

Grief, Pain & Loss

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Soul Care Equipping Conference

*The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.
He guides me along right paths for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of
death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my
enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of
my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
(Psalm 23)*

Loss for Teri and I

We all experience loss...avoid comparison

Kinds of losses*

Avoidable and unavoidable

Temporary and permanent

Actual and imagined

Anticipated and unanticipated

Leaving and being left

Loss is seen as foreign although, like death and taxes, it is inevitable.

Our culture routinely interprets losses as alien invasions that interrupt our 'normal' lives. We numb our pain through denial, blaming, rationalizations, addictions, and avoidance. We search for spiritual shortcuts around our wounds. We demand others take away our pain.

Yet we all face many deaths within our lives. The choice is whether these deaths will be terminal (crushing our spirit and life) or open us up to new possibilities and depths of transformation in Christ.

Peter Scazzero, *Emotional Healthy Spirituality*

Biblical view of loss & redemption

Part of meta-narrative - Gen 3 (pain & loss) and Rev. 21 (no more tears or pain)

Isaiah 53:3 "...a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (ESV)

John 11:35 "Jesus wept."

God can redeem all things - James 1

Romans 8:35-39. IN our trials we find his love.

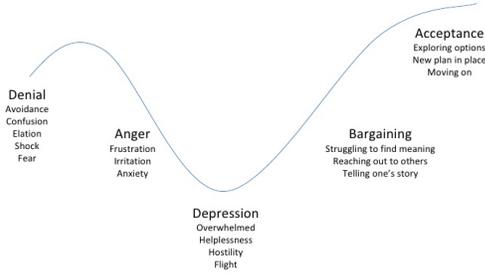
Response to grief and pain

Family of origin patterns (my mom's family)

Cultural patterns: stoic, demonstrative, vocal, communal, private. (Western Canadians)

We all follow default patterns unless intention is given a different pathway (Are you aware of yours?)

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



Response to grief and pain

Minimize / denial / avoidance - stuff it down

Maximize - attach identity to loss

Blaming self, God or others

Rationalization / intellectualization

Medicating - choose your drug

Getting stuck in the process (picking off dandelion heads) - processing symptoms, not roots

Processing the pain in the presence of Jesus

Effects of not processing our pain and loss

Incongruent emotional responses

Muted or heightened emotions

Presence of deep anger (sometimes within seemingly placid people)

Lack of empathetic response, "numbness"

Absence of joy

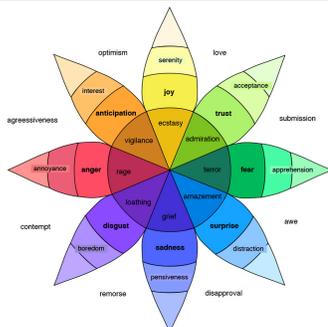
Barrier to real intimacy...loneliness

Self, others, God...seeking false intimacy

Difficulty "hearing" God - can mask as demonic

Addictions / medicating pain

Effects of not processing our pain and loss



"Plutchik's Flower"

by Robert Plutchik

Psalms of Lament

Largest single category of Psalms: 68 of 150

*“O God, why have you rejected us forever?
Why does your anger smoulder against the
sheep of your pasture?”*

Psalm 74

*Turning toward our pain is counterintuitive.
But in fact, the heart of Christianity is that
the way to life is through death, the pathway
to resurrection is through crucifixion.*

Peter Scazzero, *Emotional Healthy Spirituality*

Processing our Grief and Pain

Invite Holy Spirit to guide you
Acknowledge the truth of the loss
Allow yourself to feel the pain
Invite Jesus into the painful experience
Give your pain and damaged emotions to him
(adapted from Charles H. Kraft, *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing*)

Stay current in processing grief. Grief journal.

Experience: Processing Grief and Pain

Work through a Psalm (42, 28, 13)
Ask Jesus to come and be with me. *“Is there any
memory you want to lead me back to?”*
*“Jesus, I invite you be be present in the events
around my loss.”*
Ask Jesus to lead me to any unprocessed grief.
Were any vows/agreements made that day?
Any parts of me that got locked away that day.
Give him access to my soul, emotions, memories.
(Adapted from Ingrid Davis)
