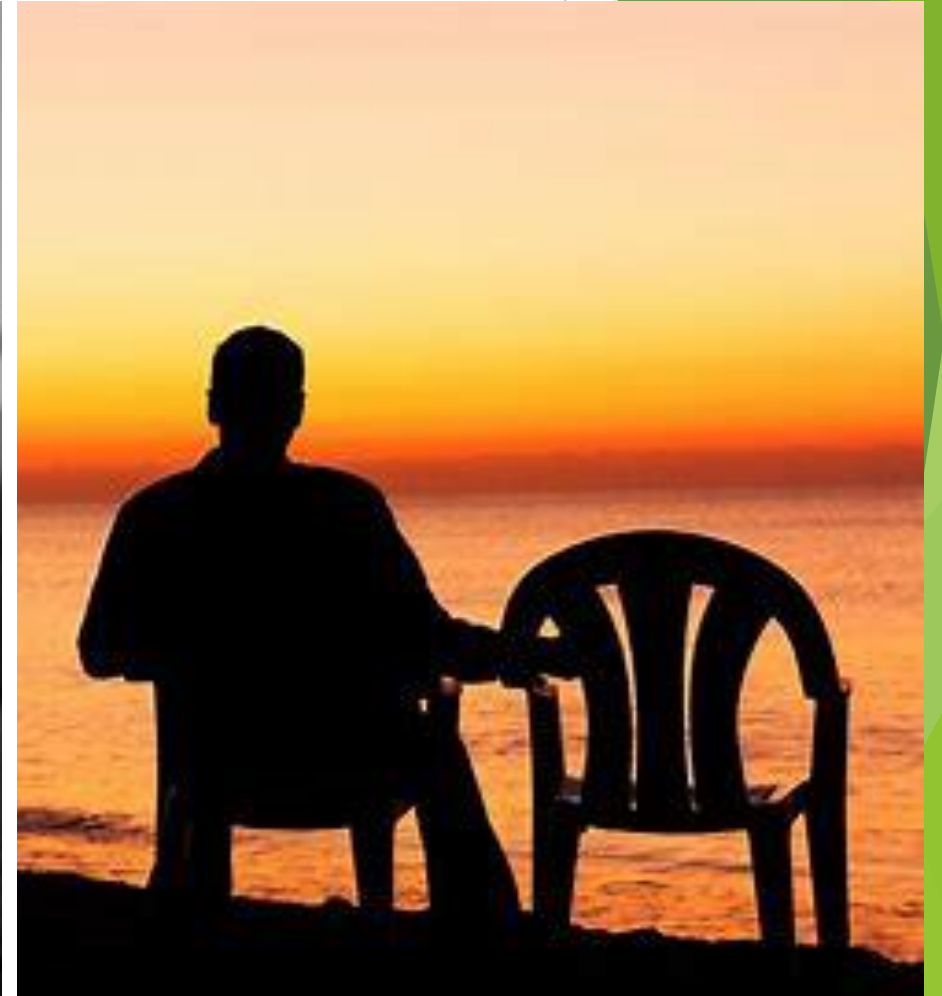


Grief and Loss

by David Tillman (www.lifesjourney.us) - December 2020



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Web search on grief and loss images, (accessed December 22, 2020)



<https://pearlcounsellingandparenting.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/grief-5-800x828.jpg>, (accessed December 22, 2020).

Do you find yourself relating to any of these words? 1

I don't know what is going on with me.

My world is upside down.

It is so painful I cannot even think of what's happening.

I am so angry.

How can God allow this to happen?

If I would only have gone to the doctor a year ago, we could have caught it sooner.

Why do I feel sad and depressed most of the time.

I can't relate to my family, friends, and co-workers like before.

Nobody understands what I am going through.

I talk, but no one listens any more to me.

I have trouble sleeping.

I know I am not eating well these days.

When is this going to end?

I want it to be over now.

