

RECONCILIATION OF GRIEF

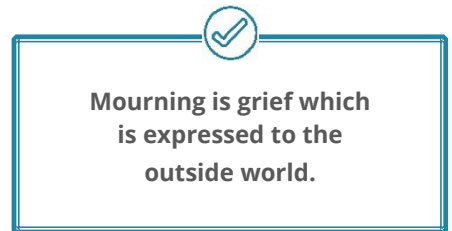
GRIEF VS MOURNING

Grief is an internal experience. For some, it is an inside fear, emptiness, panic, loneliness, anger, guilt, longing, or even depression. It's often expressed as, "Grief is love with no place to go."

Mourning is a bit different. It is the process where we work through our grief by outwardly expressing our internal feelings.

Grief without mourning is dangerous and destructive to the human system. By coming to this group, you are beginning or continuing a healthy mourning process.

What are you experiencing now? What is it like for you?



WHEN GROWING UP, WHO TAUGHT US HOW TO MOURN?

All our lives, most of us have been taught how to acquire, not how to lose. Children and young adults aren't offered a course in LOSS 101. No wonder it is strange and painful. Many mourn their grief as they witnessed a parent, movie or societal personality handle his or her grief.

As young people, we may have heard these messages:

- **"Don't feel bad, don't cry."**
MESSAGE: Bury your feelings.
- **"You lost your toy! Well, just be good and Santa will bring another."**
MESSAGE: Everything is replaceable.
- **"Now, you just keep your feelings to yourself."**
MESSAGE: It isn't safe to share your feelings.

Who taught you how to experience loss and appropriately express feelings?

GRIEF RECONCILIATION

Intellectually, you know you really don't recover from your grief in the sense that everything is restored to the way it was before. You know it's unlikely that life will ever be the same, yet at the beginning of our loss, this is difficult to accept.

You are beginning a process—a journey toward reconciliation—where you learn to adapt to living with your loved one in your heart.

TASKS OF RECONCILIATION

There are a number of tasks ahead as you proceed with your own process of grief reconciliation.

- ✓ You learn to effectively experience and express outside of yourself the reality of the death.
- ✓ You allow yourself to fully embrace the pain of the loss, while learning how to assure that you are nurtured, physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- ✓ You learn to convert your relationship with the person who died from one of interactive presence to one of appropriate memory.
- ✓ You learn to develop a new self-identity based on a life without the person who died.
- ✓ You begin to relate the experience of the death to a context of new meaning in your life.
- ✓ You develop a lasting network of support to help you through the process.

In these next few weeks, you will learn safe ways to experience and express your grief.

- ✓ You will learn how to mourn while still taking care of yourself.
- ✓ You will begin to develop a new perspective about your loss and begin to clarify your self-identity.
- ✓ You will begin to discover a new sense of meaning in life while finding a network of supportive relationships to help you along the way.
- ✓ You are at an early stage of this process. Be patient and take it one moment at a time.
- ✓ Trust that it does get better. Because it does.

Learning to find the path for your personal reconciliation journey is what these support group sessions are all about.