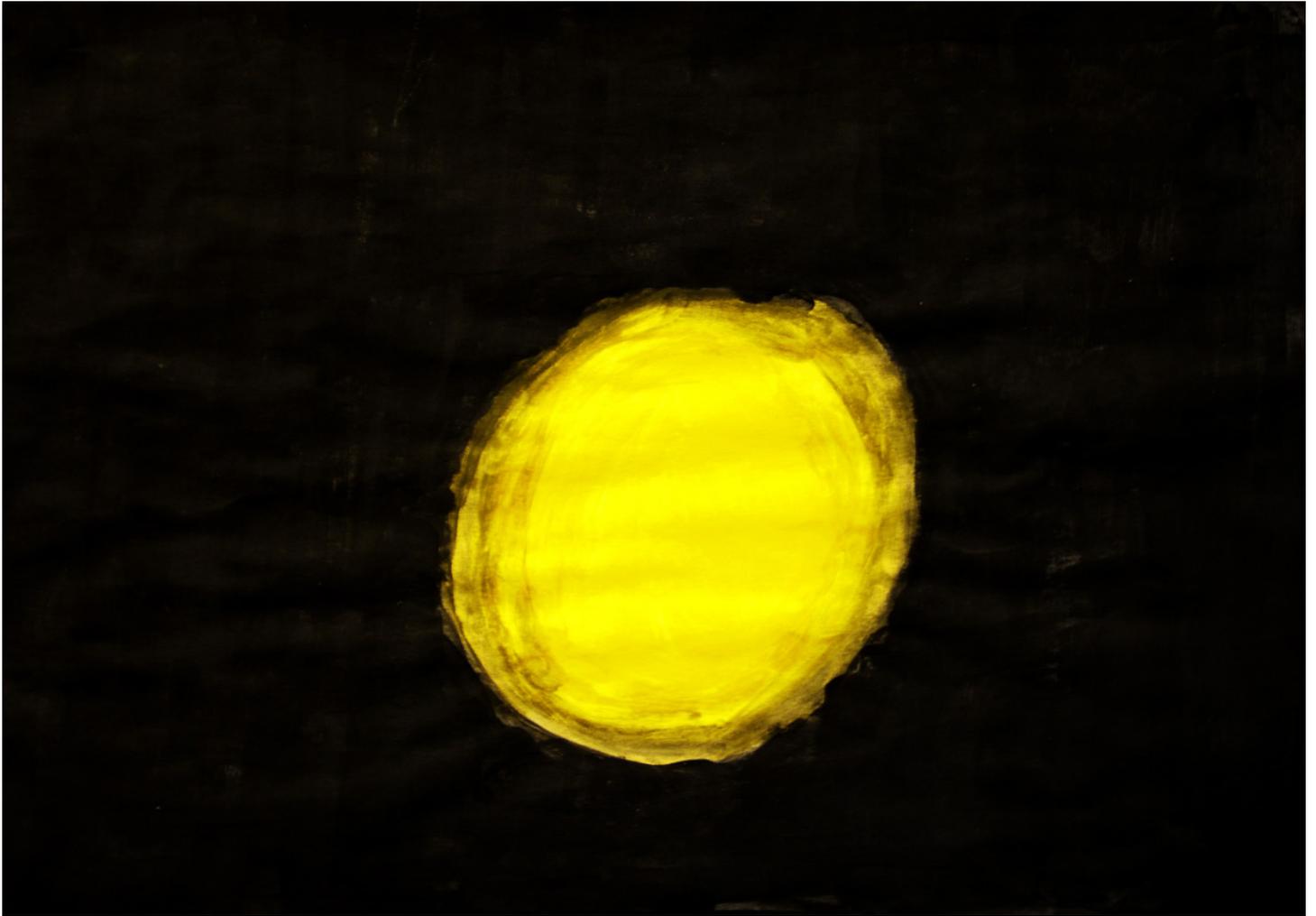
During this final stage you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this experience. But you will find a way forward. It is important to know that you will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your special person. You will still have sadness but you won't have the wrenching pain that you had before.



