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Cooling Down Stress — Part 3

Resolving Deep-Seated Stress

Lecture Notes for Realistic Help, Reorganizing Life and Restoring Joy After Loss

Advanced Stress Management for Today's 24/7 World
Beyond Relaxing • Resolving the Pain



with Cameron Johnston, Stress Management and Burnout Coach, Author and International Speaker

Seminar Outline — for Resolving Deep-Seated Stress

1. Teach Grief Recovery Basics
2. Provide temporary Support
3. Help Reorganizing Life with an Intentional Grieving Plan

Grief Recovery and Healing from Acute Loss

(Much of the material in this Seminar is adapted
from *Grief Recovery* by Larry Yeagley)



*Grief Isn't Something You Get Over
It's Something You Go Through.*

Alan Pedersen

Major Losses Include

Typical

- Death
- Divorce
- Loss of Job
- Terminal Illness
- Loss of Home
fire or default
- Other _____

Atypical

- Infertility
- Slander
- Loss of expectation
- Loss of control
- Financial
- Illness/Burnout
- Stupid mistake
- Other _____

Another Way To View Losses Include

Concrete

- Mother
- Father
- Son/Daughter
- Husband/Wife
- Friend
- House
- Health

Abstract

- Love
- Control
- Self-respect
- Ambition
- Reputation
- Freedom
- Confidence

It is important to adjust to both types of loss.
Failure to adjust to abstract losses tends to
prolong grief.

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My Loss History

Below list all your losses in chronological order. Put a check mark by the losses you adjusted to poorly. Put a double check mark by the ones you still struggle with. (If you need more space use the notes space on the next page.)

In the space below make observations about your history you'd like to share with the group.

What strengths did you use in past losses that would help you now? Any new strengths you can use?

At the time of loss did you

- Talk about it? _____
- Weep? _____
- Try to forget? _____
- Pretend it didn't happen? _____
- Bottle up your feelings? _____
- Get feelings out in the open? _____
- Other? _____

Describe your present support system below.

How can you improve or better utilize you support system?

Notes:

Common Grief Reactions

Physical Sensations

- Hollowness in the stomach
- Tightness in the chest
- Tightness in the throat
- Over sensitivity to noise
- Breathlessness
- Weakness in the muscles
- Lack of energy
- Dry mouth

Mental Sensations

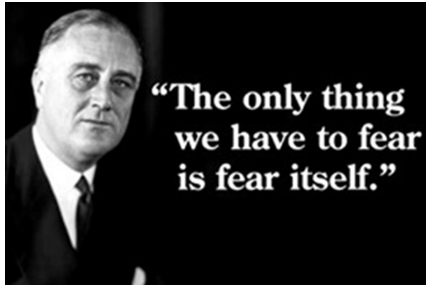
- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Preoccupation
- Sense of presence
- Hallucinations

Behaviors

- Sleep disturbance
- Absent minded
- Avoiding reminders
- Dreams of deceased
- Searching/Calling out
- Restless/Over activity
- Visiting places that remind
- Carrying objects that remind
- Treasuring objects that belonged to a person
- Appetite disturbance
- Social withdrawal
- Sighing/Crying

THE 5 STAGES OF GRIEF

1. Shock and Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance



Expose and Lessen Your Fears

Fear invades when life-events shatter our regular world – like loss.

Fear can paralyze us and leave us anxious and immobilized.

Fear is a _____ part of grief. Quit fighting fear.

It is not your fault.

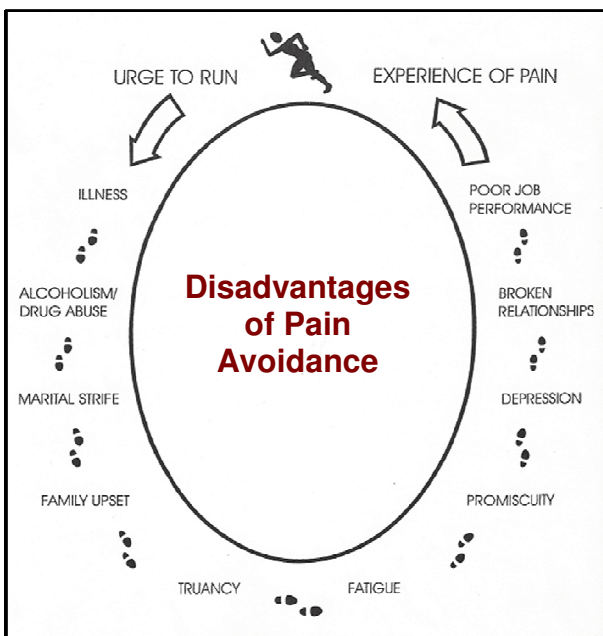
It is the situation.

