

# DEALING WITH LOSS AND GRIEF

Summarized from:

*The Grief Recovery Handbook*

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## “DEALING WITH LOSS AND GRIEF”

### SEEING THE PROBLEM

If you came to this class, it is likely that, your heart is broken now, or has been broken.

It may have been caused by: divorce or wondering whether to divorce, or death, or many other losses a person may face in a lifetime (loosing job, poor health, kinds on drugs, making decisions, moving to another state, etc., or it could be caused by you being aware that your life is not as happy or fulfilled as you want it to be now.

Grief is: the normal reaction to a loss of any kind and is a conflicting feeling caused by the change of a lifestyle, etc. It is the most powerful of all emotions.

Example: When someone you love dies after a long illness:

You may feel relief that your loved one's suffering is over (which is a positive feeling) or also, you come to realize you can no longer see or touch that person which could be very painful.

These conflicting feelings (relief and pain) are normal in response to death.

Listed below are many other losses that can cause grief.

- Death of a pet
- Moving to another house or state
- Death of a former spouse
- Marriage
- Graduation
- End of addictions
- Major health changes
- Retirement
- Financial changes
- Holidays
- Legal Problems
- Empty nest

Grief is about a broken heart not a broken brain.

Comments made to grievers destroy the emotions, therefore they get confused and frustrated.

Example: When Joe's infant son died (a well-meaning, friend said, "Don't feel bad", you can have other children. This was abusive because it belittled his normal emotions. Joe's heart was broken.

## GRIEF AND RECOVERY

What is recovery?

1. Recovery means feeling better.
2. Recovery means claiming your circumstances instead of your circumstances claiming you.
3. Recovery means –finding a new meaning for living without the fear of being hurt again.
4. Recovery is being able to enjoy fond memories without the fear of painful feelings or regret.
5. Recovery means it is perfectly all right to feel sad from time to time and talk about your feelings.
6. Recovery is being able to forgive others when they say, or do things based on their lack of knowledge about grief.
7. Recover knows that talking about your loss is normal and healthy.

Recovery from grief will allow you to participate 100 % in your relationships and allow you to love again.

In order to deal with grief, you will need to be open-minded, be willing, and have the courage to get healed.

You can recover from loss by making small and correct choices.

Most of us haven't been taught to make right choices.

We may need to be re-educated to think different.

You may need to deal with a relationship where someone has died.

The death of a loved one, especially a spouse:

- Is reaching out for someone who has always been there ONLY to find when we need them one more time, they are NO longer there.

It could be reaching out for someone who has never been there for you, and still isn't.

Without a successful recovery from a divorce, you may repeat the same mistake with someone else.

## AN INCOMPLETE PAST MAY DOOM THE FUTURE

Everyone involved in a divorce is a griever. This includes children, siblings, and friends.

It will limit you to be: open with your future relationship.

It will limit your ability to be open, trusting, loving and can cause your next relationship to fail unless you complete the grief.

#### COMMON RESPONSES THAT GRIEVERS EXPERIENCE

1. Reduced concentration.
2. A sense of numbness.
3. Disrupted sleep patterns.
4. Changed eating habits.
5. Roller coaster of emotional energy.

These responses may last a long time or a short time. Each individual is unique.

#### GETTING OVER OR GETTING COMPLETE

The most damaging thing you can say to someone who has lost a child is: “You can never get over it”. This causes the parent’s heart to grieve forever and eternally.

Don’t accept this! If you can remember good memories your heart won’t feel broken.

#### WHEN IS IT TIME TO BEGIN TO RECOVER?

Even if you feel numb, and can’t feel you can concentrate, if you are still willing to talk about your loss, you can begin to work on it RIGHT NOW!

#### WHEN DO I BEGIN TO RECOVER?

If you fall down and gnash your leg and blood was pouring out would you seek medical help now or later? You would say NOW. So, are you going to bleed to death emotionally from a loss, or are you willing to get help now.

