

April 2023

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To live until we say goodbye

Ross

Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Mary Goulding

The pain of saying goodbye to the living
The pain as those who are still living in saying goodbye to the dying.

Steff Oats

Grief, I see as the emotional reaction to loss
Grieving or mourning I see as a process in acclimatizing to the loss.

Freud

With mourning it is the world that has become poor and empty
With melancholia it is the ego itself.

Freud's writings on intransience and mourning and melancholia form the basis of almost all therapeutic work and involves acknowledgement of a lost object, loss of loved ones, youth, health, career, loss of dreams and ideals

John Bowlby who defined four stages of grief, these were:

1. Shock and Numbness
2. Yearning and Searching
3. Despair and Dis-organisation
4. Reorganisation and Recovery

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William Worden defined five tasks of grief:

1. Accepting the Reality of the Loss
2. Processing the Pain of Grief
3. Adjusting to a World Without the Deceased
4. Finding an Enduring Connection With the Deceased in the Midst of Embarking on a New Life.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross proposed that when faced with imminent death people go through five stages. The five stages have since been adopted by many as applying to the survivors of a loved one's death.

1. Denial
2. Anger.
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

Grief – an emotional response to loss.

Sadness – one of the core feelings all humans experience provides the energy and motivation for letting go of the loved one – as Steff Oats asked - Where do the tears come from? They come from deep within as an expression of loss.

Making a new narrative ... the task of grieving and in all psychotherapeutic work.

Bill Cornell: As therapists our responsibility is to welcome and hold the experience of loss. “If the shadow of the lost object falls across and obscures the ego then the internal sense is I cannot grow – my life is not the same without this other.”

Ego development is dependent upon negotiating the losses of life and more importantly these losses need to be accompanied, the healing and development needs to be done in relationship. In the therapeutic and mourning process the person is able to release the object and maintain the value of the relationship.

What can I do? What should I do? --- questions both the client and the therapist ask in the face of the grief the therapist's task is to be with the client in their grief, to allow space and time for the client to create meanings and to support the development of the new narrative.

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Symptoms of Prolonged Grief Disorder DSM-5

To receive a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder as an adult, the loss must have occurred at least a year ago — and for children and adolescents, at least 6 months ago. Additionally, the individual must have experienced at least three of the following symptoms nearly every day for the last month or longer:

- Disrupted identity
- A feeling of disbelief about the death
- Avoiding reminders that the individual has passed
- Intense emotional pain directly related to the loss
- Trouble getting back to normal life
- Numbness
- Feeling that life is meaningless
- Loneliness and detachment from others

Therapeutically TA can be used to create an understanding the impact of prolonged grief and the causes of prolonged grief, reflecting on the client's process using various TA models such as script / racket / ego state analysis.