

Grieving Life's Losses

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EVER LOST SOMETHING OR SOMEONE?

Grieving--it is like the waves of the ocean. The "waves" of grief will wash in and out of your life. Some days, they will be like a calm rhythm. Other days, they will be dark, fierce, and unpredictable. Significant losses in life must be processed and won't just heal with time. You can be in denial of something for decades before you are ready to actually grieve the loss. Elizabeth Kübler-Ross proposed 5 stages of grief you might experience in any order throughout your life:

Denial & Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance.

Activity: Categorize Your Losses

Directions: Consider the major losses you have experienced in your life.

List your most significant ones below in one of the two categories:

Losses Out of My Control

To Process:
 How has this loss impacted me?
 Who do I know who has lost something similar?
 What are my options going forward?

Losses I Influenced

To Process:
 What do I know now that I did not then?
 What needs was I trying to meet?
 What lessons have I learned through this?

Process Questions:

(*Consider writing your answers out in a journal.)

- 1.) What is it that I have actually lost? Clearly define your losses.
- 2.) What would I have had in a “perfect” scenario? Describe it.
- 3.) How have these losses impacted me?
(Consider each component: Emotionally, mentally, financially, physically, professionally, relationally, sexually, or spiritually.)
- 4.) What might I say to a friend who had experienced the same losses as myself?
- 5.) What needs have these losses left me with? What wants? List them individually.
- 6.) What are my healthiest options to meet these needs now? Brainstorm.
- 7.) How can I turn my losses into something that heals others?
- 8.) What will processed grief look like for me? What will be different in my life?
- 9.) What is my plan for coping through the years when a dark “wave” (memory) comes unexpectedly crashing in? List any helpful strategies you have in place.
- 10.) What have I learned about others and myself through my experiences of loss that will positively inform my future?

Tips for Coping With Grief & Loss

- Be present with the pain, identify your emotions, and remember the feelings will pass.
- Tell yourself, “Many people feel just like me when they go through this.”
- Join a community group aimed at supporting those facing similar challenges.
- Allow yourself good days and breaks from grieving. You can’t grieve 24/7. Keep track of which healthy activities are healing for you.
- Be mindful of the condition called “complicated grief” and seek treatment if you feel stuck.
- Look for ways to honor loved ones you’ve lost or share what insight you have learned through hardship with others.