

Widowed Father Builds Independent Publishing Company, Nears 10,000 Readers in First Year

After struggling to reach readers through Amazon alone, entrepreneur Jesse Kuhn built an independent publishing company from scratch.

SAINT LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Less than one year after completing the seven-book [Always Here grief companion series](#), entrepreneur and widowed father [Jesse Kuhn](#) is on pace to reach 10,000 readers, an outcome that seemed almost impossible when the books first launched.

Kuhn began writing the series after losing his wife to cancer in 2022 while raising three young daughters. As his primary business in the mobile gaming industry began experiencing diminishing returns, he found himself at a crossroads professionally and personally.

"I didn't wake up one morning and decide I wanted to become a publisher," Kuhn said. "Something in me just knew these books needed to exist."

Between May and December 2025, Kuhn wrote seven relationship-specific grief companions focused on experiences including the death of a spouse, the death of a dog, the death of a cat, disenfranchised grief, the end of a romantic relationship, and becoming widowed while raising young children.

After publishing the series on Amazon, almost nothing happened.



The Always Here Grief Companion Series includes seven books written for specific kinds of loss, including the death of a spouse, companion animals, intimate relationships, disenfranchised grief, and widowed parents raising young children.

Most early sales came from friends and family. Advertising through Amazon, Google, and Microsoft Bing consistently lost money.

"For months I honestly thought I had built something nobody wanted," Kuhn said.

Eventually, he reached a different conclusion.

"The books weren't failing. The distribution was."

Instead of abandoning the project, Kuhn began rebuilding the business from the ground up.

Although he had spent more than two decades building technology companies, publishing, ecommerce, print-on-demand manufacturing, and direct-to-consumer fulfillment were entirely new disciplines.

Using conversational AI as a technical research and implementation tool—not as a writing tool—Kuhn taught himself Shopify, print-on-demand production, fulfillment automation, Meta advertising, and the infrastructure required to build an independent publishing business outside Amazon's marketplace.

"I wasn't asking AI to write books," Kuhn said. "I was asking it to help me learn entirely new systems so I could spend my limited time solving problems instead of searching for answers."

The first signs of a sustainable business model appeared in February 2026.

Today, the [Always Here](#) catalog has sold more than 7,000 books through Amazon and direct sales while averaging approximately 250 to 300 books each week, placing the company on pace to reach 10,000 readers in less than one year from the completion of the series.

The catalog includes:

Death of a Spouse
When a Dog Dies
When a Cat Dies



Jesse Kuhn — Author of Always Here Book Series

When a Pet Dies
Disenfranchised Grief
When a Love Ends
Widowed With Young Children

The series has also received continued recognition through the Global Book Awards.

In 2025, *When a Love Ends* received the Gold Medal, while *Widowed With Young Children* received the Bronze Medal. Last week, four additional titles—*Death of a Spouse*, *Disenfranchised Grief*, *When a Dog Dies*, and *When a Cat Dies*—were announced as 2026 Global Book Awards finalists, with medal winners scheduled to be announced later this month.

Across two award cycles, every title Kuhn has entered has been recognized as a finalist.

Today, *Always Here* has grown beyond books into a broader publishing platform that includes educational essays, free grief resources, and relationship-specific communities where thousands of readers continue conversations about loss, healing, and life after profound change.

Looking back, Kuhn says the biggest lesson had nothing to do with writing.

"I thought my job was to write the books," he said. "What I eventually realized was that my job was to figure out how to connect the people searching for these resources with the resources themselves. Once that happened, the business finally began to work."

About *Always Here*

Founded by entrepreneur, Certified Grief Educator, and widowed father Jesse Kuhn, *Always Here* is an independent publishing company focused on relationship-specific grief support. Built from lived experience following the death of Kuhn's wife in 2022, the company publishes books, essays, and educational resources designed to help people navigating different forms of loss. Less than one year after completing its seven-book launch catalog, *Always Here* has sold more than 7,000 copies, is on pace to reach 10,000 readers, and continues to grow through Amazon, direct sales, and its expanding educational platform.

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