



Q & A



Beth Allen Slevcove is a spiritual director, retreat leader, writer, surfer and mother in San Diego, California. She served as the director of spiritual formation for Youth Specialties for seven years and holds advanced degrees in theology and education. She also co-led a spiritual direction training program through Christian Formation and Direction Ministries (CFDM) and recently co-led the San Diego Spiritual Directors Association. Beth is deeply rooted in her urban Lutheran congregation and is an oblate at a Benedictine monastery. She created and runs the Surf Monkey Fellowship, a Southern California surf company and online community.

We all experience loss.

What prompted you to write a book about loss?

Beth Allen Slevcove: I want to help people stay connected to Jesus when life disappoints. My motivation came from both personal experiences of loss and struggling to figure out what to do with those experiences, and from my work as a spiritual director listening to the losses, often minimized, of the people I met with.

The need I am addressing is what to do with the suffering we experience, as it touches every human being at the core of our being. Each person has a need to find ways to deal honestly and creatively with the losses life brings in order to stay open to life and connected to God, self and others instead of the isolating, deadening, low grade depression and increased numbing behaviors that often accompany unacknowledged and ungrieved loss.

What is the main idea in *Broken Hallelujahs*?

Beth: My central thesis is that we all experience loss, and this loss can harden us or be an avenue of compassion and growth [transformation]. Learning to grieve can move us from the hardening, isolating effects of loss toward a more compassionate acceptance of and richer participation in life. Learning to grieve has everything to do with living a full, abundant life.

What does learning to grieve look like?

Beth: Learning to grieve involves

1. Honestly acknowledging to Jesus and ourselves what affects us.
2. Creatively working with what we find.
3. Finding traveling companions.

This approach is distinctive in that it looks at loss as a transformational journey, a means of spiritual formation. The book is invitational, weaving together memoir, story, ancient wisdom and practical help in a way that encourages the reader to open their journeys of loss to God, self and others.

Who is *Broken Hallelujahs* written for?

Beth: This book is written for those who are experiencing the disillusionment that comes from disappointments in life, for those who desire to relate differently to suffering, to somehow incorporate disappointment and loss into the fabric of their lives — people needing companionship and guidance through the loneliness and confusion of loss. This book is for people who desire to struggle with the darkness and find hopeful ways to incorporate their loss into their faith journey and ultimately into an increased ability to live in a broken world

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT THE INTERVARSITY PRESS PUBLICITY TEAM:

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com
Krista Carnet, broadcast and online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kkcarnet@ivpress.com
ivpress.com/crescendo

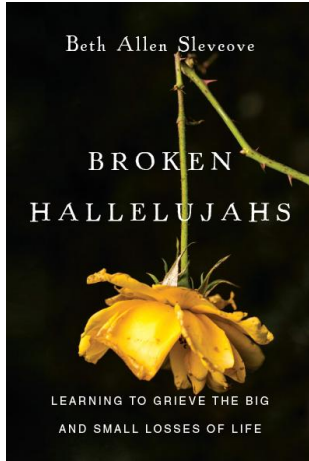
INTERVARSITY PRESS

Visit ivpress.com/media





Q & A



Broken Hallelujahs: Learning to Grieve the Big and Small Losses of Life

Available April 2016

\$16, 224 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4323-7

The losses in our lives are both big and small, and cover a range of experiences. We leave home. We experience physical illness and disabilities. We struggle with vocation and finances. We may long for a spouse or child. We lose people we love to addiction or illness and death.

In this book, spiritual director Beth Slevcove shares stories from her own life about losses and struggles. Along the way, she offers distinctive spiritual practices that can guide us back to God and, in the end, to ourselves.

with compassion, openness and a trusting, often joy-filled awareness. [It's for] people ready to make room for new possibilities and discover the grace loss brings (experience, not age).

What do you hope readers are able to take away from your book?

Beth:

- You are not alone. We all experience loss.
- Small losses deserve our attention and can accumulate unaware.
- God is present in our losses.
- Grief can lead to more life (or grieving can free us to experience life more fully).

