

Dealing With Loss

Loss Is Painful, Fearful & Sometimes Terrifying

Loss, whether through death, divorce or separation is one of the most difficult, upsetting and frightening experiences we will ever encounter. It is the one experience that will connect us with our vulnerability and for many of us, begin our emotional growth and change the direction and quality of our lives dramatically. In this life, "There can be little gain without pain."

Why Are We So Shaken?

As children, we become conditioned and intuitively understand that we cannot survive without the emotional and physical support of our parents. This conditioned belief becomes deeply entrenched within our consciousness and remains until its truth is put to the test as an adult and found to be in error. Whenever we form an emotional attachment or feel supported by anyone, we recreate the same kind of feelings we had with our parents. "If they leave me I die," is what we hear in our mind and feel in our heart. If and when they do leave, whether through death, divorce or separation, we feel that our very survival is being threatened. The deeper the emotional attachment, the deeper the fear and pain. When we are abandoned, it is like suffering our death. We are forced to feel vulnerable, alone and the fear of the unknown, the most humbling and threatening experiences that we ever encounter.

How We Respond

How we respond depends a great deal on just how comfortable we are with painful emotions. For many, the fear and pain surrounding the loss experience is so strong that avoidance, denial and attack all seem fully justified in order to survive. We hold our breath and tense up to shut down emotions and keep control over them. Often we will spend great amounts of time in the past trying to justify and understand or change the situation to avoid the pain and fear. Blame and anger may well up within us in an attempt to deflect our pain outside ourselves and keep it at a safe distance where it cannot be felt. "The best defense is a strong offence." This puts the responsibility for our pain on someone else so that we can attack instead of feeling vulnerable, hurt, and not in control. Overwork, drugs, food or alcohol become the addictive response of many to distract and deaden the pain. Some seem to go into a kind of unconscious denial of the whole situation. These kinds responses all apply great amounts of stress to the body that will lead finally to physical and emotional **disease**.

How Can We Cope Constructively

We can't heal what we won't feel. We must be prepared to **give up the blame** and all the coping choices that lead us away from our emotions and be willing to **feel and express the pain**. This becomes terrifying when everything inside is screaming out, "If you let go and give up control, you are going to die." For most of us this means that we will fight to the bitter end any kind of surrender into this emotional pain and fear. Sometimes when we are at the end of our rope, have suffered enough and are too tired to fight any longer, we let go and plunge into the black hole of our frightening and painful aloneness.

Feeling is healing and since our emotional pain is always experienced somewhere in our bodies, we must be willing and able to hold the awareness of our emotional pain on the altar of our consciousness long enough to relax through the fear. In order to accomplish this successfully we must breathe fully, let go on every out breath, and relax fully into the physical pain of our emotions. This emotional pain is usually located somewhere deep in the heart or abdominal area. It means giving up control and experiencing what we most fear, pain and the unknown depths of our emotional body. During this process, our ego, the fear-based part of our consciousness, will make powerful attempts to distract us any way it can. Expect it to pull out anger and blame, worry, criticism, judgement, and make endless attempts to analyze and understand or change the situation, all this to avoid letting go, feeling the pain, and yes, healing. When this happens, gently and with determination, we must bring our attention back to our body and locate the place of emotional pain, breathe, let go, and relax into and through this pain as much as we can.

Those more comfortable with emotions may be able accomplish this process of **grieving** immediately and fully. They will feel their deep sadness, let go, cry out and through the pain of their aloneness and discover a deep sense of peace within themselves, a kind of Universal Oneness. Others, less comfortable with emotions, may take years to get to the point of healing the deep grief within them. As soon as we are ready, the perfect situation will present itself to trigger the feeling and healing of the unfinished wounds and grief within us. When the learner is ready, the teacher appears. Remember then, when situations and people trigger feelings of pain and fear, see each one as a teacher and friend, an opportunity to feel and heal the deep wounds from the past we carry within us. Just remember to **give up the blame**, let go, breathe, feel and express the pain. One last suggestion for those of you who have been willing and able to follow me this far without turning away. While you are breathing and letting go into the pain, holding it on the altar of your consciousness, speak to the Universe, or to God with these simple words, **“Please heal this pain and fear within me.”** Know that all healing prayers are answered in the perfect way and at the perfect time. It is our job is to let go and feel the pain; the healing comes from the Universe, at our request and readiness.

What Do We Gain Through All This Pain?

For the vast majority of us who are very frightened of giving up control and entering into painful emotions like sadness, helplessness and aloneness, the loss experience is the only situation painful and powerful enough to shatter our control and force us to surrender into this dark and uncharted ocean of our consciousness. Much like Columbus, our ego has told us that if we sail out into this uncharted ocean, we will drown or fall off the edge and die. Sailing, however, through this ocean of our painful emotions, especially into loss and aloneness, known as **“suffering our death,”** provides us with a sure gateway into the light and peace within us that is known as our Spirituality or Spiritual Body. This light, love and peace has always been with us, just lost for a time in the dark clouds of our fear and defensiveness. Whenever we are willing to surrender and suffer through the pain and fear of our loss, aloneness, and deep sadness, we become awakened to a whole **NEW WORLD**, within our consciousness, a world filled with Peace, Power and a sense of Infinite Oneness.

Until this kind of situation comes along, we are imprisoned within the finite limits of our thoughts, senses and emotions. Because of this vulnerable and very mortal sense of ourselves, most of our motivations and actions are fear, defense and security based. Most of what we do and how we think comes from a desire to defend ourselves from pain and gain security. Like a **“near death experience,”** suffering constructively through loss and aloneness will free us from fear and open our hearts to Love and the feeling of Power and Infinite Oneness deep within. Those we have lost through death, divorce, or separation can be our greatest teachers. When we can think of them with gratitude, our lesson has been learned. **“To suffer ones death and be reborn is not easy.”** (Fritz Perls, Founder of Gestalt Therapy)



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