Speaker 1 ([00:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pk3MxqA8JtJMw8wiDfs2zdUD_Bbo-x0oA0X9N3imyma36reyM5C9OGnEI7Foqf0M_Ts5xSSx1g5jqRD623qT5wC644E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2.67)):

Hi everyone. And welcome to this episode of ask a death doula hosted by doula givers. My name is Susan O'Brien today. We're gonna talk about grief and we're gonna talk about healing grief. My guest today is re Peterson. He is the creator of grief refuge, a mobile app for grief support. He achieved his master's degree in transpersonal psychology from the Institute of transpersonal psychology in 2007 and is certified in death and grief studies by the center for loss and life transition after losing his biological father to suicide in 2006 and his stepfather to cancer in 2016, Reed felt a calling to help the grieving find peace and purpose after loss Reed. Thank you so much for being here.

Speaker 2 ([00:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=po4mtbNJEfABECfCRVwuyCuofnhPkkN-GYoPFzwSz5k-nza3YjhKypU7yUhf1HyRBvOKBx6BWTe401b6X7Q-KDC8W20&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=49.12)):

Thank you, Suzanne. I'm looking forward to our meaningful conversation.

Speaker 1 ([00:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vgk5JJBfjGDtj-_XJQBjDDAjoor-ZpXKfOI51uc-QHTGBfWFxn0bxT3UINDwk2M44CGVVLneidy42kZoM5lvB-XMfwc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=52.68)):

Definitely. So I want to honor you and I also want to highlight your journey and coming to this space because I think one of the things that is wonderful is when we can turn a traumatic or painful experience into something that can help others in that space moving forward. And I often will share with people that you're helping other people, but you're actually also healing your experience as well. And as we know, and my listeners know that right now, we're not talking about end of life. We're definitely not talking about grief. So this is a wonderful interview and podcast for us to really get into the grief area of our life's journey and experience. So if you would be so kind to share a little bit about that background and what brought you to the passion to want to do this, uh, work?

Speaker 2 ([01:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mRQuEQZBSPKNLofj3w-smxQn1rE_zQOc4HFnVeOOg0OfdoZembfQxULerg5T_0b_XqYBF0FO-0RqpeanEEmtKXd-w0c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=103.87)):

Sure. Um, it actually started in graduate school and I was studying to be a professor. I wanted to teach transpersonal psychology. And I, at that time I was really, um, if you think of dark heavy en energy and you think of light and joyful energy, I was really drawn to the light and joyful energy. And I was so excited about like helping people achieve transcendence and like really finding the higher consciousness of themselves. Sure. And then, um, and then in my, actually the spring of my first year of school, uh, my dad died. He and he died unexpectedly. He died by suicide. Mm. And I, I took on this, um, approach, uh, the way I reacted to the news and the events was, um, really a lot of relief. And it was at the time it felt very authentic truthfully because my dad, most of his adult life was a constant struggle.

Speaker 2 ([02:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WzfuyfIlNrjGzLL-GphbpM2oPL3c9zdeGu8jg_7Zq-TA-uIBUByBH32erbvIYVXY0FozFiMsS5V25dO9icPV9_BdbLk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=168.13)):

He struggled with post traumatic stress old with post-traumatic stress. He was in the Vietnam war. He also was an alcoholic. And so my communication with my dad was difficult and I just didn't have a solid bonded father, son, emotional connection. And so I really grasped the concept of, um, he is in a better place and also his suffering is ended. He's he's free. Those were some of the terms I would repeat in my mind. And then over, you know, over some time I realized, oh, I, I do feel sad about his loss. I miss him. And I also am slightly feeling guilty about the way I originally felt. And so I had to process that a lot for quite a few years. And then in 2008, my stepfather, who was an active father figure in my life, he was diagnosed with multiple myeloma. And so his battle with cancer was long.

