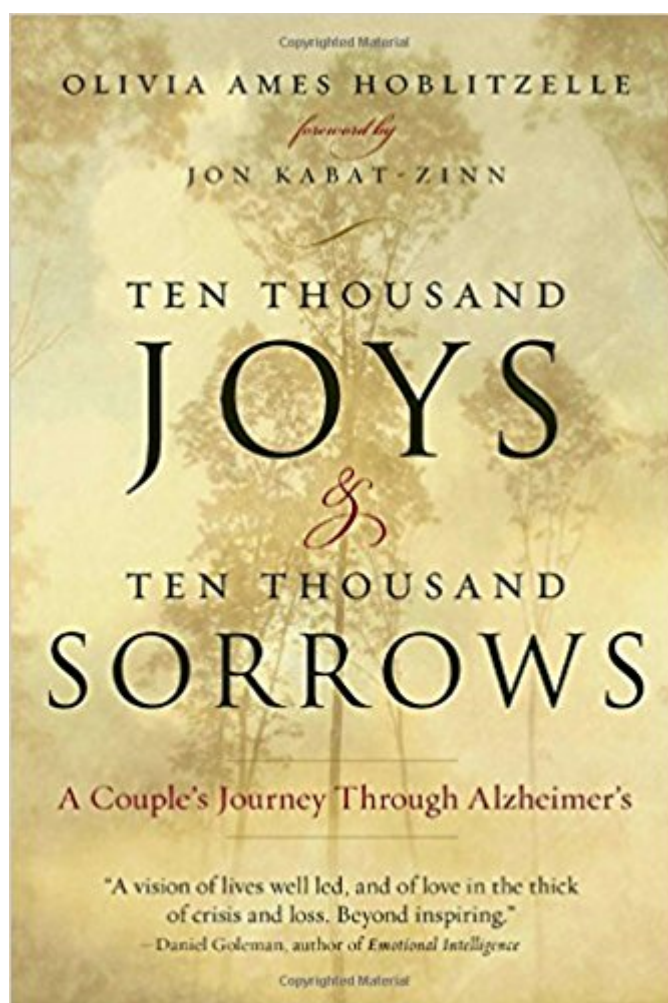


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# Ten Thousand Joys & Ten Thousand Sorrows: A Couple's Journey Through Alzheimer's



## Synopsis

"Ten Thousand Sorrows & Ten Thousand Joys offers a vision of lives well-led, and of love in the thick of crisis and loss. Beyond inspiring."-Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence "This beautiful book is unlike any other personal account of living with Alzheimer's disease that I have ever read . . . it offers patients and families practical insights into how they can live their lives more fully amidst the heartbreak of a mind-robbing illness."- Paul Raia, Director of Patient Care and Family Support, Alzheimer's Association, Massachusetts Chapter "A story of courage, love, and growing wisdom in the face of Alzheimer's."-Joseph Goldstein, author of One Dharma, Founder / Director of Insight Meditation Society In this profound and courageous memoir, Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle describes how her husband's Alzheimer's diagnosis at the age of seventy-two challenged them to live the spiritual teachings they had embraced during the course of their life together. Following a midlife career shift, Harrison Hoblitzelle, or Hob as he was called, a former professor of comparative literature at Barnard, Columbia, and Brandeis University, became a family therapist and was ordained a Dharmacharya (senior teacher) by Thich Nhat Hanh. Hob comes to life in these pages as an incredibly funny and brilliant man who never stopped enjoying a good philosophical conversation-even as his mind, quite literally, slipped away from him. And yet when they first heard the diagnosis, Olivia and Hob's initial reaction was to cling desperately to the life they had had. But everything had changed, and they knew that the only answer was to greet this last phase of Hob's life consciously and lovingly. Ten Thousand Joys & Ten Thousand Sorrows provides a wise and compassionate vision for maintaining hope and grace in the face of life's greatest challenges. (This memoir was originally self-published as The Majesty of Your Loving.)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Both Hoblitzelle and her husband of nearly 40 years, Hob, practiced the Buddhist methods of acceptance and letting go to graceful effect in dealing with Hob's symptoms of Alzheimer's. In this thoughtful narrative, Hoblitzelle explains that at age 72, Hob, a former English professor, was diagnosed with the disease, having experienced odd moments of disconnect and forgetfulness; his condition gradually declined until his death six years later. The author, 14 years his junior, records her compassionate side-by-side journey with her husband, mindful of their remaining time together and resolved to face the disease and its challenges rather than deny it. As a man of words, Hob grew deeply distressed by his aphasia, and the author details the stages of Hob's debilitation--which he accepted with humor and lightness--mostly in terms of his painful lapse into the inarticulate. Much of the barrage of wisdom she sought from Tibetan elders sounds blithe and pat out of context, but Hoblitzelle frankly expresses the growing sense of disconnection between them and the burdens of caretaking, and at the end of each chapter offers helpful suggestions for those dealing with the disease. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

