



AND NOW... WHAT TO DO?

A Little Friend for Brave Boys and Girls



Gilbert Brenson Lazan with Parcia Margarita Sansary Gómez

Illustrations by Natach

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Dear Little Friends,

We are Gilberto and Parcia. We wrote this book to help girls and boys who have suffered terrible grief, or when they feel a lot of pain for something that happened, or when they are confused and have a lot of problems after a tragedy and ask, "And now, what do I do?" .

A tragedy is something that happens to us, without us being to blame for it having happened and without us being able to do anything to avoid it. It's like an accident or an illness where we feel very, very bad and believe that we will never get better or be like before. And then we discover that it's like having a disease that we think will never end and then we discover if we get better we can feel good.

We understand what is happening to you and we want to help you recover from this tragedy. Everything we write to you in this booklet we have lived too, so we will accompany you and the person who is with you (a teacher, your Mom or Dad, a friend, etc.) to review each lesson together so that you can recover more quickly.

These fifteen lessons are like the fifteen steps of a ladder: if you try to climb them all in one step, you will fall and never get to the top. If you only climb two or three steps and stay there, you won't get there either. If you try to jump some or climb them too quickly, you run the risk of slipping and not getting there. So, let's climb them together, step by step, lesson by lesson. By studying a lesson every day or two and doing homework on each of these lessons, we will reach the goal of feeling better, continuing to grow, and overcoming this challenge.

From your friends who love you forever,

Gilberto and Parcia

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARENTS AND OTHER SUPPORT PEOPLE

Dear Parents, Educators and other friends of children.

We share an enormous responsibility: to help children overcome all traumas related to a natural tragedy or human violence and to facilitate their speedy recovery and subsequent growth. In other words, having helpful answers when children ask, "Now, what do I do?" It is for this purpose that we wrote this booklet and if you use it with your children, students or clients, we ask that you consider the following suggestions:

1. We cannot give what we do not have and we cannot teach what we are not. Therefore, we cannot guide our children and learners in a healthy emotional recovery without being on the same path ourselves. We consider it very important that parents, educators or therapists who use this material are well aware of its content, available in our other free publications: **"LIGHT IN THIS DARK VALLEY: 50 Things to Do When There Is Nothing to Do"** (Amauta International, LLC, 2016) and our Guide for Support Professionals: **PSYCHOSOCIAL RECOVERY: A Guide for Crisis and Disaster Support Facilitators"** (Amauta International, LLC, 2016).
2. Assigning this booklet or its lessons to children in the form of a mandatory task or for them to do alone, will not be as effective as elaborating it with them, sharing experiences and tasks performed. Parents can sit the children on their laps and share a lesson with them each day or two, performing the tasks verbally or in writing. Educators can design a dynamic and group methodology for the development of lessons and tasks. For such purposes we offer additional materials. The epilogue can be used independently or as an additional lesson, in narrative, dramatized or represented with puppets, drawings, etc.
3. We have addressed this primer to children from four to twelve years old, focusing vocabulary and comprehension level towards an average age of approximately eight years. To use it with younger children (4 - 7 years old), it may be better to do it verbally and make sure they understand all the vocabulary.
4. We invite you to refer to the other services that we offer to you completely free of charge. Many other materials are available in the Virtual Library of Global Facilitators Serving Communities, <https://globalfacilitators.org/library/>

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With much affection and with our best wishes for the prompt emotional recovery of your children and students ... and for yours,

GILBERTO AND PARCIA

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LESSON 1 - THE LOSS:

No one could comfort our little friend Rosita. A huge truck killed her beloved puppy, Paco. She screamed, she cried, she was angry with everyone. She doesn't understand why it had to happen. What happened is horrible, unfair, sad. We understand Rosita because we know that any loss hurts a lot.

You know how much it hurts a person when they lose something like a toy, a friend, a pencil, or someone's attention. Now you have lost much more. You may have lost family, friends and things you loved very much, you may have lost your home, your village... everything you had. We know it hurts a lot, a very huge hurt. The first step to recovery is to realize everything you lost.