#### SUICIDE, MURDER, AIDS, AND OTHER TRAGIC CIRCUMSTANCES

When a person suffers grief, they want to isolate themselves and not talk about it. Especially if someone you love dies in a tragic car accident. All you want to believe is the unfairness of it all.

We need to move on to two larger truths.

1. This is a painful question. Would you miss your loved one any less if they had died some other way? The answer is always NO.
2. What is left emotionally unfinished for you as the result of this death?

When all is over you are still left with what is emotionally unfinished between yourself and your loved one called “unresolved grief”.

### THE GUILT WORD

An often-misused word applied to grief is: “guilt”.

The dictionary definition of guilt implies: “intent to harm”.

One griever said, “my son committed suicide and I feel so guilty”.

Did you ever do anything with the intent to harm your son? Of course not!

Then put the “guilt” word back in the dictionary.

You are devastated enough by the death of your loved one - you don’t need to add to it by feeling guilty.

### MAYBE YOU SHOULD PUT IT THIS WAY.

There are some things I wish had ended DIFFERENT, BETTER, OR MORE.

If you have done things with the intent to harm, maybe an apology would help you remove any obstacle, so your relationship can be completed.

Example: You don’t survive someone else’s suicide. You may survive if someone tries to murder you.

The word “survivor” defines the griever and causes them to revisit the circumstances about the loss.

Many times a griever can get more caught up in their own pain than in completing the emotional aspects of the relationship.

This will cause them to remain incomplete with the person who died, or who you divorce.

## THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH YOU

If you have found that the information given to you after a death has not helped you recover it is not because something is wrong with you. It is because of a lack of correct information.

## WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO DEAL WITH LOSS

We don't know how to deal with the emotions caused by grief.

Eight million people become new griever each year, owing to death alone, not counting divorce, retirement, job loss or change, medical problems and financial problems.

## WE ARE TAUGHT HOW TO GET THINGS, NOT WHAT TO DO WHEN WE LOSE THEM.

Sometimes we are better off not knowing how to grieve, than learning the wrong way to grieve.

All actions, physical and emotional become a habit!

Let's look at some helpful habits for dealing with grief.

1. If you develop a new habit, you must become aware of the need to have a new habit.
2. You must learn the skills that it will take to build the new habit.

Example: You must recognize things that do not work, and replace them with ideas that do.

3. You must practice the NEW IDEAS so you can turn them into habits.

I want to help you learn new ideas and practice them.

## WE'RE TAUGHT MYTHS ABOUT DEALING WITH GRIEF

Before we learn what recover is, we must learn what it is NOT!

We must first learn how we dealt with loss in the past.

Example: A little boy about five years old had a dog just about ever since he came home from the hospital as a baby. The dog would follow the boy around as he crawled.

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As he got older, the dog slept with him every night. One morning the boy called his dog and she wouldn't wake up. The boy remembered how cold she felt when he touched her. He remembered being afraid. He called his mother, she said, your dog is dead.

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I didn't know how she explained what death was to me.

The next several days after the dog died I cried, and spent a lot of time in my room.

My parents felt helpless in trying to help me. Finally, in frustration, my dad said to me, "Don't cry-on Saturday we'll get a new dog"

Let's look at what the boy's dad said to him more closely.

We learn by different methods—  
One is called "influence learning".

During the first few years of a child's life, the child's primary contact is with his parents. By 18 to 24 months, the child watches what his parents do, and by this time has gained verbal skills.

The child can see and understand what the parents do.

The boy, in the example, knew what his father said, "Don't cry"...meaning, "Don't feel bad".

--on Saturday we'll get you a new dog"—meaning, replace the loss.

The boy believed his dad, and tried to follow his advice NOT to feel bad.

To a young child who wanted his dad's approval, this was a powerful statement from the most authority figure in his life.

Sure enough, his dad got him a NEW dog on Saturday, but "I still missed my ole dog, but I didn't tell anyone, thinking they would NOT approve.

After a period of time, I actually forgot about my ole dog, but I found it hard to love the new dog in the same way, I'd loved my old dog, and I didn't know why.

Maybe he couldn't love the new dog because; he wasn't emotionally complete with the old dog.

