

Exploring How Others Try to Define Grief



The Grief Recovery Method[®]

by The Grief Recovery Institute[®]

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This eBook discusses Grief, the normal and natural reaction to loss, and looks at other terms people use to describe it

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About The Authors

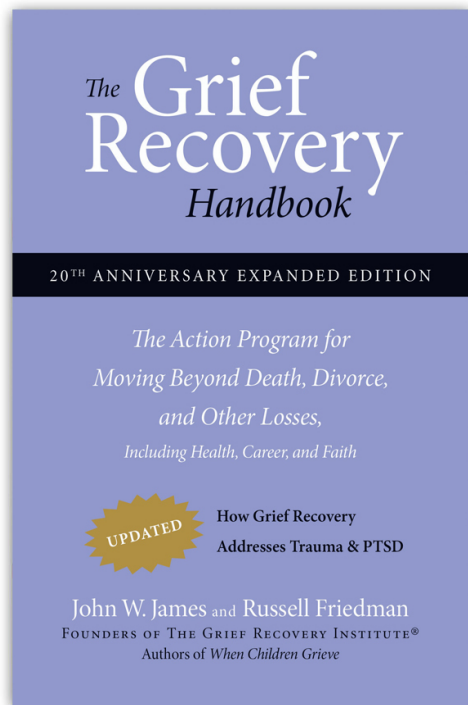


Russell Friedman arrived at the Grief Recovery Institute in 1986 on the heels of a second divorce and a bankruptcy. After dealing with the emotions caused by those and other losses, he began a rigorous training under the guidance of the Institute founder, John W. James, eventually becoming a partner and co-author of *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, *When Children Grieve*, and *Moving On*. Together, Russell and John co-developed the Grief Recovery Method Support Group, which has helped millions of people all over the country and abroad.

Russell became the go-to Grief Recovery expert on CNN. He appeared on that network many times, most notably in the wake of 9/11. He has made a number of media appearances in the aftermath of national tragedies, most recently on *The Today Show*, in response to the death of Michael Jackson to help guide parents when children suffer loss. He was also a guest lecturer at local academic institutions and has consulted with major companies who are learning that unresolved loss has a negative impact in the work place.

On November 26, 2016, Russell passed away surrounded by his family. Russell will be greatly missed and his legacy will continue on in the work of all the people's lives he touched. [Click here](#) to read our tribute to Russell.

Stephen Moeller has been a licensed Funeral Director since 1978. Steve established one of the first Grief Recovery Method Support Groups over thirty years ago. Since then, thousands of grieverers have gone through his programs. Steve was the Director for Community Relations at Floral Haven Crematory, Funeral Home, and Cemetery in Broken Arrow, OK, prior to resigning to form Grief Recovery Resources, Inc. He also has served on the Tulsa County Task Force on Infant Mortality, the Tulsa Human Response Coalition, and was a member of "Ask the Experts" on Aurora Casket's Funeral Plan. Steve is a featured grief and recovery speaker at hospitals, churches, civic clubs and many other organizations, but spends the bulk of his working time focused on Certification Trainings.



Get Your Copy



The Best Grief Definition You Will Find By Russell Friedman

Since grief is such a wide topic that covers so many kinds of losses and an almost infinite range of emotions, there isn't a single grief definition that covers it all. But there are three we use to help people understand what grief is and what it isn't.

The most basic one is:

“Grief is the normal and natural emotional reaction to loss or change of any kind. Of itself, grief is neither a pathological condition nor a personality disorder.”

While that definition is accurate, it doesn't really explain what grief is. So here's another one we use to give a better idea of what grief is, beyond the fact that it's normal:

“Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior.”

When someone important to us dies, it represents an end to what has been familiar for us, and we must adapt to that new—usually unwanted—reality. Our lives are different after someone meaningful to us dies. That's fairly easy to understand.

It may be a little less obvious to understand what we mean when we say “conflicting emotions.” Let us explain, using circumstances you'll probably understand if you've ever been a primary caretaker to someone who was afflicted with a terminal disease, like cancer. If not, you'll probably still be able to relate.

For most people who've been in that situation, the primary emotion they feel when that person dies is a tremendous sadness. Part of the sadness is about the irrevocable fact of the death, and another aspect is that a miracle didn't happen to cure the illness and allow more time together.

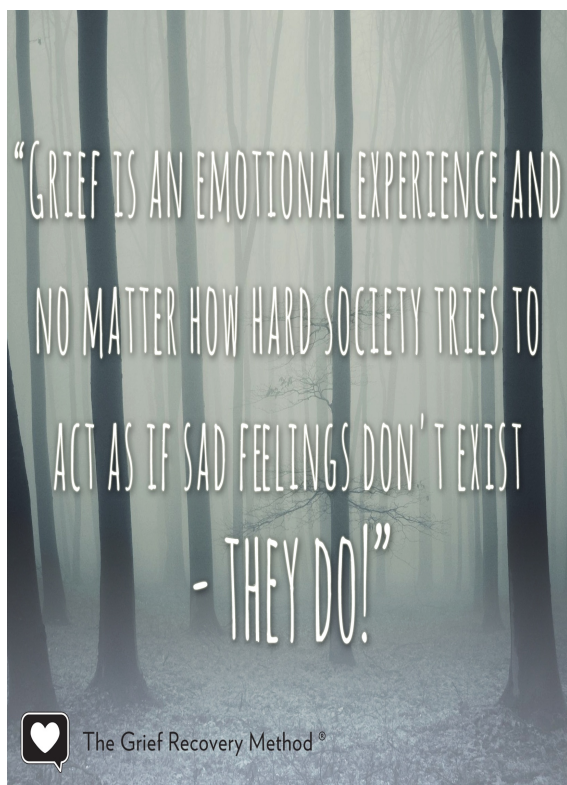
But in addition to the sadness and other painful feelings involved, a huge percentage of people who've attended to a dying relative, spouse, or friend over a long period of time, will tell you that one of the feelings they felt when that person died, was a sense of relief. Relief that the person they loved was no longer in pain; and relief at the difficulty of seeing someone they loved in pain and the frustration of not being able to cure them or ease their pain.

Relief is often perceived as a somewhat positive feeling, especially when it comes at the same time as sadness. So the idea of conflicting feelings, in simplest terms, is sadness on the one hand and relief on the other.

However, the idea of conflicting feelings isn't limited to death and the entire range of emotions including sadness and relief. We suggest to anyone who's ever gotten married that their wedding day probably contained a conflicting mixture of feelings. There's the love and excitement and high hopes on the one hand, and there's the loss of certain freedoms and independence on the other. Even if it's a good trade-off, it still represents a loss.

We can even move away from death and marriage and talk about conflicting feelings in other life areas. For example, when you get a promotion and raise in salary at work, that's a good thing. But along with the change may come an end to some or many of the daily interactions with co-workers in your old position.

As you can see, our definition using conflicting feelings relates to most—if not all—of the major life changes that can and do happen. At this point, we can tie the first two definitions together and say that the range of emotions—including those that seem to be conflicting—that we feel in response to the changes in our lives, are normal and natural.



Grief Definition—Reaching Out For Someone Who’s Always Been There

There’s another definition of grief that’s so descriptive that we include it in all of our books, and usually quote it every public speech we make. It’s a piece of language that we didn’t create, but if we knew who first said it, we’d give them credit.

“Grief is the feeling of reaching out for someone who’s always been there, only to discover when I need her one more time, she’s no longer there.”

We find that statement to be profoundly emotional and exceptionally clear in its meaning. We believe that the person who coined it was referring to the death of a long-term spouse. But it could just as easily apply to the death of a parent, who was clearly there from the beginning of your life.

As poignant as that statement is in giving words to feelings, it can be reversed and used for a different painful situation; as when a long-term relationship has never been good, in which case it can be stated as:

“Grief is the feeling of reaching out for someone who has never been there for me, only to discover when I need them one more time, they still aren’t there for me.”

In that situation, it doesn’t imply that the other person has died, but is still emotionally or otherwise unavailable to you, as they’ve always been.