A Partial List of Real Loss Fears

- I'm afraid I will _____.
- I'm afraid I won't be able to care for my house.
- I'm afraid another loss will happen.
- I'm afraid my finances will not hold out.
- I'm afraid of losing my _____.
- I'm afraid to be in the house alone at night.
- I'm afraid I will not be able to raise the children alone.
- I'm afraid to lean on friends for fear they will leave me.

People in Grief at High Risk

- _____ Loss – one lady in a recovery group listed 25 losses and asked where do I start? Secondary losses i.e. not only loss of husband but also lost a friend, financial counselor, travel partner, etc.
- Tragic loss – accidental death, suicide, homicide
- Lack of _____
- Inability to express feelings
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Troubled Marriage
- History of loss not adjusted to
- History of Emotional Crises
- Physical Illness



The 6 Rs of Grief by Therese Rando

1. _____ that the loss has occurred
2. React to the loss
3. Recollect or re-experience the relationship with the person
4. _____ your attachments to what can no longer be
5. Readjust and move into the world in which the person no longer lives without forgetting the person
6. Reinvest and set new goals

5 Heartfelt Requests For Family and Friends from a Grieving Person

1. Give me space to have my own grief experience
2. Listen and acknowledge my right to grieve
3. Be present even when you are uncomfortable with me showing my emotions
4. Please let go of the grieving timetable, give me the time I need
5. Please reach out to me, several times, even I say no to invitations. I just may not be ready. Do ask again.

(Adapted from Wings of Change materials)



Reorganizing Life with an Intentional Grieving Plan

Process Includes

- _____ it really happened
- Experience the _____ fully

- Adjust to the environments with memories
- _____ with new plans
- Process to reach the destination

Process to reach the destination

(Do this deliberately and consciously)

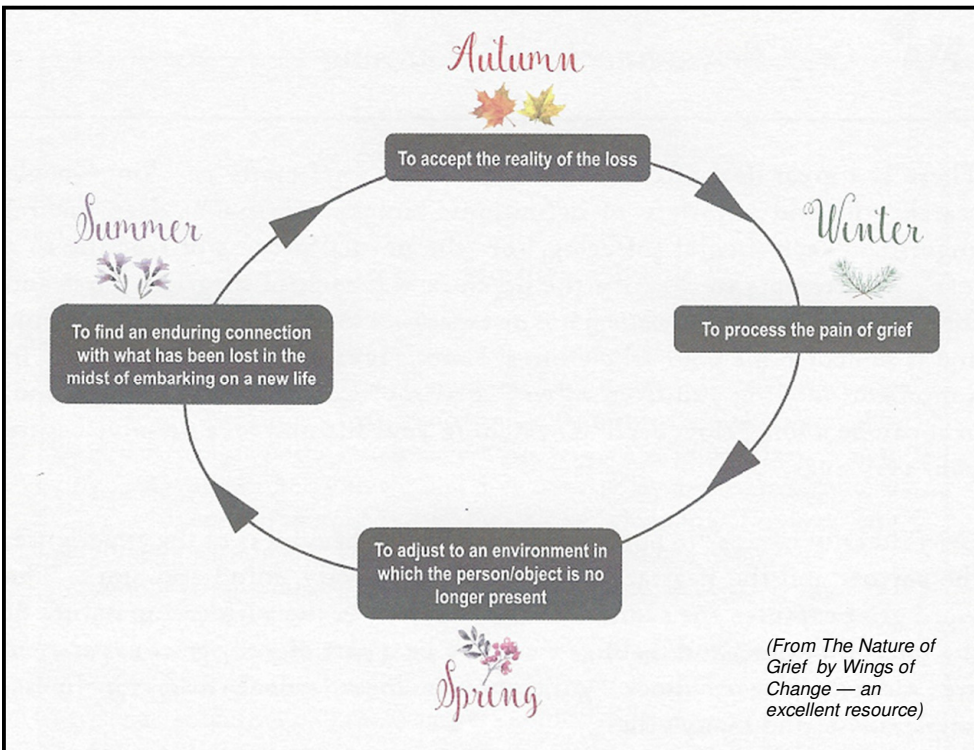
- Choose a quiet place to spend alone daily for a few minutes
- Take reminders of the lost to that place
- Take a journal and pen to that place
- Completely relive in mind just ONE aspect of the relationship
- Completely review ONE hope for the relationship
- Record in the journal your feelings
- Write a brief farewell to what you can no longer do
- Read and say the farewell aloud many times
- Allow the emotions to flow until they diminish

• **The next day** repeat the farewell from and then proceed and repeat as you did before

- If you care to, share your farewells, etc. with a friend



Notes:



1. Be Good To Yourself

Grief often causes us to avoid pleasure, but it is important to be good to yourself during your time of adjustment. This week plan to do something enjoyable. Yes, you will still be adjusting and have times of sadness, but allow yourself to have some simple pleasure this week.