Speaker 2 ([03:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dad9GRUlSnFW1uGTKz0kIiE_sNiKFH3gsxZepukgkdUOwqyUel08NelmFig6QkjBNI-0x6G81r617kfSt2bPqvglntc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=230.73)):

It was grueling. Um, I give him tremendous props for being like, you know, a warrior in his journey. And then in 2016, he, I think he said I've had enough. And he transitioned. And when, when he died, I thought, you know, I've been here, I've done that. I've grieved a father. I'm, I'm gonna be good. And Susanna, I was completely Sur surprised by how different and, um, how, how deeply emotional I felt, um, with Warren's passing. And so it led me to, uh, seek out local support groups and also grief counseling in my community. And those were very helpful experiences and tools that I relied on. But I also got to a point where I was like, what do I do in the, in between? Because there was kind of like this duality experience, you know, of like feeling really supported and then feeling really lonely. And then a week later feeling really supported and then feeling really lonely again. And that led me eventually to the work that I'm doing now,

Speaker 1 ([05:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xwqYJzfjzsm6u_X6X0tYaXz_329NdF4UOo5iCx7aIw6_Lp-lVbVQoNDAJ7letB4429tLu6rbtiVecY3_bQ2wdRVuKz0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=305.279)):

Really powerful. And I, and I love that you had two different, very different experiences, but I also really wanna highlight our veterans and it gets me really emotional. Um, because, you know, end of life is so complicated in and of itself for, for all of us, but you then bring in veterans and their past experience and post traumatic stress disorder. And, you know, it's a very, very unique, specific end of life or life that they carry with them. And I, I think we don't do, you know, nearly obviously enough and we have to bring back that awareness, how difficult it is for people. It's the most difficult end of lifes I've ever been part of are my veterans, honestly. So I thank you for those two journeys and thank you to your father for his service. I think it's very important that you share that. I feel good. And then all of a sudden, I don't feel good. I feel supported. And then wait a minute, like where, and this is a very natural, and I want people to know that. Cause I think if we don't talk about end of life, we definitely are not talking about the grief part of it and we're not sharing the natural way that grief works. So if you would be kind enough to give us just a definition, if you could, of what grief is,

Speaker 2 ([06:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=11EzU-wxPKyqQB5oZWS3O3JonRyZgIuRMenzexWYhmelSaHBbQq4YfRSwpO7gza8ADVZiHHnZ1TPB5RbpKCtphMj52c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=384.19)):

<laugh>

Speaker 1 ([06:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=761lLk349JODy_0fNxpx1i0a9IIoC6487cQXK7GYtfZDNCPYTBK1YVLjQ2jrXXaecZpF_Npqcj1678gLuUELLwFcJzM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=385.77)):

As best you can.

Speaker 2 ([06:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j4bFNZ7xSM-mRwUesugllDPuDh3WtMp2BLxZflykzq5FFLj_Qxjq6yv36UzzPbkX-LmsqMvYDuWKbX9BYSxvnZ9dvL8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=387.38)):

Well, I I'm laughing cuz I'm like, well, uh, maybe I can address grief in, in our connection in this conversation. Yeah. But then I, I really want to point out that if I were to talk to someone else, I might say different words. So let me preface it that way, but okay. In a, in a nutshell, let's go textbook grief is the thoughts and the feelings that are related to a loss. The loss doesn't have to be death related. It could be a significant experience in life. Um, but that's very generalized and taking it a little bit more specific to death related loss. I really think it's, um, it, it's the ability to journey and to come to understand, um, your life experience and also what you defined the relationship was while your loved one was still living. And now how you define the relationship going forward, because I believe there is still a relationship that can be maintained with somebody who has transitioned.

Speaker 1 ([07:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YvWtmUEqvdc19ifHb_RDf9HomvNEzvr1_nkJmL6zC2GYeWs5Yg7Lv63LuCllq1_uDQzcLlsy9I2cwMG36NHn5EbE8KQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=450.13)):

Definitely. So thank you for that. And I want people to really understand that grief is a response to loss of any type and there's so many. And I think that we all probably can pick several things that we feel lost to in the last few years here. So people were, you know, grieving their life as they knew it or the situation or their jobs or all of it. It was just very layered and very intense, really honing into that. It's a natural and expected response. And so one of the things that I find in my work is that when we don't talk about this area at all, we don't know what is natural and what isn't and what is complicated and what's not. And also what tools that we can use for helping support each other. And one of the things that I often will say is that our presence is the best medicine we can give each other.