Lastly, in the case of divorce, it can be restated as: “Grief is the feeling of reaching out for someone who had been there for me at one time, only to discover that I can’t go to them for help or comfort anymore.”

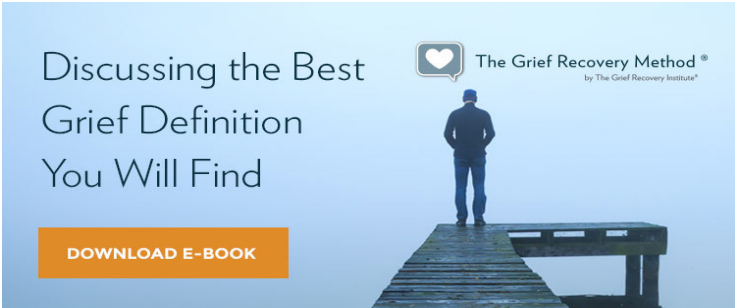
One More Grief Definition—A Cliché With Which We Agree

Most people are familiar with the expression, “Every one grieves in their own way and at their own pace.”

We agree with the basic truth of that quote, even though it doesn’t define grieve beyond saying that we’re all individuals and we will each experience and express our grief uniquely and in our own time.


Summing Up

[There are many other definitions of grief](#) that you can find if you want to spend time researching. But we caution you that defining basic grief, while important, doesn’t necessarily lead to recovery or completion of what the death or divorce has left behind in terms of [unresolved or incomplete grief](#).



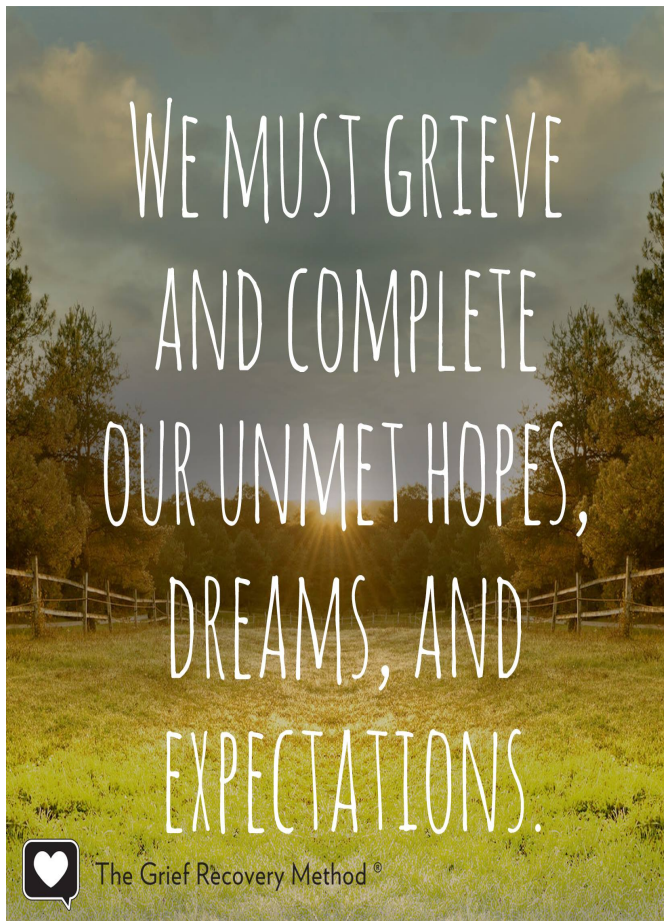
Discussing the Best
Grief Definition
You Will Find

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 The Grief Recovery Method®
by The Grief Recovery Institute®

A silhouette of a person standing on a wooden pier extending into a body of water under a blue sky.

The problem with any label is that it may give someone a description for his or her feelings, but it does little else. It offers them an “identity” to explain to others why it is that they are hurting, but at the same time may prevent them from taking action, since they are just dealing with “anticipatory grief,” rather than actually grieving the loss itself. Whatever label is offered, the thing that these people need to understand is that they are, indeed, grieving. That means that they have a clear choice: they can continue to be overwhelmed by those feelings of grief, or they can take action to move through and beyond them.



Rather than becoming the “victim” to a label, it is far better to take action!

Even for those people who are anticipating additional grief to come, they can take action now to deal with these current feelings. This will help them to better deal with the additional grief that they will likely have as time passes in this relationship. For those dealing with an impending death, they will find that in taking recovery action prior to that time will put them in a better emotional position when that death actually occurs.

[The Grief Recovery Method](#) is designed to offer grieverers a mechanism to help them move beyond the pain and control that grief holds over lives. The principals it offers can be extremely effective in helping people struggling with any “type of grief.” I say this from the experience of having used this method to help me in dealing with both of my parents as they succumbed to the ravages of Alzheimer’s and dementia. By taking Grief Recovery Action for myself, early in their progression through these diseases, I was in a far better position to serve their needs, rather than being focused on my own. I was able to better act as their advocate, because I had already taken action to deal with the emotional pain in my own heart.

I personally found The Grief Recovery Method very helpful as well in dealing with my feelings of loss as our daughters moved on to independence and marriage. It helped me say “goodbye” to them as dependent children and “hello” to their new status as adults who could now make their own choices.

The average person tends to associate “real grief” as only related to a death. In fact, grief is the natural and normal emotion that people experience with every major change experienced in life. As was pointed out in “A Place for Mom,” anticipatory grief can be just as painful as the grief experienced at the time of a death.

The Grief Recover Method, and the actions spelled out in the step-by-step format of “[The Grief Recovery Handbook](#),” are designed to help people deal with any type of grieving experience. These actions are something that you can work on together with a trusted friend, or with the assistance of a [Certified Grief Recovery Specialist](#). Some people, after completing this work, then choose to go on to become [Certified Grief Recovery Specialists](#) themselves, so that they can better assist others.

Do not allow yourself to become a “victim” of a label. Instead make the personal choice to effectively deal with the grief in your life, so that you can make the most of every relationship, no matter what the situation.



Chronic and Prolonged Grief By Stephen Moeller

Chronic and Prolonged Grief are two labels for grief that lasts over an extended period of time. The people so identified continue to suffer through their grieving experience for years without ever effectively moving through the grieving process.

For some, it is related to a single, heavily impacting loss. This may be the death of an important figure in their lives. For others, it might be due to the loss of everything familiar, due to a war, fire or natural disaster.

Simon Olshansky, a counselor who worked with parents of developmentally disabled children, coined the term “chronic sorrow,” in 1962, to describe the extended and ongoing grief they experienced. In this situation, the grief continues for these parents whose original dreams of “**the perfect child**” are dashed by the reality of the ongoing issues they face. This is not meant to say that these parents cannot have a wonderfully fulfilling relationship with their child, but rather to recognize that is not the relationship they had originally planned or expected.

Whatever the cause, the net effect is that people identified with these issues of grief tend to suffer them over an extended period of time. In some cases, left without treatment, they may suffer this emotional pain for the rest of their lives.