Draw or write here some of your most important losses:

LESSON 2 - YOUR PAIN:

Juanito is three years old. His grandmother has just given him a delicious strawberry-flavored caramel. He had taken some tasty bites when he fell into the mud and his mother wouldn't let him pick it up. Juanito cries and cries and his mother finally tells him: " Don't be silly! It's not worth crying so much for a silly candy." It seems that she forgot that any loss hurts, even if it is small, and your loss hurts you a lot.

Children know better than adults how to talk about the pain they feel when they lose something. Children can also recover from a loss faster than older people. When you feel sad, or angry, or afraid, you can talk about what you feel; there's nothing wrong with it, even if someone tries to silence you. And when you no longer feel the sadness or the fear or the rage, you don't have to say you feel it to please others.

What did you feel at the moment it happened?

What do you feel now when you start thinking about what happened?

LESSON 3 - YOUR COMFORT

Recently, our son Eric lost his package of balls. He felt very bad and didn't want to tell us anything because he was afraid we would scold him. Then he was left with only his sadness. But his older brother Benjamin noticed and told him it was better for him to tell us. With a lot of fear and tears in his eyes Eric told us and then we could console him and tell him that we understood his pain. Eric learned that day that he could ask for comfort from many people and at any time. Comfort relieves some of the pain.

You can also ask for comfort at any time and from many people like your family, your friends, your teachers, your neighbors and others. You can say, "I want to be consoled for a while." You will feel better being accompanied in your grief.

Draw or write the names of three people who love you and who you can ask for comfort when you need it.

LESSON 4 - YOUR VALUE

Our friend Clarita's mother died of a horrible illness. And then, as if that were not enough, everything was going wrong: she got bad grades at school, she fought with her friends and every time, her father and aunt scolded her. She is a cute, intelligent and polite girl. Before her mother's death she felt this way: cute, intelligent and polite. But now she feels ugly, brute and foolish. Did she change?

After any tragedy, one becomes very restless, cannot concentrate, has problems with others. This almost always happens for a while. But if the person is convinced that it is going to be like this forever, that's not right. That's not the truth.

You are special! You are very special! You are a beautiful and valuable person and a creation of God. No tragedy you suffer can change who you are and how much you are valued. Even if you've misbehaved, you're still a good person.

Write a list of your qualities, that is, the beautiful things that other people have said about you.

LESSON 5 - YOUR TIME

Yesterday Juan Pablo fell off the swing and broke his leg.

Today his leg is all wrapped in plaster and he is very sad. He thinks he will never be able to play football again. His mother comforts him and pampers him and tells him that he should not worry because over time he will get better, but Juan Pablo does not believe it, because now he feels very bad. Will Juan Pablo improve?

Have you heard people say "Give it time!"? This means that although today things seem very difficult, in a while things will change, we will have new opportunities and we will do better. Time is like a great friend, but this friend needs your help: try to behave as best you can now... and you know how.

Remember that every sad day is less sad than the day before and every happy day is happier than the one before.

Draw a picture of yourself doing something you liked to do before the tragedy:

Now, make another drawing of who you are and what you do these days.

How have you changed?

LESSON 6 - YOUR STUFF:

We have a cute dog named Neeca. From time to time we give him some bones to play with and clean his teeth. Like any dog, after playing with them, he hides them in a hole in the yard and gets very happy every time he returns to his hiding place to dig them up. But once without realizing it, we placed a huge box on top of the hiding place. Neeca became very sad and then very foolish, biting the legs of the furniture and clothes in the yard for not having his bones.



Both puppies and people are alike, we need to have our own things and a private place to put them. You may have lost a lot in tragedy... maybe everything. It's important that you start now, if you haven't already, to try to get your stuff back. It may be that many of those things are not important to other people but they are important to you and you have the right to have them and keep them, even if only in a cardboard box.

You might have:

- a collection of stones
- a toad
- a doll
- hats
- balls
- toy cars
- many other things

But be very careful! You don't like it when a sibling or friend reaches into your stuff. Nor does he or she like it when you do it. Everyone, young and old, must learn to enjoy and respect our own things and to respect the things that belong to others.

Draw here the things of yours that you like the most:

LESSON 7 - YOUR FAITH:

In addition to Neeca, 25 cute fish live in the house with us in a large aquarium. Every day we feed them with good food and sometimes with fresh worms and flies. At mealtime, all the fish rise to the surface to get their food. From time to time we change the filters and plants so that the water is always clean. If a little fish gets sick, we isolate it and give it the necessary remedies.