Later when I was 14, I feel in love for the first time. When she broke up with me, I was devastated!!! This was a major loss for me.

I walked around like a wounded duck.

Finally, my mother couldn't take it anymore, she said, "Don't feel bad—there are plenty of fish in the sea".

By this I got a clear picture of what to do when you lose something.

1. Don't feel bad.
2. Replace the loss.

When you are taught to grieve alone, it will follow you through your adult years instead of "going to your room, you will get in your car (for your room), and drive aimlessly around the neighborhood.

The unchanging habit was to grieve alone.

So now we have three ways to deal with loss.

1. Don't feel bad.
2. Replace the loss.
3. Grieve alone.

By this time you will feel you will never be happy again.

So, I went to my mom and "with no intent to harm me", she said. "Time heals all wounds".  
By this time, I started through a devastating divorce.

I thought if replacing the loss was going to fix me, then I don't have to wait for time to heal me.

(These two statements don't go together!!)

If you come across a person with a broken arm, would you just say: "Just give it time and it will heal". Of course, not. A bone has to be set to heal and function again, so must your emotional heart need to be set right, to heal again.

Can you imagine waiting 25 years to get healed of pain and frustration?

**WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WAIT THAT LONG!**

Time itself does not heal. It is what you do with in the time that will help you complete the pain caused by the loss.

Now we have learned 4 ways to get healed.



1. Don't feel bad.
2. Replace the loss.
3. Grieve alone.
4. Give it time.

Have you ever heard the statement, "We have to be strong for others", but we weren't given instructions on how to do this.

If you are going through a divorce and the fact that you need to be "strong for others" doesn't apply, because "you are the other".

Now there are five incorrect ways to deal with loss.

1. Don't feel bad.
2. Replace the loss.
3. Grieve alone.
4. Just give it time.
5. Be strong for other.

There are many other incorrect ways to deal with loss, but the 5 listed are what you will identify with the most.

You also hear, "you have to keep busy", or "you must stay active".

Does keeping busy complete the pain caused by your loss? Of course, not!!  
Keeping busy only buries the pain for one more day.

No matter how busy you stay, at the end of the day there is still "a hole in your heart".

We learned earlier that GRIEF is a conflicting feeling caused by the end of something that we have been used to.

If you were never a busy person before a loss, keeping busy would add yet another major change in your life.

So a sixth way, added to the five is: "Keep busy".

## LOSS OF TRUST

All of the above mentioned, incorrect ways to deal with loss would cause you to eventually lose trust. After you distrust people, especially authority figures in your life, you think it will stop pain in your life, but it will sooner or later cause you to back off from any relationship for fear of being hurt again.

## PRACTICE MAKES HABITS

Why do we keep trying to get healed from grief, with information that doesn't work for us?

Let's look at what we call "the mind".

1. Our mind can only recall what it has learned.
2. The information that is formed in the mind is there in order of importance.

This means where we got the information, the more we believe it is right. To a child, parents are the most important source of information.

3. The mind's job is to believe that whatever it has stored in it is always right.

If you believe you are right, others must be wrong.

You must accept the fact that if we tried incorrect ideas, then if we try correct ideas, we will get results.

One of the common phrases heard by grieving people is: "I know how you feel".

No one knows how you feel. All relationships are unique!

If both our mothers died, and I had a warm supportive relationship with my mom and you had a stormy one, do you "know how I feel?"

RECOVERY FROM GRIEF means completing what was unfinished for you in your relationship.

## THEY'RE AFRAID OF OUR FEELINGS

Society teaches that having a painful feeling is not appropriate by saying, "big boys and girls don't cry", or "stop that crying, or I'll give you a reason to cry".

The cause of loss is intellectual, but the response to loss is emotional.

People experience the death of a loved every 9 to 13 years.

Come comments that appeal to the intellect are:

- Be thankful you have another child
- He's in a better place
- You'll find someone else

-Be grateful you had your child for so long

These all have to do with the intellect, NOT the emotions.

### THEY DON'T HEAR US!

Some people can't even say the word death.