Speaker 1 ([08:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=latVXFjO6nxmeQsiQobdtR1SsGPR-63yVY63L7s8HouhcZnEKApJi02g9MllCDUA2wyeypn8cvL0-RAfvPDq0WmCyD0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=503.23)):

So I am not here to fix things. I am not here to, you know, wave a magic wand and make things disappear. I'm here to be in this journey with you and to bear witness, and also to share whatever tools that I can offer that you would choose if you wanna use. But also just to say, I'm with you here as a compassionate human being. So I love that definition of brief. And, um, and again, I want to get into a little bit more, the next question I think we should talk about is why do you feel in your experience that we are at a place in our journey of this humanity? That grief is just really not talked about that so much complicated grief. Um, you know, I have my obviously thoughts on that, but what is your thought about that?

Speaker 2 ([09:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w-QKVnDZM7ClpYOThvMqm0Xs2rV0p04uq9Vw9fxLH_ap5-W0SBNWf-TlyLG9Ty1SmcXleZk8jLG8GlK88asAU3OfDSU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=552)):

I appreciate you asking because it's something I've pondered for quite a long time and where I tend to lean towards is pain and just the concept of pain in that quite simply, people really don't want to feel pain. Um, our healthcare system is really built to provide medication and the medication can help block, uh, feeling physical pain and then emotional pain. You know, a lot of grievers that I've supported, they just get so sick and tired of crying all the time. And it's really, they understand that's important, but yet they just want some sense of normalcy. So yeah. Um, somehow some way a lot of people learn when they are in pain, they define that as not normal. And then they want to feel a part of something that's normal. Yeah. And so that's why I think, you know, grief gets dismissed. It gets disenfranchised, it gets tabooed, it gets stigmatized. It really gets a bad rap. And you know, it doesn't get a lot of, uh, respect for lack of better term as part of the natural process to life and healing and experiencing. And I just wanna say really quickly, I love it when you say the word natural, because I can hear your energetic charge in it. And I'm like, we are definitely on the same page in that regard.

Speaker 1 ([10:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=zt5T9XIz_D1fX2ecYXux_0drldZ2Ox9y2mUVm95dSokRl5nf6keTEuLyuTInD7NgePUmZ8KKZd4trrOyo8lkFySmEZo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=643.309)):

Beautiful. I love that too. Um, so one of the things that was so, uh, shocking to me is that working as a hospice nurse, when people had their end of life, you know, this is the way we do it. We usually give people like a weekend off or maybe even two weeks off, if they're lucky enough and then they're supposed to be over it. They're supposed to go through the services, go through the motions and then kind of put it in a tight little box with a bow on and put it away. That's not how it works. In fact, I found that most of my families had the most heavy part of their grieving. Sometimes three weeks out from the actual death when they found themselves all of a sudden alone and, and realizing what just happened, it was kind of whirlwind. So for us to really identify the energy attached to grief.

Speaker 1 ([11:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gxAqbODL5qP4q93e2ZQP7C1VxONZYoSmcsihbYcaYM6-xVXdfbJJM8zJKqiBVUWtGeM9P-irQjMThXL8DwcHEu40CQE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=688.51)):

And when you said pain, let's talk about pain for a minute. We know pain is uncomfortable, right? But pain is a wonderful signal to you that something's there for you. And if we, again, and I love that you highlighted, every people don't wanna be in pain. We live in a society. We're like, oh, you have pain fix, you know, push it away, fix it, take a medication. It's a warning symptom. It's a symptom of something it's letting you know, it's you. And so we don't wanna be in pain, but we wanna say, what is that pain? And we have got to honor it to recognize it, to acknowledge it, to move it so you can play all the games that we want. And believe me, we're all works in progress. There's no judgment here about pushing it away about pushing things away about taking medication.