Need some ideas?

Your favorite dessert
 A manicure and pedicure
 A massage
 A shopping trip
 Buy a gadget you always wanted and try it out
 Attend a concert
 Take a tour of car dealers and view the new models
 Visit an old friend
 Plant a new flower garden
 Start whistling and singing as you take a walk
 Other options — Use your imagination!!

2. Lifestyle Tips For People in Grief

1. Discipline yourself to eat regular meals.
2. Eat a balanced plant-based diet, lots of fruits and vegetables.
3. Be generous with foods high in Vitamin B's, consider a good vitamin B supplement.
4. Avoid sweets and fatty foods.
5. Drink lots of water, 8-10 glasses per day, no pop or alcohol, alcohol is a depressant.
6. Eat a good breakfast and lunch and a light evening meal.
7. Schedule 20-30 minutes of vigorous exercise daily.
 This stimulates the production of endorphins, a natural antidepressant. See your doctor for exercise guidelines appropriate to your age and health condition.
8. Do some deep breathing in the fresh air.
9. Maintain good posture.
10. Take a nap during the day, if needed, its okay.
11. Do some relaxation exercises, daily.
12. Avoid caffeine, hot or cold, it stimulates then lets you down
 Rub down with a loofa in a warm shower for lasting stimulation. See cold mitten friction on page 8.
13. Sharply reduce TV viewing.
14. Make a schedule for yourself, keep it light.
15. Keep life as regular as possible.
16. Keep a balance between work, relationships and aloneness.

3. My Loss History

Be sure to do this on page 2, regardless of how difficult it may be. Below is another excellent exercise that may be a bit difficult right now but will be helpful.

4. I Am Very Special

My Assets — skills, gifts and abilities

My Growing Points

I Am Very Special — continued

My Short Term Goals For Using My Assets

My Long Term Goals For Using My Assets

My Goals For Developing My Growing Points

5. Some Ideas of What To Do Now About the Big Unknown

1. Disorganization and mental confusion naturally occur when loss happens. Ask a good friend to go over all the details and obligations surrounding the loss to make sure all is done well. In certain losses the services of a family attorney, pastor or spiritual counselor can help. Don't try to do it alone.
2. After sufficient reviewing of the loss, focus on the relationship that was lost. Be sure to review the good, the so-so and the negative aspects of the relationship. Using the intentional grieving process, move on from a physical relationship to a relationship of memory.
3. Alone or with a friend who knows you well, take inventory of your abilities and interests. Examine as many options for utilizing them as you can. Lay a few plans for carrying out one or two options. If an option doesn't pan out, go on to another one. This is a time to focus exclusively on what you have lost. It is a time to decide what you can do with what is left.
4. Begin by making a schedule with at least two things you will do each day for about a week. Extend the schedule as you go along. It can be as simple as clearing off the work bench or washing the living room windows.
5. Remember, it is easier to act your way into a new way of feeling than it is to feel your way into a new way of acting. Reactive depression tends to make you lethargic. You have to push yourself to launch those plans.
6. Begin your day with a shower and a cold mitten friction to get the circulation going. It gives you a stimulation that doesn't let you down, a great replacement for early morning caffeine. See page 8 for info on cold mitten friction.
7. A good 30 minute walk every day improves your outlook.
8. Begin something you've always wanted to do, but never got around to. Adult education programs are great. Joining a chorus can lift you. An aerobic exercise group would be great. Just make sure that it puts you in touch with others and offers an element of pleasure. Make it something you can look forward to each week or day.
9. Look at the big unknown realistically. None of us knows a great deal about the future, so just take one day at a time. If you are lonely, say, "Today I am lonely, but I won't always be lonely." Changing your perspective is important.
10. Think of people you know who have lost and have gone on to live and love creatively. Ask them how they managed to get beyond the big unknowns and the what-to-do-now's.

6. Loneliness and Grief

Loss of relationship almost always has the tag-along emotion of loneliness. The best solution would be to restore the relationship, but that is out of the question. Adjustment to the loss through adequate grieving is the most immediate action toward solution. In addition, it is important to understand the causes of loneliness. The following solutions for some grief challenges will help.