If the fish could think, they would realize that they never lack anything because we are always there to take care of them. Sometimes they get sick, many times they feel hungry, but we are always on the lookout even if the fish don't know it.

Our world is like an immense aquarium. We sometimes feel hunger, pain, sadness or other things and believe that no one cares. But there is always, always someone who takes care of everything: our God. We can have faith, that is, know that God loves us and that God is taking care of us in every moment.

Did you know that you can talk to God? You can thank him for what he has given you, you can tell God what you want, and you can ask for what you need for yourself and others. God works in many forms, through the people who take care of you, the trees that give you their fruits, the animals that feed you, the land of the sun and the rain that make the harvest grow. And God can also accompany you and will fill your heart with love.



MY LETTER TO GOD:

LESSON 8 - YOUR CONFUSION:

Remember our friend Clarita? When her mother died she was very confused. Her grandmother told her that she would see her mom in the sky again, but Clarita looked and looked at the sky and never saw anyone. Her father told her that the mommy was asleep, but she was not in bed. Her friend told her that her mom was in the cemetery where she was buried. Poor Clarita didn't know what to think or what to believe.

After any tragedy, we all have a lot of confusion and many unanswered questions, such as:

- What happened?
- Why does that have to happen to us?
- What did the people who disappeared do?
- Why do Mom and Dad act so weird?
- When is it going to happen again?
- Why don't the big guys tell me everything?
- Why do I have to live like this?

And it's even worse when the big guys answer your questions or say things that confuse you even more, like when they say:

- It is God's will.
- It's time to hold on.
- It is destiny. That it will be, it will be.
- Life is a valley of tears.
- Ask your mom that.
- It is the work of the devil.
- It is God's punishment.

We disagree with these answers, especially those that want to blame God for problems. God doesn't punish you or anyone else with tragedies. We believe you have the right to better answers. Find a person who loves you and trusts you a lot, such as a teacher, a family friend, your doctor, or a priest or pastor.

Make a list of the questions you still have:

Who are you going to ask them to?

LESSON 9 - YOUR MEMORIES

Recently our little friend Paula was on a walk with her family when her car was rear-ended by a bus. Paula, her mom and her little brother were in the back seat and were injured. All three went to the hospital for several days. Now everyone has recovered but Paula is now afraid of cars and almost every night she wakes up scared because she is dreaming of accidents.

You also suffered a tragedy and probably have nightmares and other sad memories. And even worse, when everyone says it can happen again. All this happens to many people. Every person who suffers a tragedy has many memories. It is part of the healing of the mind and part of your recovery.

When you have these memories and nightmares or feel this fear, you can look for someone you can talk to. Tell them what you are feeling and remembering and ask them for comfort. If someone tells you you are dumb or dumb for having them, show them this booklet and look for someone else.

Write or draw your most common sad memory:

LESSON 10 - YOUR FEELINGS:

Misty, Marcos' cat, has disappeared. We don't know how he escaped that afternoon. He might have left because Marcos' mother left the window open or because Marcos was careless when he arrived home from school. The truth is that Misty is not there and Marcos feels very bad.

What do you think Marcos is feeling? You are right! He feels very sad. He has lost his best friend and is crying. He also feels anger and wants to hit something or someone: anger with his mother, with bad luck, with Misty and with himself. He also feels guilty about what happened, for not treating Misty better sooner, and for yelling at his mother. He is also afraid that his kitten will not return or that something will happen to him. All these feelings are stirred; Marcos does not know what to feel or think and is even more confused when the adults tell him what should and should not be felt.

Many people can tell you:

- Don't be such a chicken.
- You're crying like a little girl.
- Men don't cry.
- Be brave! Don't be afraid.
- Girls don't feel anger.
- Don't feel that way.
- Don't cry! That doesn't change anything.

Don't worry when the adults say these things. They are saying them not because they are right, but because they don't want to feel bad watching you suffer. In the face of any tragedy EVERYONE, big and small, feels ALL feelings: anger, fear, sadness and guilt. It is the most human thing and you have the right to feel everything you feel and tell others. Your feelings are not bad, they are part of you.