Speaker 1 ([12:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vhqonWW3b9u0KdJk77Cy1rDnxHKwGXtrPsgWwT6Wmp0gC2qgIIfmUAL4V-hgzHt_dFTfAxsWIcWUj54R5w17s6e4crg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=734.79)):

You're just masking it. It never goes away. And what happens is it will just transmute or grow to something even more severe. So knowing that it's natural to me knowing that it's expected, but then also okay, what it, what's here to acknowledge it. And how do I sit with it, honor it, what are my tools to actually eventually transform it? So what I love with my families that have gone through a process of healthy grieving or in, in that space is when they can get to a place of looking back at the end of life. And it's not triggering that painful emotion anymore, but they're looking at it more with, okay, that person I loved. And they're, we're highlighting the positive aspects of that end of life and of that person, because it's almost like a highlight reel end of life. Everything goes so fast.

Speaker 1 ([13:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gnA_wpUJIeSPa2EBLRrKBrvLST8MxjI1km_X68UHpQxIVZWzoWdkFNrfsqUbq-pAQqgnNYFJ_JTWcvWw4-KrnFdLklo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=788.28)):

This is how trauma works. That, and it's usually the negative things are highlighted in the real. So if we are remembering that quickly, we remembering, oh, when they were in pain or something mean that they said, or whatever that may be, you wanna reproces and go back and really start to reprogram that memory and, and cha take that highlight reel that was painful and say, what were those moments with my mom that were beautiful? What, what really happened there? And so it's a, it's a, it's a process, but unless we're willing and we have the courage, which again, it doesn't take a lot. I think it's more the awareness to sit with the pain, to make friends with the pain, to befriend the pain we're not ever really gonna be able to transform it and, and move past.

Speaker 2 ([13:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yY7S_GOnzbxo240hY33ebD5zklhUtU1ljfOuqMsx3ATrZEUbelrklQIuPdbjQwWFlyD8fACDRKdW4pwZTr7Q8sZShOM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=835.69)):

Yeah. I, all I can really say is ditto. <laugh>.

Speaker 1 ([13:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mXoaS3WEN5Hve5-RT8Bq66_r6mvwbXVmJBUnJJqDKMxPLDH4BK4vnR4iUMO4wCm4f3s-4jPH8ukzO6p2ULxWO0iasx4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=838.929)):

Yeah. Ditto. I like it, but it's, that's great cuz I really want people to hear that. So, and this is wonderful because this is the platform that you are offering. Just that kind of support that people can have a, um, tools and a platform and a, and a support group to actually transform it. So we will get to that, um, at the end to share what that beautiful app is. But a couple more questions before we get there. Do you believe that if you're aware at all that if we brought back ritual into the end of life process itself, would that have a bearing on jumping off point of healthy, grieving? Um, what is your feeling on that?

Speaker 2 ([14:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hzRitlNTmtE7pKtYqg0fJ6BrjenypRDExrQF5691H6mDKEFF1NRrRvCxQgATOZo2oHU_KZzxD08hubSxnbfWUqFcxhA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=880.85)):

That's a beautiful question. And actually when you asked it, I could kind of feel something sink into like my tummy, like viscerally, where it's like, oh yes, like that incorporating ritual more in the aspects of end of life and, or, um, grieving and memorials. I, I think that it can be so comforting and in the act of comfort, it can really help provide some insight into, uh, maybe not giant leaps, but some baby steps for the next phases of life. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. So I think that any ritual is helpful. I think that, oh man, when ritual is participated with, you know, loved ones, it's even that much more empowering. I'm all for ritual mm-hmm <affirmative> especially in nature

Speaker 1 ([15:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3ZTFkCtR7YL46fJ7Qr19LPam1lyuzy-rXJn0DC_gf2VnPxqPZ-Cio9xwNEvAB9wUOvTSHPTmg1fraozsD2w_krlwsFo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=939.1)):

