

St. Timothy Loss and Hope

Our Mission

The Loss and Hope Ministry is a ministry of consolation to offer God's healing love through emotional, physical, mental and spiritual comfort. Through each other, this ministry offers strength, compassion, peace and love manifesting the glory of God within us. This ministry is a source of blessing as we reach out to our brothers and sisters experiencing a loss.

We hope to help you normalize your experience and provide some tools to assist you in navigating the stages of recovery from loss.

Our Group Sessions Outline

- Chapter 1 Introduction & Self Nurturing
- Chapter 2 Grief, Bereavement & Mourning
- Chapter 3 Unresolved Grief
- Chapter 4 Guilt
- Chapter 5 Fear & Anxiety
- Chapter 6 Divorce & Relationship Losses
- Chapter 7 Holidays, Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Chapter 8 Steps to Survival & Rebuilding After Loss

A Social, set by group

The invitation is open to any and all of you to join us, regardless of faith. We offer our sessions at no cost or commitment, to attend as few or as many sessions that is applicable in your grieving process. We are here for YOU.

Our new 90 Page "Loss and Hope" book may be purchased through St. Timothy's office or email bcovini3@Gmail.com

Loss & Hope Objectives

- Provide a **safe environment** to process grief that includes **support from other grieving individuals**
- Help grieving individuals realize their painful experience is **NORMAL**
- **Abnormal grievers** will be referred to appropriate medical resources
- Provide grieving individuals with **COPING SKILLS** found helpful by past grievers
- Encourage grieving individuals to use **SPIRITUAL RESOURCES**

Group Sessions

- Our classes are seven 90 minute sessions plus a group social.
- The social is presented in the fall and spring.
- Meet twice monthly
- First 60-75 minutes is dedicated to exploring how each individual is progressing
- Last 15-30 minutes is dedicated to processing the Loss and Hope manual chapters

“Praying with tears: “Tears are the prayer- beads of all of us, men and women, because they rise from the fullness of a HEART.” Edward Hays in *Pray All Ways*

Grieving is a process, a journey from obsessing over the loss to cherishing the memory.

- Each individual takes a different journey
- We may emulate our family of origin grieving traditions, or discard them, because they are too painful
- There is no time table
- This is a normal life event

The Process of Mourning

The following experiences of mourning **do not occur in any order**

Denial

- No, it did not happen

Anger

- Why did you do this to me? Why did God allow this?

Bargaining

- How about if it was me rather than my loved one...

Depression

- Oh no, it did happen and I can't bear it

Acceptance

- I'll be o.k., let it be as it is

Grief as always changing: "Grief, as I read somewhere once, is a lazy Susan. One day it is heavy and underwater, and the next day it spins and stops at loud and rageful, and the next day at wounded keening, and the next day numbness, silence."

*Annie Lamott in **Traveling Mercies***

What is Loss? Some Losses and causes of Loss

Death of a loved one	Heritage	Identity	Money
Roots	Activity	Separation	Reputation
Agility	Power	Culture	Responsibility
Divorce	Leadership	Terminal Illness	Position
Job/Career	Goals	Pets	Followers
Faculties	Title	Retirement	Dreams
Things	Success	Vision	Just Leaving
Changing	Time	Fire	Failure
Speech	Loss of Friends	Promotion	Structure
Theft	Change	Taste	Misplacement
Demotion	Freedom	Argument	Challenge
Sexuality	Graduating	Closing out	Independence
Distance	Stimulation	Bodily Controls	Tasks
Virginity	Country	Skills	Co-Workers
Surgery	Family Changes	Fertility	Abortion
Elections	Location (moving)	Body Parts	Growing up
Beauty	Miscarriage	Projects	Self-esteem
Teeth	Marriages	Schools	Toys
Teachers	Youth	Hair	Births
Lifestyle	Choices	Beliefs	Childhood
Appearance	Values	Faith	Energy
Leaders	Health	Stamina	Aging
Balance	Control	Trust	"Yours?"