*"The arrow shows the way of putting your life back on track.  
It can be hard to know which way to go." - Zachary Trigg*



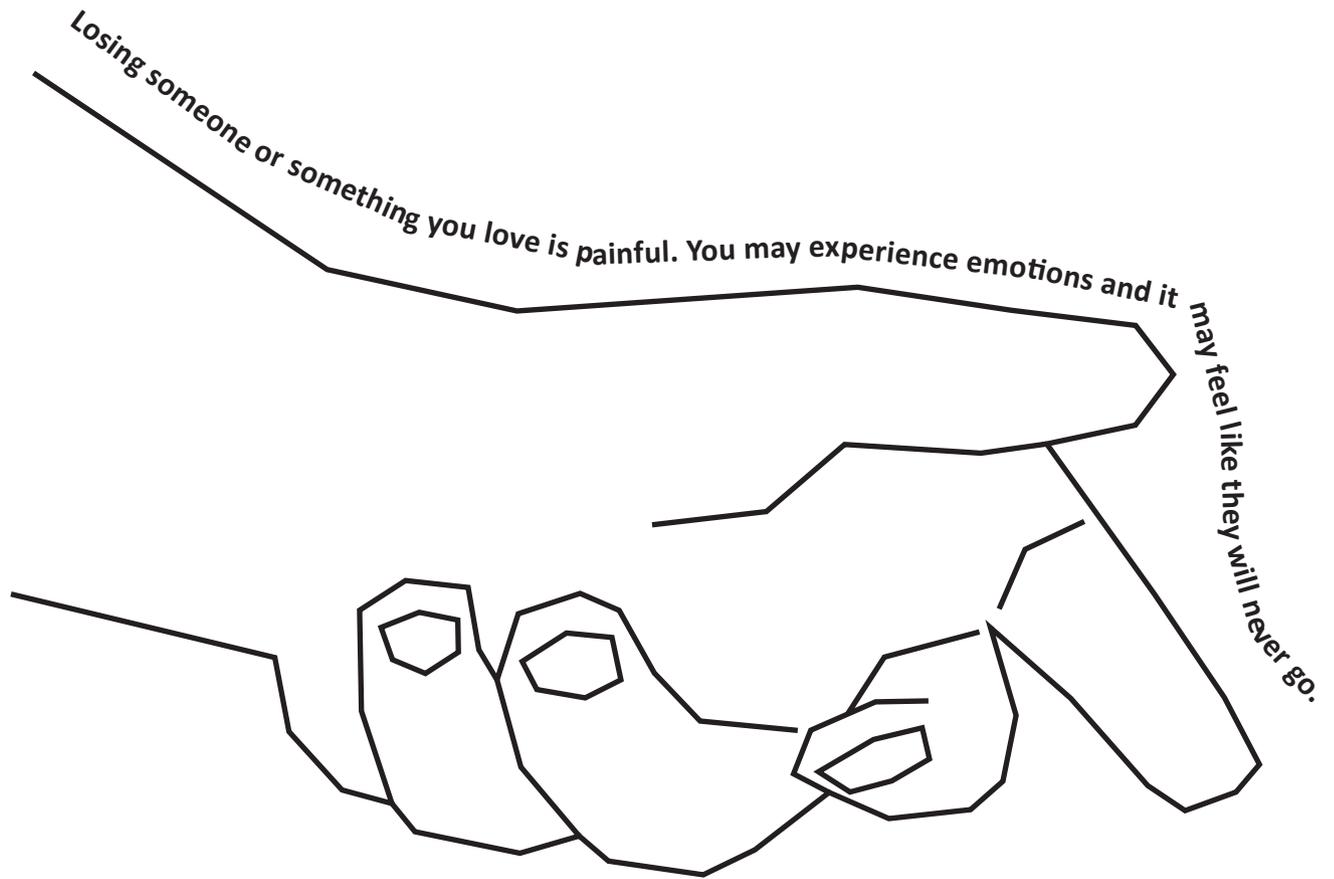
*"Blue Sky Thinking." - Grace Ellis*



*"The light at the end of the tunnel." - Grace Ellis*

TIPS ON HOW TO COPE WITH  
ANGER AND EMOTIONS

*- Coralie Freeston, Michael Kurt and Maria Waters*



**1. Take a timeout**

**2. Once you have calmed down think what you want to say constructively**

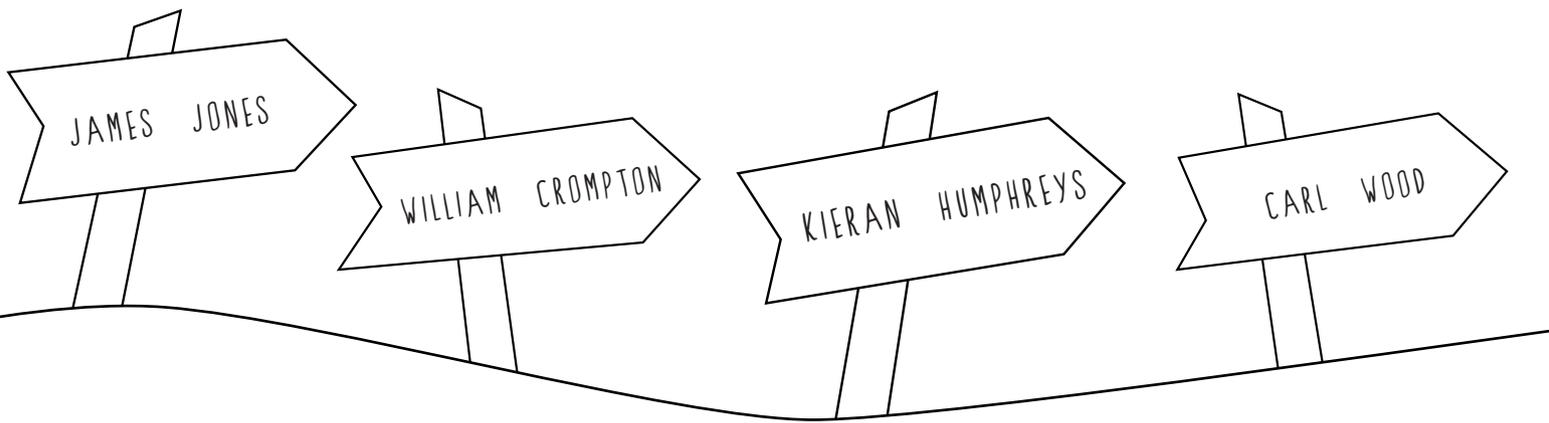
**3. Get some exercise**

**4. Think before you speak**

**5. Identify the possible outcomes**

**6. Stick with 'I' statements when expressing your feelings**

LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT  
FURTHER SUPPORT AND ADVICE



JAMES JONES

WILLIAM CROMPTON

KIERAN HUMPHREYS

CARL WOOD

**LOSSuk**

[www.loss-uk.org](http://www.loss-uk.org)  
07455 728540

**Trust Links**

[www.trustlinks.webs.com](http://www.trustlinks.webs.com)  
01702 213 134

**Rethink**

[www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)  
0300 5000 927

**Mind**

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
020 8519 2122

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)  
0844 477 9400

**Winston's Wish**

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)  
08452 03 04 05

**Child Bereavement UK**

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)  
0800 02 888 40

**Grief Encounter**

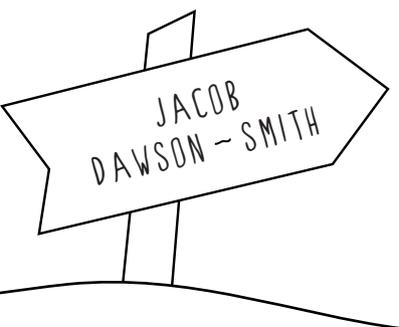
[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)  
020 8371 8455

**Working With Loss, Death and Bereavement (book)**

[www.uk.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book229411](http://www.uk.sagepub.com/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book229411)

**Alliance of Hope (forum: a place for those grieving loss to suicide)**

[www.forum.forsuicidesurvivors.com/viewforum.php?f=18](http://www.forum.forsuicidesurvivors.com/viewforum.php?f=18)





**Southchurch  
Vocational College**  
in partnership with St Nicholas School



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