

Resilient Coping: Facing Life Course Realities Plus a Pandemic and Community Upheaval



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- An overview of facets of loss, personal and communal
- The process will move from self-awareness to aging, to shattered dreams to Covid19, ambiguous loss to addressing complex losses
 - Responses of reasonable hope and resiliency promotion
 - Discussion included



The Guest House

**This being human is a guesthouse.
Every morning is new arrival.**

**A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.**

Welcome and entertain them all!

Beginning lines of a poem by Rumi

Midlife to Aging Some Potential Tensions

Valuing Wisdom vs. Valuing Physical Power

Generativity vs. "Over the Hill"

Socializing vs. Isolation

Emotional and Mental Flexibility vs. Rigidity

Years Yet to Live vs. Years Lived

**Independence vs. "The Caught Generation"
(caught between yourself and others)**

Richard Hey / Ted Bowman



Losses in Later Life

(different from earlier periods)

- **Rapidity of Losses**
- **Finality of Losses**
- **The Ever-Present Character of Loss –
for oneself and one's peers**
- **Losses Are Cumulative**
- **Meanings Attached to Losses (dignity,
independence, safety, etc.)**
- **Loss of the Future Story**

A 4 Legged Stool

Typical Losses
Common, response
traditions

Shattered Dreams
Personal, identity, meaning

The State of the World
Sadness/worry, collective
loss

Covid19
Ambiguity, anxiety,
unclear future





**Is A Time When
Predictability Breaks Down**

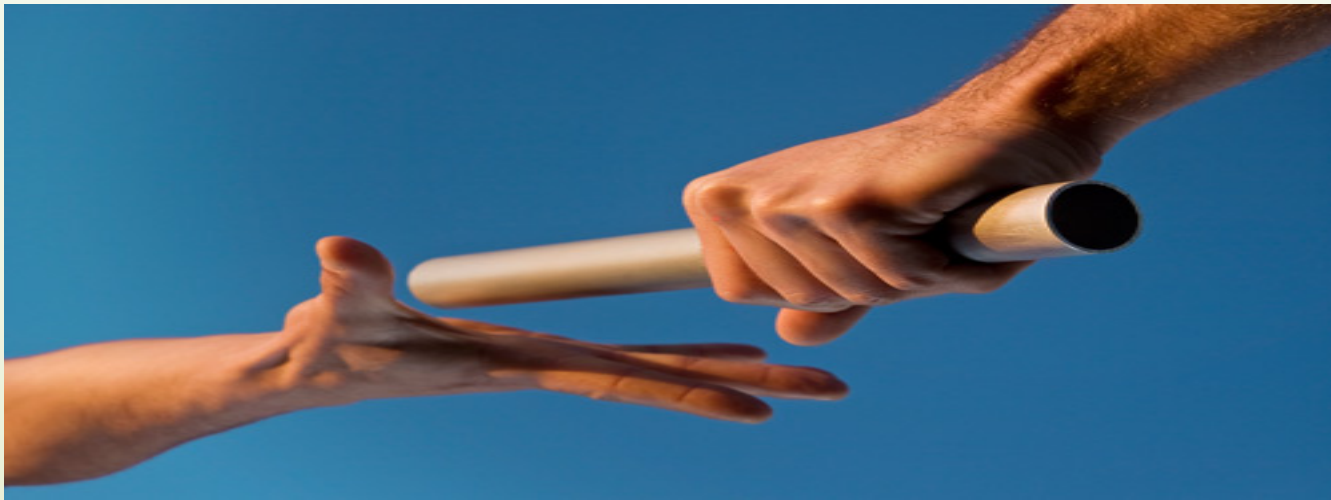
**Our Predictable Ways
Of Thinking About And Doing Things
Are Interrupted By Change**

Change Results

In Uncertainty

Transition is the process of letting go of the way things used to be and taking hold of the way they subsequently become Transition is the way we all come to terms with change.

William Bridges



Definitions

**LOSS Refers To
Being Deprived Of Or Ceasing
To Have Something
That One Formerly Possessed
Or To Which One Was Attached**

Grief Is A Whole Body Response To Loss:

Emotional

Cognitive

Spiritual

Visceral





Factors That **Exacerbate** Losses

Loss Or Stress Accumulation/Overload

Loss Of Control Or Power

Losses Which Break Normative Rules

Losses Which Violate "Moral" Expectations

Losses That Stretch Developmental Abilities

Losses Which Reinforce Or Precipitate Family Conflict

Disenfranchised Losses

When Basic Needs and Losses Overlap

Losses Which Continue To Require Adjustment After Onset

Ambiguous Losses

Loss Of Dreams

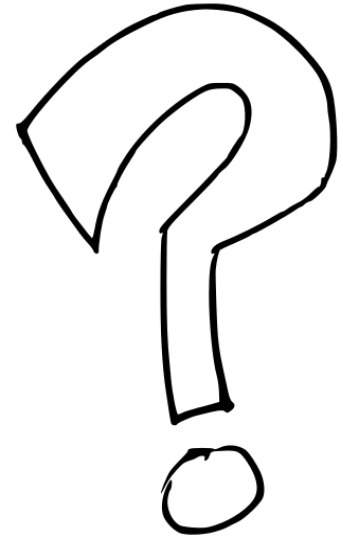
3 Questions for Grieving People

What's lost?