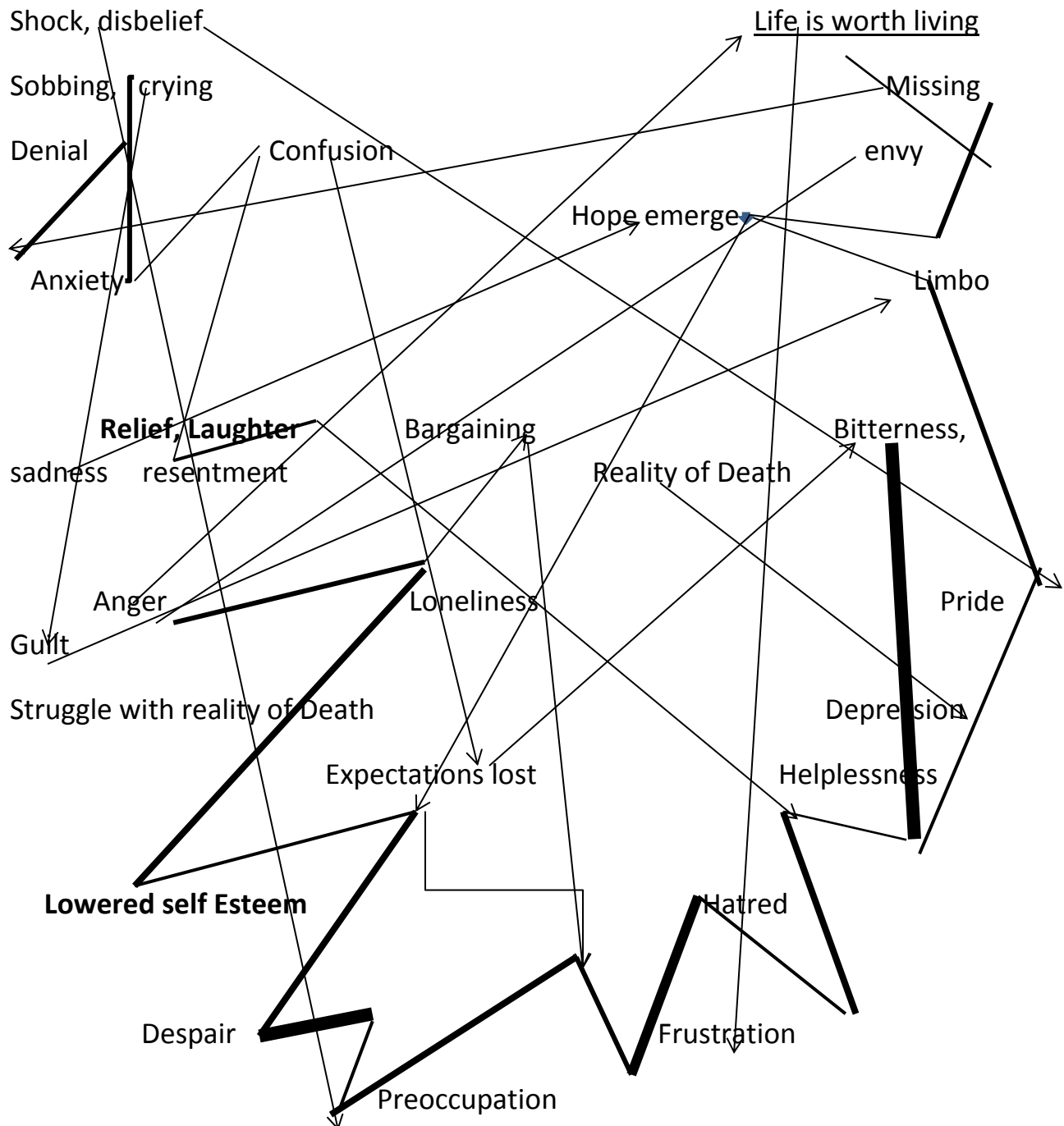
Separation

*I cut the cords that laced us together, one by one.
As we slip gently apart, the pain is hard to bear.
But as each recovery moves from step to step,
I take another move towards separation.*

*I cut the cords that laced us together,
But hold on to one remaining there.
You were so dear to me,
I shall forever hold tenaciously
To that last cord of memory and feel
You are always there.*

The Chaotic Experiences of Grief

Where are YOU?



It is important to understand the various experiences of grief. Everyone does not necessarily go through every experience nor do they go through them in any set order. Everyone has their own timetable and his or her style of grief. You may struggle with several feelings at the same time. The depth and duration of each is different for everyone, or you may experience the feeling briefly. Understanding the various phases helps you.

Four Tasks of Mourning

Worden, William. (1991) Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy

Tasks of Mourning

Signs of an Incomplete Task

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. To accept the reality of the loss | Not believing |
| 2. To experience the pain of grief | Not feeling |
| 3. To adjust to an environment in
which the deceased is missing | Not adapting |
| 4. To emotionally relocate the deceased
and move on with life | Not loving |

Learn to accept the uncertainty: Uncertainty is a fact of life, so try to accept that you will always have to live with and tolerate some uncertainty. Unexpected things happen, and accepting this in the longer term will make your life easier and reduce your anxieties.

