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Loss Arises in Many Forms

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,

When I think of grief, I think of someone coping with loss from a death. Lately I have been feeling symptoms of grief that you speak of when you talk of the phases of grief. I feel like I have been moving back and forth from denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance and yet I am not sure what is going on. This year has been difficult as my business has not done well and my dog was put down. Can you say a little more on healing from loss? Thanks, Meghan

Dear Meghan,

Thank you for sharing your experience of emotional healing from loss. You are correct that loss can come in so many forms. Loss of a pet, dreams, health, self, finances, time, innocence, hope, home, family and so many other types of losses are very real and valid. Any time you find something happens that forces you to redefine yourself from the way you have perceived yourself previously, sparks the grief process.

Grief is that redefining process of what you had been previously, that has changed now, due to some event in your life. Any time you need to redefine yourself means the old self has been left behind, or bluntly stated, the definition of you has died and the redefining process is called grief.

Realizing loss happens throughout the day gives you many chances to practice the grief process, which will help you to experience healthier emotional responses when more dynamic losses happen in your life. Any disappointments in a day stimulate a grief process. Most of the time the issues are rather miniscule and we may not even notice that we go through loss and healing from that loss. By becoming more conscious of loss and the grieving process itself, will also help to heal events from your past that may still be causing some level of discomfort within your psyche.

Your emotional stability relies on your ability to see, hear, and value emotions that arise. These emotions do not even have to make sense. Through recognizing emotions and consciously feeling them, you will help your system heal and grow. It also decreases something called compounded complicated loss in which there are so many losses your emotional system is on overload and it is almost impossible to know what issue is causing you pain and you become flooded with emotions and no set event to associate the emotions to. This can cause enormous confusion and a feeling of futility. The more you are able to grieve losses as they arise, the stronger your emotional system will hold up regarding the loss, while your interior emotional infrastructure works to transform the loss and lessen the emotional weight in order for you to step into your next moment of life.

Choosing to consciously grieve will give you the opportunity to live a fuller and brighter life, even when it does not feel that way within the early phases of the loss. 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.