Needs

We all have basic human needs. Some of them are love, security, appreciation, affirmation, a sense of belonging, the touch of tenderness, to be needed, etc. Lonely people need to be open to relationships and situations that will meet these needs. This could be family, work associates, friends, fellow church members and various organizations that bring you into contact with those who meet some of these needs. **Unmet needs make you more susceptible to loneliness.**

Deprivation

When we are deprived of community and intimacy, we may experience loneliness. Grief can nudge us into isolation and withdrawal, but we must determine not to do this. Grief is a time to develop existing community ties and broaden our understanding of intimacy. Many people too often think of intimacy as limited to sexual intimacy, but intimacy is also derived from sharing common interests with a variety of people. Intellectual intimacy, aesthetic intimacy, recreational intimacy, social intimacy, work intimacy and spiritual intimacy are a few types of intimacy that can ease the void left by a major loss.

Discrepancy

When there is a large gap between what we expect and reality, loneliness can result. In grief, we sometimes expect a certain amount of support from family and friends, but that support is not forthcoming for many reasons. Loneliness follows. Bringing expectations closer to reality helps.

Alienation

Alienation from God, self, others and nature is thought to be a source of loneliness. Make every effort to break these alienations. An old song says, "No man/woman is an island. No man/woman stands alone."

Tell yourself, "Today I am lonely, but that is today.

Tomorrow I will not allow loneliness to control my life. Then plan to put at least one significant activity into your schedule that will put you in contact with others. Controlling loneliness is a process, not a recipe.

7. Stress Management

Stress is both positive and negative and is our reaction to the activities of life. Grief from any loss is a deep-seated stressor and can seriously overload our stress coping skills and resilience. In addition to good coping skills we need to look critically at the many spaces in our lives where we can conserve energy needed to grieve and adjust to loss.

The many spaces in which we live include: **Home, Work, School, Church, Recreation, Personal, Emotional, etc.** Some of our spaces are healthy, others can be very unhealthy.

A healthy space is rewarding, enjoyable, promotes growth and advancement, uses our strengths and compensates for our weaknesses, etc.

If a space is unhealthy we can choose to **CHANGE** the space, **EXIT** the space, or change our **PERSPECTIVE** on the space. If the space is temporarily unhealthy we can reduce energy expended in other spaces until the unhealthy space is made healthy.

Grief temporarily makes several spaces unhealthy due to the enormous outlay of energy. Cutting back on energy expended in other spaces allows energy for grieving.

You may find an unhealthy space unrelated to grief that needs changing or exiting. Go for it!

9. Help For Insomnia

By Allen Frances, M.D. & Michael B. First, M.D. from Mental Health

1. There is no standard for "normal" sleep and no one can expect to have perfect sleep. Most people underestimate the amount of sleep they get.
2. The use of sleeping pills probably creates more insomnia than it improves. They should be used only occasionally in early grief, but you can expect a hangover the next day.
3. Get into the habit of easing into sleep by reducing light gradually and ceasing stimulating activity, including TV viewing.
4. Before retiring do things that slow you down, soothe and calm you.
5. A warm bath and gentle massage an hour before bed relaxes.
6. Make a to do list for tomorrow so you can put them out of your mind.
7. Darken the room as much as possible and shut out sounds as much as you can.
8. Don't nap excessively during the day.
9. No vigorous exercise after sunset.
10. No snacking after supper and no late supper.
11. Don't use the bed or bedroom for anything but sleep.
12. Do progressive relaxation exercises.
13. Meditate on uplifting themes.
14. Keep regular sleep hours, preferably two hours before midnight.

8. Divorce and Grief

Divorce causes your assumptive world and reality to clash.

All the emotional and physical reactions that accompany death may occur, but some are much more intense,

rejection	anger	self-blame
sense of being used	loneliness	denial, etc.

Regular or occasional contact can cause false hopes of reconciliation and the beginning of perpetuation of denial.

Some people construct large lists of their faults that may have caused the rupture of the relationship. Remember, there are faults on both sides even in marriages that last 50 years.

Reviewing all the aspects of the married relationship and saying farewell to them precedes saying hello to the reorganization of life and plans for the future.

The rush to develop another romantic relationship is folly. Dr. Lyn Weiss, radio talk show hostess in Dallas, TX, always advises callers to give at least two years. Good advice.

Divorce can cause a major dip in self-esteem. Assess your assets and set new goals for using them.

Anger will eat you alive. Learn constructive ways of heading off justifiable anger.

Refuse to withdraw from former friends, especially couples who are still open to friendship. Socialization is vital to adjustment.



The cold mitten friction

A simple, easy safe way to force the body to relax and heal.