They say,

-He's gone to his eternal rest

-He expired

-Dad's gone

Imagine how all this sounds to small children, who expect to hear truthful answers.

A child asks, "What happened to grandpa?" We say, "grandpa has gone to sleep".

The child takes one look at grandpa in the casket, and knows something isn't quite right about that answer.

He is confused, but assumes he's been told the truth.

The child spends the next six months being afraid to go to sleep at night, for fear of dying.

Just tell the child the truth!

The most misused word on the topic of grief is: DEPRESSION

Clinical depression includes many of the same symptoms that a grieving person might have, so they seek a medical solution to a non-medical problem.

Treatment of grief in the form of drugs can hide the normal and natural reactions to loss. This can lead to a long-term dependence on drugs.

### THEY WANT US TO KEEP OUR FAITH

Being angry with God is a typical response to an untimely death or loss. It is o.k. to say you are angry at God and NOT be judged for it. If you don't get this anger out, it can block your spiritual growth and cut off one of the most powerful sources of support that we may have.

FAITH AND FEELING, THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

There are two distinct probabilities following a loss:

1. Your spiritual faith may be shattered, or
2. Regardless of the loss—your faith is undamaged, and may get stronger.

It is most often

- the death of a child, or
- a sudden tragic accident

that causes a breach in a person's faith.

First, work on your relationship with the person who died about things you wanted to say, that you didn't get to say.

Second, use your power of faith to give you courage to be completely healed by completing what is unfinished for you in the relationship.

#### ACADEMY AWARD RECOVERY

Trying to act recovered when you are NOT is the hardest thing to get over if you plan to get over your loss.

Some of the academy award names are:

- I'm fine
- Be fine for my family and friends
- Put on your happy face

How many of these act recovered faces are you now using?

#### ENSHRINE OR BE DEVIL?

Incomplete grief is known as "enshrinement".

Example: The mother who did not change a thing in her daughter or son's room, after death, even though they had been dead for more than five years.

It's impossible to totally recover without looking at both the negative and positive aspects of the relationship.

Bedevilment is the opposite of enshrinement.

The griever here only as a long list of complaints about how the person has mistreated them through life. They are unwilling to let go of disappointments and anger.

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With bedevilment the griever clings to the negatives and the enshrined clings to the positives, but neither view the entire relationship.

“I’M FINE” IS OFTEN A LIE

How many of you have said you were fine when you were sad and hurting. When you say you are fine and you are not, just creates scabs over infections, leaving a mess underneath.

WE BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE A MASSIVE LOSS OF ENERGY

Sometimes it is all a griever can do to get out of bed, and go through the motions of a day.

Human energy is used most efficiently when our minds and bodies are in harmony.

UNRESOLVED GRIEF SEPERATES US FROM US.

Example:

How many times have you been driving down the road, and then suddenly realized that for the last three blocks you were anywhere, but driving the car. You were, in your head having a conversation with someone who was not in the car.

The conversations are usually with someone who has died or with a former spouse.

This means you are holding onto unfinished emotional business between you and someone else.

WE EXPERIENCE A LOSS OF ALIVENESS

Many people experience a kind of “a false recovery” based on their performance. This can lead to NOT feeling alive, that is almost impossible to overcome. You feel you may NEVER be able to return to a state of “full happiness and joy”.

Some of you may not have gone through a death or divorce, but you may have gone through a childhood that wasn’t so happy. Discontent is all you’ve known

Let’s get ready to recover!

PREPARING FOR CHANGE: STARTING TO RECOVER

To recover you will need to make some small and correct choices.

By taking this class, you have said,

1. A problem exist.
2. The problem is caused by a loss.
3. You have said you are willing to take action to get rid of your grief.

Let's look at the first actions necessary for moving beyond loss.

## YOUR FIRST CHOICE: CHOOSING TO RECOVER

Three words to remember in order to begin to recover are: different, better, or more.

Have you wished you had thanked someone for what you learned from that person before they died? You waited too long, and now you are stuck with the thing you wished had been different, better, or more.

## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

The next "difficult hurdle" to overcome is: the wrong belief that other people or events are responsible for your feelings.

Example:

- “So and so ruined my day”
- “So and so made me angry”
- “I'd be o.k. if so and so hadn't done such and such to me”

This can also start in our childhood:

- mom says to the child, “You make me happy”
- dad says, “You make me proud”
- mom says, “Don't make your daddy mad”

Telling kids this makes them know their actions cause feelings in mom or dad. Children realize if I can make mom or dad feel something then they can make me feel something.

When we make other people or events 100% responsible for causing our feelings, then we also make them responsible for ending our feelings.

Example:

What ruins the picnic?  
“The rain or one's attitude about the rain?”

The rain really does ruin the picnic, but you cannot do anything about the rain.  
You can only deal with your reaction to the rain.

This same thing is true of all most all losses.

Some think the “government” is ruining their lives, but what it boils down to is the belief that “they make me angry”. If we are “responsible”, we won’t need to get angry.

We must take responsibility for our own actions, and not blame anyone else.

#### YOUR SECOND CHOICE: CHOOSE A PARTNER OR WORK ALONE

You can either work with a partner or work alone. Since we are taking a college course we will need to work alone, or work with a partner outside of class.

Anyone who has suffered emotional loss can become a great partner.

A good place to find someone to talk to is at church.

#### IDENTIFYING SHORT-TERM ENERGY RELIEVERS

Example:

Child comes home from school after getting feeling hurt on playground. Mom says, here is a cookie; this will make you feel better. You can’t heal feelings with food, alcohol, or drugs, except for only a short-term, then you have to get more, which will cause you to be addicted to a chemical for relief.

A more subtle danger that people choose is to visit grave sites too often to find closure, because it helps them feel close to their loved one.

Visiting the grave every day will not help you find closure with the person who died, it may help you to commit suicide!

Short-term energy relievers don’t work, they just appear to work.

Analogy: If your yard is full of weeds, you can cut the weeds to give short-term relief, but they will grow back, or you can pull the weeds and stop the problem.

Let’s decide to get long-term relief, instead of short-term.

Choose which energy reliever you have used. This could be your first chance to be honest.

You must recognize they exist, before you can change some of the habits that hurt you.

## THE LOSS HISTORY GRAPH

If you have tried short-term energy relievers and they haven't worked, let's try something else.

We are going to make what is called: A LOSS HISTORY GRAPH

It will help you find which losses are affecting your day-to-day living the most. We are going to make a graph of the losses that you have had in your life and see which one affects you the most then deal with it forever.

The purpose of making this graph is to examine the loss events in our life, and identify the patterns that have resulted from them.

Another reason to make this graph is to bring everything up to the surface where we can look at it.

“As the old mountain man told the young mountain man, “if you want to avoid bear traps, it's a good idea to know what they look like”.

So let's see what a Loss-History Graph looks like. (See next page)

## WHAT GOES ON THE LOSS-HISTORY GRAPH

Remember-Grief is the emotion caused by an end to, or change in a pattern we are used to.

Any major change in our life can cause grief such as:

- a move
- financial changes
- loss of any limbs, eyesight, diabetes, kidney failure, heart attacks, menopause for the woman that can affect the whole family, and divorce.
- being mistreated as a child (physical, sexual or emotional).

Almost anything that has affected you in a negative way is a grieving experience for you.

1. The entire exercise should not take you more than an hour.

(In doing this, you will experience a wide range of emotional responses)

2. Write your graph alone, and in silence.
3. Get a pen or pencil, and a piece of blank paper. Place the paper horizontal on your desk.



4. Draw a straight line across the center of the page. Divide your lines into 4 equal parts. Mark the sections lightly with a pencil. This will give you reference points for thinking of dates.

