



GRIEF TRANSFORMED

“To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness.”

~ Erich Fromm

“Death is not extinguishing the light; it is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come.”

~ Rabindranath Tagore

Grief is an inescapable aspect of our human experience. Part of the great mystery of life, it is a portal to greater unknowns. It is not a mystery to be mastered, but a doorway to be opened and entered.

The fear of pain can overwhelm us, even for fleeting but seemingly unending moments, preventing us from crossing grief's threshold. No one will be exempt from the grief experience during an earthly life—nobody can avoid it. The feelings of loneliness and abandonment will never be adequately described, as those left behind wonder how and even *if* they will survive the desolation and isolation that has descended upon them. Because grief is difficult for us to express in this modern age, the natural process of this exquisitely human experience may never be allowed to fully unfold into its glorious intent.

Each “death,” each transition, is a major life event, sometimes dropped like a terrorist bomb into the midst of our existence. Or it may open up beneath us like an earthquake, our grief placing us at the very epicenter. Aftershocks continue outward, each one resounding with the explosive force of the original event, expanding and then returning as imploded echoes, gigantic tsunamis or smaller tremors, each one separated and cushioned by unpredictable periods of silence. As the mind shuts down, the silence is not always peaceful, but resounds with deafening echoes of the original explosion.

The event also launches cycles of waves that swell and recede, ebb and flow. There is something new here that now uses our life for its own breathing. We seem to float helplessly on a depthless ocean, struggling to keep from sinking. The cycles' momentum may slow down over an indeterminate period of time, causing us to sleep too deeply, or be kept awake by haunting memories. The slowing down feels depressing to the body, and the ego-mind uses this feeling to justify uninvited dark and dismal thoughts. These thoughts collapse into remorse and guilt, holding us fast like an anchor caught in reefs of despair. The cycles grow increasingly heavier and slower, encrusted with crystallized memories. We become trapped in a frozen hell of numbness.

But these cycles, which are part of Nature and so part of us, cannot be interrupted without consequences. They are meant to carry us *away* from the event, supported by waves on an ocean of unlimited love, not of endless grief. These waves of sadness carry us to new waters, geographies, and life experiences, and to expanded understanding and awareness that we are always safe, and cannot die. This supportive ocean of love is Creator Source, and It will wash away the old to reveal the new. If we allow ourselves to surrender to the process, our grief can carry us to the mental and emotional shores where our loved ones, once thought lost, await us. Surrender is not submission, which is defiance that puts up barriers. Rather, it is an agreement to put down the weapons against grief. One can always pick them back up again if needed, but the only place they can be aimed is at one's self, wherein the grief resides.

Recognizing that we're engaged in a cycle of grief is also part of the surrender. Conscious and aware recognition of how earthly time works in these cycles becomes a self-empowering tool. In the early days of bereavement, we may feel disengaged when the cycle is at a low point, and little or no movement is felt from within the "stuckness." But we shouldn't use the down time to try to shift things by doing something. This time is for non-doing, non-thinking, and for rest. The body and mind are in recovery mode during this period. Arrangements should be made to not be working for at least a month or more if possible. Some, in their loss, may feel an urgent need to quickly return to the structure of work because their life's structure has fallen apart. But this return will bring only temporary relief, and is actually avoidance of the greater need of the soul to heal and rebuild, through the experience of new growth.

Sleeping and eating are essential and must not stop. If sleep will not come or stay, it's best to consult a medical advisor about temporary medication. Because grief is a very watery process, plenty of the purest water must be taken in to replenish lost fluids. Quiet support by trusted others, close by and in contact by phone, letters, and email is also nourishing. This time may be also well-spent in the sequestered safety of a therapist's space. The therapist will know how to help you thoughtfully and carefully use your time of healing.

During these quiet down-cycles, we can let the feelings of grief arise, like

bubbles trickling up through a muddy lake. These bubbles will stir up a lot of cloudy stuff before the waters begin to get clear again. There may be large pockets of sadness or enormous rushes of despair and even rage—let them do their work by letting them pass, knowing their energy is finite and malleable. These feelings are the aftershocks felt within one’s own body. Although they are real, they are not signs of weakness, sinfulness, or insanity. It’s all humanly normal. Pay attention to the breath—breathing through the mouth will intensify feelings, while breathing through the nose will calm them.

These down-cycles are the time for quiet respite—let yourself rest. Don’t permit the mind to dwell on any particular thoughts. Rather, with the eyes closed, let a spot of sunlight shine on the face and on the heart area—warming with a gentle glow—nothing more. Sunlight is deeply healing.¹²

It’s advantageous to seek help from the Risen during the down-cycles, including from your transitioned loved one. Worrying that they’re in pain or in a bad place is counterproductive and works against the cycle. It’s safe to say they’re in a better place than before. If you can’t convince yourself of this, say the following blessing during the down-cycle: “[The loved one’s name], may your soul rest in peace, and may everlasting light shine upon you.” Continue to invite Risen Healers to assist your own healing. Say: “May all those who are interested in my welfare and that of the Universe, assist me now.” Allow yourself to relax into accepting that your request will be answered without fail. Relax, and rest.