What is Grief: 1

- ▶ Grief is the emotional reaction to change, loss and transition which affects every area of our lives. An emotional attachment of investment in another person(s), thing, idea, etc. has been broken and we feel it.

HOW WE
WANT
GRIEF TO
WORK

HOW GRIEF
ACTUALLY
WORKS



Sources for the Feeling Associated with Grief: ¹

- 1 - Contemplation of the loss itself
- 2 - Contemplation of the future without the lost object
- 3 - Contemplation of the unexpected experience of grief itself

▶ **Grief emotion clusters:**

- ▶ 1 - numbness, emptiness, loneliness, and isolation
- ▶ 2 - fear and anxiety
- ▶ 3 - guilt and shame
- ▶ 4 - anger
- ▶ 5 -sadness and despair

We cannot control our emotions, however, we can control how we respond to our emotions. We have a choice how we deal with our emotions. Our emotions point us to what we really must deal with. Healing is possible when we accept, accommodate to, and reconcile with the underlying cause(s) of our grief.

Grief is neither good or bad, it just is. We tend to label the whole mess we call grief as “bad” because it hurts, hinders, distorts, confuses, persists, etc. When we look at grief as “good” we can begin to remind ourselves that we did love, care about, and cherish this person, group of people, thing, event, or idea which has changed in our lives. ¹

What is Grieving? ¹

Grieving is our (action) response to whatever triggered our emotional reaction. Grieving and our response is a “Dual Process Mode” (DPM):

▶ **Deal with Emotions**

- ▶ Embrace my emotions
- ▶ Accept this as a journey
- ▶ Allow myself “days of grief”

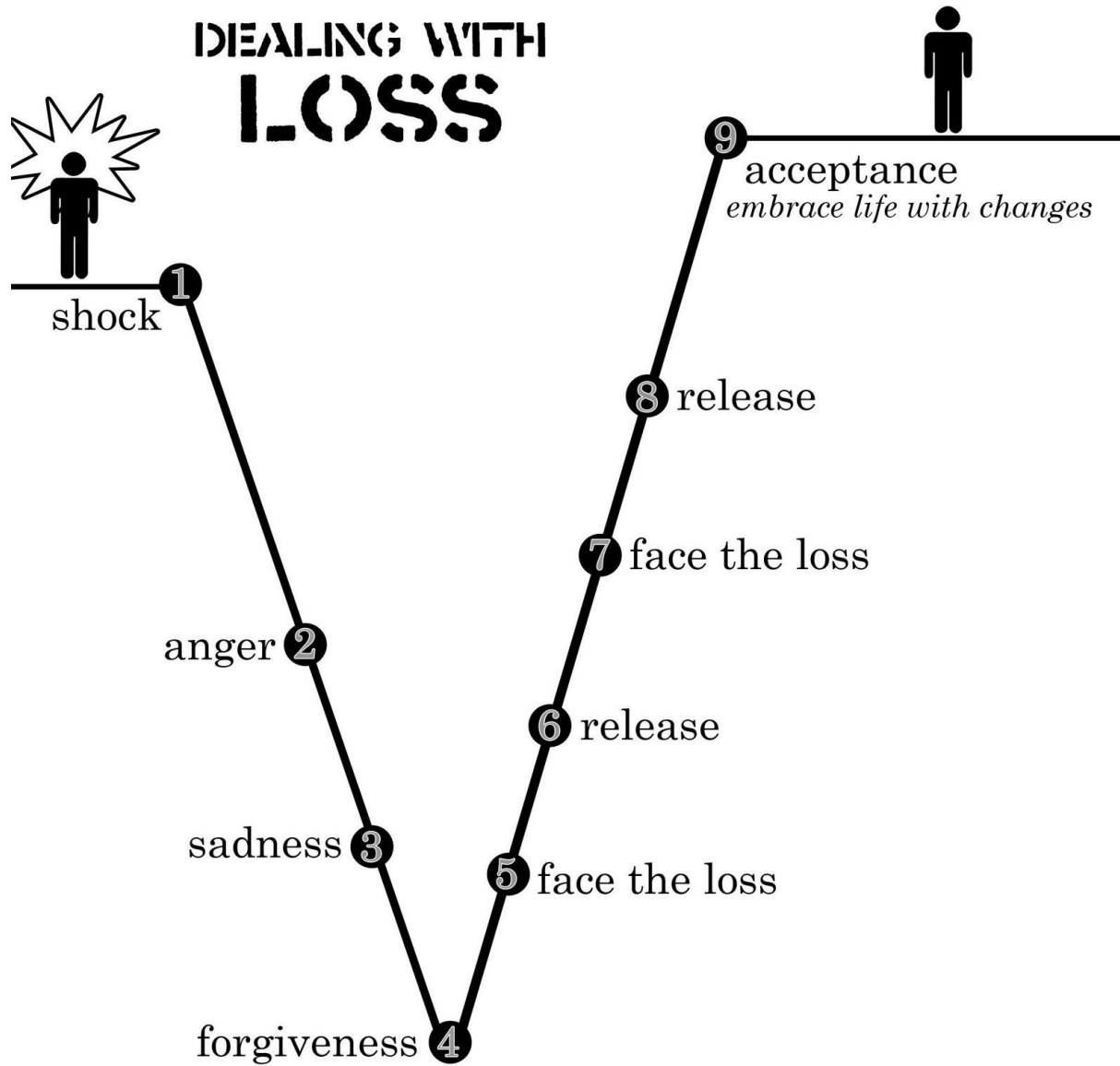
▶ **Continue Living, Learning, Re-engaging with Life**