Example:

Birth date Yr.	Mid-Point	Current
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5. Example: If you are 50 years old, at the halfway point you are 25. Write the year of your birth at the left end.  
Put the current date on the right side.
6. Just after the year you were born mark you DOCM (Dawn of conscious memory)  
This is the first time you remember anything. (Between 2 & 5 – more likely 5)  
One way to remember is to think about your first house. This is just a starting point.
7. You do not have to get the dates exactly right, just try to remember the losses and what emotion was attached to it.
8. Take a few moments. Ask yourself. What is the most painful, life-limiting loss I have ever experienced.

#### TIME AND INTENSITY

All losses are experienced at 100% intensity when they occur. Some have greater impact than others.

Example: A young man was engaged to a young woman in 1964. This relationship lasted only 3 months.

When the romance crashed, the two of them were not on good terms. Thirty-two years later he got a call from a mutual friend that she had died.

The news has a powerful impact on him. The relationship, while short, had had tremendous emotional intensity.

1. Try to remember your most painful loss.

Find the approximate date on your horizontal line and draw a vertical line downward to the bottom of the page. Make a note of what the loss was.

Just make simple notes that will remind you of the loss.

2. Let your mind go back to your earliest memories, and start marking down the loss events you remember.

Use the length of the vertical line to show how hurt you were over the loss.

Sometimes you may have negative and positive responses to the same experience. This is normal.

Example: You may feel happy over getting married, but may also feel sad about your loss of freedom. Even if it feels uncomfortable, let's try to stay with the loss part of the experience at this time.

If it seems to take too long, take a break, and come back.

Most people over 14 years have had at least 5 losses to write down. For adults, the average is between 10 and 15 loss experiences.

Be honest. You will not get a grade on this, or no one has to look at it.

## LEARNING FROM YOUR LOSS-HISTORY GRAPH

Congratulations on finishing your graph.

The story of your life can be an eye-opening experience.

Let's look at our losses to see how we've been taught wrong on how to deal with our losses.

Also, don't criticize anyone who may have taught you wrong, they did what they knew.

REMEMBER! There are no two snowflakes, crystals, or grains of sand alike, but they are made of the same ingredients.

PEOPLE ARE ALSO UNIQUE!!

## FOURTH MEETING

This meeting marks a change in how you will proceed.

1. You will tell how you feel about what you have written.
2. Bring your Loss-History Graph and the two lists.

- A. On misinformation, and
- B. Short-term energy relieving behaviors.

Instructions:

1. Let's discuss our Loss-History Graphs.
2. If you cry, just keep talking.
3. Talk about how you were misinformed as well as short-term energy relieving behaviors. Compare your graph with the one we did on the board.

## FINDING THE SOLUTION

The solution is made up of 5 actions you must take in order to complete the pain caused by the loss.

1. Gaining Awareness – realizing a relationship is still incomplete.
2. Accepting responsibility – that in part you are the cause of incompleteness.
3. Identifying recovery communications – which you have not talked about.
4. Taking actions – to talk about them.
5. Moving beyond loss – saying good-bye to things you did not say and to the pain associated with it.

## WHAT IS INCOMPLETENESS?

We will answer questions like:

What do you do when a person dies before you talk to them?

If you misunderstand strangers or people you work with, or go to school with, you will surely have a misunderstanding with your family in a lifetime.

Incompleteness represents many things we talk to people about (usually negative) that we still need to complete, in order to feel right.

## ONLY THE LIVING GRIEVES!!!

It is only necessary to complete what is unfinished for us, not the dead.

Sometimes incompleteness is caused by our actions, other times by circumstances outside of our control.

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We never know which words will be our last. Seems like the right time never comes to say something to someone, then that person dies, and we are stuck with things we wish we hadn't said.

In short, emotional incompleteness is words we haven't said to someone that needs to be said to bring completeness to OUR life. This does not mean that you are BAD.

It only means circumstances have robbed you of the opportunity to feel complete.

## HOW TO IDENTIFY WHAT IS INCOMPLETE

So far we have listed on a graph things that have made us grieve. Now, let's talk about which grieving experience still makes us emotionally incomplete.

