

The Process of Grief

Pursuing Podcast Episode 3

March 18, 2019

Notes	
Introduction (Quote by Sandberg)	“I don’t know anyone who has been handed only roses. We all encounter hardships. Some we see coming; others take us by surprise. It can be as tragic as the sudden death of a child, as heartbreaking as a relationship that unravels, or as disappointing as a dream that goes unfulfilled. The question is: When those things happen, what do we do next (Sandberg, 2017 p. 10)?”
What is grief?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grief is an emotional response to any type of loss. ● The emotional response of grief is one that we are often not expecting because we don’t realize how significant that loss is. ● Naming it <i>grief</i> is the first step in our healing—that is empowering, normalizing, and validating.
What is the process of grief?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When we are having an emotional response to a loss, to first know and understand that it is normal, it’s natural, and that it’s a necessary experience as we adapt our response to a loss. ● Grief is an individual experience. ● It often presents itself in a few primary emotions: sadness (most commonly associated with grief); anger (a raw anger and not sure of trigger); and feeling numb (often where we start). ● A common response is the “why” question (e.g., <i>Why is this happening to me?</i>). The “why” question is a great and human response question, but if we spend too much time with the “why” question, we’ve used too much energy on an outcome that will often not change the current situation. ● The first step is just to feel. ● Trauma is when power has been taken away from us; we no longer feel safe. ● Gaining some control back starts with us leaning into those emotions and feeling them. ● Sit with it. ● If we sit with emotions too long, they lose their utility and it can become catastrophic. ● Place the emotions on a river (let it go), but understand there

	<p>is a corner up ahead that will bring it back around to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grief is lifelong journey. ● “Life is a rollercoaster of grief and hope.” ● Grief is not a straight line along a graph that goes straight up to the top. Grief is more like a line where there’s loops all throughout it, but it is still headed upward. ● As those emotions loop back around again on the grief journey, it isn’t that we are starting over again, because we have made progress, it is just a learning opportunity to sit with and learn more from those emotions. ● The five stages of grief identified by Kubler Ross—denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—was not really meant to be a checklist we pass off and are done with grief. We are constantly going through them (not really final; <i>journey</i> rather than <i>stages</i>). ● Grief is messy, but it doesn’t always have to be along this journey.
<p>The Three P’s (Sandberg, 2017, p. 16)</p>	<p>Psychologist Martin Seligman found that these three P’s can stunt recovery (from trauma/loss):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personalization: the belief that we are at fault <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look at those beliefs and challenge them—are they true? ○ Guilt is okay and is a motivating emotion; it is about how long we sit with it and if we let it move to shame, which is incredibly damaging. ● Pervasiveness: the belief that an event will affect all areas of our life <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Also known as catastrophizing (thoughts/beliefs). ● Permanence: the belief that the aftershocks of the event will last forever <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anxiety = <i>What if’s of the past and the future.</i> ○ Challenge the thoughts with facts.
<p>Supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write down a list of coping strategies (not right or wrong). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Making a list of coping strategies before a crisis is far more helpful for when we are in the crisis, so that we have a list that we can reference. ● It is valuable to seek out social connection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grief is an isolating emotion. ○ We are not alone on this journey; everyone around us is on it too. ○ Connection allows us to recharge (validates and normalizes the experience). ● We support those that are grieving best by witnessing. ● Grief isn’t fixed; it is a journey and an experience that we go through. And it’s a healthy experience to go through because

	<p>we are learning and teaching our body and mind how to become resilient, because there will be more grief in the midst of the joy and hope and other emotions we experience on this journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn to honour ourselves and our emotions (self-empathy and self-compassion). ● Allow meaning to come on the journey. ● Make a joy list. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the midst of grief, there still can be joy.
Three Principles	<p>Three principles to remind ourselves as we grieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grief is normal, natural, and necessary ● Grief is a unique and individual journey (and is often messy) ● Some of our greatest growth comes from accepting and learning to live with grief and loss
Three Action Items	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your job is just to feel (honour ourselves) 2. Choose empathy over escape (lean into the pain) / Self-Compassion 3. Watch for the three P's
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Source (recommended reading)	Sandberg, S. and Grant. A.M. (2017). <i>Option B: Facing adversity, building resilience, and finding joy</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf.