

THERE'S A LOT MORE TO GRIEF THAN "STAGES"

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HeartLight

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“The downside of human closeness is that,
to the degree you have loved their presence,
you grieve their loss.”

Beth Moore, *All My Knotted-Up Life*



Categories of Loss

- Finite (death)
- Ambiguous
- Anticipatory
- Traumatic
- Non-finite (non-death)



Grievers have three needs

Victoria Alexander:

- To find the words for the loss
- To say the words aloud
- To know that their words have been heard




Grieving assaults the “Assumptive World”:

“Grieving is the psychological, biological, and behavioral way of dealing with the stress created when a significant prop of the self or prop for the self is taken away.”

John Bowlby (1980)

Common expectations for an “orderly” world [Janoff-Bulman]

- Be predictable & controllable
- Be meaningful
- Operate according to principles of fairness & justice

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- Keep individuals basically safe and security
 - People are trustable
 - Institutions are trustable

- **Issues in grief integration**



Issues in Grief Integration

- Impatience with grief
- floaters
- fighters
- navigators



**IMPATIENCE CAN CAUSE WISE PEOPLE
TO DO FOOLISH THINGS.**

- The emergence of *bereaving* vs. *bereaved*



- The difference between *closure* and *erasure*





“*Closure* is just a TV word.”

Gloria Vanderbilt

“You close on a house
not on a death!”

Peggy Broxterman



- **Difficulty defining “normal” grief and “abnormal” grief**






“When I use a word, it means
just what I choose it to mean,
neither more nor less.”

Humpty Dumpty

“The question is ‘whether
you can make words
mean so many different things.’”

Alice



NORMAL is a highly imprecise word and implies “what most people do” which is NOT particularly useful to a grieving individual.”

Jackson Rainer, *Life After Loss*




“My mother reminded me of Jackie Kennedy. She was perfectly poised, maintaining great dignity amid this profound sadness. We were requested to act the same.”



Natalie Cole (2010) 29

The intrusive “Grief Patrol”



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- Symptoms & levels of human distress that are life *“limiting.”*
 - **10-15%** of bereaved people are likely to struggle with enduring grief.

- Need for ***makom hanekhama***
“safe place of comfort”





- The “sanctification of the dead” vs. *hesped* [LaPata]
- Hesped = balanced eulogy



- Polishing “the glittering image”
Susan Howatch



Finding/making safe places to mourn

RESOURCE: Where is your safe place?

1. _____


2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

- ***Hesped:*** balanced eulogy





“Remember me in your heart, your thoughts,
your memories of the times we loved, the
times we cried, the times we fought, the
times we laughed.
For if you always think of me, I will never be
gone.”

“Remember Me” by Margaret Mead



The Tasks of Mourning

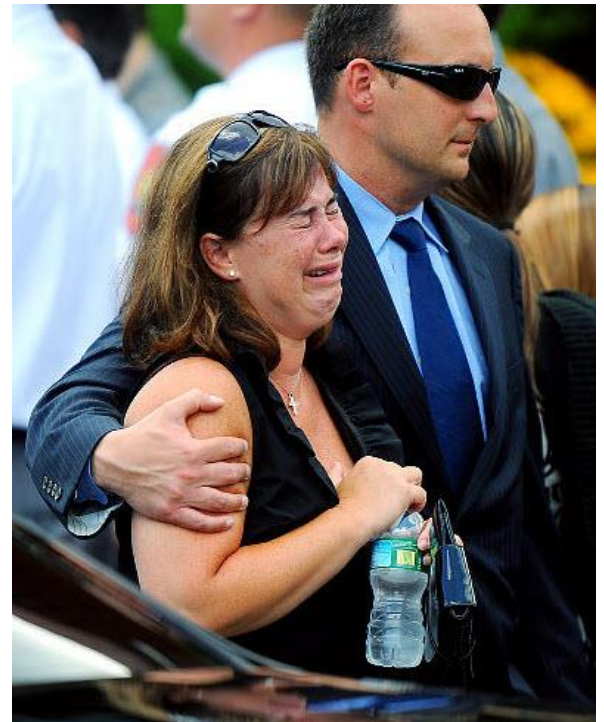
William Worden, PhD

- To *accept* the reality [realities] of the loss*





- To *process* **to** the pain of grief









- To *adjust* to a world without the deceased



- Confusion about identity: “Who am I *without* [N]...?”