Some clues that might help you are:

1. If you are unwilling to talk or think about any loss, you may still be grieving.
2. If FOND memories turn painful, you may still be grieving.
3. If you only want to talk about the positive side of any relationship, it may be you are still grieving.
4. If you only want to talk about the negative side you are still grieving.
5. Unresolved grief may be at the root of any fear in a relationship. The more intense the feelings mean we are still suffering from unresolved grief.

## CHOOSING A LOSS TO COMPLETE

Now we are to the place to choose which loss still hurts you the most. It could be from someone dying to someone who is still alive.

Instructions:

1. Look at your graph. Circle the losses that bother you the most.
2. Use the idea of time and/or intensity of what is still most painful for you.

Example: If your infant died, the relationship may not have had much time, but will certainly have been the most intense pain for you.

3. It is possible that the loss you brought to this class may not be the one you wind up working on first.

Don't be afraid to choose the one that hurts the most for fear you think you can't deal with it.

4. The loss that hurt you the most may not be on your graph, because it might be with a living person who does not appear as a "loss".
5. Choose the loss that is limiting you the most right now.
6. Choose only one. We can work on the others later. We will do one at a time.

### INTRODUCING THE RELATIONSHIP GRAPH

This graph is different than the Loss-History Graph. With this we are going to take a look at one relationship. We are going to find out what you need to work on the most.

I want you to mark positive things that happened to you just like you did with the negative things, only make a mark above this line this time.

After a loss, our brain begins to search for what we NEVER said, that we wanted to say.

### COMPLETING IS NOT FORGETTING

To complete a loss does not mean you will forget it. What we will forget is the pain caused by the loss (that feels like a hole in your heart).

The only thing that can stop you after dealing with the pain is: the fear you will forget your loved one.

### THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE!!!

Three relationships that we are going to focus on are: physical, emotional, spiritual.

Death ends the physical relationship we had. We can no longer touch or speak to the other person in the same way.

Divorce changes the physical relationship we had with our spouse. We do not touch them or even talk with them in the same way.

Emotional feelings include all the feelings we may have about another person, or even a pet.

While the physical relationship ended, or changed, the emotional relationship continues in our memory.

The spiritual aspect is more difficult to define. Spiritual aspects are those that are neither physical nor emotional.

It is that intangible something that makes you sense a connection to others. It does not end when someone dies, or when you get a divorce.

#### ACCURATE MEMORY PICTURES: YOUR PART

Sometimes we as grievors can create larger than life memory pictures. You can only complete your loss by telling the TRUTH.

As much as you loved a person that died, he or she was not perfect, like us.

In order to complete an emotional relationship with a person you must remember them, as they truly were both negative and positive.

An accurate memory of your loved one is much stronger than a fantasy about them.

#### TRUTH IS THE KEY TO RECOVERY

We must be totally honest about ourselves in relationship to others.

People even grieve about someone they didn't like. You may have strong resentment or even hate for that person.

We are going to take an in-depth look at a relationship and discover what we wish had ended different, better, or more.

There is no one yet who has had NO undelivered emotional communication at all.

#### EVEN LONG ILLNESSES END IN UNFINISHED BUSINESS

After a long-term illness where you took care of your dying loved one 24-hours a day there could still be something unfinished between you.

Why? Because while they were alive both of you were pre-occupied with treatment, care giving, etc. to be able to find time to talk.

Divorce is the death of a relationship as well as hope, dreams, and the future.

Feelings about the end of a relationship can begin long before any legal proceedings have started.

While death signals the end of the physical relationship, divorce changes the physical relationship.

In a positive relationship we will miss being together, and enjoy things that happen over time.

We will miss our retirement days together such as traveling together and visions for the future.

In a negative relationship there is hope that someday the other person will apologize for what they have done to harm us.

(See relationship graph on next page)

#### DAWN OF MEMORY- THE DEATH OF AN INFANT

If you are dealing with the death of a child, the DOCM (dawn of conscious memory) will start a bit earlier than most other relations.

The mother's bonding begins when she hears she is pregnant. The father's begins when he feels the small kick of a baby after putting his hand on his wife's tummy.

#### CONVERTING THE RELATIONSHIP GRAPH INTO RECOVERY

To complete a relationship you must first put them into one of 3 categories.

