

## Power Struggles Lead To Resentment and Future Problems

*The Taos News has committed to implement a bi-weekly column to help educate our community about emotional healing through grief. You 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 work for a company that is going through some changes and it has been difficult on all of the staff. You say that grief comes in many forms and even though the changes may be good there has been a lot of animosity, fear, and power plays for new positions. I am seeing how people will do many things in order to stay safe and secure. What are your thoughts about this and how does it fit into emotional healing. Thanks, Brenda

Dear Brenda,

You are correct in that there are many types of loss, and conscious grief will help with healing, as well as the transformational process of healing from loss. Loss is often followed by a time of confusion or chaos before there is a rebuilding and redefining phase. In an organization, there can be a collective grief in which the organization is an entity in itself and each of the individuals make up a whole that is in a state of change.

Whenever there is a redefining process there is loss and grief. Fear often accompanies loss where someone feels insecure, leading to behaviors of trying to prove a power differential in which one person is trying to jockey for feeling of being bigger and stronger than someone else. This is a survival mechanism found in most animals which I call: "cower or devour", meaning I need to either cower someone or take the power position of devour others.

With humans this often happens by belittling someone, claiming power over someone, and any other way to make the other person feel smaller than another. Sometimes these behaviors are passive aggressive such as talking behind someone's back, sabotaging another person's success through resistance or defiance and other ways that are not as obvious but have the intent and message of "I am better than you" or "I am entitled to have it my way". There can also be more aggressive styles of intimidation through power in which one person is demonstrating power to intimidate another in order to have it their way. This is often demonstrated through finances, position, education, or any other way showing the other person that they need to do it the way of the intimidator. Strategies to have someone feel smaller than you, usually backfire in the long run due to a building of resentment, loss of team effort, disrespect and walls being built that do not lead to a cohesive group effort.

Remembering that in the midst of transition, there will be grief and that people may be in a fearful place where they may need to try to make others feel smaller than themselves, can help you keep clean and clear boundaries and determine how you may choose to navigate the chaos while being proactive in your own healing as well as the organization. I wish you and your company well as you work towards transformation in healthy ways. Good luck and thank you. Take care and I wish you well your path to emotional healing.

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, and Founder of Golden Willow Retreat at (575) 776-2024 or [GWR@newmex.com](mailto:GWR@newmex.com).