 **INTERVARSITY PRESS**

Visit ivpress.com/media

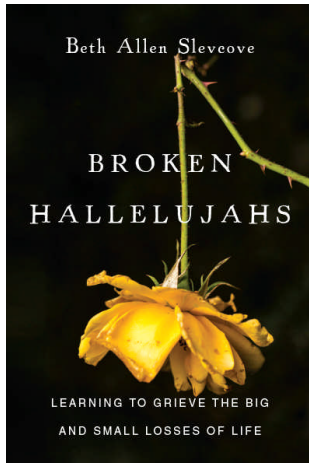


FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW CONTACT THE INTERVARSITY PRESS PUBLICITY TEAM:

Alisse Wissman, print publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Carnet, broadcast and online publicity, at 800.843.4587 ext. 4013 or kkcarnet@ivpress.com

ivpress.com/crescendo



Broken Hallelujahs: Learning to Grieve the Big and Small Losses of Life

Available April 2016

\$16, 224 pages, paperback

978-0-8308-4323-7

A Journey of Broken Hallelujahs

Our neighbor, it turns out, was committing murder.

In the days that followed, we began to overhear confusing messages spoken in low tones by adults or blurted out by the older neighbor kids: “Murder,” and “Bulldozers sent into the hills searching for a shallow grave.” It wasn’t until years later that the story came together in bits and pieces. The body of a young woman was discovered in a ditch one town over and identified through dental records. The next owner of the home replaced the bloodstained carpet in the small bedroom facing the street. Apparently the man with curly red hair, besides being an unfriendly neighbor, had a propensity for killing people. He had invited a woman over to his house, a prostitute by trade, and taken her life away with a baseball bat. And, we were told, years before he had done the same to someone else’s daughter in someone else’s hometown. . . .

After I heard about the murder, I felt exposed and vulnerable, realizing for the first time that God and my parents might not always protect me. Fear crept in under the sheets. The world was a much more complicated place than I had thought.

I was being cast out of Eden.

I didn’t know how to name the shifting landscape inside of me. It felt like the dissonant buzz and black and white fuzziness on the TV when we couldn’t get a clear channel. I hated that buzz. With the dawning realization that the world was not the secure place I thought it was came the equally harrowing discovery that I had no idea what to do with the realities of death, disappointment, instability or fear. I had no idea how to live away from this garden home. I wasn’t ready to leave. I hadn’t packed my bags.

A New Sound of Music

The house across the street, besides holding a murderer, also held something else, something innocent and small.

Some years before the murder, long before the man with curly red hair moved in, that room held a crib with wooden bars and plastic covered rails. In that crib was a little girl standing on her tiptoes, peering over the rail in hopes that someone would hear her cries in the dark.

My first memory is standing in that crib. The bedroom that would later become a murder scene was my nursery. When my family first moved to Ventura, this was the home we settled into. I was eighteen months old when we arrived, and my earliest memories of home formed within those walls.



BOOK EXCERPT

“Those who find themselves in the dark and disorienting cavern of loss will sense a true and faithful companion in Beth Allen Slevcove. She has spent a great deal of time in the dark and has not only survived but has learned to discern the subtle grays and cracks of light to guide her forward. She has tended her grief well, and her life’s journey has given her a deep ‘heart of wisdom’ that some people gain but few articulate so poignantly.”

—Jeff Johnson, musician

The little bedroom was dark; night had fallen, but I was wide awake, unhappy. I remember the distress of feeling alone and longing for Mom or Dad to appear. Finally the door cracked open ushering in both the light of the hallway and the loving face of my father. As Dad picked me up I knew I was free, safe within his arms. Maybe he would take me down the hallway to their bedroom where I could snuggle between him and Mom in the Big Bed.

It is strange to think that this little geographical location holds someone’s first memories and someone’s last. It holds someone’s cries that were met by her loving father and another’s cries for help that went unheeded. How can anything hold such life and death, such light and darkness, such beauty and horror, such heaven and hell? This bedroom parallels the world I was being forcefully awakened to, and I’ve grown to understand it also mirrors my own heart.

Duality exists in me. Love and hatred, intention and apathy, creativity and destructiveness, beauty and brokenness reign inside of me, as well as in my external environments. Can I find ways to hold this tension until it opens into something else, something expanding and softening instead of dulling and hardening? How can I honor the reality of brokenness without losing the memory and hope of wholeness? Where are my teachers?

I was discovering, even then as a young child, that if a hallelujah could be uttered out of the dark realities of life, it would be a “cold and broken” one. Death and a penetrating darkness entered into my awareness of what those hills held, a slow-motion shattering of my “happily ever after” ideology, making them alive with a more complex sound that I had not heard before. A sound incorporating notes of beauty and perfection right alongside those of death and devastation. A new song began playing, and with it, the initiation into a new journey, a journey of broken hallelujahs.

— *Adapted from chapter one, “Remembering Eden”*