

THE SIGNAL · A FREE GUIDE

The First Step Out of The Deep

A gentle guide for the newly grieving — from someone who's been in the dark himself.

by **Michael Paul** · Grief Guide & Evidential Seer

Before you read this

If you're holding this, something happened. Someone's gone, and the world expects you to keep walking like the ground didn't just disappear.

I'm not going to tell you it gets better on a schedule. I'm not going to hand you the five stages of grief like a checklist you failed. This isn't that.

This is just a hand in the dark from someone who's been down there. Read it slow. You don't have to do anything with it today except know one thing: **I see you. And you're not as alone as it feels.**

1. You're not broken. You're in The Deep.

There's a place grief takes you where you stop reaching. You stop hoping. You just go still.

Some days you don't even know what you're looking for. Peace. A sign. Just *something* to remind you they're still here.

That fog has a name. I call it The Deep — and I lived there for a long time, in my own way. What I need you to hear is this: **being in The Deep is not a sign that something is wrong with you.** It's what deep love does when the person it was pointed at is suddenly gone. You're not malfunctioning. You're grieving. Those are not the same thing.

You don't have to climb out today. You just have to know there's a way up. There always is.

2. Grief isn't sadness. It's love with nowhere to go.

Everyone expects grief to look like crying. Sometimes it does. But just as often it looks like *numbness* — like nothing at all — and that nothing is the hardest thing to explain to people who want to see you cry so they know you're okay.

Here's the reframe that changes everything:

Grief is not a problem to be fixed. It's love that suddenly has nowhere to go.

All the care you had for them is still in you — it just doesn't have a person to land on anymore. That's the ache. That's the weight in your chest. It's not weakness. It's the exact size of how much you loved them.

You don't have to make it smaller. You just have to help it find somewhere to go again.

3. The thing that keeps you stuck (nobody warns you about this)

Most people think grief keeps you stuck because it's *sad*.

It's not the sadness. **It's the guilt.**

The guilt of laughing again. The guilt of a good hour. The quiet fear that if you move forward, you're leaving them behind — that healing is a kind of betrayal.

I want to say this as clearly as I can:

They don't want you frozen in the pain of their passing. They want you to remember the joy of their life.

Moving forward is not forgetting. Feeling okay again is not betrayal. The guilt is the thing chaining you to the worst day — and you have permission, right now, to set it down.

4. Your emotions are the way out (Emotions as GPS)

Here's the thing I've built my whole life around, and it's the truest thing I know:

How you feel is your compass. Your emotions are a map — they are always pointing you somewhere.

We're taught to run from the hard feelings. Numb them, drink them, scroll past them, stay busy so they can't catch us. I did that for twenty years. It doesn't work — because the feeling *is the signal*. It's trying to tell you which way to go.

You don't have to fix how you feel. You just have to *feel* it long enough to read it. Every feeling is answering one quiet question:

Does this move me a little closer to who I want to be — or a little further away?

That's it. That's the whole navigation system. Not big leaps. Just the next small turn toward feeling a fraction better than you did a minute ago.

A little progress beats staying still. Every single time.

5. The first step: Show Me Your Breath

When you're in The Deep, "take a step" can feel impossible. So let's make the first one small enough that you can't fail it.

It's called **Show Me Your Breath**. You can do it right now, wherever you are:

1. **Put one hand on your chest.** Where the weight sits.
2. **Breathe in slowly** — through your nose, to a count of five. Let your hand rise.
3. **Hold, gently, for a moment.**
4. **Breathe out** — even slower, to a count of five. Let your hand fall.
5. **Do it five times.** That's all.

That's not going to fix your grief. It's not supposed to. What it *does* is bring you back into your body for thirty seconds — out of the spinning, into right now. And right now, in this breath, you are okay.

When the wave comes — and it will keep coming — you don't have to outrun it. You just have to breathe until it passes. And it always passes.

6. You don't have to climb out alone

Here's what I've learned, on the dock as a boy and on the back deck of a ship at the lowest point of my life:

The way out of The Deep isn't found alone. It's found the moment someone sees you — really sees you — and reminds you that you're still in there.

That's the work I do now. As a Seer, I help people who've loved and lost feel seen, find their footing, and take the next honest step up. Not with predictions. Not with cold reading. Just by seeing what's true, and helping you see it too.

If today all you can do is breathe five times, that's enough. That's the step.

And when you're ready for the next one — I'll be right here. I've been here the whole time.

When you're ready for the next step, it's free: a 15-minute Steady Call — you talk, I see you, no pitch. askmichaelpaul.com/steady

And when you want the full hour — the Steady Ground Session is there too.

*With you, **Michael Paul** Grief Guide & Evidential Seer · A Signal of Hope*

This guide is offered for personal insight, comfort, and reflection. It is not a substitute for professional medical, psychological, or grief-counseling care. If you are struggling — especially if you're having thoughts of harming yourself — please reach out to a licensed professional. In the U.S., you can call or text 988 any time to reach a real person. You are not alone.