

Living With a Personal Sense of Loss

GRIEF

By Dr. Bruce Woolard

Grief is an intense emotional feeling caused by personal loss. There is acute sorrow, deep sadness, pain, and anguish. Bereavement is a sad and lonely state due to loss such as the death of a loved one. It is a difficult time and the bereft may feel that his experience is unique, that no one has ever endured such a loss, or suffered as he is suffering. There are cycles of relief to the pattern of grief which permit the bereft to recover in due time. Some individuals continue grieving over a longer period. In some ways, no-one is ever completely free from the sense of deep loss. Sometimes the emotional feeling of grief will be so intense that very little in life will make sense. There are seven stages through which the bereft will go. Grief is an emotion and emotions fluctuate and change, – believe you me, you will recover.

THE CYCLE OF GRIEF

- ◆ The initial ***shock*** of hearing your loved one has died leaves a person with a seeming paralysis. The news you received that your loved one passed away was devastating. Your emotions and nervous system has been bruised and broken. You feel numb.
- ◆ There may be an emotional ***release*** or period of crying. Do not suppress this emotion, control it and then gently release your feelings in the privacy of your room, remember that crying serves as a means of releasing the inner emotional hurts.
- ◆ ***Anger*** is an emotion and as an emotion you need to accept that it is part of the grieving process. You may feel cheated by life and the circumstances may compound your distress. One may feel resentful even to the loved one who has passed away. “How could you leave me alone?” Or “I’m so angry that life has treated us this way.” This overwhelming anger may lead to bitterness and dejection. All is not lost.
- ◆ ***Guilt*** follows the feeling of anger. You may feel guilty because you feel angry and the cycle of grief continues to play havoc with your self-confidence as your value of life is challenged. You may feel that you could have done so much more to make life easier for your loved one. Do not punish yourself with thoughts that may damage your sense of worth. We all make mistakes. Do not condemn yourself for those mistakes. Learn to close the door on this foreign feeling of guilt by acknowledging that we do not always have the foresight to know how to react. Retrospectively and with hindsight one may always feel that one could have done things differently.
- ◆ ***Loneliness***. You may prefer to avoid people and have difficulty in sleeping. You may become anti-social and although you are lonely and depressed no one can bring comfort. You long to find comfort that only your loved one could give. Do not despair, in some remarkable and strange way much of her / his personality is still with you. There are so many wonderful memories that you may hold on to. Loneliness will dissipate and will be substituted with a deep desire to meet people and interact with them again. The time for this will come. Be patient with yourself. The clothing, the pictures, and the house décor may remind you of your loved one. I suggest you think in terms of changing things. Do not feel guilty if it becomes necessary for you to re-arrange your furniture or home. Request that a family member remove old clothing etc.
- ◆ ***Memories***. The sad times and the happy times need to be remembered. There were times of discontent, disagreement and one tries to re-live the past. Do not rob yourself of the experiences of yesteryear. Take from these memories the strength and inspiration that you know your loved one would want you to value. Do not be afraid to write a letter to your loved one expressing how difficult it is to have to say goodbye. Often people who have gone through grief have acknowledged the therapeutic value of this suggestion. Some have chosen to place it in a bottle and when ready cast it into the sea. This was their way of saying goodbye or bringing closure to their inner hurts.

- ◆ **Accept** that death is part of life. It is not the end of life. Your loved one has left the physical material realm of earth and has entered into a domain where he or she will never ever grow old.
- ◆ You may feel **disconnected**. The central nervous system regulates every body function according to how the mind has been programmed. Beyond getting proper medical help there needs to be a transformation of the way we think and believe. Remember belief determines behaviour. If one's belief system concludes that death ends life then indeed there is every reason to feel totally helpless and hopeless. But if this disconnected feeling is temporary and that there is hope of meeting your loved one again, your emotions and nervous system will respond positively to this message sent by your mind.
- ◆ We do not need **religion** because religion is a weak and feeble attempt by humanity to find the Divine. The truth of the matter is that the Divine is not lost, the reality rather is that humanity is lost. We can live without a proper healthy belief system but we cannot die without believing that there is something better and greater on the other side. We do not need religion. We need to accept the reality of life and that simply means that life does not only consist of the physical but that there is a metaphysical realm where our loved ones go to after discarding of their physical bodies. By no means am I suggesting that we should attempt to "connect" with those who have crossed over. The peril of doing so is too ghastly to contemplate. If, whilst, we are in our physical body, we try to connect with the spiritual, we lose our purpose of physical existence. We deny the reality of material existence and subconsciously we live with those who have died. This will result in further emotional disorders that will damage the way we reason and live. There is a far better way. Leave your loved one to rest in the world beyond so that when the time comes for you to leave this material world, the connection will then be made. This may appear to be far fetched, but may I assure you that there is something far better waiting for all those who acknowledge this divine truth.

I request that you show a measure of tolerance as I share with you what I sincerely believe is the truth about life after death. We have three components that make up our being. The first is physical and material. We receive this component from the material matter produced by our biological parents. The second component is non physical and is of a spiritual nature. It is a life force that merges with the physical matter produced by our parents to bring about conception. When conception occurs, a third component ignites. This part of our human make-up is what we call the human personality. It is unique and very special. In essence the human personality is the soul of man. When death occurs, the spirit life force within the personality leaves the physical body that no longer can sustain life for the soul and the spirit. These two components represent the individual and enter the realm of the super-natural. I believe that that super-natural world is an advanced place or planet. I call it heaven and paradise. However, not everyone who dies, enters into this world of peace and tranquility. The person, who has had his human spirit quickened by the Creator, is spiritually alive, the person who dies without having their spiritual nature awakened would be dead physically and spiritually. In this context we refer to the soul as being lost. Some call this state "hell". Now one appreciates that many people have their own opinions on this new world. What is more important is not the opinion of man but the truth that the Creator has chosen to reveal to mankind. By nature all of us are part of humanity. Collectively the human race is disconnected from God and by virtue of this state we will all die physically, but it is not necessary for all to die spiritually. Someone in human history conquered death and claimed to be the only way back to the Creator. He said "I am the way the truth and the life. No one can find God unless he comes through Me." So we have a Mediator who has asserted His right to lead us into the New World of paradise. Rejection of this concept does not negate the fact that it is fact.

The future is in His hands. He has a purpose, He has a plan to defeat the enemy of life. Part of that plan includes the resurrection of the physical body from the grave. According to the sacred Scriptures, the human spirit and the personality of the individual will return one day to re-enter a resurrected, glorified, immortal, body and in our flesh we shall see God. Granted there are a myriad of false viewpoints relating to the Divine. I believe that Christianity is exclusive. Every man, woman or child has the right to accept God's way through the Living Saviour Jesus Christ. Was the historical Jesus an imposter? Or a mad man? Or is He the Person He claimed to be? Is He the mediator of all mankind and Saviour of the world? Our eternal destiny hinges on our answer to these questions. You be the judge. Please read Romans 10:9-10