Grief Has NO Timeline

One week, one month, another tear,

Six months, ten months, a year,

“Aren’t you over that yet?

Aren’t you all set?”

Set for what? Another way,

To live without every day?

To live without the warm embrace,

the loving eyes, the smile, the face.

To live without the jokes and fun,

No watching together the setting sun.

The holidays that brought such cheer,

Now feel empty, wrought with fear.

Loneliness at the day’s end,

The hollow feeling the darkness sends.

No, I’m not at all set,

Not over it yet.

I’ll reminisce. Relive and remember.

Until another year ends this December.

And after that, each decade, each year,

Until we’re together, until we’re near.

By Cynthia McRae

The Following are excerpts from our manual

Self- Nurturing Suggestions

- See your doctor
- Medications
- Sleep
- Nutrition
- Water
- Exercise
- Pamper Yourself
- Pray

Journaling is an effective method and helps us to resolve and advance the healing by helping you process the grief

Deep Breathing Exercise

- Get into a comfortable position, preferably on your back, but sitting is fine.
- Close your eyes.
- Place your right hand on your abdomen so that your thumb is on your naval.
- Purse your lips as you were going to whistle and slowly breathe out like you are blowing into a balloon.
- Now breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose. Your hand should be rising on your abdomen indicating that you are breathing correctly and filling up your lungs from the bottom.
- Hold your breath as you count to yourself, one-1000, two-1000, three-1000.
- Now purse your lips again and blow out all your air slowly while you count one-1000.....up to six 1000.
- Repeat at least 3 times.

Life's Major Losses

- **Person**
 - Death or Divorce
 - Health, Coma or Alzheimer's
- **Employment**
 - Job loss after years of loyalty
 - Age
- **Home**
 - earthquake, flood, fire, relocation, financial loss

How religion helps at a time of loss

Sr. Teresa Mc Intier, CSJ, R.N., MS

- It influences one's fundamental view of life.
- It provides the motivation required for healing.
- It's a great antidote for the loneliness of loss.
- A worship community can provide supportive strength.
- Every significant change initiates a rethinking of one's beliefs.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Matthew 5:4

Some thoughts on guilt

- Guilt is a feeling in response to thoughts based on unrealistic or inappropriate expectations or standards.
- All relationships contain some measure of positive and negative feelings.
- No matter how much we love someone; there are always little things that annoy us.
- Our relationships are not perfect. It is normal to remember things we did or failed to do that we regret.
- No matter how loving, patient, kind, etc. you are, you will always wish you had done more. You will always remember the ONE time you were not so loving, patient, kind, etc. LET IT GO!!!
- In the early stages of grief, people tend to recall all that was **NEGATIVE** about their relationship with the deceased while at the same time recalling all that was **POSITIVE** about the deceased. This can cause guilt. Eventually, this will balance out and the survivor will be able to look at both realistically.

How to resolve guilt

- **Acknowledge it**
- **Discuss it**
- **Attempt to see the relationship realistically**
- **Forgive yourself**

God has not placed guilt on us, only we place it on ourselves.

Crossing over

Oh, please don't feel guilty; it was just my time to go.

I see you are still feeling sad, and the tears just seem to flow.

We all come to earth for a lifetime, and for some it's not many years.

I don't want you to keep crying, you are shedding so many tears.

I haven't really left you, even though it may seem so,

I have just gone to my heavenly home, and I am closer to you than you know.

Just believe that when you say my name, I'm standing next to you.

I know you long to see me, but there is nothing I can do.

But I'll still send you messages and hope you understand.

That when your time comes to "Cross Over," I'll be there to take your hand.

Author Unknown

Fear

- **Fear is the unknown. It is the imagination. It is not reality.**
- **Fear is disbelief in yourself.**
- **It is not a matter of destroying fear, but of knowing its nature and seeing it as a less powerful force than the power of love.**
- **Fear is only as strong as your avoidance of it. The greater your reluctance to see the fear, to accept it and embrace it, the more power you allow it.**
- **Listen to your fear with a wise ear. What are you afraid of in life? What are you afraid of in yourself? You must challenge fear and ask it what it means to say.**
- **You can manage fear through prayer, through meditation, through clear thinking.**

Prayer for Our Divorced

Dear God, Please strengthen me as I grow through this divorce.

Help me to learn from the change, rather than fear it,

Instead of worrying what tomorrow might bring.

Let me make the most of each day, knowing that you have

Chosen this life's path will empower me to move forward

In a positive direction. Help me to not be consumed with bitterness and regret

But with confidence and faith. Guide me so that I may make the most of

This prayer time. Let me feel fulfilled by your unconditional love.

