



Life After Loss

Definitions

Grief: An individual's normal and natural response to loss.

Bereavement: The state of having suffered a loss through death.

Mourning: Socialized ways of expressing grief.

Grief

Grief is experienced in any loss we see as significant.

Grief is experienced differently by different people.

Myths (adapted from Therese Rando, Ph.D.)

- All losses are the same.
- Everyone grieves in the same way.
- Once resolved, grief never comes up again.
- It takes two months to get over your grief.
- Because you feel crazy you are going crazy.
- You and your family will be the same after the death as before your loved one died.
- You should feel **only** sadness that your loved one died.
- You can find ways to avoid the pain of your grief and still resolve it successfully.
- Grief affects you psychologically, but not in other ways.
- The intensity and length of your grief is a testimony to your love for the deceased.
- It is better to tell bereaved people to be brave and to keep a "stiff upper lip" because they will not have to experience as much pain.



Truths

- All losses are **not** the same.
- Different people grieve differently.
 - There are a wide variety of reactions.
 - Symptoms differ
 - Intensity of symptoms differ
 - Length of time differs
- Grief may return from time to time.
 - “Ambushes, attacks and sieges”
- It may take a year, or two, or more to feel like things are normal again.

“There is no set time period for how long it ‘should take’.”
Therese Rando, Ph.D.

- The duration depends upon:
 - The meaning of the loss
 - The circumstances of the death
 - The level of social support
 - Overall health
- Feeling crazy does not mean you are going crazy.

“As long as mourning behavior does not severely impair one’s ability to function for too long, is not harmful to long term adjustment, or does not represent more severe pathology it can be viewed as normal.”
Theresa Rando, Ph.D.

- Things will **never** be exactly the same again.



- You may feel **many** different things surrounding the death of your loved one.

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Numbness
- Relief
- Anger

- Grief cannot be resolved without experiencing its pain.

Grief is patient and will come back until we give it attention.

- Grief affects people physically, psychologically and spiritually.

- Physical symptoms
- General health
- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Socially
- Attitudes toward God, the clergy and religious groups

- The intensity and length of a person's grief is **not** necessarily an indicator of one's love for the deceased.

People are temperamentally different, socialized differently and different in their expressiveness.

- "Telling the story" and expressing thoughts and feelings will substantially assist "recovery".

A **crucial** key in moving through the grief process is "telling the story" as often and in as detailed manner as necessary.



Take Aways

1. Everyone experiences loss.
2. Everyone grieves loss and grief is normal.
3. Everyone grieves differently.
4. Grief is best addressed directly and by using a multifaceted approach.
5. There is life after loss.