

## Grief & Loss: The Catalyst & Bridge for Transformation

*The Taos News has committed to implement a weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. People may write questions to Golden Willow Retreat and they will be answered privately to you and possibly as a future article for others. Please list a first name that grants permission for printing.*

Dear Ted:

I have spent this last year feeling different pressures from the political noise as well as losses in my life, I started wondering: what does loss play in our life and why is it part of our life? I know you don't hold all the answers and I know there are many religious beliefs around this, but I wonder how you see loss and grief in one's personal journey. Thanks, Philosopher

Dear Philosopher

I always enjoy getting letters, wondering what the question will be and how the person signs off on the letter. Thank you for your question, your pseudonym seems so appropriate. Last week was the inauguration, so I'll first address your statement about the political arena as many people continue to be caught in their beliefs about the election and have stayed in the habit of debating who should be president. For better or for worse, the election is over and there is a new president. I'm sorry to see how the media continues to talk as if it is still an election year.

Loss is anytime there is a redefinition within one's self, or the environment, in which you navigate your life. This means during jovial and sad times, there is loss. Grief is the natural normal healing process where someone redefines and adapts to the present situation. The difficulty, is when you have a loss, there is a tendency to be caught in the past and overwhelmed and/or fearful of the future. Grief is not a linear process but contains the phases of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, and relocation.

I believe we are seeing this within the political state of our country as we transition from one president to another. As acceptance (meaning acknowledgment of a fact) becomes more of a reality, there is room for conscious proactive choices to help heal and grow. As long as people are caught in the past, healing is very difficult.

You also asked about how loss and grief fit into the bigger picture of one's life. Now that's the million-dollar question! My own belief is that loss brings each of us to a place to have to contemplate our lives, meaning of life, and how we will be after the loss. Often, this process is interrupted by distractions such as addictive behaviors, drama, new losses, relationships, every-day life demands, and anything that delays healing and redefining the present situation. Loss is the catalyst that allows and possibly forces someone to redefine their life. Loss is a rite of passage into the next phase of your life. Grief is the metaphorical bridge in which you are able to move past the daunting gap of holding onto the past while being overwhelmed by the future. It allows you to rebuild, bit-by-bit, a foundation on your present situation in order to consciously build a future with wise decisions. I see loss similar to the baby bird who falls from the nest, has chaos, then starts to flap the wings and redefine into the bird building the next nest.

Thank you for the question. I wish you well. Until next week, take care.

**Golden Willow Retreat is a nonprofit organization focused on emotional healing and recovery from any type of loss. Direct any questions to Ted Wiard, LPCC, CGC, Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or [GWR@newmex.com](mailto:GWR@newmex.com)**

