

## **The Experience of Loss: Grief**

**The most difficult part of grieving is...**

**When I experience grief, I feel...**

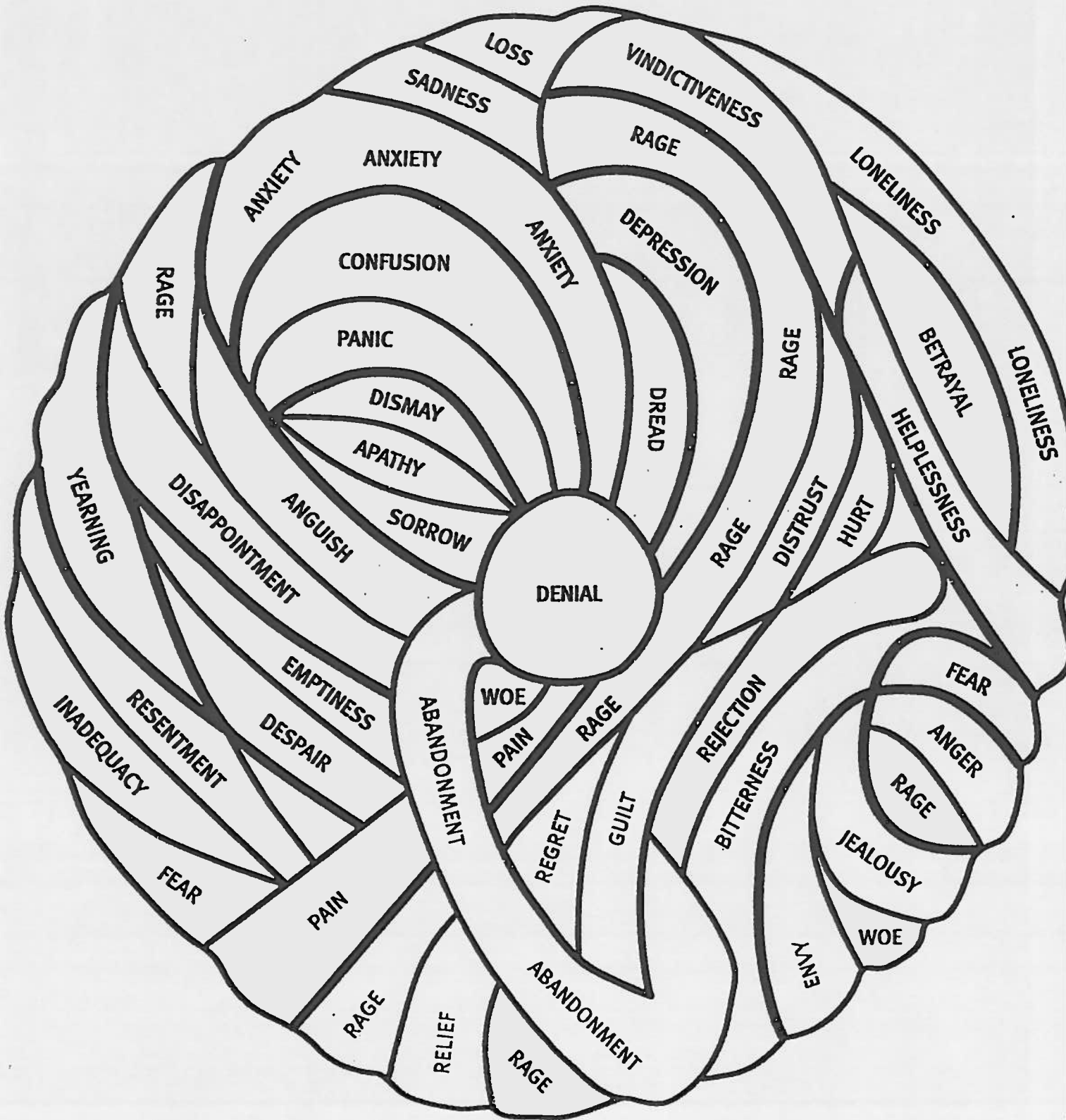
**The hardest emotion of grief is...**

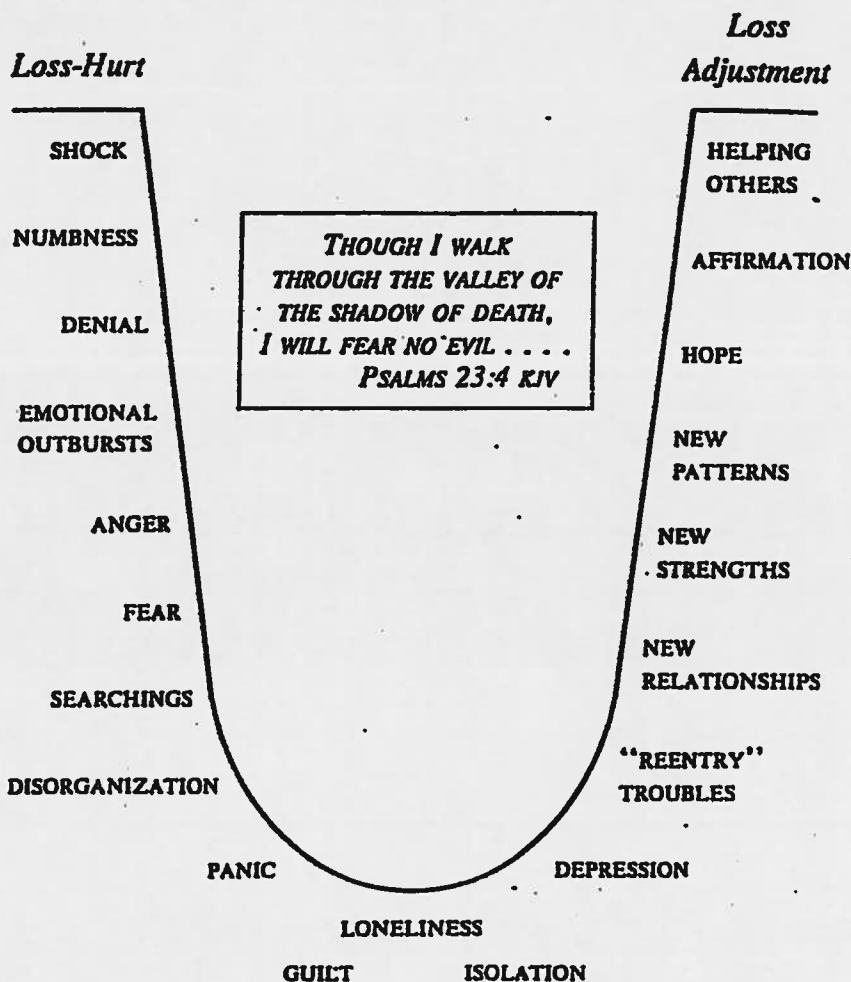
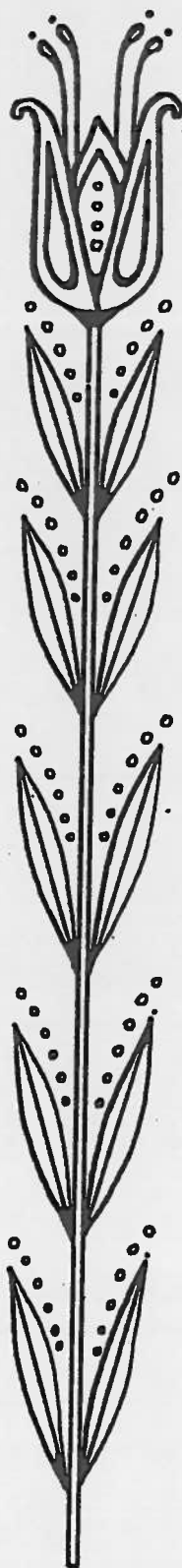
**What helps me the most when I am grieving is...**

**To me tears are...**

**My grief usually lasts...**

# Grief—A Tangled Ball of Emotions





1. Cross out the stages you have already experienced.
2. List ways you have freed yourself from being "stuck" in one phase.
3. Make some statements to yourself about your own patterns of handling loss experiences. (Examples: "I turn inward instead of outward." "I internalize my anger.")
4. List the strengths you now have because of the grief you have experienced. (Examples: "I'm a survivor!" "I've learned empathy for others.")
5. What are ways you can use these new strengths to help others?

**Loss can strengthen our faith. It enables us to \_\_\_\_\_ more in God and His resources rather than ourselves. With every loss, we are \_\_\_\_\_ of the fact that we are not in control nor are we self-sufficient. Every loss allows us to rest in the grace of God. Loss enables us to change our \_\_\_\_\_ and allows our hope and anticipation of the life to come to grow (II Cor 4:17, ff).**

**Loss produces \_\_\_\_\_: Character qualities such as patience, endurance, humility, long suffering, gratitude and self-control can develop through our losses. (Romans 5:3-4).**

**We live in a world which demands \_\_\_\_\_ satisfaction. Losses teach us that lesson that it doesn't always work that way. We cannot have what we want when we want it, no matter what.**

**When you experience loss, you will discover the extent of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.**

# **THE THREE MESSAGES OF GRIEF**

- Through grief you express your \_\_\_\_\_ about your loss.
- Through grief you express your \_\_\_\_\_ at the loss.
- Through grief you express the \_\_\_\_\_ you have experienced from the loss.

