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
• Keep individuals basically safe and secure

• 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”
• 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.”

• 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__________  ________Restoration
Orientation

Orientation
The Grief By-Pass (Welwood 2002)
• To *reject* what is difficult or painful

• To *grasp* onto something solid for comfort & security
• To desensitize ourselves to avoid feeling the whole problem.
• To *embrace* ways to avoid facing the rawness of grief.

“Stay busy…..”
Gender differences [Martin & Doka]

instrumental griever

intuitive griever
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

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

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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
• THE END