

GRIEVING OUR LOSSES – A NECESSARY STEP FOR PERSONAL GROWTH

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These days, many people are grieving their losses of one kind or another, at a personal or societal level. It could be the loss of a loved one, loss of health or work and all the consequent losses, loss of peace in the family or neighborhood or some other cause of grief.

We face loss and grieve at one time or another. We need to remind ourselves that grieving is not a weakness or lack of faith, but a psychological necessity. Grief is a normal human process that all of us experience at one time or another. When we handle grief well, it can be therapeutic. By sharing grief with others, it can help us cope with it better and help the grief to diminish with time as we work our way through it.

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE GRIEF?

Grief can manifest itself in several ways:

- as bodily stress, pain, restlessness, irritability, weeping, or anger
- as a sense of hostility toward God or others
- as a sense of guilt and sometimes grieving person starts blaming God or others or even themselves for what has happened to a loved one. They may also blame the person who has died suddenly and left them without any warning.
- as depression, fear or loneliness

We need to name our feelings and go through the grieving process, walk through the center of our grief and not just tiptoe around it. We need to remind ourselves that grief is the price we pay for love, when we feel the loss of a loved one. All of us are less than perfect and blaming ourselves and the person who has died will not be a solution. We can learn to share our grief, manage it, learn from it and use the wisdom we have gained to help others in similar situations. Some tend to deny their grief, and this does not solve the problem. Some anxiety is not necessarily a bad thing, but if it lasts too long, it is an indication that the grieving person needs some help.

Faith is very important in working our way through grief. It does not remove the pain of grief, but it can help us to live with and work our way through it. God's compassionate and healing spirit will help us find healing and hope.

We can help the wounded, grieving person search deep within and find their own connection with the Divine, discover their own resources and move toward independence without the loved one who has died. We can all learn through suffering and as Henri Nouwen described himself and become “wounded healers.” It helps people move away from self-pity and be compassionate companions for others on their journey. They will then become better, not bitter on their way through the grieving process.

Acceptance of our pain and loss is also an important stage of grieving. There is no right or wrong way to grieve, no set amount of time to walk through the grieving process. There is no “one size fits all” in our grieving. By keeping the circle of family and friends within reach, resting, taking care of oneself and relying on God’s healing presence and power will enable one to continue the journey successfully. Joining a support group may also be helpful. When people offer suggestions, listen to them. They may offer some help that has been overlooked. Giving thanks for our continuing life and all the blessings we enjoy day by day will also facilitate the healing process.

Many grieving people write journals, put into words their precious memories and recall with gratitude the love of the person who has been part of their life journey. By entrusting our deceased loved one to the gentle care of our loving God and living with the hope of joining them in an endless future with God, is a wonderful source of healing and encouragement. All of us can be helpful in walking with grieving persons and help them to reach beyond their grief toward greater life and wholeness. We all need friends, faith, family, hope, meaning and courage to work our way through the grieving process.