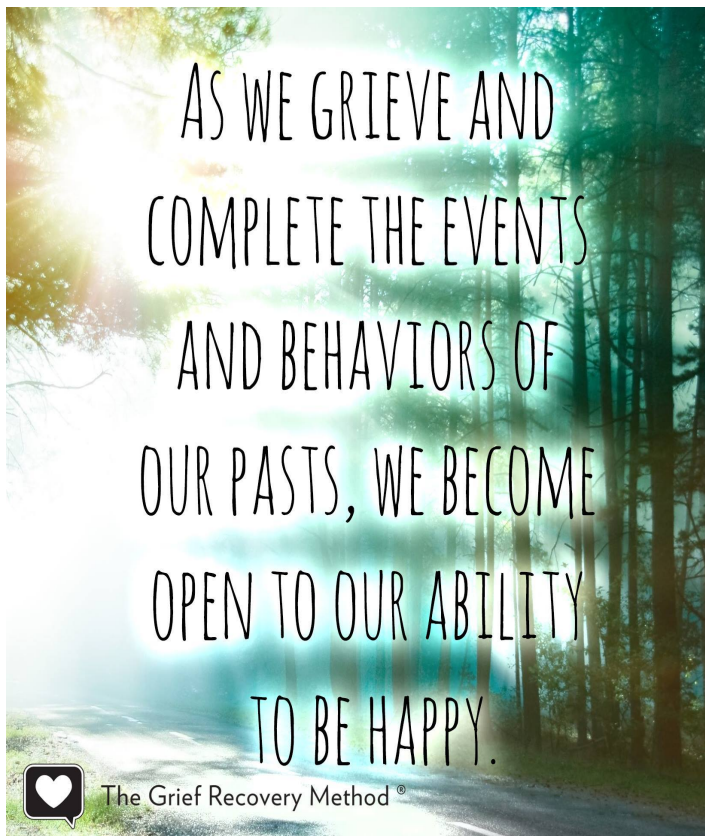
“The key to
recovery
from grief
is action,
not time!”

-griefrecoverymethod.com

Just because a person continues to feel that pain does not mean that they must suffer forever. As with any form of grief, the key to moving beyond that emotional pain is in the willingness of the griever to accept that they are, indeed, grieving a loss and a committed desire to take grief recovery action. Taking this action does not mean that they are trying to discount the impact of the loss. For those dealing with a death, it means that they see the need to deal with the pain so that they can once again enjoy any fond memories of the relationship. For those dealing with the loss of all things familiar, it is recognition that they do not wish to continue letting a single disastrous event have power over their lives. In the situation of those parents who have a developmentally disabled child, it is about dealing with the loss of a dream, so that they may better face and emotionally invest in the ongoing commitment to being the best advocate and parent to their child.

It is not uncommon that these people have, at one time or another, attempted to deal with their emotional pain by trying to work through “the stages of grief,” as described by [Elisabeth Kübler-Ross](#). A well-meaning friend or counselor may have suggested this concept to them. As we have pointed out in [past articles](#), Kübler-Ross defined these “phases” as those experienced by a person dealing with the diagnosis of a terminal illness, and not as stages faced by someone who has faced a significant emotional loss. This misconception of their intended purpose has frustrated many grieverers who felt that failure to progress through them could leave them forever in misery.

A far better approach to moving beyond the power of this emotional pain is to follow an action plan designed specifically grieverers. That is the design of [The Grief Recovery Method](#). This approach is focused on dealing with the unmet dreams and expectation of a future that is different than what had been expected. It is about addressing those things grieverers might have wished had been different or better in that relationship lost. It offers an effective way to say “goodbye” to that which has been lost, to make it possible to face the future with a new perspective.



This action plan is spelled out in a step-by-step manner in “[The Grief Recovery Handbook](#).” The authors deal with grief, not as an intellectual problem, but rather as the emotional pain of a broken heart. This is not a text book! It is a guided journey through the necessary actions a griever must take to deal with all of things that need to be addressed. The authors walk each griever through this process, hand-in-hand, to help them on their journey. This may sound too good to be true, but I can speak from personal experience in using this method that it works!

You can use this book on your own, working with a trusted friend, or you can work through the grief process in a grief support group situation. There are [Certified Grief Recovery Specialists](#) around the world who focus on working with grievers in group settings. Many also provide assistance one-on-one.

Life is far too short to allow chronic grief or prolonged grief strip you from the opportunity to enjoy it. You can move from being a victim to being someone who survives and thrives despite his or her circumstances. There are many wonderful moments available to people beyond their emotional painful events. Dealing with your losses makes facing each new day and challenge a less overwhelming possibility!



Find Grief Support Groups in your area

Our Grief Support Groups provide a safe environment for you to look at your old beliefs about dealing with loss, which losses have affected your life, and take actions that will lead you to complete unresolved emotions that may still be causing you pain.

FIND A GROUP



Complicated Grief

By Stephen Moeller

The best way to start a discussion on “complicated grief” is to start with looking at a definition of grief in general. Grief is the normal and natural reaction to any change from what is familiar in life. It is the emotional response to change. It can be defined as a feeling associated with the things we wish might have been different or better in any relationship, whether it is with a person, a pet, a job, an educational experience, or even a place of residence, just to name a few. Grief can be a result of wishing we had spent more time together or related to unmet hopes and dreams that were never realized due to the end of that relationship.

Grief can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Some people find that the confusing feelings that grief generates interfere with sleep, while others find it difficult to get up and function after waking up. Some people find that they feel sad or cry over things that never seemed to bother them before. Many find themselves longing for that relationship lost and others find, especially when they discover that friends seem to be able to offer little meaningful help, that they lose some of their ability to trust others. Some find themselves easily irritated, while others do not have the energy to feel much of anything. For some, the memories leading up to and including the moment of loss overshadow all of their fond memories of that relationship.

Simply stated, grief can be overwhelming! Just as overwhelming can be the labels that are put on grievers and the advice that they are given.

In the 1990's, a new term, "complicated grief," was coined to describe prolonged grief associated with a death. The problem with this term is that all grief is complicated in one way or another. The grief each person experiences is influenced by a variety of factors. The intensity of that emotional relationship, the amount of unfinished business in that relationship, and how we try to deal with the pain of the loss are among the primary elements. Since, as we have discussed in a number of previous articles, most people have very few effective learned behavior patterns to deal with loss, it is often very difficult to deal with the impact of emotional pain. The average person tries to deal with emotional on an intellectual level. The problem is that emotions are not logical and do not really respond to intellectual reasoning.

The symptoms of "complicated grief," according to a [Mayo Clinic paper](#), are the same as those of "normal grief." The defining element of complicated grief is the duration of these feelings.

A Little Background Information

The fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-4), from the American Psychiatric Association, set the normal time for grieving at two months. The DSM-5, published in 2013, changed this period to one to two years, indicating that most physicians and grief counselors felt that this time frame was more realistic. The DSM-5 also included the term "complicated grief" as a mental disorder.

Time and Grief

The reality of things is that time, in and of itself, is not really a factor in true emotional recovery from loss. With the passage of time, we may become used to living with the pain of loss. As time goes by, most people simply learn to bury their feelings, rather than to take effective action to deal with that pain. Obviously, two years, rather than two months, gives you more time to bury and discount your feelings. If, after an arbitrary amount of time, you have persisting feelings of emotional pain and try to utilize medication to treat the "problem," you are often just treating the symptoms of grief without actually doing anything to deal with the underlying problem.

How is “Complicated Grief” different that “Normal Grief?”

What defines complicated grief, according to [Dr. Katherine Shear](#) at Columbia University, is that it occurs in only a small percentage of grievers. For people that suffer with this problem, their other relationships tend to be very difficult and they can ultimately have other health issues. Many with this diagnosis lose a purpose for living. The diagnosis of “complicated grief” is most often reserved for those who have a family or personal history of mental health disorders.

Does labeling your grief as “complicated” help you recover?

A label alone does not make things better. It is simply, a label. Having a member of the psychiatric community assign this label to a griever may actually give them a reason to give up. Some people, when diagnosed with a mental disorder, will use this for justification as to why they cannot recover.

Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss

Since grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss, doesn't it make better sense to try to take personal responsibility to take effective recovery action, rather than to allow it to control your happiness? Most grievers really want to feel better. Even if someone has suggested that you might be suffering from complicated grief that does not mean that you cannot take action to recover from the emotional pain of your loss. Do not let a label, which may or may not be accurate, keep you in misery.

The reason that people have a difficult time in recovering from the pain of emotional loss is because they do not have [the tools](#) to take action. “[The Grief Recovery Handbook](#)” is a step-by-step action plan for recovery. It starts at the beginning with what you learned in your childhood about dealing with loss and why many of these “tools” were ineffective. It then gives you “new” tools to deal with the unfinished business in that relationship lost. It offers you the opportunity to safely deal with those things that make remembering painful. It will allow you to be able to enjoy your memories and share them with others, rather than finding them overwhelming.

