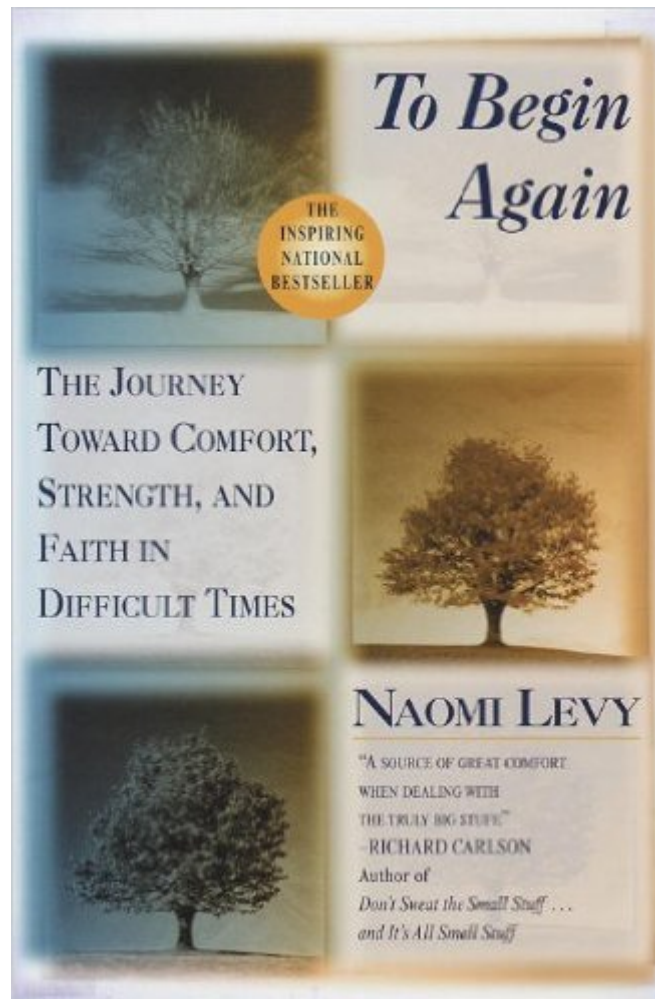


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# To Begin Again: The Journey Toward Comfort, Strength, And Faith In Difficult Times



## Synopsis

"Words that come from the heart enter the heart, an ancient rabbinic proverb instructs us. The words in this book come from the heart--mine and the hearts of others. I pray that you will find within them a spark that will ignite the flame of hope and the passion for healing that lies within us all." Naomi Levy was a spirited fifteen-year-old when her father was murdered in a senseless holdup that destroyed not only his life but her trust in a loving God. Healing took a long time, yet from her struggles with grief, anger, and depression, she forged the wisdom that made her, at twenty-six, a beloved rabbi--and now makes her book a miracle of honesty, recovery, and compassion. Where do we find the strength to meet tragedy? Can we rekindle hope? Innocence? Faith? The answers, illustrated with many moving, true stories drawn from Rabbi Levy's experience and the lives of her congregants, provide sanity, peace, and a safe harbor where we can heal and grow. Remember: "Death is a great tragedy. But to die while we are still living, that is the greatest tragedy of all."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

When I purchased this book it was with a little trepidation that it would not live up to all its reviews and ratings. In my opinion it deserves them all. I have found it a gentle, comforting and understanding companion during my time of intense pain, loss and loneliness after the sudden and recent death of my father. I loved my dad beyond words as he did his family - he was always there for us. This book with its stories, prayers and compassionate words makes you feel that you are not going crazy or behaving oddly in your time of pain. It is written in such an understanding and empathetic way and addresses all the feelings one has after tragedy strikes. It has been spiritually

uplifting for me. You certainly do not have to be Jewish to appreciate the wonderful compassion and stories that are contained in the pages of this superb book. It does not promise quick fixes but helps you to understand the pain you are going through, shows you that you are human and gives you pathways to seek assistance and eventually the coming to terms with what has happened. Naomi Levy has written this book from the soul.

Going beyond books with glib answers and easy how-to formulas for handling life's deepest and most painful losses, the author of this book has the honesty to acknowledge that grief is often very personal, mysterious and not easily resolved. What's more, the author seems to be saying, sometimes there is value in simply listening to grief and learning from it. I don't mean to imply that Levy always has a "wait and see" approach to grief, however. As a former rabbi for a Conservative congregation on the West Coast, her advice is solidly grounded in Jewish values and each section ends with a heartfelt prayer, lending perspective to her words. She also gives numerous examples of how individuals handled the most difficult losses one can face, from seeing family perish in the Holocaust to losing a child or spouse. This is an inspirational, warm and very engaging book.

I first became interested in this book when I saw Rabbi Levy on the "Today" show - I was completely taken in by her beautiful and compassionate recounting of some of her experiences that became part of this book. Although I was not going through any kind of difficulty, I purchased her book the next day. I must say that, as one who sits the fence between Catholicism and Agnosticism, I was moved to rethink my views as well as my role in this world. The message is not necessarily one of religion, but one of kindness and compassion as a member of society-at-large. In addition, I was pleased to get a better look at Judaism - a religion with which I have very little experience but that I admire for its beauty and sense of community. This book is a great read - regardless if your life is happy or troubled - as I think all will come away with a better outlook on life.

In this very personal book Rabbi Levy takes us through her own very personal story of loss so that we may ourselves recover from the death of a loved one. As a young teenager she lost her father and in this work of nonfiction she takes us through her struggle with G-d (HaShem), with helping her mother, and with living the rest of her life without her dad. We are able, as readers, to bond with the author as she takes us through her life from teenager to young adult and then through college. We experience the transformation of Rabbi Levy through rabbinical school to her obtaining a pulpit of her own in a congregation full of daily and weekly worshipers. Each chapter of this inspiring book

finishes itself with a wonderful peaceful serene meditation that leaves the reader feeling just wonderfully at peace and without grief. This book was recommended to me by my therapist. I was hesitant to read it at first because it was written by a female Rabbi. I did not feel that I would have anything to gain from the female perspective. Then I had to stop and think. I am grieving over the loss of my dear beloved wife who died too young at the age of 47 from brain cancer. She is up there in heaven whacking me on the side of the head if I don't change my "Archie Bunker" ideas and read the book. Well, I did. It proved to be a defining decision in my road to recovery from grief. This book is one of two that I read and, along with individual and group therapy that helped me overcome the 2.5 year nursing home ordeal of brain cancer, that finally culminated in death. It does not matter whether you are Jewish or not, whether you are male or female, buy this book if someone you love has died, it will help you.

This book bowled me over. I have been going through a very tough time lately, and have gravitated toward the self-help section-- something I don't ordinarily do. I checked out a lot of titles, and went through the pap and hooey of two other best sellers. Then I came to Rabbi Levy's book. It touched me immediately. She is a pitch-perfect story teller, who also has the ability to draw deep, mature and meaningful lessons from the stories. This is not a book of easy answers, but of deep and lasting insights. I have since bought several copies for friends and loved ones, and it has moved them and helped them as well. Thank you for this book.

This is probably the best non-fiction book I have ever read. I bought it during a "difficult time" and it was the best medicine I could have received. Levy manages to tell stories that anyone can connect with. It is poignant and heartwarming and I would recommend this book to anyone. I am not a religious person but the prayers at the end of the chapters really touched me, spiritually and emotionally.

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