“The impact of losing my dad at age fifteen was incalculable. Some twenty years later, I was told by a wise counselor that I still hadn’t mourned the loss. I’m not sure I ever will.

My teenage years will forever be defined by my father’s death.”

Natalie Cole,
Love Brought Me Back, 99



- To *find* an enduring connection with the deceased while embarking on a new life.



“I am just a lost soul. Nobody is going to believe how much I miss being told what to do. My father always told me what to do. Then Calvin told me what I had to do.”



Grace Coolidge, 1933,
widowed at age 54





The Dual Hypothesis of Loss [Strobe & Schut]




Loss _____
Orientation



_____ Restoration
Orientation

The Grief By-Pass (Welwood 2002)



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- To *reject* what is difficult or painful
 - To *grasp* onto something solid for comfort & security

- To *desensitize* ourselves to avoid feeling the whole problem.



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- To *embrace* ways to avoid facing the rawness of grief.

“Stay busy.....”

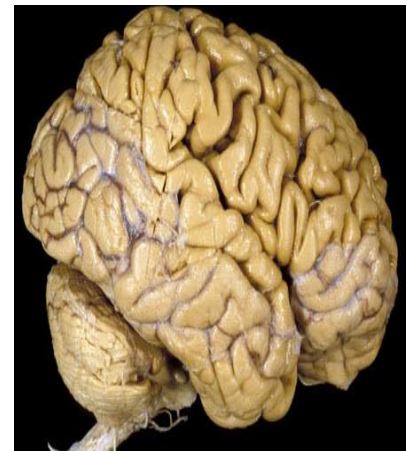
Gender differences [Martin & Doka]

instrumental grievers

intuitive grievers



Nexting!






John Schneider identified “**Phases of the Grief Process**”

- **Discovering** what is lost—the beginning of grief;
- **Discovering** what is left—the limits of loss;
- **Discovering** what is possible—moving toward transformation

1994, *Finding My Way: Healing and Transformation through Loss and Grief*. Colfax, WI: Seasons Press, p. 36



“If we are still breathing, it is too early
to tell the ultimate impact
of any event in our lives.”

John Claypool (2006) 40



“By finding some benefit, grievors
are creating a different,
and in many ways, more tenable way to look
at an otherwise unendurable event.”

George Bonanno (2009) 81

Doing Something *with* Grief & Loss

- What can I do to make it more fruitful for others in the future?
- What can I do to learn from this AND become a more sensitive person.
[Francine Shapiro]

- “What is to become of me without the familiar?” (Attig, 2001, p. 40)




Mary Lincoln--Mrs. Abraham Lincoln-

- a grieving mother.
- had buried 3 year-old Eddy in Springfield;
- mourned for 11 year old Willie in 1862
- is considered “the most controversial first lady



- gets little credit for visiting wounded soldiers in Washington hospitals.
- “discovered what is possible”:
- could no longer nurse Willie, but she could offer kind words & presence to *other* mother’s sons



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- On August 10, 1864, in Campbell Hospital, Mary wrote to a “Mrs. Agen,” from Campbell Hospital, Washington:


“I am sitting by the side of your soldier boy. He has been, quite sick, but is getting well. He tells me to say to you that he is all right.”

- Although this was not her first time to visit the young man she had never told him her name. She signed the letter:

“With respect for the mother
of the young soldier.
Mrs. Abraham Lincoln.”



(King, 2005, p. 38)



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Rx: Three Gratitudes

- Today/tonight I am grateful for...
Today/tonight I am grateful for ...
- Today/tonight I am grateful for ...
- Today/tonight I am grateful for ...

CONCLUSION

“IF ever there is tomorrow when we're not together, there is something you must always remember. You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think. But the most important thing is, even if we're apart...

I'll always be with you.”

Winnie the Pooh



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- **THE END**