<laugh> oh gosh. Yeah, for sure. What I have found right now we are living in a society that we treat death is optional. And you know, when it shows up, which we know inevitably it will right. One day, a hundred percent guaranteed when it comes, it's like a shock to people. And I'm even speaking about people who are in their nineties, that the family's like telling the doctor, what do you mean? They have a, what do you mean they have a terminal diagnosis fix it. So we put, we put pressure on our doctors and we've taught them that if somebody dies, they've actually failed, which is again, we have to really change our thinking here. We have to bring death back into the natural fold of life. But for me, that denial, first of all, I think death is our greatest teacher about how to live, because there's so much wisdom and beauty here, just your presence, the gratitude that you have, you know, purpose and all of that and how we're all connected.

Speaker 1 ([16:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Dt4qR3xQKDdUKTZPlXzz8vIIPsnJAjJi2rPcISIetj19AwpRa9zPH6ZCEf9awfMZ64yHfR-Stw5-EL6CVlWqO7R66Bg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=995.29)):

But also it really becomes a crisis at the end with that removal of it. So that when it does show up, we don't have any advanced care planning. We haven't thought about it. And usually there's a ton of regrets because if you live every day thinking you've got forever, well, you're not gonna get to that conversation. Or you maybe you won't climb that mountain or write that book or whatever it may be. And when you realize that your time is up, oh no. So there's a whole bunch here, not just for the person, but for the family. So I have found that the end of life is very complicated with that, but then the grief part is extremely complicated. The families that have done this and it's becoming more and more of an option that people are using. I slow down my families. Like if I'm there as a hospice nurse and a doula giver, I want them to take as much time at that end of life when that person dies.

Speaker 1 ([17:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7EY4st3EsM76Z-MCNPOEYsDTbTjGkyHTrcKASlLk2dtCRslzRshweuoLidxl3rZZfg4Mz137MSxhFiiyJ24xDTF1Fu0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1049.65)):

And usually it's kind of a, it's kind of a very fast process right now because if people not planning and that person dies. And I say, don't, don't rush this, don't call the funeral home right away. What do you mean? Don't call them right away. How, who needs to be here, take your time. And that window, that window of when that person has end of life for people to stop and be present, and maybe they sit in quiet, they read, they tell stories has had such a direct impact on the way that that grief and bereavement goes from that point forward. There's lots of documentation, about three day home wakes and things. And, and I'm really trying to be an advocate to help bring that awareness back. Do you have insight onto that as well?

Speaker 2 ([18:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MDCKEN_Gk9S6zy6PPwAmkM14n9rrmCn47dII8gCNZNBVtFxwdOogJhMgwLVCCsCF4zp0FQUK-Jocyfp6R91dMVZvlek&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1093.1)):

Yeah. I, I guess I can piggyback on your thoughts. I hear your passion and I, and I'm like, yes, I definitely advocate for slowing things down. Mm-hmm <affirmative> um, just to help process, because life changes almost like at the snap of a finger when somebody's so important now has died. Mm-hmm <affirmative> and so there's so much to take on there's, um, you know, all the administrative tasks and nobody really asks for that. So taking an approach to, um, to settle and let things just kind of like marinate for a minute is helpful. Yeah. It, you, you beautifully articulated it because it's like, there is no need to rush.

Speaker 1 ([19:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fzX3nkzkALC-a0S-mV7qIY6B0uo2xRKnz2Pkhbcou64QKRjjSMGVI8Y5shyaFOFMJ-qcfHBRdau85vdoqpNHW7HsbH8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1141.9)):

Yeah. And we really shouldn't. We need to take this moment in, because if you think about it, we'll never get this moment again. Right. So even if, and again, it, I'm not ever telling somebody what they need to choose for, um, how they memorialize or, or, but I want people to know they have options. And this is really empowering because I feel like at end of life, people tend to feel such a loss of control. They have lots of choices and there's lots of beautiful options with natural burials and water cremations and home wakes, but allowing us to slow down in that moment, because usually things have gone very fast and really take in that your loved one has actually stopped living in that human body is very important for you to concretely understand when I have been a hospice nurse and when people have had end of lifes and they've gone so quickly, it's fight or flight, the internal diagnosis go home.