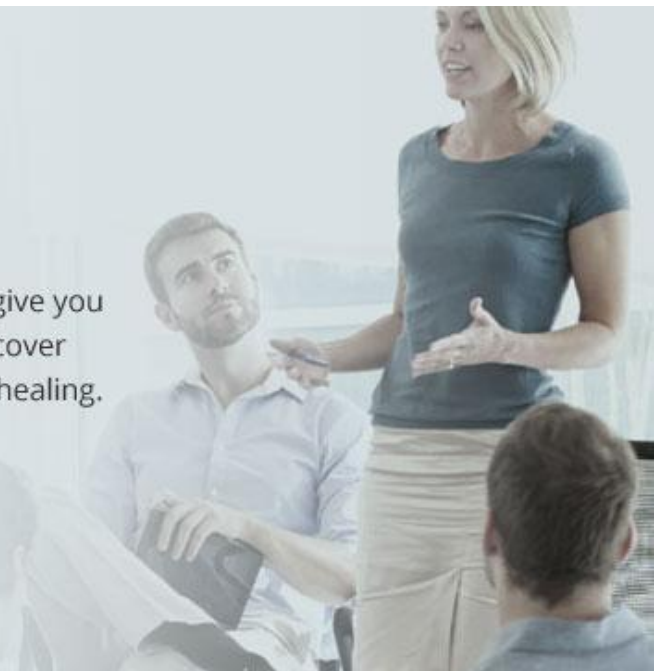
The first loss with which I dealt, using these tools, occurred some 25 years before. This is obviously over that 2 month to 2 year period for “normal grief” to persist. In actuality, I did not realize how much that loss was still impacting my life. I had become used to living with that pain. Once I took effective action with the Grief Recovery Method, I found a whole new level of happiness. As I have taken more action with other relationships, I have found that I now can truly enjoy my memories, rather than being overwhelmed by my losses.

I encourage you to do this as well. Do not let grief define you! Do not let a label define you! By taking action, those lost relationships that once cast a pall over you can once again warm your heart.

Help Grievors in Your Community

The Grief Recovery Certification Training will give you the tools you need to effectively help grievors recover from loss as well as an opportunity for personal healing.

[LEARN MORE](#)





Cumulative Grief

By Stephen Moeller

To say that grief can be challenging and overwhelming is an understatement. It's not unusual for a griever to feel like their whole world is closing in on them. They will often find that they are not only dealing with the emotional pain of their most recent loss, but every other loss they have experienced as well. It can be as if this latest event has awakened their memories of every other life changing moment that has brought grief into their life as well.

The reason for this is that grief is cumulative. Most of us have a defensive mechanism or habit in place of suppressing our painful emotions, rather than expressing them. This is a habit that we begin to establish at a very early age, when we hear someone tell us to "not feel bad" when we are dealing with a moment of sadness. While that comment does not make us feel any better, we tend to bury those feeling of sadness, in an effort to follow the directions offered by someone we trust, on how to cope with an emotionally painful event.

Until each loss is effectively addressed, they tend to sit, waiting inside us. When yet another moment of grief hits us, and that internal “kettle,” where we have stored all of this sadness, is full, it tends to erupt like a volcano. We find ourselves then not only grieving this most recent loss, but all of those other past losses as well. Just as with the falling ash of a volcanic eruption, it seems that no matter which way we turn, we are surrounded by the painful memories of past bereavement.

Perhaps yet another analogy will help you better visualize what is happening inside you. Most of us have a drawer, cupboard or closet where we store those scattered items that we might need some day, but do not know what to do with in the meantime. (We have a neighbor down the street who appears to have an entire garage filled with such things.) When we open this container, it is often difficult to find anything amid all of that clutter. It can be overwhelming. This is very much like our personal internal storage center for those grief filled memories of our life. It is such a random collection of memories of sad moments from our life that it is difficult to isolate each individual thought.

Dealing with all of these memories of loss may seem like an impossibility. That is because we have been taught our entire lives to suppress our feelings of loss, rather than to deal with them. They cannot all be dealt with at once. It’s a bit like the old question: “How do you eat an elephant?” The answer to this is: “One bite at a time!” That is how you can effectively deal with your many losses as well: one at a time.

Without action there
can be no change.



The Grief Recovery Method®

This is an important part of the design of “[The Grief Recovery Method](#).” It involves taking an inventory of your past grieving events and deciding which one to first address. Sometimes the best place to start is with the most recent loss. Others may find that this most recent emotional event is “the straw that broke the camel’s back,” and that a previous loss might be better addressed first. Whichever is the case for you, it gives you a starting point. You cannot effectively deal with every grieving event at the same time. To have the best chance of success, you must work on each one individually.

Once you have found which one to tackle first, the “[Grief Recovery Handbook](#)” will guide you through the necessary steps on how to deal with all of those conflicting feelings associated with that event. Once you are freed from all of the painful emotions of grief associated with that loss, you are in a far better position to deal with each of the other losses in your life.

It would be wonderful if you could deal with every loss in your life at once, but that just does not work. Multitasking in this situation would only leave you confused and unsettled regarding all of them.

I can still vividly remember my first efforts in effectively recovering from the emotionally painful losses that impacted my life. Once I took that personal inventory, I discovered that the death of my grandmother, over 20 years before, was not only one of my most painful grieving events, but also the one that set the pattern that I had since followed to deal with my grief. After I took action, using The Grief Recovery Method, I could not believe how much better I felt. It seemed impossible to me that these rather simple actions could make such a difference, but they did! My next thought was that if dealing with this one loss could make such a difference, perhaps dealing with another from that inventory could help as well. With each subsequent recovery action, I found that I had more and more room for happiness in my life. I never realized the weight of the grief I carried in my heart until I started taking this action.

“The longest journey begins with the first step!” It is my sincerest hope that you will choose to follow the path to recovery that I took. I was a complete skeptic at first, because I was accustomed to carrying this emotional pain with me at all times. I had done this all my life and had a habit of burying my emotional pain inside. One I took this action with the death of my grandmother, I discovered that it was time to create a new habit in how I dealt with loss. The more I practiced this new habit in dealing with other losses, the more it became an instilled behavior pattern.

“Cumulative Grief” does not need to control your life and leave you feeling overwhelmed. The Grief Recovery Method can help you find your path to grief relief!



Delayed Grief By Stephen Moeller

The term Delayed Grief is used to describe grief that is postponed and resurfaces sometime later. It is not unusual, after a loss, that there are many things that must be done. Often people decide that they “must be strong” for all those around them and suppress their own feelings of pain and loss, so that they can be there for others. Some people feel that the best way to handle their personal loss is to “keep busy” with work or other endeavors, rather than taking time to go through the grief process.

The problem with grief is that if you fail to take action to deal with your personal emotional pain, and instead suppress it, it waits deep inside to haunt you later. Mark Liebenow used this quote in an article in [“The Good Men Project:”](#)

“Ignoring grief is like a leak in our roof. We can take care of it now, or we can wait as it seeps through the ceiling, gets into the walls, and warps the floors.”

This truly describes what it is like if we fail to address the grief that touches our lives. When we suppress it, it seeps into other parts of our wellbeing. It can inadvertently impact other relationships and can keep us from fully enjoying them. These suppressed feelings can also negatively impact a person's health, resulting in headaches, ulcers and other issues.

This is exactly what we have been saying at [The Grief Recovery Institute](#) for nearly 40 years. Unfortunately, this is something that many of us do on a regular basis. In past articles we have talked about [Disenfranchised Grief](#) and [Masked Grief](#) in reference to suppressed grieving experiences. Our socialization process has ingrained in it the idea that we should ignore or hide our emotional feelings of pain and "put on a happy face." We tend to [discount](#) our children's seemingly unimportant grief issues and establish a pattern in them of suppressing feelings related to emotional loss.