**\*Starred Review\*** In this heartfelt and ultimately heartbreaking book, Hoblitzelle, a writer and teacher, describes the loss of her beloved husband, a former professor of comparative literature known endearingly by his nickname Hob, who was diagnosed at the age of 72 with Alzheimer's. We watch helplessly as Hob battles the disease with grace, nobility, and good humor, even when he struggles for words and then loses the ability to speak altogether. Hoblitzelle describes with great humanity the early symptoms and the initial shock after first learning of the diagnosis. She discusses her various coping mechanisms, the many forms that caretaking can assume, and how the teachings of Buddhism and the reciting of poetry helped them navigate through the darkest moments. Hoblitzelle offers very useful and cathartic self-help sections at the end of each chapter that include reflections, suggestions, and prayers. This is not an easy book to read, but it is an important one. As the author notes, "Our story is everyone's story." Wise, inspiring, and compassionate, it is for anyone whether patient, caregiver, or family member who is facing a life-changing diagnosis. --June Sawyers

If I could give this 10 or more stars I would do it. This book was recommended to me as my husband is dealing with memory loss and is 90 years old. Even though the book deals with Alzheimer's I still connected with Olivia's emotional journey. I have been care giving for my husband for about 6 years. I started to meditate regularly three years ago and that is what I mostly connected with in the book. She and her husband both meditator's come from a beautiful place in dealing with life and death which is the same outlook my husband and I have. I found myself understanding more when I get angry and feel "is this what my life will be about" I had never read a book with someone dying with Alzheimer's so if my husband does move into that diagnosis I feel I will be more educated on the journey.

One of the most profoundly moving books written about the 'journey' Olivia and Hob, her husband, diagnosed with Alzheimers, would ever be asked to make. A must read. The spiritual integrity and practices that underline the couple's approach to dealing with the devastating effect of the syndrome is a courageous example for us all. A caveat: the title here was forced upon the author by the publisher on its second edition - it trivializes the book and does it no favours, nor is it particularly relevant. The statement Ten Thousand etc etc is a Buddhist thing (perfectly fine for a treatise on Buddhism). The original title is powerful and contains within itself the indicator of the profound love between this couple. The original title The Majesty of Your Loving should have been preserved. Majesty - the light of majesty is in everyone, or we would not recognize it; it is the divine light which gives our essence its Being. However, not all of us live to the majesty of that light, nor to the light of Majesty. We do, however, recognize majesty: the dignity, integrity, humour and repose which extend from a person out of whose presence flows an innate authority. The love between Olivia and Hob is majestic, and we are humbled by its presence as we read.

Olivia Ames Hoblitzelle has given us a remarkable and beautifully written account of her and her husband's mindful journey through Alzheimer's Disease. I believe that her story is not only for those affected by this awful disease, however. I found much of interest and also comfort here regarding the universal theme of death and dying. Hoblitzelle and her husband were students and teachers of Buddhism and Mindfulness Meditation and she brings that radiantly clear and fearless view of death to bear here, but no matter your spiritual tradition, this is one of the most compassionate, unflagging, and hopeful accounts of a journey to the other side that I have read, and having lost both of my parents to cancer, I have read many, representing many traditions. In spite of the subject

matter, *Ten Thousand Joys & Ten Thousand Sorrows* is never maudlin or morose, but offers an honest, unflinching guide to a "good dying". If you or anyone you know is facing death, or has already crossed that threshold - okay, so that's everyone - this beautiful book will help.

As a professional in mental health as well as a nurse working with people who are in the process of dying, I found the Buddhist perspective on the journey to care for a beloved family member with Alzheimer's intriguing. But as a caregiver of a man with Lewy Body dementia, I found it a life-saver! I'm well-versed in Buddhist tradition and have read much about the Buddhist approach to dying, but Olivia Hoblitzelle tells us of one couple's heartfelt journey to companion each other to the end of (his) life, using Buddhist practices as their anchor or port in a storm of change and confusion. I loved, loved, loved this book and have read it to my dear friend who is in crossing into late stages of this disease, as well as shared it with friends who are caring for various family members: parents, spouses, and in one case, a son with early onset dementia. Her compassion is inspiring, and yet equally so is her impatience and compassion fatigue. Her struggles to make Hob's passage into and beyond an unknown terrain a traverse of love (no matter what) are as authentic and heartbreaking as her attempts to keep the threads of her own (separate) life gathered together so she would have something of her own once his journey had ended. These are the very real issues managed by everyday caregivers. She has a way of inviting the reader into his/her own story by compellingly recounting hers. A beautiful book, absolutely beautiful.

This is truly a story of two people, even though only one person wrote it. She was able to capture so much of her husband even as she gradually lost him to Alzheimer's. His "diminishment" is what he called it - the tiny piece by piece loss of a brilliant human mind. She honors him in her writing, and she honors herself as she writes honestly of the strain and heartbreak of being the witness to everything both of them lose, slowly, gradually, permanently. This book is very much a keeper - one I'll reopen frequently.

this book is about one couple's journey with Alzheimer's disease. It was interesting to read & relate to as far as the disease goes but it has a lot about Buddhism in it & the author's involvement as teachers & meditators. I ordered another book since reading this & this seems to be more helpful to me as I struggle with various issues caring for my young spouse with the disease.

Great read for anyone curious about the challenges and joys that comes with being a care partner

of someone living with Alzheimer's disease and dealing with death. Truly a beautiful and insightful read that will make you question how you see death.

A moving story of practice and loss. I appreciate being able to purchase it online because my nearby town doesn't have a bookstore.

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