Speaker 1 ([19:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mQY1EIQ6l-dhp2wVEw3TADFQQhzqJQDDLICPwq7M7eJG8OEnm33g-tVorasmHrH_aHrASrCvizdi_s8R6LO3LaImf-Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1195.04)):

Everyone is kind of frenetic, not sleeping. They have their end of life call the, the funeral home 15 minutes. They come in the body's whi away. Sometimes you don't even know what happened. And I think that really contributes greatly to the complicated grief that people are suffering. So I think that bringing back ritual is super important for this, especially against slowing things down and allowing processing, you did mention something and I wanna highlight planning ahead and preparing as much as we can, everyone. It is our responsibility. You and me not as practitioners, not as people in this space as individuals to take care of our paperwork, what we would want or not want are items. Um, because this shouldn't be left to family. You know, it's hard enough for them that they're dealing with saying goodbye to somebody they love in that physical form. But then to have to do all of the hunting and fishing and paperwork, it doesn't allow them to even step into that grief role. It takes about 16 months, they set on average to settle in a state. So they're dealing with a whole bunch of stress. They're not even having a moment to deal with their own grief. So I wanna really say to people, let's, let's do our advanced directives. Let's get our basic paperwork in order. It's the greatest gift you can give your family. So thank you for highlighting that. Um, stuck grief. Can you speak a minute about what complicated or stuck grief is and, and then we're gonna talk about tools that we can help healthy grieving.

Speaker 2 ([21:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8ukbB_9TYjOeYQspTd65qKOaKo2qmnw1wwZUUUhfO2L54VhYlDOApVLzGZEuftFZEwEFOrAfOilz2y1-z5bGANEO1zE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1286.01)):

Sure. I, I guess I think of very practical statements shared by people and, um, I guess three common things come to mind. They feel very hopeless and you know, like a statement of like, I just feel like I'm treading water or barely treading water. Um, you know, that's often an indicator of the hopelessness there's loneliness. Um, I think any type of grief is a lonely process. It's I mean, let me rephrase that. It's for sure. Isolating and many people also feel very lonely and then, um, feeling lost, not knowing what to do now. That's, um, I feel like those, like thematically those three things. When you gel them together, you have some complicated grief and you have some what people refer to as being stuck in their grief. Um, that's really the.off the top of my head. I could go deeper, but I might start sounding a little clinical and I really wanna avoid that. <laugh>

Speaker 1 ([22:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=yM8u-tbHEGTOe7xNW0W9KKmz0LN5VDFJJEHzhKCAAF4ewH5JDD-M8cgYtxVBsTCWzrIxDwti3M22asxnS7z6CaJFOng&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1349.96)):

Yeah, no, I appreciate that. I think for me, the people that I have worked with that have those stuck, um, energies of grief, it has been where something happened in the experience where they feel that it can never be healed or undone or, or, you know, like for instance, one of the most common things. And I have to say, we had a webinar last night with a thousand people learning the level one end of life, doula, how to care for their loved one at the end of life. And people come to that webinar to learn how to do the care for those at the end of life, a skill that I try and get people to learn before they need it. And so many people talk about how this webinar healed them. Now I'll give you an example of that. One of the most common things that happens at the end of life is that people will wait for you to actually step away from the bedside for them to have their end of life.

Speaker 1 ([23:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cPiwfQNd_87UREp9rLIhp_WyMx8-gWrCyufLcnuGZ9xSQKCOJy_x9eFo-Ljaqp-0BgSKBKl6wBghIiHAbcNXcwYTDgA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1399.6)):

So these are people that are in sleep in coma at the very end, the transition, not talking, not having their eyes open the five minutes that somebody leaves to get a cup of coffee, go take a shower. That person decides to have their actual end of life. And people come back and are usually riddled with guilt that they missed it. Now, this is a very common occurrence globally. I've worked with people all over the world. And what is that saying on a bigger picture? And I'm told that that person does not want that to be the last thing you remember, because death is too hard. So they wait now, how do they know you left the room? So when people come to this webinar and they hear this and they've been holding this on, in fact, I'll give you just one quick example, cuz this is so important.

Speaker 1 ([24:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VONi5anrFCB_j_Lgxe1uQpyAmxD7zsvIZ_7adniQJRwSf0y6TAr2QjFhfEZMILAVIXsaUvinKlHATvWPJqZYhpqngeo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1444.23)):

I was working, I was training a certified group and this woman was going through the program. She was taking care of an 82 year old man while she was doing it every week, she was telling him what she learned. She came to this part of the training and she turned around, he was crying and she said, why are you crying? And he said, you just gave me the greatest gift I've been holding onto my mother's end of life for 35 years that I wasn't there. And so we have got to talk about end of life, as that natural part of the life's journey share skills. Again, this is not a death is not a medical experience. It's a human one. And talk about the tools that can help us in that natural place of grief and pain and then how we can move forward. And that leads me to your work with the grief refuge. Can you share the grief refuge, what it is, what services it provides and how people can get in touch with you about it?

Speaker 2 ([24:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vkrylKULdzV7IgpUamPsqK0hamC3Jv9F6sa19-HHdi16k2nJZde8QvMYeB2XKf5Jyif5G9Kc2nymFTq4SjjskL7bKcY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1498.609)):

Sure. Yeah. If I fumble, I just want to say your, your experience in story brought me back to, um, one of my grandmothers, we, um, there were eight of us in the hospital room and she transitioned and it just, so is a little bit of a grief burst, uh, when you shared that. And fortunately for us, it, for me, it was a beautiful experience, but at the time I was 23 years old and I, you know, was still trying to figure out many aspects of life. Um, <laugh> trying to make it for that matter. And so, um, yeah. Uh, so I, I, um, sitting with a little bit of emotion of that, but I I'm deeply appreciative Suzanne, um, because it is so important. Um, what I can say about grief refuge is, um, we're a hybrid, um, organization and we're a hybrid organization of we do provide services like live services, such as retreats and or support groups.

Speaker 2 ([25:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Orv4ENhBWGGZhweSetTm1oBkbL_LbnxrK5o2jhKk5zOi6JHZJUtZR0DfL5VxLF5ZqQR9mFZpb93tpeqZ9To6-y1huto&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1559.26)):

These days, our support groups are online. Uh, we focus on try to, we, we try to focus on unique aspects of grief experiences. So for example, at the time of this recording, a current group're facilitating is people that are coping with too much loss, um, people who are experiencing grief overwhelm. And so a lot of support groups focus on like types of loss, like loss of a parent loss of a spouse loss of a child. And those are fantastic, but I noticed that, um, there's a lot of unmet needs in some of the specific experiences. Uh, one other example is I identify as a highly sensitive person. And so, um, uh, I think two years ago I wrote an article about, um, kind of, uh, articulating, uh, a typical grief experience for people that are highly sensitive and I've received countless, um, thank yous and gratitudes from that.

Speaker 2 ([27:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aos5elHSku0XuSPCf0c-4q3U4w0hB53bssDb7cP7pP_Lws9boYVWRtQ5f6GQI-BTW_nRenOM_dxfxHMepSIGZGGjln8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1624.93)):

And, um, and it's really led me to understand like a lot of people that identify as highly sensitive and are grieving, could really benefit from meeting each other. And so, um, likely in the future will be setting up some of those types of support groups. So those are the in person events and the services we provide. I do a little bit of one to one. Um, I call it grief companioning, and that's what I learned from Dr. Allen. Wolfel at a, at the center for loss and life transition. And it's, companion's a little bit different than counseling. Well, it's very different from counseling because I just counseling tends to follow the mental health model. And unfortunately with the mental health model, I, I, you know, I'm over generalizing, but I will say like, there's, there's a basic assumption that something needs to be cured or something needs to be fixed.