When the cycle begins to turn upward, the time has come for doing—but not much—in fact, very little. Walking or sitting quietly in nature is especially grounding and really quite enough. When we hear the sounds of birds and insects, or the leaves rustling in the wind; feel mist and rain on our face, or watch clouds slowly cross the sky; gaze at the incomprehensible majesty of the stars at night, and inhale the scents of water, air, earth, and plants, the most ancient part of our brain is stimulated, bringing us back into contact with our primordial race origins, and grounding us in its ancient foundations.

It’s best to completely avoid alcohol and other substances, but watching old TV movies and eating comfort food is not a bad thing. But too much is not healthy either, and may stimulate addictive tendencies or result in hangovers in the form of nausea, headaches, confused thinking, absence of mind, lethargy, and physical depression. In turn, these affect the mind in similar ways, swinging the body back into the next down-cycle too soon. Continue to rest during subsequent down-cycles but engage in slightly more energetic healing exercises—listen to meditation tapes, for example.

¹² This is not to be misconstrued with Surya Yoga—or sun-gazing—a practice that should never be attempted without proper information, training, and an appropriate guru. Regardless, keep the eyes closed and don’t forget the sunscreen. – AG

The main thing to remember—which is not often easy in the midst of pain—is that there is usually what feels like a delayed reaction between one cycle and the next. We are in a physical body of matter which exists within terrestrial time, and so “time matters.” A more accurate way to say this is, “matter is timed.” During the down-cycle, the physical body has cycled to a state of quiescence. The astral-etheric spirit bodies are then less inhibited from responding to various healing approaches, even such gentle ones as the sunlight exercise mentioned above, for the sun will slightly raise the body’s vibrations. The response of the astral-etheric bodies also takes place in the form of increased vibration. This increased vibration, however slight, expands one’s receptivity to the Risen, who are naturally of higher vibration. Laughter also raises one’s spirit, and it’s a very good sign when a sense of humor peeks through the clouds.

Because of the seeming delay due to the timing of physical matter, little or nothing will appear to happen as result of any healing interventions. There is no immediate appearance because healing is first taking place within the astral-etheric bodies, which are usually beyond our physical sense perceptions. But as the down-cycle begins to swing into an up-cycle, its momentum will increase, enhanced by the spiritual healing. The up-cycle will occur faster because of the healing attention during the down-cycle, and both cycles will grow shorter and less frequent. As the spirit’s health improves, the body’s health will follow. When it’s time for a down-cycle, it’s easy to forget that one actually felt better just a little while before, and fall back into old negative response patterns. If we look at the things we’re still managing to achieve in spite of how we feel, we may realize we’re doing better than we thought.

Grief is as much about surrendering to our physical and emotional feelings as it is about talking about them. We must allow the emotional experiences to be, even though they may feel neverending. This feeling of endlessness could be reacted to with fear and its own endless forms of defensiveness. Or we could instead respond to this endlessness—which is the awesome feeling of eternity—by embracing it, gently at first, until its coldness gradually becomes warmed and familiar. No longer felt as a threatening presence, grief transforms and evolves into a feeling that is accepted as part of one’s self. It’s like taking an abandoned and shivering kitten and putting it under our coat to keep it safe and warm, instead of ignoring it and leaving it to deal with the harsh elements of life all on its own. Unkindness is never necessary, especially to oneself.

Whether or not we describe the leaving of a loved one as “death” or “transition” the fact remains that for most of us, these people appear to no longer be with us, and this seems to be final and irrevocable. Even when joy and anticipation are measured in with the sorrow, there is still the immeasurable pain that falls and remains upon our shoulders like a heavy cloak, often for the rest of our earthly lives.

Ignored and unresolved anguish will stagnate, harden, and fester. This growing wound will then begin to devastate our life from within, and from there our life's energy will spiral downward. The same will happen if grieving is given too much energy. If we focus exclusively on our grief, it may gain an ever-increasing momentum that generates agonizing guilt, which becomes nearly impossible to stop. "What ifs" and "I should haves" will appear and grow like fungus in our very heart and bones.

Grief can be so darkening, so deafening and mind numbing that we might not be able to see or hear those around us—embodied or Risen—who are asking us to let them in to help. Neither would we be able to ask for their help. We certainly wouldn't be able to experience any awareness of our Risen loved ones who are near us while we are cloaked with feelings of light-sapping futility. The Risen are *very* aware of our intense suffering and our feelings of loss. This loss is not the same for them, for they have gained the self-knowledge that they are alive. By focusing on beliefs that grief should be ignored or negated, we deprive ourselves of opportunities to center on and attend to the advanced form of the reality of the Risen.