The cold mitten friction is rubbing the surface of the body with a cold wet cloth or specially made mittens. Begin at one part of the body and rub vigorously with the cold cloth until a red glow develops, then move to another part with the cold wet cloth. Take one part after another until the entire body surface has been covered.

The equipment consists of any container with a few quarts of cold water (can also be done in the shower) varying from just cool to ice water. To apply the friction use a large washcloth wrapped around the hand and secured by the fist, or sew up two mitts of rough fabric such as a rough terry cloth, denim or corduroy. A loofa sponge may also be used, but it will not as effectively deliver the cold part of the treatment.

10. Suggestions for Journaling

Acquire a notebook of your choice. Don't worry about sentence structure or spelling. This is simply an exercise in regaining your equilibrium. Here are some ideas.

1. Put your saddest feelings into words. Address the journal, not the lost person.
2. Describe the pain you feel in emotional and physical terms.
3. Do a lot of reminiscing in the journal.
4. Write about the strengths you have and how they will help you adjust.
5. Set some recovery goals for yourself and record your progress.
6. As you are able, write farewells to activities or dreams that you know will never be a reality.
7. Record memories you want to treasure for the rest of your life.
8. Write about ways in which the missing person brought joy and fulfillment to your life. Express gratitude for those contributions.
9. Dream about your future and write down some of those dreams.
10. Read your journal entries aloud regularly.
11. Journaling brings tears. Let them fall.
12. Write down things you want to do in the present and record the degrees of pleasure experienced.

Quit journaling whenever you wish. Share life with other people. We all need confidantes with whom we can share high points. That is called a living journal.

11. Children's Grief

Children need to grieve as much as adults, be sure to let them. Children's capacity to grieve comes earlier than once believed.

Here are some guidelines from research that can be helpful.

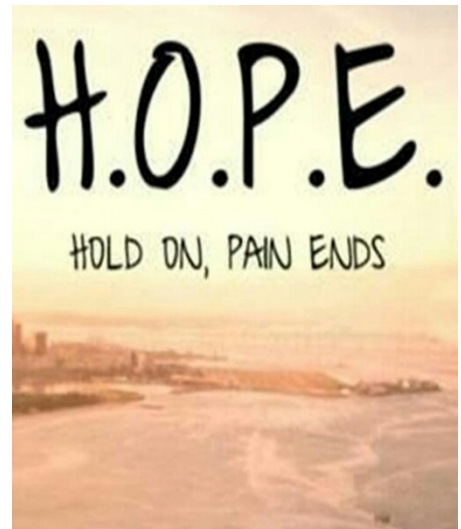
1. Much depends on their overall maturity level.
2. Adjustment is made easier in the presence of a consistent adult who meets the child's needs and helps the child express feelings about the loss.
3. Adjustment is made easier when close adults model healthy ways of grieving.
4. Children need to be given a choice to attend funeral events and even given a voice in planning and participating in them.
5. Family openness to talking about the deceased encourages the child to grieve.
6. Acting out and scholastic problems may not be greater than their non-bereaved peers, but adult awareness and understanding are helpful.
7. Consistency in life routines is helpful.
8. They don't want teachers, coaches, pastors to bring it up, but want them to listen when they bring it up.
9. Support, nurturance and continuity are key ingredients in good care.
10. Self-worth changes begin about 2 years after loss. This can be headed off by good worth-building practices in the home.
11. Cohesive families have fewer problems with children in grief.
12. Loss of mother presents more adjustment hurdles than loss of father, especially as a child moves through the second year of mourning.
13. Clear indications that a child needs professional help should be treated in a manner that does not single out the child.
14. One quarter of children fall into the at-risk group, regardless of the type of loss, during the first 6 months of mourning.

Note: All Grief Recovery material not specifically credited to others is adapted from Grief Recovery material written and compiled by Larry Yeagley.)

It is decision time.

Decide On An Action Plan

- ★ Start _____
- ★ Stop _____
- ★ Keep _____



Resource — Highly Recommended Book — *Grief Recovery* by Larry Yeagley
 check with us on how to obtain 250.267.1660

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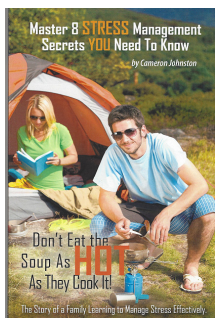
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Also Available is a Book, *Cooling Down Teen Stress* →→→

Written By A Teen — For Teens, With Teen Stress Strategies

For Real Teen Concerns Like, Dating, Parents, Money, Jobs, Grades, Fear, Guilt, Suicide and Grief.

Teens are saying: "The teen stress strategies helped me a lot and I love the story so much that I read the book 3 times!" Heidi, Grade 10, Alberta, Canada