Speaker 2 ([27:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pjeDBcFSA3m2aUI4BKA1l1e3ZRXqTTTDwQHU9BeJleawKVApEPRP39GptvesTjESRB28jUbfM4ceD8zLZfK3tNog8Wc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1679.06)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, uh, you know, I, I, I mimic your words of like death grief, it's all a human experience. Mm-hmm <affirmative>. And so in with companioning, I really focus on the matter being heart centered and soul centered. And so I find myself doing a lot more listening and a lot more, um, being a soundboard for someone who just is that lonely and not being able to express a lot of what they're feeling. Um, and then we have the digital side, we have the product, um, in my story of my loss, when I came to learn that there was an in between, you know, you get support and then you don't and what do you do in the, in between mm-hmm <affirmative>? Well, the grief refuge app is the answer to that. It's, it's really a platform. It's an app on, um, both Android and iPhones mm-hmm <affirmative> and, um, anyone who's grieving can come to that and they can seek, um, seek and get validation.

Speaker 2 ([29:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u0By3rW3NUtlL3azCyMDKJJLotKt6phYyFimOhIVzdnxAE0zk_7upE2JUIBmtRIKfV-xiNaszA7-_b2w40yaaaquMtk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1740.32)):

They can find comfort, they can, you know, hear stories. They can hear daily reflections, they can get a little bit of guidance. Yeah. And it's all there for them. And, um, it's really convenient. And I'm really proud of that because, uh, when, at the time that I was experiencing my loss, nothing like that existed. And so, and so we planted that seed and brought it to life and it, um, it's doing really well. A lot of people are finding it in the app stores and they're, um, really thankful for it. They're just grateful that something like this exists.

Speaker 1 ([29:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6cOj7jgmM5p5FcqQiUd-KICQxzt8HVomZGQsK6yzsakQKn61L1cJHzjwMoPzZ1J3dqWQ6kErzmTY3c9SgqtoGGqv13o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1778.67)):

So again, back to the start of this episode, just reiterating how taking your experience that was painful and difficult and turning it into a gift to make the world a better place. Amazing. I honor you the technology part, you know, again, we live in a world that, you know, we got shut down. Technology. People sometimes have technology, but it there's really beautiful benefits to technology. And when you find yourself in this grief journey, which is a journey, this thing called life, and you have those moments, you can click something and immediately be connected to support. That's beautiful, cuz we can't always get to a meeting. We can't always get to a retreat, love that. And we just have to end this on emphasizing the power of our presence. The power of true presence is the best medicine we can give one another at the end of life and in life. And that's what that open heart centered, compassionate. I'm walking this journey with you. I'm companioning in humanity to make it a better place. I love it. Read. I wanna thank you so much for being our guest on ask a doula. Thank you so much. I love your work that you do and I'm sure plenty people will be reaching out and using your services.

Speaker 2 ([30:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dABVJ5z88ahUV_Q8X3BNTjUkdMPSJ_Lqdft-QQNxkpm7-9XsPHnN0QObTxPXta6htpEYHO1YkkFMt5R1NHI56KxH1wA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1856.19)):

Suzanne. Thank you. I love your passion. I I'm deeply inspired just by having this conversation with you. So thank you.

Speaker 1 ([31:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UFPEOBU3Kv9aZtSgfy-LGHBVS3vwf7UVqoB9lIjuCSIxD1Zcxg6BIPy27odtPUlc1oW6XPiWz_SHXyzf-yrz9yNjrT0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1863.45)):

Thank you so much. Okay. Well anyway, to be continued everyone. Thank you for watching this episode of ask a death doula again, my guest today read Patterson and we will continue. We'll put all of your links below, get in touch with him. And again, I will see you in the next episode. Thank you everybody.