This sets in place a pattern that is similar to failing to pay income tax, without advantage of programs designed to forgive some of that burden. In this case, delaying our action in dealing with grief means that it waits for a moment to surface. I am sure that many of you have had situations where something you see or hear triggers a memory from the past. We have used the example of a beautiful flower garden in the past to describe such an event. You see the garden and it reminds you of the ones your mother planted. It is a fond memory, until you start thinking about other moments in your relationship with your mother that you wish you had addressed. It might be things you wished had been different or better. Sometimes these memories related to conversations that were never finished. For some it is about dreams and expectations for a future that was different, because of her death or your estrangement from her. Suddenly and unexpectedly, all of those happy feelings that were generated by seeing that garden have lead you to a place of sadness. All of these things relate to the suppressed grief issues that you have delayed addressing.

If you discover that you have delayed grief issues in your life, you can take action to deal with them. The other option is to continue to suppress them and have those issues continue to trouble you with each passing year. Taking grief recovery action does not involve years of therapy, but rather taking a little time to put [The Grief Recovery Method](#) to work for you in your life.

The path you need to follow is spelled out in “[The Grief Recovery Handbook](#).” This is a step-by-step guide to “completing” the unfinished business in relationships. It works, even if that relationship is one that is ongoing, but is less than everything you want it to be. It gives you the opportunity, once and for all, to deal with your emotional feelings of loss, so that they do not continue to cause you trouble. Best of all, if this is an ongoing relationship, it gives you the tools to deal with new events in the moment that they happen, rather than adding to your collection of delayed grief!

You can work through this process on your own, or you can contact a [Certified Grief Recovery Specialist](#) to assist you through this educational process. A Specialist can assist you in taking this action in a matter of weeks, rather than letting it continue to control your life in popping up when you least expect it.

You can settle for having a “name” to define your grief, or you can take action to move beyond its power. The choice is yours!



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1-on-1 Online Support

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Weekend Workshops

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Discounted Grief In Children By Stephen Moeller

The term Discounted Grief has been replaced in professional circles with [Disenfranchised Grief](#). Basically, this refers to issues such as divorce, the break-up of a relationship and moving, to name but a few, that others may not recognize as grief producing experiences. In this article, we want to focus on those events that happen in the lives of our children that, as adults, we often totally discount as painful emotional losses. What most of us never think about is that when we have discounted grief in children, we are inadvertently sending them signals on how to deal with grief the rest of their lives.

A little background

Children begin establishing their belief systems on how to deal with the issues of life at a very early age. [Basic psychology](#) tells us that 75% of the reasoning skills that our children will likely use for the rest of their lives are established by the age of two to three years old. In other words, before they have fully developed their verbal communication skills, they are already establishing a mindset on how to deal with events in their lives.

Most of this information is essential to their survival! They learn to look before crossing a street and to not touch a hot stove. Unfortunately, however, some of this information that they store may include elements of misinformation. This is often the case when it comes to how to deal with issues of loss.

Children rarely begin to develop an understanding of coping with the pain of emotional loss with the death of significant person in their lives. The losses that they face are ones that adults often see as totally insignificant. It might be the loss of a balloon in the park or a favorite toy. When this happens, they normally display their emotional pain with tears. This is when, as adults who do not wish to see our children suffer, that we offer them the first two bits of “misinformation” on how to cope with this emotional pain. We tell them:

On the face of it, both of these things sound like logical responses. As adults, neither of these losses sounds significant on any level. They are things that are easily replaced. What we do not realize or understand is the emotional connection our children may have to these objects. Once these things are replaced, our children may quickly adapt to the change. Unfortunately, they have also begun to establish an understanding that the display of sad emotions is not the correct response to loss, and that the best way to cope is with a replacement or replace the loss.

If this only happened once or twice in their formative years, children might not absorb this as the correct approach for dealing with emotionally painful events. Instead, they tend to hear this on a continuing basis. With each new loss of something that, as adults, we see as relatively meaningless, we repeat these same communications to our children. We do not do this to purposely implant misinformation in our children, but simply because we do not realize that is what is happening.

Another thing we fail to realize is that if we repeat the same behavior pattern 30 to 40 times, it becomes an established habit.

Why is this misinformation?

The best way to understand this is to look at how we deal with grief and loss as adults.

When we deal with a major life changing event, the best and most natural way to begin to process the feelings of grief is to express that emotional pain: to put voice to it. If we have continually been instructed to “not feel bad” when dealing with a loss, we instead tend to suppress those feelings. Trying to not feel bad rarely makes us feel better. We hold those feelings deep inside, where they continue to bother us, but do not feel comfortable sharing them with others. This does nothing to relieve and release that pain. As a result, we tend to relive those loss experiences each time we see something that reminds us of that relationship.

Most of us, after the death of a spouse, would never immediately consider “replacing” that person with someone else. [Studies](#) have shown, however, that men have few tools to deal with this emotional pain and frequently remarry or enter new relationships fairly quickly. When a long term relationship ends in divorce, this is also the case. Unconsciously, these people are simply following that established behavior pattern of replacement to deal with their emotional pain.

How do adults reinforce this and other misinformation on coping with loss and grief in our children?

One of the comments that I frequently heard, when I was very young and was crying about something that my parents deemed inconsequential, was, "If you are going to cry like that, I will give you something to cry about." In truth, my parents never beat me, but that threat was enough to encourage me to "man up" and stuff my emotional pain. I have frequently been told by others that they heard this as well.

I remember very well when my first “girlfriend” and I broke up in grade school. I was miserable! Rather than encouraging me to put voice to those feelings, and take the necessary grief recovery actions to successfully move beyond that pain, I was told, “Don’t feel bad, there are a lot of fish in the sea!” I remember wondering at the time how this solved my problem, but I trusted that my parents knew what they were talking about. I stored that emotional pain inside and was much more reluctant to share my heart with the next girl I liked.

While I am sure that my parents knew childhood friendships come and go, they did not realize that they were establishing in me behavior patterns that I would continue to repeat over and over as I got older. As I moved into my twenties, I continued to share less and less of my heart with those girls to whom I was attracted, which ultimately doomed those relationships as well. I often tell people that it is only thanks to ultimately learning how to successfully grieve and “complete” lost relationships that I became a good candidate for a lasting and loving marriage.

As part of this learning process, I also had to learn to let go of other bits of misinformation that I had stored in my belief system. I learned that “being strong” was yet another way I had learned to suppress my emotional pain. I learned that “keeping busy” to sidetrack me from any emotional loss I experienced was simply a way of seeking distractions, rather than facing and solving the problem.

Listen with your heart



Not your head!

Allow all emotions to be expressed without:

- judgement
- criticism
- analysis

www.griefrecoverymethod.com

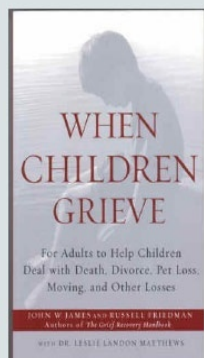
There is a better approach than discounting early losses!

As adults, we need to remember that we once walked down many of the same paths that our children are taking today. We need to remember how we felt when those adults around us discounted our first grieving experiences. Instead of discounting them, we need to learn the necessary tools to allow our grieving children to express their feelings without analysis, criticism or judgment. It is about helping them to deal with painful events in the moment they occur, so that they can move through those events and not carry that pain into their future relationships.

“[When Children Grieve](#)” is a book that parents can use to help them in preparing their children to successfully move through emotionally painful events. It is not a book to give to children, but rather an educational guide for parents. It is not an intellectual instruction manual. It is written from the heart and from the perspective of one parent walking with another in this journey of offering children positive assistance in dealing with emotionally painful events. It gives assistance for helping adolescents, tweens and teenagers find a more effective way of dealing with any loss experience.

This is a book that parents can use on their own, or they can learn to utilize its techniques in a group situation. There are [Certified Grief Recovery Specialists](#) who have been trained to facilitate parent support groups in putting these methods into practice.

As parents, we have a choice. We can continue to instill in them the same information that has crippled us in dealing with loss events, or we can offer them tools that will be of value for the rest of their lives. We can continue to discount their early losses, or we can find better ways to help them, that will support them as they move to adulthood.



