



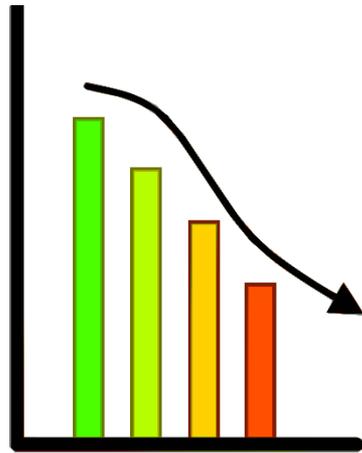
Loss, Grief, and Recovery



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Brain References
www.arlenetaylor.org
www.LLM.life

Human Experience

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Everyone experiences loss—it is part and parcel of life—unfortunately it is often defined rather narrowly in many cultures, typically applied primarily to the death of a family member or pet

Learning how to recover from loss and move on successfully is a required course in the school of life but many never graduate, because the homework is challenging and the exams are usually tough to pass...

Loss—What Is It?

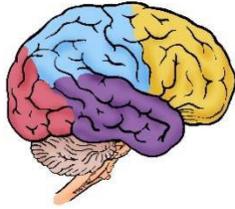
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State of being deprived of something that you once had (or thought you had)

- **Physical – you could touch it**
- **Abstract – cognitive, philosophical, belief, and behavioral dimensions**

Sometimes it can be fixed or repaired and sometimes it cannot—in order for the brain to deal with something effectively, you need to be able to label and describe it





Loss Examples

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- **Death . . .**
- **A sense of not meeting expectations**
- **Major change in a familiar state of affairs (as in displacement due to a natural disaster)**
- **Loss of a body part, chronic illness or disease**
- **Failing sensory perception (eyes, ears, nose)**
- **A hoped-for event that does not materialize**
- **Diminished perceived options**
- **Being laid off or fired, bankruptcy**
- **Cannot get pregnant, miscarriage, fetal demise**
- **‘Left at the altar,’ divorce, abusive situation**

Challenges

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Society has taught its members how to acquire but not lose, emphasizing *instant everything*—and recovery take times



Many lack skills for dealing with loss-related stress effectively or learned unhelpful coping styles—so they fall apart quickly creating drama and messes to clean up that were unnecessary and could have been avoided

Many don't understand how to manage emotions or feelings (they have different brain pathways)

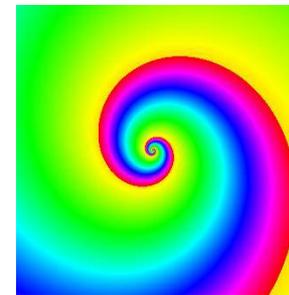
Challenges, Cont'd

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Some 'rush to replace' the loss as close to the original as possible in an attempt to 'fill the void,' minimize discomfort, or try to pretend it never happened—which delays/prevents recovery

Others don't know what to say, what words to use and blunder by saying nothing or by spouting unhelpful clichés and euphemisms

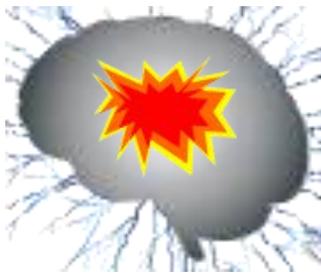
Still others become involved in unhelpful and unhealthy behaviors in an attempt to stifle the pain—and a few kill themselves because their brains are in an altered state



Loss Can be Cumulative

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Sometimes loss looms large as in the death of a family member or close friend or pet; sometimes it is an accumulation of little losses that occur on a daily basis



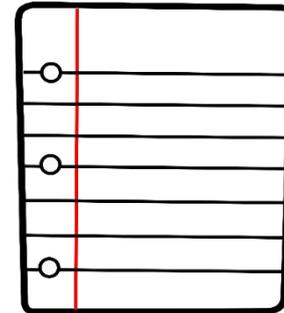
If a person does not know how to grieve loss effectively and recover (or does not do it), a slush fund of unresolved grief can accumulate in the brain—which can trigger an over-reaction to a subsequent loss, however small

Identify Losses

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Create a 'loss line' to help you visualize your losses over your lifetime

- **Write down approximate dates (some may begin even before your birth)**
- **Label each loss event**
- **Make notes about your own brain's perception of the consequences to you**
- **Assess your level of recovery**



Bad News – Good News

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Bad news: unresolved loss or grief that has not been worked through can accumulate, forming a slush fund

The unresolved emotional pain can trigger an over-reaction to a new experience of loss— however small the loss

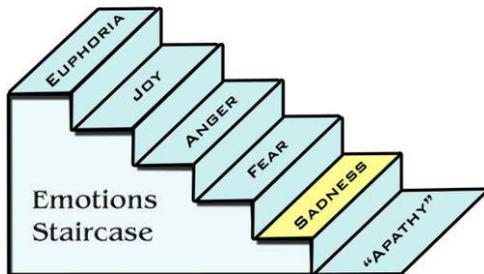
Good news: you can learn to move through the recovery process successfully!



