

“Finding One Another”

by Carlo Griseta

Chapter 6

The Weight We Carried Alone

Victor had become very good at pretending he was fine. Most people believed him.

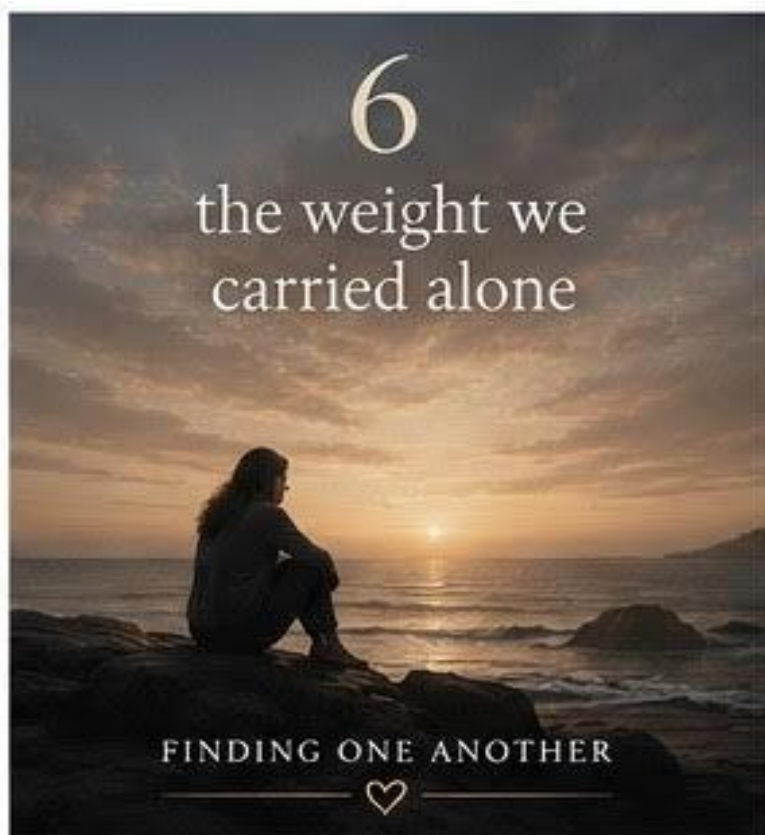
At work he remained dependable, at church he stayed involved, with friends he joked easily, at home he handled responsibilities without complaint. Even Lisa believed he was “holding up well”, but she didn’t know he had been waking up at three in the morning for nearly a year unable to fall back asleep. She didn’t know how

much pressure he silently carried about money, or aging, or his health, or whether he had somehow failed his family emotionally without knowing how to repair it. And, Victor never told her, not because he didn’t love her, but because somewhere deep inside he believed: “If I fall apart, everything falls apart.”

Lisa had her own hidden world too. She missed her mother terribly since her death two years earlier, but after the funeral, life simply resumed moving. People stopped asking how she was doing. Victor rarely brought it up anymore either, not because he was uncaring, but because grief made him uncomfortable and he genuinely thought “giving her space” was helpful. So, Lisa learned to carry her sadness privately. At night she often sat awake scrolling through old photographs while Victor slept beside her unaware.

Both of them were suffering, neither truly knew the depth of the other’s loneliness. Over time their relationship became increasingly quiet, not hostile, heavy.

Conversations stayed surface-level because deeper emotions felt difficult to access. Whenever Lisa tried expressing sadness, Victor immediately moved into problem-solving mode. Whenever Victor felt overwhelmed, he withdrew



“Finding One Another”

by Carlo Griseta

emotionally because vulnerability felt unsafe and unfamiliar. So, both of them carried enormous emotional weight alone while living under the same roof.

One rainy Saturday afternoon, Lisa found Victor sitting silently in the garage staring at nothing, at first, she almost walked away. Walking away had become their pattern: not disturbing each other's pain. But something stopped her. She sat beside him quietly for several minutes before speaking, “You don't have to carry everything alone.” Victor immediately felt tears rise unexpectedly, not because the sentence solved anything, but because he suddenly realized how profoundly alone he had been feeling for years. And perhaps even more painfully: how alone Lisa must have been too.