- ▶ What is still viable from before?
- ▶ What do I have to learn through this experience?
- ▶ Venture forth to re-engage with life

Where are We Going? ¹

- ▶ **There is an objective to our grief journey:** Called the “**Next Normal.**” This is not an “end” or “getting over it.” We accept/embrace, accommodate and reconcile.
- ▶ **Accept/Embrace:** the new reality (I am going to die from my terminal illness, a caregiver, widow, widower, now alone, etc.). This IS now my life. I may not like it, but, “it is what it is.” I have choices to how I accept and embrace my life going forward.
- ▶ **Accommodate:** How do I make the necessary changes? Who can provide comfort and support to me, be a good listener, at this time of loss?
- ▶ **Reconcile:** Become on with your new reality. How do I make meaning with all that has taken place and moving forward in my life? How do I reshape my memories of my loved one (or other change) to foster love and hope for my future?

DEALING WITH LOSS



Daring To Look Ahead

This is a process of redefining oneself and one's roles. Redefining means reconciling what used to be with what is now. Therese Rando's "6 R's of the Mourning" help us reframe and redefine our mourning. They are:

- ▶ Recognize the loss
- ▶ React to the separation (experience the pain)
- ▶ Recollect and re-experience the deceased and the relationship (review and remember)
- ▶ Relinquish the old attachments to the deceased and the old assumptive world
- ▶ Readjust to move adaptively in the new world without forgetting the old (reshape memories)
- ▶ Reinvest in life (create new relationships)
- ▶ Therese Rando, How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies

Types of Losses ²

- ▶ **Functional loss:** “loss of “some muscular or neurological functions of the body.”
Example: loss of mental or bodily function from heart attack or stroke.
- ▶ **Roll loss:** “the loss of a specific role or of one’s accustomed place in a social network.”
Example: loss of job, retirement, or demotion.
- ▶ **Systematic loss:** “when one counts on a personal relationship system (home or job) that changes”
Example: going to college, losing a job, or finishing school.