Grief: What Is It?

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Grief is a state of sadness – the emotion of sadness being the natural response to an experience of loss -- Intense emotional (even physical) suffering related to misfortune, injury, a loss, or evil of any type, conflicting feelings experienced following an event that the brain perceives has a negative impact on your life



- **Males tend to stop at Anger**
- **Females tend to go to Sadness**

Sadness

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Sadness is a core emotion that signals you have experienced a loss or and provides energy to grieve recover—the brain appears designed to live at joy and use the three protective emotions as needed to recovery and move on to balanced living

Some help each other move through grief recovery successfully and then go on to create something together to honor the loved one

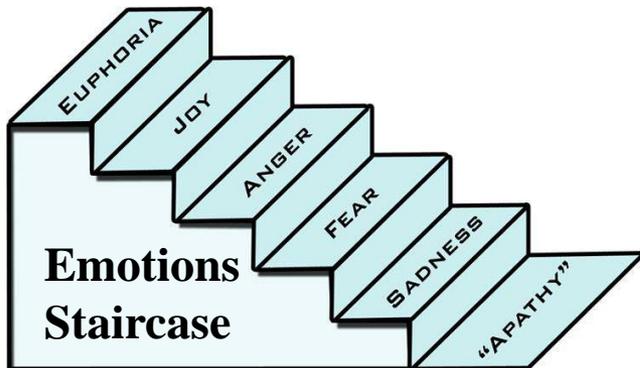


Risks by Gender

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The male brain wants to ‘fix’ things and some losses cannot be fixed—so a male may distance himself from reminders of his inability to ‘fix’ the loss (emotionally and/or physically)

The female brain can get stuck in a cycle of grieving rehearsal—almost ignoring relationships that remain and/or failing to take constructive action and move with life



Recovery: What Is It?

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Learning to *feel better* following a loss – you are able to recall the loss without experiencing the terrible sting of the grief

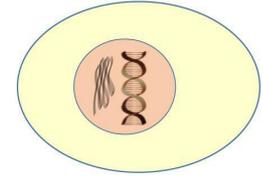
Returning to or achieving a state of soundness and balance after experiencing any loss



Building requisite skills and raising your Emotional Quotient to help better deal with subsequent losses (yours and others)

Encouragement

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Once two systems come in energetic contact, they are connected forever by the infinite cellular memory of their connection. Our experiences with parents, siblings, children, and others close to us remain within us. Cellular memory is a form of energy — as with matter, energy is not destroyed so information stored at the cellular level is retained indefinitely.

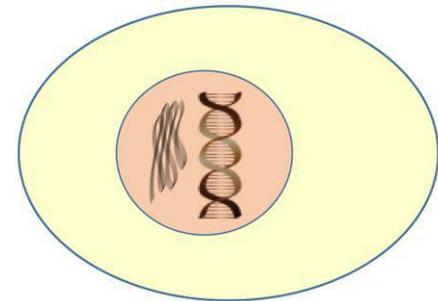
—Paul Pearsall PhD

In Your Brain & Body

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When a loved one dies, survivors (even when they struggle with survivor guilt) often tend to think of that person primarily in terms of absence

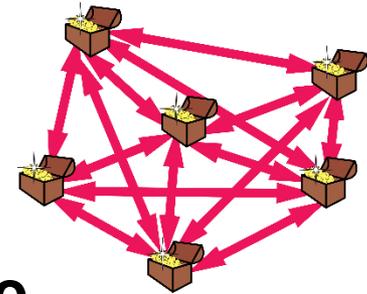
No longer tangibly present, yet you carry them with you as long as you live in the cell nucleus



Memories are housed on the protein strands—and their facial memory likely is housed in a single cell

Recovery Models

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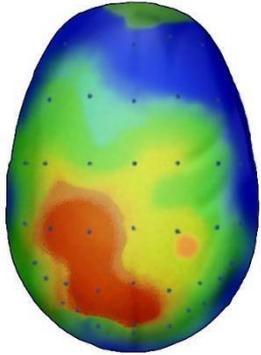
The Kubler-Ross model has been landmark in helping individuals prepare for their own death process and dying with dignity

