

"Godless Grief:
An Atheist's Guide of Mourning Death,
Divorce, and Other Family Loss".

Email your responses to: surveytwo@godlessgrief.com

Subject Survey: 12 June 2005

The following questions have come from interviews with non-atheists, and theists regarding their perceptions of atheism, and grief. Some may sound simple, some may sound absurd, but it does give an idea of what the misperceptions are regarding Atheism. I surveyed over 200 people, and came up with the following questions. Some may not pertain directly to your expertise, and feel free to avoid those, or any others you feel uncomfortable answering.

There are three topics: Atheism; Work v. Personal Life; Loss.
There are only ten questions per section.

SECTION ONE: ATHEISM

Bear in mind, this is to assist those unfamiliar with the concept. Most people who asked these actually think they've never met an Atheist or a non-theist.

1. What would be your definition of 'god'?
2. How do you think the world is organized, and what is your place in it?
3. Do you do things that you feel affect the outcomes of your life, such as meditation?
4. If you were in an airplane that was crashing, would you find yourself praying?
5. Do Atheists have rituals? Memorials?
6. What is the difference between agnostic and atheistic?
7. Do you feel the need to justify your beliefs to others?
Do you find that you are expected to do so?

8. Have you ever been religious, or have you considered other beliefs?
9. What do you think a soul is, and why do people believe in one?
10. What do you recommend people read to learn more about Atheism?

SECTION 2: WORK v. PERSONAL LIFE OF AN ATHEIST

These questions were specific to legal, ethical, and issues of the human resources offices I've spoken with, and may be used to enlighten employers and co-workers of Atheists and non-theists.

- 1 Do you need to tell your employer of your beliefs?
- 2 How do you respond to the news of a loss of a co-worker?
- 3 When returning back to work, after loss of a loved one, how do you handle people's "prayers"?
- 4 How do you handle people who harass for no belief?
- 5 Have you known people who've been fired for being an Atheist? What is the recourse?
- 6 What do I do with legal paper work that includes "acts of god" clauses?
- 7 What is the worst debate you've encountered regarding beliefs?
- 8 How do you approach politicians who use religion in their platforms?
- 9 The Greeting Card, Wedding and Funeral Industries seem to lack for Atheist based business practices. What could they do to improve this?
10. Is Freedom of Religion also Freedom FROM Religion? Have there been lawsuits on this?

SECTION 3: LOSS

This section may be too personal to answer for some, and again, as in all questions, it is totally up to the interviewed subject to respond or not. Loss could signify divorce, a limb, a best friend, or death, so feel free to think in those terms.

1. Has the death or a tragedy of another caused you to ever question

your beliefs?

2. How do you explain loss to a child?
3. How do you want to be "taken care of" when you die?
4. What do you fear?
5. Do Atheists think "why?" when tragedies happen?
6. How do Atheists seek support in grief? Where?
7. From where does the feeling of grief come?
8. How do you memorialize or celebrate loss?
9. Can an Atheist believe in superstitions?
10. What is learned from the first loss?