Get your copy of **When Children Grieve**

For Adults to Help Children Deal with Death,
Divorce, Pet Loss, Moving, and Other Losses

[LEARN MORE](#)



Disenfranchised Grief

By Stephen Moeller

It's common in our society for people to rate certain things as "more important" than others. We see this applied to economic factors, food groups, financial expenses and even reasons to select a home or automobile. The number of issues for which rating hierarchies are established is endless. But there are some things, such as the grief related to any emotional loss, which should never be treated in this way.

Sadly, most of us have heard a griever sharing the story of the emotional pain of their loss, only to hear a second person interject that their personal loss was so much worse. In a very real sense, this is an illustration of the term, "disenfranchised grief." Trying to prove that any loss is of less importance discounts the emotional pain of the griever who has been dealing with that particular grief-generating event.

The genesis of this term

[Dr. Kenneth Doka](#), a professor of gerontology at the Graduate School of New Rochelle, first coined this term in the 1980's. He was discussing the grief of widowhood with his graduate students. One of those students commented the grief she experienced when her ex-husband died was not even recognized. They had been high school sweethearts and divorced after 25 years of marriage when she discovered he was having an affair with one of her friends. While that breakup had been bitter, they still had a long history together and shared children. The possible intensity of this type of emotional pain was something that struck him as "a bolt out of the blue." In the next several years he researched many of these "forgotten" grief experiences and ultimately labeled them "disenfranchised grief."

[He describes this as grief that is often ignored and denied public support on three levels:](#)

- Grief that is not acknowledged
- Loss that is not recognized
- Grievers who are not acknowledged

These are people whose emotional losses are simply not recognized as being of the importance or level of intensity of others.

What, exactly, is grief?

One of the biggest issues that many grievers face is in having the emotional pain that they are experiencing not even recognized as grief. More often than not, people think of grief as just relating to death. In truth, we can experience grief for any number of reasons.

There are many published definitions of the word grief. So, what is grief? In "The Grief Recovery Handbook," grief is defined as "the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior." Basically this is saying that any change that occurs in our familiar behavior patterns can generate the emotional pain that is called grief. It's an emotional reaction to loss of any kind.

[Russell Friedman](#) further describes it, in his article "[The Best Definition of Grief You will Ever Find](#)," as reaching out for someone that has always been there, only to discover when you need them one more time, they are gone. He adds that sometimes it involves reaching out to someone who has never been there as well. Perhaps one of his best observations includes that since grief is a normal reaction, it is neither "a pathological condition nor a personality disorder."

Understanding Disenfranchised Grief

This relatively new term is designed to help people understand that there are no limiting factors in what can cause grief. It may be related to a death that others may not see as emotionally significant. It may relate to the breakup of a marriage, relationship or friendship. It can relate to our emotional response to a change in someone we may have never met. It might be the loss of a pet, a home or a job. It can even relate to abuse or a personal assault on our body. The list of things we might grieve is endless.

Rather than simply creating a new term to describe the things that can be emotionally impactful, it would be far better if we simply expanded that establish mindset about what grief really is. Grievers don't need new terms; they just need to be recognized as people dealing with loss of any kind. New terms don't help them move through a grieving experience. If anything, trying to apply different terms only add to the confusion and conflicting feelings a griever is experiencing. At best, terminology only provides a label to define the problem, but does nothing to solve it!

Taking action to move beyond the pain of loss

Many grievers suffer in silence. This is because friends and family, who actually recognize that they are in pain, have no idea of how to really help. It's not unusual for them to offer intellectual suggestions on why they should not be suffering, rather than anything this actually addresses the emotional issues of loss. Dealing with emotions is often a challenge since they are not something that can be easily defined. Each person is different and each grieving situation is unique, meaning that there is no singular way that everyone reacts to any loss.

Recovery from the emotional pain of any loss is dependent on the griever recognizing that how they are dealing with that pain, is not helping them feel better, and their choice to actually elect to select a different plan of action. [The Grief Recovery Method](#) is a proven action plan that adapts to each individual and their unique situation.

Recovery from any loss is not about learning how to bury that pain inside, but rather how to effectively put voice behind those feelings to move beyond the hold of that pain. It's about saying goodbye to those things that were unfinished and incomplete in that relationship, so that you can enjoy any fond memories you might have, without the constant intrusion of the emotional pain of that loss. It's about being able to successfully face a future that may be vastly different from the one that you had planned.

Many years ago, before I became involved in helping other grieverers move beyond their losses, I was a griever myself. I didn't realize the enormous power that both my recognized and disenfranchised grief held over my happiness. The best thing that I ever did for myself was to find a useful mechanism to deal with all of the grieving issues I had experienced. That approach was and still is The Grief Recovery Method. I find that I still use these same principals, which I learned so many years ago, on a daily basis so that I never let grief hold me hostage again.

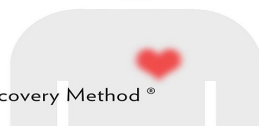
This is an action plan that works. You can learn how to use it to your own advantage in a support group or one-on-one with a [Certified Grief Recovery Specialist](#), by attending a personal workshop and/or with the assistance of "The Grief Recovery Handbook." Once you have found success in dealing with the losses in your own life, we offer [Certification Training](#) so that you successfully make a difference for others.

While grief may be defined with a variety of labels, your success in moving beyond its hold is entirely dependent on you taking action for yourself!

COMPARISON ROBS
DIGNITY - BECAUSE
YOU NEVER KNOW
HOW SOMEONE
ELSE FEELS.



The Grief Recovery Method®





Masked Grief By Stephen Moeller

There are many ways in which people attempt to work through the grieving process. Those who recognize that grief, by definition, is an emotion and make a concerted effort to deal with what is emotionally incomplete in the relationship that has caused their grief, can be very successful in moving forward. Those who try to deal with it strictly from an intellectual standpoint, often find little relief and that they face additional issues as well.

The term Masked Grief relates to those situations where the griever has become so adept at suppressing their feelings of emotional pain that they take on other symptomology. While this term has been associated with [Complicated Grief](#) in [various articles](#), it is something that we frequently encounter in talking with grieverers at [The Grief Recovery Institute](#). These grieverers rarely call it by this name, but their stories clearly tell us that this is the issue with which they are dealing.



The vast majority of people have little formal training on how to deal with loss in their lives. Rarely does an adult sit a child down and tell them how to deal with emotional pain. More often than not, children learn how to deal with loss based on what they are told with each grieving experience. Our first encounters with grief, such as the loss of a balloon or a favorite toy, are often discounted by adults as being of little importance. What these adults do not realize is that words they share with us can become imbedded tools in how we deal with each future loss.

As adults, we never want to see our children to suffer. We tell them such as "Don't feel bad" and "We will get you a new one" when they lose that balloon or toy. Rather than allowing our children to express and vent that emotional pain, without even realizing it, we are instead encouraging them to suppress it. As life moves on, we suggest to them, when dealing with an emotionally painful event, that they "Be Strong" and "Keep busy," as a way of dealing with their loss, so that it will hurt less. This really does little to deal with that emotional event, and instead further encourages children to stuff their sad and unhappy feelings inside.

These adults are simply passing on the things that they were told as children themselves. They do not realize that they are passing on what will become lifetime patterns of behavior in how to deal with loss. Just as adults tend to mask and suppress their feelings to be "socially appropriate," we tend to pass this survival pattern on to our children, without the thought of the consequences.

Our bodies are designed to process rather than strictly store things.

The human body is designed to be a processing center. We consume and process food to create energy and to fuel our various organs. If we consume more food than necessary, our body stores it as fat. Too much of this fat storage can have negative consequences for our overall health. Likewise, the body is designed to process our emotional experiences. If we suppress, store and mask those emotions deep inside, this can result in negative consequences for our general health as well.