1. Amends
2. Forgiveness
3. Significant emotional statements.

Amends are apologies for anything you did or did not do that might have hurt someone else, or it maybe something you actually did.

Example: I'm sorry for taking money from your purse.

Or, it could be something you did not do.

Example: I'm sorry I didn't visit you in the hospital.

Forgive means to cease to feel resentment against someone who we feel has hurt us. It is more for us than the other person.

## SIGNIFICANT EMOTIONAL STATEMENTS

Anything that doesn't come under amends, or forgiveness is "significant emotional statements.

Example:

I loved you, I hated you, I was very proud of you, I was very ashamed you.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now we need to decide what goes with each relationship, an amends, forgiveness or significant emotional statements.

Usually above the line events will be: either amends or significant emotional statements.

Below the line most of them will be: forgiveness or significant emotional statements.

Some may need two categories, especially negative events.

Example:

"Dad, thank you for taking me to my ballgame" (significant emotional statement), but  
"I need to forgive you for telling me that I was the worst player there" (forgiveness).

## MOVING FROM DISCOVERY TO COMPLETION

You are now ready to complete the loss. To get rid of the pain you must complete what is between you and that person.

Let's write a completion letter. Writing the letter is best done alone and at one time.

You will have emotional pain while doing this, but let's get surgery and hurt a little while, instead of a band-aid and hurt the rest of our life.

Your letter should be anywhere from 2 – 5 pages.



## HERE IS A HELPFUL EXAMPLE OF YOUR LETTER

Dear Dad (or whoever)

I have been reviewing our relationship, and I have discovered some things that I want to tell you.

Dad, I apologize for ...

Dad, I apologize for...

Dad, I apologize for...(you can list more than 3, if you like)

Dad, I forgive you for...(list as many as needed)

Dad, I want you to know.... (Significant other statements. List more if needed)

## CLOSING YOUR LETTER

When you speak on the phone, you usually end it by saying, Good-bye. That means the end.

Close the end of your letter this way, or you could say,

“I love you” – “I miss you” – “Good-bye, Dad”

Or you could close by saying, “I have to go now, and I have to let go of the pain.” “Good-bye, Dad”

You are not saying good-bye to find memories or spiritual beliefs (such as you will see them in the resurrection).

## NOW YOU ARE 100% COMPLETE!!!!

This does not mean you won't ever be sad again, but you can return to a full range of human emotions.

There will be many reminders every day of the one who has died, but if you let these negative feelings come without resistance, they will pass. Process every feeling the moment you have it.

In each case you experience talk about the feeling, then move on to the next one.

Sometimes we get stuck on a painful memory that seems impossible to forget, but if you tell what you have experienced the pain will end more quickly.

You will now have emotional freedom by completing all losses in your life.

## CLEAN UP WORK

Things look different, because we have changed on the inside, so let's look at the outside and adjust our environment.

So, let's get rid of all the things that do not fit into our new perspective.

Before you rush out and throw everything away, let's make a plan that will work.

(Have someone with you when you do this)

One of the most painful tasks for griever is deciding what to do with clothes.

1. Take all clothes and put them in the living room.
2. Go through them one at a time.
3. Make 3 piles of clothes.

Pile A – the ones you are certain you want to keep.

Pile B – the ones you are certain you want to get rid of.

Pile C – all the ones you are not sure about yet.

Look at all the clothes.

Put Pile A- Put back in the cl

Give Pile B to individuals, groups, etc.

Put Pile C in bags and take them to the attic.

One month later bring all the Pile C bags back to the living and work the same plan over.

Do this as many times as you need to. Eventually you will be done.

## THE NEW ACCOUNT SOLUTION

This is another problem. You still have your checks, with your loved one's name on it.

If you take the name off it will help you to gain a feeling of independence. You may want to leave the old account until your balance runs out and open a NEW account to.

## DEALING WITH ANNIVERSARY DATES

This is any date that was significant for you. Since you know they are coming, prepare for them ahead.

Be with someone on these days. It is normal to be sad on these days.