If we promote our negative beliefs about grief strongly enough, the resulting feelings *will* reach out and connect to our Risen loved ones, but in negative ways—usually by exerting a feeling of pulling them back to the earth. This pulling feels dark and depressing to them, especially because the earth is no longer their natural habitat—it may even hurt them. In the early days after his transition, Tim once described this as if I had a headlock on him while we were trying to walk together along a beautiful path. Letting go of Tim did not mean he was then going to leave. He just wanted to be able to be with me on his own terms, so he could stand up straight and enjoy our togetherness while seeing the sights.

Grief is temporary because it transmutes to something higher and finer. Yet there is a paradox about this. Even transformed, grief does not completely vanish, for it becomes a permanent part of our life while we're on earth. The *quality* of grief may be different for those whose understanding allows them to accept that their loved one's absence is transitory. If this is accepted, it's possible for the experience to transform into something less sorrowful and more affirmative. From there, the experience moves into realms of higher spiritual qualities. The new inner conditions allow for more openness and less fear. Outer conditions will often change to reflect the inner transformation. When not held back, grief moves through us. This will have the equal, balancing effect of moving *us through it*, as if it were a door. We will be enabled to commune with our Risen loved ones instead of feeling isolated from them. We learn firsthand that they have not really left us but are simply less accessible at times. Thus empowered, we can also begin to communicate and live more authentically with our loved ones who are still with us on earth.

I've learned I can let my feelings work for and not against my transitioned loved ones by finding a way to be happy for them. In doing so, I grow to become happy *with* them, which allows me to forget my own self-absorbed loneliness for a little bit. It might seem obvious here, but not feeling lonely, even for a little bit, actually feels better.

The Risen experience an expanding joy from being who they are and where they are, and may want more than anything to share their wonderful new fortune with us. There really is no need to fear that if we think we are letting them go, it means that we'll never see them again. They would never leave us—it's as simple as that. Think of letting go as if you're releasing a bird so it can fly as it's meant to do, and not imprisoning it in your hands, where it would only languish for freedom. Think of it as letting a small child learn to crawl on its own so that it can learn to walk, while it laughs in delight and pleasure at seeing how it can move freely through its own volition in its new world. We are all such children with dreams of dancing and flying to our own music.

There is no more powerful earthly story than that of death. Every story begins with "once upon a time" and every story has an ending—which is really another beginning. Stories must be told or else they become secrets, which eventually eat their way back out. And then they're hardly recognizable as they become exposed, and treated as painful evidence of something unnatural. Trying to keep them from coming out will result in their implosion, which sets up a resonance that attracts negativity like iron shavings to a magnet.

Grief is the main human response to death, and can keep us apart rather than bring us together. Our Western culture perceives death through a lens of suffering rather than one of healing and joy. Because most of us have had some kind of grief experience, a commonality exists that allows us to join with others in discussions about our suffering. We need to tell and re-tell our stories, for that is how a true transformation of suffering is accomplished on the earth plane. Tim and I share our stories with you so that there may be a gradually increased understanding of this process, from which validation and strengthened confirmation of your own experiences will arise.

When some of my still-embodied friends and I get together, we sometimes feel compelled to re-tell our personal stories of loss. At times, there's a bit of underlying inner guilt that chastises, "They don't want to hear it *again*." Yet because we love each other and there is great trust in the safe-holding of our friendship, we've realized just how important it is that our stories are told over and over and over again. We experienced that our narratives changed over time. More details emerged, connections were made, and flashes of insight sometimes appeared. Our tales of death were revealed to be novels of life, unsolved mysteries much stranger than fiction. And we noticed another miracle—we enjoyed telling our stories. Somehow in the telling, joy quietly found its way back into the chronicles of our lives. Here is grief transformed.

Undeniably, grief may be frightening and take us to places of seemingly no return. Our culture urges us to move away from bereavement as quickly as possible and not take too long a look at it, and certainly not to talk about it. But we *must* look at it in order to understand what is happening, and we *must* talk about it in order to shift the energy of understanding in a new direction. In order to do this effectively and to move toward a shared understanding, we begin with what we each already are—Authentic Self.

Few of us are aware of Authentic Self, and so we'll have to start with what most of us *think* we are. In this book we call this misthought “the simulate self.” Generated by the ego-mind, it needs us to be frightened by grief while it continues to cultivate feelings of ever-deepening separation from our loved ones. This feeling of separation is also simulated, and will fade away into nothingness as we disconnect from the simulate self, and eventually reconnect with our true essence, Authentic Self.