The consequences of stuffing sad emotions

When we continually stuff these feelings of emotional pain, rather than putting voice to them, our bodies tend to send us signals that they are not happy. Some people get headaches, while others respond with intestinal issues and ulcers. I have a good friend who, when emotionally stressed, develops a prominent rash on her chest. [Other normal responses](#) to emotional stress can include an increased heart rate, rapid breathing and high blood pressure.

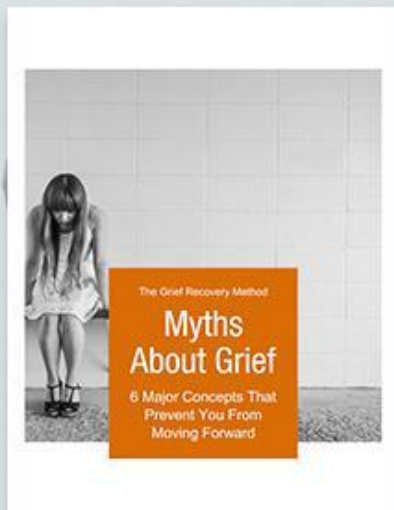
A trained grief professional can often recognize that such issues are a common sign of suppressed emotions related to an unaddressed grieving experience. It is rare, however, that someone so suffering first looks to such independent support services as those provided by a grief recovery professional. Unfortunately, these same symptoms can also be the result of medical issues as well, which means that when we consult a physician, they may very well attempt to approach it as a physical problem, rather than as a sign of masked grief.

That is why masked grief is such a problem. Failure to identify this common response to loss means that many people are treated strictly for the symptoms, rather than the underlying problem. When we treat the symptoms, rather than the real problem, nothing is done to deal with the underlying emotional pain.

This is a subject that is explored in detail in an early chapter of "[The Grief Recovery Handbook](#)." It is in recognizing that these are indeed normal responses to suppressed emotional feelings that the best treatment plan can be followed. The Grief Recovery Method is an effective action plan for dealing with the emotional pain of loss.

I speak from personal experience in the value of using [The Grief Recovery Method](#) and what it has to offer. At one time I used to have severe stomach issues. I never associated this physical problem as being related how I was dealing with grief in my life. (Life most people, I was stuffing and masking my feelings of sadness.) I consulted physicians who looked in vain for a medical reason to this problem. It was not until I went on for [Certification Training](#) with the Grief Recovery Institute that I was able to see that the times when I was suffering most with these problems also happened to be times that I was also dealing with a grieving experience in my life. As I learned to better deal with my own grief, I found that my related stomach issues vanished!

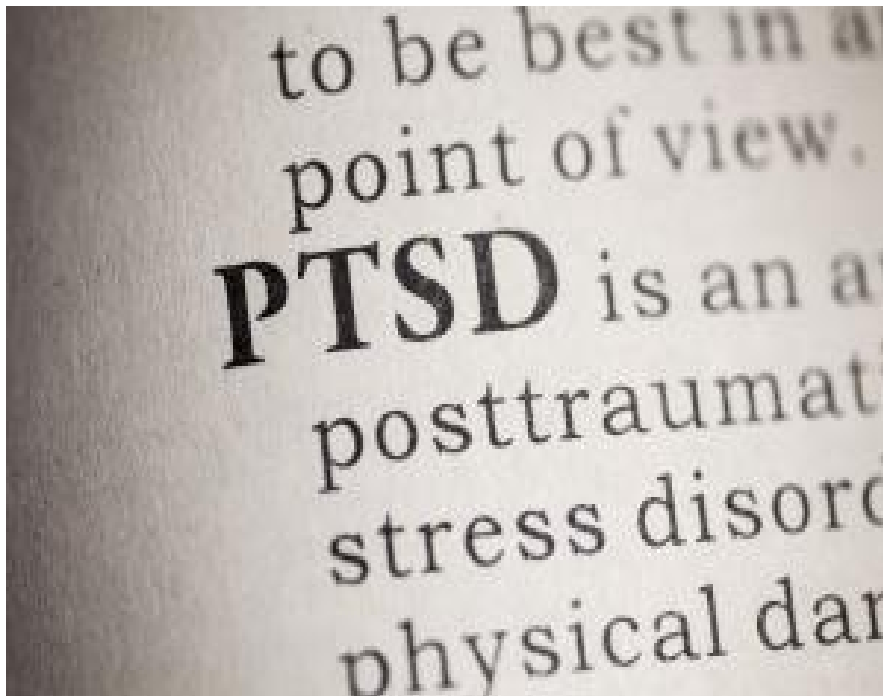
I implore you to not let the pain of emotional losses that you have experienced and suppressed take a toll on your body. Taking effective Grief Recovery Action can not only help you feel better emotionally, but physically as well.



Download our FREE eBook: **Myths About Grief**

6 major concepts that prevent you
from moving forward

[DOWNLOAD E-BOOK](#)



PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder By Stephen Moeller

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a relatively new term. It was first introduced in the 1980 American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III). It has since been further modified in its definition in the DSM-IV and DSM-5. What it describes, however, is hardly new. Some have said that this concept of being overwhelmed by a single or series of related events can be tracked back to the first caveman attacked by a sabre toothed tiger.

Since the 1600's, previous terms that described similar diagnoses were primarily focused on those who served in the military. Such terms as shell shocked, combat exhaustion, and post-Vietnam combat reaction are just a few of those terms used in the last century. It now goes beyond military involvement to refer to people who have dealt with enormously impactful events in their lives, including rape, physical or sexual abuse, and terrorist attacks, to name just a very few.

It is a diagnosis. It cannot be made by a clinician until at least four weeks after that event has taken place. There are varying degrees as to how it impacts the life of the person so diagnosed. Many of the symptoms are remarkably similar to unresolved grief.

In the first few years after this term was coined, it was strictly confined to clinical practice. Unfortunately, like many terms, it has taken on a bit of a life of its own. After Survivor-Africa, one of the participants claimed on a late night talk show that she had been so unfairly edited in the televised show that she was suffering from PTSD. It has become so frequently used in all forms of media that it is not uncommon to hear a journalist, with no psychiatric training, suggesting it as a possible diagnosis for someone after a tragic event.

When it comes to working with people who tell us that they are suffering from PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the first question that needs to be asked is how and when they were diagnosed. The reason for this is simple. It is very possible that they have self-diagnosed based on what they think this term means. Very few people actually go to the [National Center for PTSD](#), a part of the U.S. Veterans Administration, for the complete definition and the test of symptoms. Only a small number of people have actually been diagnosed by a qualified psychiatric clinician.

Those who have self-diagnosed may have simply found a label that seems to explain and justify why they are having problems. The problem with any label is it can offer a reason for their problem, but does nothing to solve it. It can even end up being an impediment to them taking action. As stated earlier, the symptoms of PTSD are remarkably similar to those of grief. It is possible that those who claim to suffer from this disorder without a true diagnosis are indeed grievers overwhelmed by a recent, or not so recent, emotional loss. As grief professionals, we know that there are actions they can take to recover!

FOR _____

DATE _____

ADDRESS _____



Grief is normal
and natural. It is
not a pathological
condition or a
personality disorder.

Dispense as Written

Brand Exchange Permitted

REFILL _____ TIMES

DEA No _____



The Grief Recovery Method®

Grief is the normal and natural emotional reaction to any change that has impacted a life. Since most people have never had any meaningful training on how to deal with loss, it can be overwhelming. Having someone else tell you to “be strong and get over it” does nothing to effectively deal with that pain. Successful recovery from loss involves sorting out those things that were incomplete in that relationship and putting voice to those things we wish might have been different or better. It also involves dealing with the dreams and expectations of a different future than what is being faced after that loss. This entire process is the foundation for the [Grief Recovery Method](#). It is a plan for action, rather than leaving people with simply a label to explain that they are in emotional pain.

Even for those have been given this “label” by a professional, taking Grief Recovery Method (GRM) action can be a valuable part of the “healing process.” One of the more effective therapies, outlined by the National Center for PTSD, involves helping individuals understand how that event changed their thoughts and feelings, leaving them at a loss to cope with life. A key part of the GRM is to help people discover those things that have been incomplete for them after their loss event and to help them make the necessary changes in their belief system so they can take personal responsibility to make changes in that system. Once this has been done, they can take action for completion and recovery.