Your feelings themselves are not bad. What you do with them can cause you problems. If you swallow them and keep them to yourself, inside you, you can do a lot of damage to your body. If you get out of control with them: yelling, hitting, locking yourself up, or hurting yourself or others, it can go wrong for you. But if you tell someone you trust how you feel, he or she can help you understand things better and you will feel better.

Write here the feeling that you have felt most:

I feel fear when:

I feel anger when:

I feel sad when:

I feel happy when:

Now, which trusted people are you going to show this list to?

LESSON 11 - YOUR PAST:

When we saw Oscar's childhood photos, we felt like crying. Oscar was a handsome, active and intelligent boy and was very successful in school and in his games. He was the most beloved child in the village. One day, when he was just eight years old, he became ill and was paralyzed: he could not move his arms or legs. Doctors told the family that Oscar would spend the rest of his life in bed. Oscar wanted to die of sadness. His family tried to cheer him up but Oscar didn't want to do anything but stay in his bed and watch TV. He was sure he had nothing else to do in life.

The first thing we did when we visited Oscar and his family was to ask all his siblings to make a long list of all the qualities and all the things Oscar did well before he got sick. Oscar and his family soon realized that many of Oscar's abilities did not suffer from any illness: he could do many things even from bed. From that moment Oscar began to change.

When we survive a tragedy, we forget that before the tragedy we were happy and did many wonderful things. You can't always feel the same way or do the same things again, but you can remember everything you were and everything you did, so that you can do what Oscar did and decide which activities you can do again. On the next page, you can write down or draw the enjoyable things you did before the tragedy:



THE BEST THINGS I DID BEFORE THE TRAGEDY:

LESSON 12 - YOUR PRESENT

When Oscar read the lists of things he did before his illness, he realized that he could still do much more than he was doing. First, remembering how good a student he was, he decided that although he could not go to school, he could read and listen, and his parents brought a teacher to the house to teach him the lessons of his class. In addition to this, remembering how much he liked to sing, he listened to music for two hours each day and learned many songs that he sang with his sister who played guitar. He also remembered how nice he was and asked for a lot of joke books to memorize and then amuse his friends and the other patients in the hospital where he had to go every month for six years for operations and other treatments.

Oscar learned that it's important to not only think about the things he had done in the past, but to do some of these things again and some new ones, too. You can think about your list and decide how to do some of the things you did before. Write down five things you could do now, these days.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Which one are you going to start with?

LESSON 13 - YOUR FUTURE:

But Oscar didn't settle for classes, songs and jokes, he wanted more in life. When he told his parents that he was going to finish high school and study at university, everyone thought he was crazy. They knew he had improved a lot, he could already move a hand and feed himself, he could move his head and a leg, he had learned to move around in an electric wheelchair, but how could he finish a whole career?

We saw Oscar again around that time and encouraged him to make plans, to think every day that God was going to give him the intelligence and strength to succeed and also to think about what the day of his degree was going to be like. We knew he wasn't crazy and that he could do what he thought.

You can... If you want. You can make your life what you want. Of course you are not going to decide a career now, but you can decide to finish elementary school, learn a sport, be a good student, be a good brother, have many friends or anything on your list. If you have any doubts, ask a trusted person or write to us.

Write or draw on the next page the special things you want to do in the coming year. But before you finish this lesson, do you want to know what happened to Oscar? He graduated as a lawyer, one of the best students of his 80-student class; thanks to a group of people who believed in him and helped him. Today he is the Assistant to a Governor, every day taking care of many important people, from his wheelchair.

WHAT I WANT TO DO NEXT YEAR

LESSON 14 - YOUR GROWTH

Our friend Peter doesn't know what to do. They have given him a nice table to do his homework. It's a nice big table but it has a problem: it wobbles. He can't do his homework on it because it moves around a lot. Peter looks and looks and sees that all the legs are strong. Finally he figures out what the problem is. Can you guess? The table is big, strong and pretty but it is not stable because one leg is a little shorter than the others.

You are like a big, strong and beautiful table. But instead of having four legs, you have four parts of you that sustain your life. You have a physical part to enjoy, care for and grow: your body. You have a mental part to enjoy, care for and grow: your intelligence and your feelings. You have a social part to enjoy, care for and grow: what you do with your family and other friends. You have a spiritual part to enjoy, care for and grow: your friendship with God and with all his creation.