## **FOUR STEPS TO FOLLOW IN RECOVERING FROM LOSS**

- 1) You need to \_\_\_\_\_ your relationship with whatever you lost. You must learn to exist without the person the way you once learned to exist with the person.
- 2) Develop your own self and your life to encompass and \_\_\_\_\_ the changes that occurred because of your loss.
- 3) Discover and take on new ways of \_\_\_\_\_ and functioning without whatever it was that you lost.
- 4) Discover new \_\_\_\_\_ for the emotional investments that you once had in the lost object, situation or person.

# RECOVERY STEPS


1. Try to \_\_\_\_\_ what it is that doesn't make sense to you about your loss.
2. Identify the \_\_\_\_\_ that you feel during each day.
3. What \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ are you taking to help you move ahead and overcome your loss?
4. Be sure you are \_\_\_\_\_ your loss and grief with others who can listen to you and \_\_\_\_\_ you during this time.
5. It may help to find a person who has experienced a similar loss.
6. Identify the \_\_\_\_\_ characteristics and strengths of your life which have helped you before.
7. Spend time reading in the Psalms.
8. When you pray, share your \_\_\_\_\_, your \_\_\_\_\_ and your \_\_\_\_\_ with God.
9. Where do you want to be in your life two years from now?
10. Become familiar with the stages of grief so you will know what to \_\_\_\_\_ and you won't be thrown by what you are experiencing.
11. Remember that understanding your grief \_\_\_\_\_ is not sufficient.

# A Helpful Evaluation

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Does any kind of criteria exist that a person can use to evaluate whether or not recovery is occurring? Yes, it does. Dr. Therese Rando<sup>2</sup> has made an outstanding contribution to the study of grief and recovery. She suggests that you can see recovery by observing changes in 'yourself, in your relationship with what you lost, and in your relationship with the world and other people in it.

As you complete the following evaluation, the conclusions you reach may help you to decide where you are in your recovery. The scale below is geared toward the loss of a person, but you can adapt it to other losses as well. People often find that going through this evaluation with a person who can assist them with an objective viewpoint is useful.

 On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning "not at all" and 10 meaning "total recovery in that area," rate yourself in response to each question below.

## Changes in Myself Because of My Loss

I have returned to my normal levels of functioning in most areas of my life.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My overall symptoms of grief have declined.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My feelings do not overwhelm me when I think about my loss or when someone mentions it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Most of the time I feel alright about myself.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Without feeling guilty, I enjoy myself and what I experience.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My anger has diminished, and when it occurs, I deal with it appropriately.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I don't avoid thinking about things that could be or are painful.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My hurt has diminished and I understand it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can think about positive things.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have completed doing what I need to do about my loss.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My pain does not dominate my thoughts or my life.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have dealt with the secondary losses that accompanied my major loss.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can deal with special days or dates without being totally overwhelmed by memories.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can remember the loss on occasion without pain and without crying.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My life has meaning and significance to it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

At this time I am able to ask the question "How?" rather than "Why?"

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

In spite of my loss, I see hope and purpose in life.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have energy and can feel relaxed during the day.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I no longer fight the fact that the loss has occurred. I have accepted it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am learning to be comfortable with my new identity and in being without what I lost.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I understand that my feelings about the loss will return periodically, and I can accept that.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I understand what grief means and have a greater appreciation for it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### Changes in My Relationship with the Person I Lost

I remember our relationship realistically with positive and negative memories.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The relationship I have with the person I lost is healthy and appropriate.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I feel alright about not thinking about the loss for a time. I am not betraying the one I lost.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



I have a new relationship with the person I have lost. I know appropriate ways of keeping the person "alive."

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I no longer go on a search for my loved one.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I don't feel compelled to hang on to the pain.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The ways I keep my loved one alive are healthy and acceptable.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can think about things in life other than what I lost.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My life has meaning even though this person is gone.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

### Changes I Have Made in Adjusting to My New World

I have integrated my loss into my world and I can relate to others in a healthy way.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I can accept the help and support of other people.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am open about my feelings in other relationships.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I believe it is alright for life to go on even though my loved one is gone.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have developed an interest in people and things outside myself that have no relationship to the person I lost.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have put the loss in perspective.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

What did you learn about yourself in the process of taking this evaluation? No right or wrong scores exist for these scales; obviously the more answers at or near 10, the closer you are at being at an ideal state in your recovery. Go back and study those areas in which you scored from 0 to 5. Evaluate what steps you need to take to boost your rating in that area.