The key to starting this process is outlined in the section on trauma and PTSD in the most recent edition of [“The Grief Recovery Handbook.”](#) It is essential that we move from clinical terms to the heart of the situation in dealing with the emotional pain that is grief! When someone tells you that they are suffering from PTSD and why, it involves acknowledging their statement and offering a set of words that address the emotional feelings that may have resulted from that event. Words such as “loss of trust”, “loss of safety”, and “loss of control” are among the suggestions offered. This may be the first time that this person has been offered feeling words that express how this event touched them on a personal level. If they respond affirmatively, you can then invite them to share other feelings that might have been generated. The focus of the GRM is in allowing people to safely share their feelings without analysis, criticism, or judgement, and then to offer them a mechanism to complete the relationship that caused these feelings to manifest.

I encourage you to read the section on trauma and PTSD in this latest edition of the handbook and to utilize this information in helping people who present with this diagnosis, whether it has been one they made themselves or one that was offered by a clinician. [John W. James](#), one of the authors and the founder of the Grief Recovery Institute, served in the Vietnam Conflict and dealt with the horrors of battlefield losses first hand. The tools he developed that are the backbone of the GRM were a major part of his personal recovery.

You might also find value in this previous article: [Why society will use any word but grief. Grief Recovery can help in dealing with PTSD.](#)



Transgenerational Grief

By Stephen Moeller

Transgenerational grief, sometimes called [transgenerational trauma](#), refers to situations where a grief event was so powerful within a family that it was carried on to the next generation and sometimes multiple generations thereafter. In a very real sense, this is the “gift that keeps on taking” that can be passed on through a family.

The three cultural situations where this form of [Disenfranchised Grief](#) have been most frequently been discussed concern:

- The [First Nation peoples](#) of Canada, [Native American Tribes](#) and the [indigenous people of Alaska](#). These societies dealt with the “invasion” of immigrants who saw themselves as more “culturally advanced.” In many cases, these new settlers, and the governments who supported them, down played the value of these native cultures and placed the native children in western-based schools that forbid the practice of native traditions and even the speaking of native languages. Many of these people felt a deep sense of grief over the loss of their cultural heritage, which has been passed down through the following generations. It’s only in the relatively recent past that the “[Indian Schools](#)” have been redesigned to celebrate their heritage. Sadly, despite reforms, the damage that was done in generations past still deeply impacts these native populations today. The high rates of substance abuse, suicide, and a sense of hopelessness are well documented within many of the Native American reservations.

- [Holocaust survivors](#) and their families have also been identified as a group who continue to deal with transgenerational grief. The deep sense of grief and loss felt by those who lived through the horrors of the concentration camps are unimaginable to anyone outside that experience. As those survivors went on to have children after their release, it's understandable that they shared their stories of heartache with them, not realizing the continuing grief and emotional impact it would instill in them. Studies have shown a far [higher rate of dependence](#) on therapeutic counseling among the subsequent generations of those who lived through the holocaust than in the general population, as these people continue to deal with the horrors, fears, and loss instilled in them by their parents.
- This form of grief has been noted as well within families who have dealt with [child loss](#). After going through this tragic experience, these parents are often far more protective of their other children, sometimes to the point of instilling their fears of another such loss into their children's belief systems. When this fear is deeply instilled, it can even be passed on to the next generation, as these children become parents themselves.

Beyond these three groups, there have been others who have been identified as possible potential victims of this form of grief as well. [A sidewalk Santa](#), in New York, noted after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, parents were much more cautious of letting their children visit or have contact with him. In a sense, this is an example of the ever-growing concept of "stranger danger" that we pass on to our children, without even realizing the long-term ramifications that can come with it.

There is the famous story of the [Hatfields and McCoys](#), who carried on a feud in Kentucky in the late 1800's. While it was originally the elder generation that were at odds with each other, the ongoing grief of that fight was passed on to the next generations. There are nations, and cultural pockets within nations, that have been at war with each other for generations around the world. This is particularly evident in the Middle East and Africa, but hardly restricted to those geographic regions. The feelings of grief and loss have been passed down to the ongoing generations and continue to fuel the flames of war and hatred.

The concept of transgenerational grief many have been only recently identified, but it is hardly unique to the last few generations of the world population. During the Spanish conquest of Central America, the conquistadors, and the monks who followed them, destroyed all but four of [the Mayan codices](#), in an effort to convert the population and eliminate what they saw as “heathen” practices and traditions. The true history of this civilization that had an advanced written language, mathematic skills, and deep knowledge of astronomy is still being rediscovered. The loss of the history of their culture has been felt for hundreds of years by these people and passed on to future generations. The concept of trying to erase cultural history was a common practice of colonial powers throughout world history, and has been an ongoing source of transgenerational grief.

Now that we have identified it, what can be done to assist these grieverers?

No one has yet developed a time machine to would allow these elements of grief to have been effectively dealt with in the past. That gives these grieverers but two choices: to continue to be burdened by the losses of the past, or to find a way to deal with that grief and not pass it on to the next generation.

To follow the first option guarantees that there is no relief and that continued suffering is inevitable.

While there is no way to change the bad things that happened in the past that continue to negatively impact these grieverers, there is the option of taking positive and effective grief recovery action. The choice to take this action does not mean that these people are making a decision to discount any of these past losses and say that they were not significant. Instead, it is making the conscious decision to move beyond the stranglehold these past losses continue to have on their happiness and outlook for the future. Once they have effectively dealt with their emotional pain, it puts them in a far better position to take the needed action to make sure that these wrongs are not perpetuated into the future. It can give them the clarity of thought to recapture the positive elements of their family or cultural heritage to pass on to future generations. It can give them the opportunity to rise above their historical pain and move forward. As [Viktor Frankl](#), a holocaust survivor [said](#), “Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

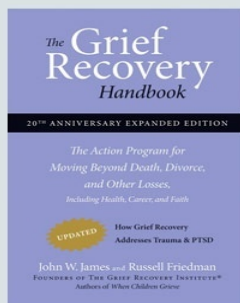
[The Grief Recovery Method](#) offers an effective means of taking this action to deal with the emotional pain of transgenerational grief. It not only gives people the opportunity to address the original event that first triggered this grief, but also the tools to deal with the grief of having this pain transmitted to you through the past generations of your family.

This approach is spelled out in the “[Grief Recovery Handbook](#),” which you can use on your own, or with the assistance of a [Certified Specialist](#) trained by [The Grief Recovery Institute](#). The advantage of working with a specialist is in having a trained person there to assist you as you take the action steps spelled out by the authors.

Unlike most other books on grief and loss, this is a true action plan. The authors walk with you on this journey and explain each step with examples of how they themselves took these steps. It’s not a book written as an intellectual set of exercises, but rather one that speaks to your broken heart. It deals with grief as a natural emotion, rather than a malady or illness, and offers the reader the necessary direction to deal with how it impacts his or her life.

Grief can be overwhelming in how it limits our ability to live from day to day. When that grief has been implanted and reinforced from generation to generation, it can be even worse. It can leave you feeling like there is no other option but to continue to live with that pain and sense of hopelessness. You can continue to be a victim of the past or you can choose to be a survivor. The greatest gift of taking action for yourself is that you can also stop this continuing cycle of transgenerational grief from being passed on to the next generation.

You cannot change what happened in the past. You can, however, take action for yourself, so that whoever or whatever caused that pain no longer controls your ability to be the best person possible.



Get your copy of **The Grief Recovery Handbook**

The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce,
and Other Losses including Health, Career, and Faith.

[LEARN MORE](#)



More information about The Grief Recovery Method®

We offer local support groups, 1-on-1 support, 2 Day Personal Workshops, and Certification Training to become a leader on Grief Recovery in your own community. We also offer several books available to help you, or others, recover from grief and loss. The Grief Recovery Institute® 1-800-334-7606

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