

To Mourn Well is to Live Well

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Understanding Grief and Loss

- **Whether expected or sudden, we are never ready for the loss of a loved one.**
- **We find ourselves making the appropriate motions, but in our state of shock, we often feel dysfunctional, confused, overwhelmed and frozen in a state of panic and fear.**
- **We often reach out to others to support and reassure us.**

Searching for Understanding

- **Unable to cope, we often throw ourselves into our work or other activities in a desperate attempt to run and hide from our pain and uncertainty, BUT BE CAREFUL, this is like a band-aid over major heart surgery.**
- **TO HEAL IN MIND, BODY AND SOUL, we must tackle the hard work of acknowledging and working through the mourning process.**

HEALING FROM LOSS: What

- **The first step we must take is to acknowledge the loss.**
- **We must be prepared to deal with our grief in our American “Grief Avoidance Society.”**
- **For this, it is important to be aware of the Misconceptions of grief.**
- **It is helpful to understand that Grief & Mourning are not the same. Grief is the container for the feelings and emotions which are stuck inside us. Mourning is the vital process of allowing them to surface while letting go of shame and blame.**

The Mourning Process: Why

- To heal one must devote INTENTIONAL time and energy to acknowledging their grief by bringing the pain from the inside out.
- Failure to process a significant loss can lead to prolonged grief.
- Complex Grief: may occur when several major losses occur in a close time frame. Especially when the original loss has not been processed.
- The consequences of unprocessed grief may lead to physical and/or mental health issues later in life and may remain an inhibiting factor in moving forward freely in life.

The Mourning Process: How

- **Acknowledge your grief.**
- **Be willing to devote the time and energy into Intentional Mourning (bringing the pain from the inside out.)**
- **Seek support from a Certified Grief Counselor who is trained to guide you appropriately.**
- **Find an understanding friend whom you trust and with whom you can freely share your deepest feelings.**
- **It's great to share with friends but ask them not to judge you or offer advice as it may be misleading and contain misconceptions.**

Dispel the Common Misconceptions of the Grief Process

- Instead, you should move toward your grief, Not away from it!
- Grief and Mourning are Not the same thing.
- Grief and Mourning do Not progress in predictable orderly stages.
- Tears of Grief and Openly Mourning are Not signs of lack of faith.
- Take as long as you need! THERE ARE NO REWARDS FOR SPEED!

Realistic Expectations for Grief and Mourning

- **You will grieve naturally, but you will probably have to make a conscious effort to mourn.**
- **This experience will impact you in all 5 realms of experience:
Physical, Emotional, Cognitive, Social, and Spiritual.**
- **You must FEEL it to HEAL it!**
- **You need other people to help you through your grief.**
- **You don't "get over" grief, you learn to understand it and live with it.**

Making the Choice to Mourn Your Loss is Essential

- **To avoid it opens the possibility of developing Physical and/or Emotional problems in the future. It won't 'go away' but will just be masked.**
- **Masking or hiding from your grief disallows you from being who you really are and prevents/restricts you from healing.**
- **Avoidance may lead to Complex Grief which is more difficult and takes longer to heal,**

Self-Care

- You must understand that not only have you lost someone close to you, you have also lost a part of yourself (the person you were with your loved one.)
- Share your concerns with a close friend, but don't expect them to fix them. They can't and shouldn't. Ask them to 'just listen.' It's your task to solve in you own way, but voicing your concerns can help you get them from the inside out, so that you can deal with them.
- Ask for what you need.
- Stand up for your right to express your feelings, and don't allow others to shame you into conforming to what they think you should do or be.