Types of Losses ²

- ▶ **Material Loss:** “the loss of a physical object or of familiar surroundings to which one has an important attachment.”
Example: missing wedding ring, home fire, or moving to different state.
- ▶ **Relationship loss:** “the ending of opportunities to relate oneself with, talk to, share experiences with, make love to, touch, settle issues with, fight with, and otherwise be in the emotional and/or physical presence of a particular other human being.”
Example: death of spouse/partner, breakup, or divorce.
- ▶ **Intrapsychic loss:** “the experience of losing an emotionally important image of oneself, losing the possibilities of ‘what might have been,’ abandonment of plans for a particular future, the dying of a dream”
Example: being fired, debilitating accident, or miscarriage.

Disenfranchised Grief: ³

- ▶ “There is no public or social acknowledgement of or support for one’s grief.”
- ▶ “Someone has experienced a loss...but the survivors [or person(s)] are not afforded the ‘right to grieve’...So, although the person experienced grief, that grief is not openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly observed.”
 - ▶ Examples: miscarriage, stillbirth, suicide or death of a GLBTQ partner.

Ambiguous Loss: 4

▶ Perceiving ambiguous loss:

- ▶ “The loss is confusing; people are baffled and immobilized. They don’t know how to make sense of the situation.”
- ▶ “The uncertainty prevents people from adjusting to the ambiguity of their loss by reorganizing the roles and rules of their relationship with the loved one, so that the couple or family relationship freezes in place.”
- ▶ “People are denied the symbolic rituals that ordinarily support a clear loss – such as funeral after death in the family.”

▶ Kinds of ambiguous loss:

- ▶ “**Physically absent by psychologically present**, because it is unclear whether they are dead or alive.” Example, missing in action or kidnapping victim.
- ▶ “**Physically present but psychologically absent**. This condition is illustrated in the extreme by people with Alzheimer’s disease, addictions, and other chronic mental illnesses.”

She Let Go

by Safire Rose

She let go.

She let go. Without a thought or a word, she let go.

She let go of the fear.

She let go of the judgments.

She let go of the confluence of opinions swarming around her head.

She let go of the committee of indecision within her.

She let go of all the 'right' reasons.

Wholly and completely, without hesitation or worry, she just let go.

She didn't ask anyone for advice.

She didn't read a book on how to let go.

She didn't search the scriptures.

She just let go.

She let go of all of the memories that held her back.

She let go of all of the anxiety that kept her from moving forward.

She let go of the planning and all of the calculations about how to do it just right.

She didn't promise to let go.

She didn't journal about it.

She didn't write the projected date in her Day-Timer.

She made no public announcement and put no ad in the paper.

She didn't check the weather report or read her daily horoscope.

She just let go.
She didn't analyze whether she should let go.
She didn't call her friends to discuss the matter.
She didn't do a five-step Spiritual Mind Treatment.
She didn't call the prayer line.
She didn't utter one word.
She just let go.
No one was around when it happened.
There was no applause or congratulations.
No one thanked her or praised her.
No one noticed a thing.
Like a leaf falling from a tree, she just let go.
There was no effort.
There was no struggle.
It wasn't good and it wasn't bad.
It was what it was, and it is just that.
In the space of letting go, she let it all be.
A small smile came over her face.
A light breeze blew through her.
And the sun and the moon shone forevermore...

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Nancy Berns, author of:
Closure: The Rush to End Grief and What It Costs Us (2011) ⁵

- ▶ *“Talking about closure limits how we think about grief and fails to capture the experiences of many who grieve over death or other losses. Some people struggle to meet social expectations for closure when privately they resent the idea or, worse, they wonder whether something is wrong with them because they do not have closure.” Nancy Berns*

[\(116\) Beyond Closure: Nancy Berns at TEDxDesMoines - YouTube](#)

<https://www.mindingtherapy.com/closure-and-its-closure/>

Reflections shared in a Small Group, With a Friend, or Personal Reflection

- 1 – Share about a loss you have experienced.**
- 2 – Tell how that loss still impacts your life today.**
- 3- Tell a story which highlights one insight you have learned about grief and loss.**