

Needless to say, the time after loss is volatile and confusing for most people. Unresolved issues come to the fore and questions we have not answered must often be confronted. Along with a sense of abandonment and sorrow, anger often arises. Most have little understanding of what they are going through, or what to expect in the future. Facing the unknown can produce additional fear.

Yet crisis means opportunity. When the process of grief is handled properly suffering can be diminished and symptoms that may appear later, can be forestalled. It is even possible for the individual to grow a great deal during this time and benefit from the experience.

The more we understand what we are going through, the less out of control we will feel. At a time like this we need meaning and direction. We need to know what to expect and how to handle the many changes that are happening.

### The Dynamics of Loss and Grief

Each person reacts differently to loss and that is fine. Some feel abandoned, others feel betrayed and afraid. Some reach out for love and comfort, while others withdraw, wanting time alone. Some go into denial and seem not to register the loss that has happened. These individuals are often unconsciously processing what has happened, not ready to face reality yet. They may fear they will be overwhelmed if they allow themselves to register what has gone on. It is best not to pressure a person to react differently. When the individual is accepted for who they are at the moment, it is easier for them to let go, and move on. This entire process takes time.

It helps greatly to realize that the pain we go through during grief is normal. It does not mean there is something wrong with us. We need not feel ashamed of or afraid of our feelings.

### What Happens When We Are Grieving

When we are grieving, interest in the outside world subsides, we slow down, sleep more, our social activities seem less meaningful. This is not necessarily bad. An individual may need more time alone. In the process of grieving the individual is contemplating the nature of their lives, coming to terms with the person they've lost. They may be reviewing that which was left unsaid or undone.

Grief is usually most difficult when the individual has had troubled or incomplete relationship. When there have been unsolved conflicts left behind, this makes it harder to be at peace. Many spend time blaming themselves for what they did or didn't do. Others blame doctors, helpers, government or family members. Casting blame is a way of removing the guilt and sorrow we feel. The sooner they are able to let go of blame and accusations, the sooner healing begins.

### Let Go Of Blame

Blame, self hate and other forms of anger, are common during grief. Although it is important not to repress anger and disappointment, it is best to feel it and then let it go. Some individuals hold onto anger as a way of keeping connected to the person or situation they have lost. The truth is that anger always keeps us out of balance. It is a poison to the one who holds onto it.

### Coming To Terms Steps To Take

Ultimately one must reconcile oneself to what happened. Most people do all they can to avoid experiencing their feelings or situation directly. Many fear that if they face their suffering, it will make them feel small and helpless. Actually, the opposite is true. It's best not to control or resist the feelings. When these feelings are not resisted,

they simply come to awareness and then fade away.

Feelings that are repressed come out later in different ways, including various physical symptoms, phobias and unwanted behaviors. If we do not address our feelings in one mode, they will appear in another – physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually.

Hopefully, we come to a point where forgiveness can take place, (forgiveness of the person we've lost, forgiveness of ourselves, the universe, or whatever it is we feel anger with). In order to do this, it is deeply helpful to realize that all of life is temporary. People, possessions, situations are given to us for a short time. As we acknowledge the transitory nature of life, we can then begin to look deeper and see what it is that we never lose.

Through acceptance of reality, of oneself and the other, one develops [do choi tinh duc](#) the power to affirm life, and to grow. One can then give to others, and become a source of inspiration, and live a life that is meaningful. The discovery and experience of value and meaning in one's life and one's losses is the most potent healing of all.

Below are a couple of exercises that are helpful in coming to terms with loss and change.

#### Exercise Giving Gifts

Make a list of the gifts you received from the person you've lost – the ways they taught and inspired you. Now find ways to give those gifts to others. As you do so, not only will you be acknowledging what you received from that person, but honoring their memory and keeping their spirit alive.

#### Exercise It Suffices

Whenever you think of the person and the way they fell short, what they didn't give you, say to yourself, It Suffices. This is in recognition that they gave all they could, being who they were, and that you can feel satisfied with what you received. (This is an ancient Buddhist practice)

#### Prayer, Silence And Meditation

Of course the deepest sense of healing, peace and security can come from our connection to a higher power or our higher selves. During the process of grieving it is very helpful to be able to connect with that which is ultimately meaningful to you. Our true security comes from discovering a larger purpose in all that happens, and our ability to trust it..