

Appendix: Details of Phenomenological Survey

Throughout this book, I have drawn on responses to a phenomenological survey of grief experiences, which I conducted with colleagues as part of the project “Grief: A Study of Human Emotional Experience,” funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. The study received ethical approval from the Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of York. It was made available via the online platform Qualtrix from 1 June 2020 until 4 February 2021. Anyone over the age of eighteen who identified as currently experiencing grief over the death of a person, or as having experienced grief in the past, was invited to complete it. All participants consented to their anonymized testimonies being made publicly available in full. Participants were able to access the survey after reading an information sheet and completing a consent form. Initial questions requested basic information such as age, gender, and nationality. Participants then proceeded to answer present- or past-tense versions of the questionnaire, depending on whether or not they identified their grief as “current.” Present-tense versions of the questions were as follows:

- What was the nature of your relationship with the person who died?
- Please can you tell us about the circumstances of the bereavement, including when it occurred.
- How has the person’s death affected you during the hours, days, and weeks that followed?
- How, if at all, have your relationships with other people (particular individuals and other people in general) been affected by the bereavement?
- Does the surrounding world seem any different to you while grieving? If so, how?

- Has your experience of time changed in any way?
- Has your body felt any different during grief?
- Has grief interfered in any way with your ability and motivation to perform various tasks, including paid work?
- Is your experience of grief changing over time? If so, how?
- Have you ever found yourself looking for the person who died or expecting that person to appear?
- Are there times, places, and occasions that have made you especially aware of the person's absence?
- People who are grieving often report experiencing the presence of the person who died. Have you had any experiences that you would describe in those terms?
- Do you still feel a sense of connection with the person? If so, could you say something about when you feel this and what the experience is like.
- Since the person died, is there anything that you have been doing in order to feel close to them?
- Is there anything that you do in order to avoid being reminded of the person or of their death?
- Has anything in particular helped you to cope with grief? Has anything made you feel better or worse?
- How understanding have other people been? Have others said or done anything that you've found especially helpful or unhelpful?
- How, if at all, has your experience of bereavement changed you as a person?
- How, if at all, does grief over the death of a person differ from other forms of loss that you have experienced?
- Are there any aspects of grief that you find particularly puzzling or difficult to put into words?
- Are there any important aspects of your experience that we have not addressed?

The survey was disseminated widely via social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. Many of the responses were received shortly after the charity Cruse Bereavement Care posted a link via Twitter. A total of 265 completed responses were received. Of these, 236 focused on grief over the death of a person, with a majority (130) involving the death of a long-term

partner. Despite the study's explicit focus on bereavement, the remaining 29 responses were concerned principally with grief over childlessness rather than bereavement. Most respondents were UK nationals. This was to be expected, given where and how the study was advertised. Other nationalities listed were United States/American (13), Dutch (4), German (4), Irish (2), Australian (2), Swedish (1), New Zealand (1), Polish (1), and Ghanaian (1). In total, 240 respondents identified as female and only 25 as male. All participants identified as either female or male; none chose to self-describe. A total of 173 participants reported an ongoing experience of grief, while 92 reported a past experience. Quotations from 101 of the responses are included in this book, integrated into chapters 1–8. The following table includes, for those respondents, information concerning (1) current age of the bereaved, (2) gender of the bereaved, (3) whether or not the experience of grief was identified as current or past, and (4) the person who died or the nature of the loss:

Questionnaire	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
8	18–24	F	Current	Brother
11	55–64	F	Current	Father
13	55–64	F	Current	Husband
14	35–44	F	Current	Husband
17	45–54	F	Current	Husband
18	35–44	M	Current	Wife
19	35–44	F	Past	Fiancé
20	55–64	F	Current	Adult son
21	35–44	F	Current	Husband
25	55–64	F	Current	Husband
28	65–74	F	Current	Husband
30	65–74	F	Current	Husband
31	45–54	F	Current	Husband
34	55–64	F	Past	Husband
35	65–74	F	Current	Husband
36	55–64	F	Current	Husband
38	55–64	F	Current	Husband
40	55–64	M	Current	Wife

(continued)

Questionnaire	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
41	65–74	F	Current	Husband
42	55–64	M	Current	Wife
44	55–64	F	Current	Husband
45	55–64	F	Current	Husband
46	55–64	F	Current	Husband
47	65–74	F	Current	Husband
48	55–64	M	Past	Wife
49	55–64	F	Current	Husband
51	55–64	F	Current	Husband
54	55–64	F	Current	Fiancé
55	55–64	F	Current	Husband
57	65–74	F	Past	Husband
59	65–74	F	Current	Husband
62	55–64	F	Current	Husband
65	65–74	F	Current	Husband
66	65–74	F	Current	Husband
67	65–74	F	Past	Husband
69	65–74	F	Past	Husband(s)
71	55–64	F	Current	Husband
72	65–74	F	Current	Husband
74	55–64	F	Current	Husband
75	55–64	F	Current	Husband
81	55–64	M	Current	Wife
82	55–64	F	Current	Husband
83	55–64	F	Past	Partner
85	55–64	F	Current	Husband
86	65–74	F	Current	Wife
87	45–54	F	Current	Husband
89	55–64	F	Current	Husband
93	65–74	M	Current	Wife
94	55–64	F	Current	Husband
97	45–54	F	Current	Husband
100	55–64	F	Current	Husband
101	75+	M	Current	Wife
102	55–64	F	Current	Husband

Questionnaire	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
104	55–64	F	Current	Husband
107	65–74	F	Current	Husband
108	45–54	F	Current	Partner
110	25–34	F	Current	Father
113	55–64	F	Current	Husband
114	45–54	F	Current	Spouse
118	65–74	F	Current	Husband
123	55–64	F	Current	Husband
125	18–24	F	Current	Father
126	45–54	F	Current	Husband
127	65–74	F	Current	Husband
133	55–64	F	Current	Partner
141	45–54	F	Past	Sister
144	65–74	F	Past	Mother
151	25–34	F	Current	Husband
159	35–44	F	Current	Father
162	35–44	F	Current	Grandmother
164	45–54	F	Current	Close friend
168	35–44	F	Current	Aunt
171	45–54	M	Past	Partner and only child
172	65–74	F	Current	Husband
174	65–74	F	Past	Husband
175	55–64	F	Current	Husband
177	55–64	M	Current	Wife
178	45–54	F	Current	Husband
180	55–64	F	Current	Husband
189	25–34	F	Current	Grandmother
191	25–34	F	Current	Mother
192	65–74	F	Current	Husband
194	35–44	M	Current	Mother
196	35–44	F	Current	Childlessness
198	45–54	F	Past	Miscarriage and childlessness
204	18–24	F	Current	Grandfather
209	55–64	F	Current	Childlessness

(continued)

Questionnaire	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
210	45–54	F	Current	Childlessness
215	55–64	F	Current	Father
221	45–54	F	Current	Childlessness
223	45–54	F	Past	Childlessness
225	35–44	F	Current	Childlessness
226	35–44	F	Current	Childlessness
233	35–44	F	Past	Childlessness
238	55–64	F	Past	Childlessness
239	45–54	F	Current	Husband
251	45–54	F	Current	Childlessness
253	55–64	F	Current	Childlessness
258	45–54	F	Current	Childlessness
261	45–54	F	Current	Miscarriage and childlessness
262	25–34	F	Current	Childlessness

This is a section of [doi:10.7551/mitpress/13987.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/13987.001.0001)

Grief Worlds

A Study of Emotional Experience

By: Matthew Ratcliffe

Citation:

Grief Worlds: A Study of Emotional Experience

By: Matthew Ratcliffe

DOI: 10.7551/mitpress/13987.001.0001

ISBN (electronic): 9780262372619

Publisher: The MIT Press

Published: 2023

The open access edition of this book was made possible by generous funding and support from MIT Press Direct to Open



The MIT Press

© 2022 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

This work is subject to a Creative Commons CC-BY-ND-NC license.

Subject to such license, all rights are reserved.



The MIT Press would like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers who provided comments on drafts of this book. The generous work of academic experts is essential for establishing the authority and quality of our publications. We acknowledge with gratitude the contributions of these otherwise uncredited readers.

This book was set in Stone Serif and Stone Sans by Westchester Publishing Services.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Ratcliffe, Matthew, 1973– author.

Title: Grief worlds : a study of emotional experience / Matthew Ratcliffe.

Description: Cambridge, Massachusetts : The MIT Press, [2022] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022004533 (print) | LCCN 2022004534 (ebook) |

ISBN 9780262544801 (paperback) | ISBN 9780262372602 (epub) |

ISBN 9780262372619 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Grief. | Bereavement.

Classification: LCC BF575.G7 R38 2023 (print) | LCC BF575.G7 (ebook) |

DDC 152.4—dc23/eng/20220621

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022004533>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2022004534>