

Loss: Grieving and Healing

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Loss is experienced in many ways -

- cancer diagnosis
- a move to new job
- death of a parent, sibling or friend
- a pet dying or running away
- a move to a new location or new parent
- a change in schools
- a physical change or illness
- family changes –especially parental separation or divorce
- loss of personal safety (physical, sexual or mental abuse).

THE EARLIEST LOSS I CAN REMEMBER WAS

- HOW DID THE ADULTS IN YOUR LIFE
HANDLE THIS LOSS?
-

MY MOST RECENT LOSS IS

***WHERE (& FROM WHOM)
ARE MY SUPPORTS????***

Loss is mirrored in the symptoms of Distress:

- Fear
- Pain
- Anxiety
- Confusion
- Depression
- Anger
- Hopelessness
- Apathy
- Shame
- Guilt
- Withdrawal
- Isolation
- Resentment
- Disbelief
- Conflict
- Regret
- Loneliness
- Powerlessness

**GRIEF IS A NORMAL AND
NATURAL REACTION TO LOSS**

- *Recovery from experiences of loss is often hampered by six myths we continue to perpetuate.*

- * *Don't feel bad*
 - * *Replace the Loss*
 - * *Grieve alone*
 - * *Be strong*
 - * *Keep busy*
 - * *Just give it time*
- [The Grief Recovery Handbook]*

GRIEF IS: the normal and natural response to loss and the inescapable consequence of caring

- *PAINFUL - it is supposed to be, the entire range of naturally occurring human emotions accompany loss, unique because all relationships are unique*

"Grief is a journey, often perilous and without clear direction, that must be taken.
The experience of grieving cannot be ordered or categorized, hurried or controlled, pushed aside or ignored. It is inevitable as breathing, as change, as love. It may be postponed, but it will not be denied."

– Molly Fumia.

*TWO BASIC
EMOTIONS ARE
HAPPINESS AND
SADNESS.*

ALL FEELINGS NEED TO
BE “VOICED”

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- “Showing, telling and teaching children the truth can never hurt – and anything less runs the risk of lifelong negative consequences for them.” (When Children Grieve)

NIGHTS AND DAYS

"There are as many nights as days, and the one is just as long as the other in the year's course. Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of darkness, and the word *happy* would lose its meaning if it were not balanced by sadness."

Spirituality is an integral component of healing.

- It is a source of strength in the presence of distress.
- It is at the heart of our well-being.
- It enriches all aspects of our life:
 - physical, mental, emotional and community.

Spirituality

Spirituality... a life force that promotes hope, encourages healing, helps us to embrace ourselves and others... is expressed in attitudes, beliefs, and practices that influence people's lives... enables us to experience a higher power.

Spiritual Healing

SPIRITUAL HEALING involves family and friends. It embraces fullness, meaning, love and hope in the journey.

Spiritual Needs:

Spiritual (Existential) Needs:

- MEANING - Who am I? Why is this happening?
- PURPOSE - When do I feel most alive?
- COMMUNICATION - With whom and how can I be open and honest?
- BELONGING - Who cares for me?
- HOPE - Where does my hope lie?
- VALUES - What are my guiding principles?

A spiritual wound such as a loss needs to be treated as gently, carefully and realistically as a physical wound.

- As friends, care-givers, patients - we express ourselves by what we do, by what we say, and by what we do not say..
- "God talk" will not heal the loss!
Religion and Spirituality have different purposes

The healing of grief will be prolonged if we try to distract ourselves and run away from it... including harm to our body.

If WE have unresolved fears and questions ourselves, we may wonder how to provide help and direction.

HOW TO HELP GRIEVING FAMILIES

- *Be aware of personal feelings*
- *Different levels of understanding*
- *Each member will grieve differently*
- *Encourage questions*
- *Encourage expression of feelings*
- *Encourage participation in events*
- *Help everyone commemorate life*
- *Maintain sense of normalcy*
- *Use available resources*

Time alone will not
heal the grief

<http://www.strathmor.com/assets/pdf/FetalDemise.pdf> Page 19.

PATH TO COMPLETION

"Completion is the action of discovering and communicating, directly or indirectly, the undelivered emotions which attach to any relationship that changes or ends."

Action 1: Do a Relationship Review

Action 2: What are the categories?

- Apologies
- Forgiveness
- Significant emotional statements
- Fond memories

Action 3: LETTER OF COMPLETION

- *COMMUNICATION OF EMOTIONS IN EACH OF ABOVE FOUR CATEGORIES.*

HEALING OF THE WHOLE PERSON INVOLVES THE SIX T's

- *THINK*
- *TALK*
- *TELL*
- *TOUCH*
- *TENDERNESS*
- *TIMELINESS*

It's a privilege to journey with
others in their loss...

A need to heal our own losses...
and to know that healers need
healing too.

THANKS!!!

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Power Point on-line at www.strathmor.com