After a tragedy, many people become wobbly like Peter's table: they forget to enjoy, care for and grow one or more of their parts. We want you to continue enjoying, caring for and growing all your parts like this:

WITH MY BODY:

Eat well.

Sleep at least eight hours each night.

Bathe and groom frequently.

Play and run a lot.

Pamper your body and ask for consent.

WITH MY MIND:

Pay attention in class.

Do your schoolwork well.

Talk to someone you trust about what you're feeling. Think about what you want to be and do.

Understand that other people are also suffering.

WITH OTHER PEOPLE:

Be kind to your family and neighbors.

Get new friends.

Love and share with others.

Defend your rights without hitting.

Respect the rights of others.

WITH GOD AND NATURE:

Every day talk to God for a few minutes.

Enjoy the sun, the moon, the air and the stars.

Take care of plants and animals.

Remember that God loves you and that you are His son or daughter.

In the lists above, mark what you're going to do from now on.

LESSON 15 - YOUR TRIUMPH

We are going to have a very tasty party. Let's participate:

Gilberto, Parcia, Natach, María, Juanito, Eric, Benjamín, Clarita, Juan Pablo, Neeca, Paula, Marcos, Misty (who has already returned home), Oscar and Peter. We want you to participate too. It is a party to celebrate something more important than birthdays: it is to celebrate the triumph of each one. Each one has suffered a tragedy and each one is already overcoming it. Do you want to celebrate with us? You don't have to be with everyone to do it.

Right now you are smarter, stronger, more loving and know many more things about yourself and the world than the day you suffered the tragedy. And that's why you have a lot to celebrate. You have a lifetime to keep growing, but now you're going to celebrate everything you've accomplished in life until now, especially what you have learned through this primer.

You can gather with your relatives, classmates, and other friends to celebrate your triumph. Alone or with them, you can review all the lessons in this primer and remember everything you've learned. Then you can thank God and all the people who have helped you grow. Finally, you can celebrate.

Draw or write here what you have learned and how you have grown and improved since you started reading this primer.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED AND IMPROVED:

How do you plan to celebrate what you have learned?

Gilbert Brenson Lazan and Parcia Margarita Sansary Gómez

Gilbert Brenson Lazan, Founding Partner of Amauta International, LLC., was originally trained in social psychology and psychotherapy. During the last forty years he has been dedicated to the facilitation, professional training, consulting, mentoring and coaching of executive teams. He was a pioneer in Latin America of Transactional Analysis, brief systemic therapy, crisis intervention, group facilitation, communication cross-cultural, stress management and executive team coaching. He has been a guest presenter in more than 40 international professional congresses, is the author of 29 books and more than 500 blogs. He is currently semi-retired, dedicated to writing, Virtual Coaching and Mentoring.

He has been Vice-President of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and Associate Director for Latin America of the Global Leadership Alliance. Additionally he is a founding member, past President and current member of the Advisory Board of Global Facilitators Serving Communities (GFSC); Honorary Member of the Association of Latin American Facilitators (ALFA) and member of the International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA). In 2014 he was appointed to the Facilitator Hall of Fame of the International Association of Facilitators.

Parcia Margarita Sansary Gómez is an Economist with a Master's Degree in Management and Productivity. She has additional professional training in Integral Systemic Psychotherapy and Organizational Structural Configurations with 15 years of experience as a facilitator, educator, consultant and mentor for executives and their teams in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Her specialty is helping individuals and groups find ways to access their natural capacity and potential, using a systemic approach to address challenges with a deeper and more embodied understanding of human nature. She is Managing Partner of Amauta International, LLC., founding partner of the Latin American Association of Facilitators (ALFA), member of the Advisory Board of the Global Facilitators Serving Communities (GFSC) and member of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF). She is also the spoiled aunt of 19 nephews and nieces with whom she enjoys spending time and doing crazy things.

Gilberto and Parcia reside in West Hartford, Connecticut where they devote their free time to landscape photography and pampering their nephews, grandchildren and grandchildren ages 1-29.



We facilitate constructive conversations that optimize learning, productivity, self-development and systemic transformation in organizations in the Americas.

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