What remains?

What's possible for me?

(Schneider, 1994)



Ambiguous Loss

Losses that are:

unclear,

**confusing, and for which
future stories / outcomes**

are unknown

Etymology: “driven in both ways”

Boss



Ambiguity occurs when there are...

Unanswered questions, uncertainty and the disruption of family and work life due to Covid19

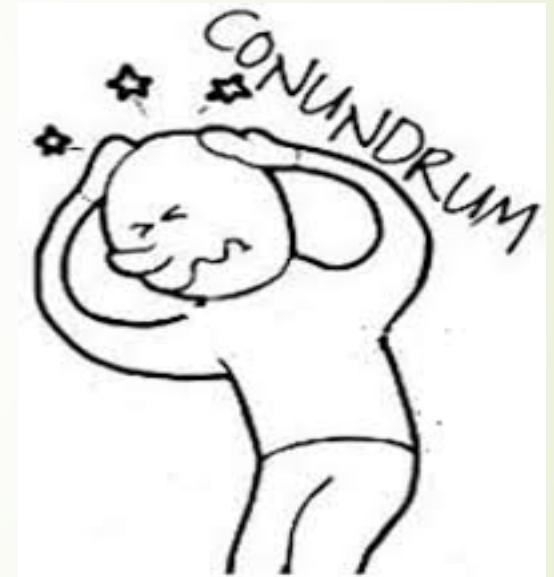
“What is distressing us is not just the virus, but the ambiguity surrounding it, what it will do, and what we should do about it. Science provides some answers, but we are experiencing uncertainty, and that’s very stressful for a society that is accustomed to solving problems and having definitive answers.”

Pauline Boss

Ambiguity Conundrum

**Psychological Presence
and
Physical Absence**

**Physical Presence
and
Psychological Absence**





Differences: Chronic Sorrow and Complicated Grief

- ▶ Both contain sorrow that can be ongoing
- ▶ Both contain elements of depressive emotions and experience
- ▶ **The Key Difference Is The Ability To Grow Life, Experience Joy And Fullness Regularly, Even While Also Grieving**

JOY



SHRINKING GRIEF

GROWING YOUR WORLD

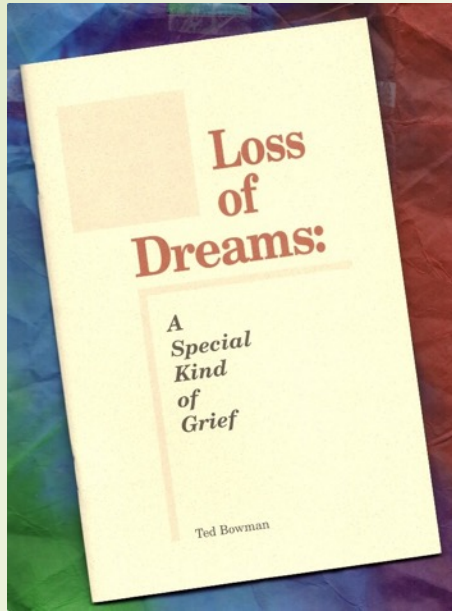




Assumptive World

All of us from the moment of our birth, have been building inside ourselves a model of the world, a set of assumptions on the basis of which we recognize the world that we meet and plan our behaviour accordingly. Because this model is based on reality it is, most of the time, a valid and useful basis for thought and behaviour. We rely on the accuracy of these assumptions to maintain our orientation in the world and to control our lives.

Anything which challenges this model incapacitates us.



Shattered Dreams

**Losing An Emotionally
Important Image
Of Oneself, One's Family,
One's Life, One's Work,
Even One's Death**

**Losing The Possibilities Of
"What Might Have Been"**

**Abandonment Of Plans For
A Particular Future**

The Dying Of A Dream

Examples of Shattered Dreams and Elders

- the dream of retirement
- the dream about how or where a home "should be"
- the dream of time for self (autonomy/control)
- the dream of being or seen as competent
- the dream that the family relationship could withstand any stress or challenge
- the American dream of "social security"
- the dream that plans would be sufficient
- the dream of dying and death



Shattered Dreams And Bereavement



The dream of death – how, where, when, who

The dream of the funeral

The dream of dying

The dream of retirement, travel, marriage, travel,
expectation unfulfilled

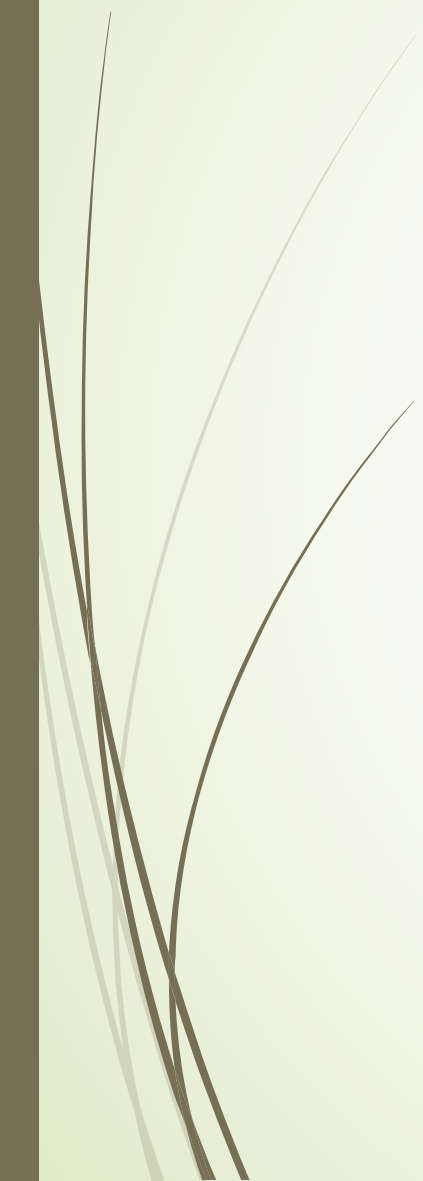
The dream of being touched

The dream of an “uncomplicated” death

The dream of never being alone



Shattered Dreams and Recent Community Upheaval

- A kind of stability even in the midst of the pandemic
 - An assumed social contract
 - Loss accumulation and overload
 - Present and future stories - generational
 - Naivete about historical trauma
 - Relationships, neighborhoods, shops and stores
 - Flashbacks, past trauma
 - American solidarity
- 



Inquiries About Shattered Dreams

- *When you pictured this time in your life, what did you picture?*
- *When you thought about being _____, what did you picture?*
- *If and when you thought of losses in your family, how did you think it would be, how would it happen?*
- *Tell me about the plans you and (the name) of the person had?*

Responses To Loss

Name Losses

Grieve Losses

Put The Loss In Perspective

**Reinforce Or Build Support Connections
(Support Groups, Teams, Informal Support)**

**Set Limits
(Saying *No* To Some Things So That You Can *Yes* To Others)**

Develop A Healing Plan

Find Joy/Promote Hope

Use Rituals For Grieving And Healing

Storying And Restorying After Loss

Involves Grieving The Old Story

**Before Creating The Next
(Not Necessarily New) Story**

Listen For

**Major Components/Themes/Values
Of The Old Story**

**How Can They Be Reframed In
The Next Story?**





Resiliency/ Hardiness

- **The capacity to spring back, rebound, and successfully adapt to adversity – Bowman from many sources**
- **The capacity to spring forward ...**
- **Resilience arises from ordinary resources and processes Masten**
- **The ability to connect, reconnect, and resist disconnection in response to hardships, adversities**

Dual-processing model (Stroebe and Schut 2001)

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Loss Orientation

Grief work

Intrusion of grief

Denial

Sorting, choices

Autonomy


Restoration Orientation

Attending to life changes

Doing new things

Distraction, denial, avoidance of grief

New roles, identities, relationships



Compassion optimally involves a quality of presence that conveys stability and resilience, with a balanced concern and heartfelt connection, but is not depleting or overwhelming to either person.





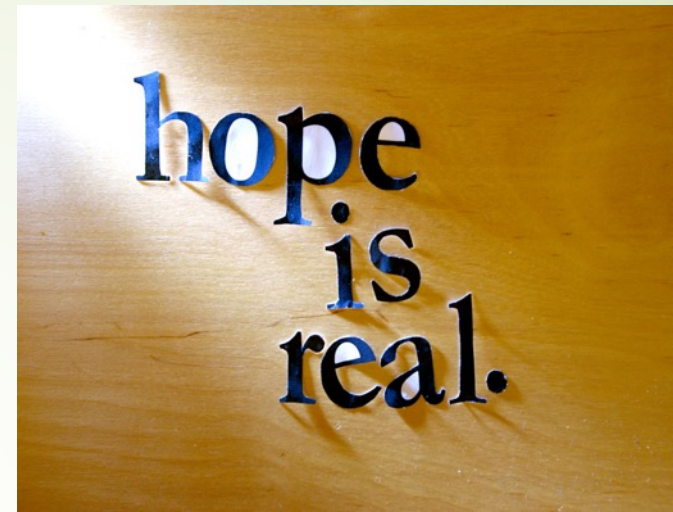
Hope

Definitions usually include:

EXPECTATION

DESIRE

Which can involve **GOALS, ATTRIBUTES,
REDEFINITION, MEANING,
PEACE, ENERGY**





Reasonable Hope

Reasonable hope is relational

Reasonable hope is a practice

Reasonable hope maintains that the future is open, uncertain, and influenceable

Reasonable hope seeks goals and pathways to them

Reasonable hope accommodates doubt, contradictions, and despair

Weingarten

ONLINE DISCUSSION