Thank you for always being my pillar of strength.

Amen

Grieve

For in the long run this may be the bravest thing to do.

Accept your feelings declare them when you choose,

Give in to them for the moment,

Appreciate them for sadness is a part of life.

In this expression people can relate to you

And rejoice with you, in your humanness.

Forgiveness does not change the past, it enlarges the future.

Grieving During the Holidays

- Avoid what gives you the blues
- When asked, “What can I do for you?”...have your list.
- Acknowledge to yourself, to another, that holidays may bring emotions and memories to the surface.
- Share stories about your loved one (i.e. If...were here, you know what...would say! Remember when....)
- You may feel sad. Feelings are neither good nor bad; it’s what you do with them that make the difference.
- Look for the true meaning behind the holiday.
- Slow down as best you can (inside and outside).
- Do something good for yourself at least once a day...this little treat will get you over the rough spots in the day.
- Take time for prayer, meditation, and sitting quietly in God’s presence. Perhaps recite Psalm 23.
- Plan ahead. Try to use a plan A/Plan B approach to the holidays. Having plan B is comforting, even if you don’t use it.
- Arrange a family meeting or conference call to discuss how you would like to spend the holiday. Let everyone have a say, including the children.
- Be gentle with yourself.
- Have an exit strategy. Sometimes it is difficult for mourners to be around a lot of people.
- Honor your loved one’s memory. For example; share your favorite stories, light a candle in remembrance, make a donation in their name, spend time working on a goal or value that was important to the deceased.

Grieving During the Holidays, Cont.

- Re-evaluate old traditions and family rituals. Do you want to keep them, change them, or celebrate in a different way?
- Be prepared for once a year creating cards from people who did not know of the death and other painful reminders.
- Plan something to look forward to after the holidays.
- It's OK to set limits. Let others know how much you can do or how much you want to do for the holidays.
- Count your blessings...make a list.

Handling the Holidays

- Keep it simple
- Rest
- Break tradition
- Accept Help
- Don't hold back tears
- Cut Back
- Be good to yourself
- Go to parties, rather than have them
- Savor the moment
- Grow in Faith, (God is in the midst of it all)
- Journal

“Lo, I Am with you always till the end of time.” Matthew 28:20

The Value of Group Support in the Grieving Process

As a species, humans are social beings. We tend not to do well in isolation. This is particularly true in times of stress or high anxiety. Modern research supports the idea that strong interpersonal relationships, or social support, protects people from the harmful effects of stress and anxiety. Losing someone we love to death can be one of the most stressful situations we can experience in life. And yet, people often report that it is during the period of grief and mourning that they feel most isolated and alone.

Immediately following the death, family and friends usually gather to offer support for the grieving survivors. In the first few days and weeks following the death, friends call, bring food, write notes, stop by and visit or look for other ways to help. During this time, many survivors are so overwhelmed and immersed in their grief they cannot focus their thoughts clearly enough to take advantage of the support that is so freely offered.

After the funeral, after all the casserole dishes have been washed and returned and usually after a few weeks or a month, the phone stops ringing, the letters and notes stop, and the people stop coming by to visit. Many survivors also say that many friends and acquaintances who they expected to hear from do not call or visit. Often these people intend to contact the grieving person but not because they just don't know what to say or they don't want to say something that would contribute to the survivor's pain or remind them of their loss.

Usually after the support of friends and acquaintances subsides, the numbness and the lack of focus begin to wear off, and the survivors begin to feel a deep sense of loss and loneliness. During this time, survivors think that there is something wrong with them because they hurt so much and they "should be getting over it". Our culture tends to send signals that we should heal quickly and resume living our lives as we did prior to our loss. It is during these times that survivors can feel true sense of isolation. Feelings and thoughts begin to bottle up inside with no outlet of expression, which can result in an increase in levels of stress and anxiety. In turn, this can manifest itself in many ways, up to and including physical illness. It is during this stressful time that bereavement support can be so important to survivors.

Bereavement groups are made up of people who have experienced the loss of loved ones and feel this need to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe, non-judgmental environment. Survivors often do not feel comfortable "burdening" their friends and family with their pain for many reasons. Often, survivors feel their friends and families just don't want to be reminded of the loss. Others feel they cannot share with the loved ones because of their life roles (ie."you are so strong; the family depends on you"). Group members have no preexisting roles with each other. While each person experiences grief and mourns in his or her unique way, members of the group share the common experience of the loss that brings a sense of support and understanding. Even after the group has ended often times they continue to gather and continue to support and heal with the general society and life.

Loneliness is one of the biggest problems of grief. And it is only you who have to solve it alone.