There can be a vast difference between the grieving process that is useful in preparation for one's own death, and the recovery process that is effective for survivors

The Grief Recovery Pyramid is a model to help *survivors*—you may move back and forth or around the pyramid stages several times

Use Metaphors

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Metaphors can help the brain work through the grief recovery process

Create a metaphor that can help you picture *hope* in a way that allows you to be grateful you had the person in your life at all or for as long as you did—because what you choose consciously to put in working memory impacts your thoughts, health, relationships, and a host of other things, including your potential longevity

Memory-Room Metaphor

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It had been a beautiful and somewhat bitter-sweet memorial for a beloved Newborn who had died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS



courtesy of
www.inthelightcaskets.com/

The cleric closed with a couple of familiar Scriptures (I Thessalonians 4:13-18 - Ecclesiastics 12:7)

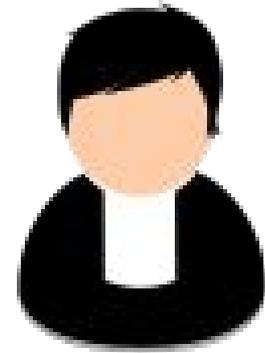
***The spirit (life's breath) returns
to God who gave it***

As the bereaved family was living the mortuary, the seven-year-old sibling asked: “Where does God keep our baby’s spirit? I want to know.”

**A bit taken aback, the cleric replied:
“Ah-h, in *God’s Memory Room*.”**

The child’s next question was, “What does God’s Memory Room look like? I want to know.”

The cleric suggested the child picture in mind’s eye the most beautiful room imaginable



“We don’t really believe in God,” the grieving mother interrupted.

“You don’t need to believe in a Higher Power to give your child a metaphor,” the cleric replied.

“Oh, we believe in a Higher Power,” the mother replied, “just not in in the vengeful God I grew up fearing.”



“I don’t believe in that God, either,” said the cleric, kindly. “Call the room what ever you want—just give your child a metaphor to help picture where the baby’s spirit is.”

“I know!” the child said suddenly. “*The Amber Room*. We saw a DVD—it’s the most beautiful room I’ve ever seen. Now I know where his spirit is, I can relax. I’ll imagine God’s *Amber Memory Room* is just around the corner.”

The child smiled and so did the mother . . .



Catherine's Palace -
outside St. Petersburg

When Henry Scott Holland wrote ‘Death is Nothing at All or ‘All Is Well’ he did not intend it to be a poem, it was just something he included in his sermon when King Edward VII was lying in state at Westminster Abby



I trust that the *spirit* of Holland’s words would be what your loved one would want for you

You may want to picture you loved one’s spirit, life’s breath, in safe keeping in *God’s Amber Memory Room*—just around the corner

***I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near, just round the corner.***

All is well. Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.

***One brief moment and all
will be as it was before.***

***How we shall laugh at
the trouble of parting—
when we meet again!***



***—Henry Scott Holland
Born in Birmingham, England, 27 January 1847
Died 17 March 1918***

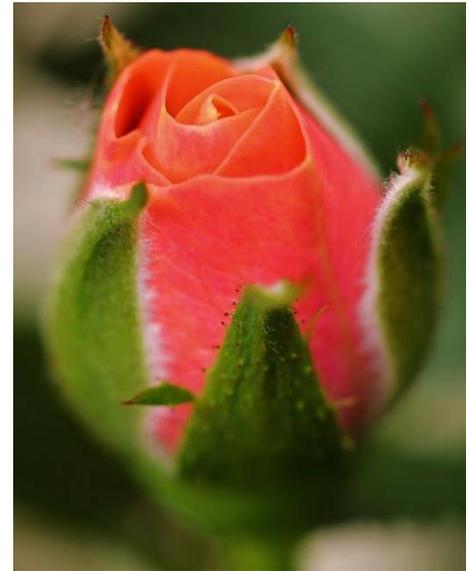
All Is Well

***Death is nothing at all. It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.***

***Nothing has happened. Everything
remains exactly as it was.***

***I am I, and you are you, and the
old life that we lived so fondly
together is untouched, unchanged.***

***Whatever we were to each other,
that we are still.***



Call me by the old familiar name.

Speak of me in the easy way which you always used. Put no difference into your tone.

Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.

Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.



Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was. There is absolute and unbroken continuity.

What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?



Grief Recovery

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Every brain is unique as are its loss, grief, and recovery experiences

- Article

*Grief Recovery
Pyramid*

- Mini-monograph

*Loss, Grief,
and Recovery*