Reflection Reading

Private Pain Inside Shared Lives

Many couples unknowingly suffer beside one another rather than with one another, not because love is absent, but because emotional burdens often become deeply private over time.

People carry: grief, shame, anxiety, disappointment, fear, insecurity, financial stress, caregiving exhaustion, health concerns, spiritual confusion, regret, loneliness, and emotional fatigue silently. Sometimes this silence develops because vulnerability was never modeled safely. Sometimes people fear burdening their partner, sometimes they fear rejection, sometimes they fear appearing weak. Sometimes they no longer believe they will truly be understood, and over time, emotional isolation quietly grows inside the relationship itself.

One of the most painful experiences in long-term relationships is feeling emotionally alone while physically together. Couples may: sleep beside each other, attend events together, maintain routines together, raise families together, while carrying enormous inner pain that rarely gets spoken aloud.

Often both people are struggling simultaneously without fully realizing it. One person may feel: overwhelmed, emotionally unsupported, exhausted, unseen. Meanwhile the other feels: inadequate, pressured, emotionally unsafe, afraid of failing. Both suffer, both protect themselves, both slowly withdraw, and because protection often looks like silence, couples mistakenly assume: “My partner must not care.” When in reality, both people may care deeply while lacking the emotional tools or safety needed to express their inner world honestly.

“Finding One Another”

by Carlo Griseta

Many people learned early in life: emotions should be hidden, strength means self-sufficiency, vulnerability creates danger, or pain should be managed privately. But relationships weaken when emotional burdens remain permanently isolated. Human beings were never meant to carry life entirely alone.

Healthy emotional intimacy requires learning how to: reveal pain honestly, receive vulnerability gently, and remain emotionally present without immediately fixing, minimizing, or retreating. Often healing begins not when problems disappear—but when loneliness inside suffering begins to decrease, because shared pain feels lighter than isolated pain and sometimes the deepest act of love is simply saying: “You do not have to carry this alone anymore.”

Individual Reflection Questions

Personal Reflection

1. What emotional burdens have I been carrying privately?
2. What makes vulnerability difficult for me?
3. When I feel overwhelmed, do I tend to withdraw or seek connection?
4. Have I assumed my partner would not understand my inner struggles?
5. What grief, fear, or stress remains largely unspoken in my life?
6. How did my family or upbringing shape the way I handle emotional pain?
7. Do I tend to hide weakness or emotional need?
8. When do I feel emotionally supported?
9. What do I most long for emotionally from my partner?
10. What would it look like to become more emotionally honest?

Shared Conversation

Conversation Guidelines

This conversation requires patience and gentleness. Do not rush to solve. Do not minimize. Do not compare pain. Simply listen.

“Finding One Another”

by Carlo Griseta

Conversation Prompts

1. What emotional burdens have we each been carrying quietly?
2. When do you feel most alone emotionally?
3. What makes vulnerability difficult for you?
4. How do you usually respond when you feel overwhelmed or emotionally unsafe?
5. What kind of support helps you feel emotionally connected?
6. Have there been seasons where we unintentionally suffered beside each other rather than together?
7. What would help us create more emotional safety moving forward?

Weekly Practice

Naming What We Carry

This week is about reducing emotional isolation.

Assignment

Set aside one uninterrupted conversation this week. Each partner complete the following sentence aloud: “Something I’ve been carrying quietly is...”

The listening partner should not: interrupt, fix, defend, or immediately offer advice. Instead, simply respond: “Thank you for telling me.”

Additionally:

At least once this week: sit together intentionally for 15 minutes in quiet presence, no phones, no distractions, no pressure to solve anything. Just remain emotionally available.

Sometimes healing begins with shared presence long before solutions appear.

Closing Reflection

Many relationships weaken not because people stop loving one another — but because people stop allowing themselves to be fully seen. Pain becomes private.

“Finding One Another”

by Carlo Griseta

Fear becomes hidden. Exhaustion becomes normalized. Loneliness becomes silent, and slowly two people begin suffering separately beneath the same roof.

Relationships become safer when vulnerability no longer has to hide, because one of the deepest human needs is not merely to be helped, it is to be known gently in our weakness and still loved there.