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*Wellness Agenda: Healthy Communities. Healthy You.*

# Shattered Dreams and Reasonable Hope: Essential Links

Ted Bowman

tedbowman71@gmail.com

## Overview of Session

- **Change and transition**
- **Shattered dreams, especially for elders**
- **Chronic sorrow – a developmental perspective**
- **Responses to losses**
- **Reasonable hope**
  
- **Discussion throughout**



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## The Guest House

**This being human is a guesthouse.  
Every morning is new arrival.**

**A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.**

**Welcome and entertain them all!**

Beginning lines of a poem by Rumi





## **Storying And Restorying After Loss**

**Involves Grieving The Old Story**

**Before Creating The Next  
(Not Necessarily New) Story**



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**Listen For**

**Major Components/Themes/Values  
Of The Old Story**

**How Can They Be Reframed In  
The Next Story**



## Reminiscence and Life Review

Reminiscence is the act or process of recalling the remote past in a silent, spoken, solitary, interactional, spontaneous, or structured way.

Life review is a more formal and more intense intervention. Life review is the process of reviewing, organizing and evaluating the overall picture of one's life with the purpose of achieving *integrity* by seeing one's life as a unique story.

Both reminiscence and life review use memory and recall in their processes.

**Change  
Change  
Change**



**Is A Time When  
Predictability Breaks Down**

**Our Predictable Ways  
Of Thinking About And Doing Things  
Are Interrupted By Change**

**Change Results**

**In Uncertainty**



**For Everyone  
Change is a Challenge**

**For Some  
Change is a Welcome Opportunity**

**For Some Change is a Threat**

**For Some  
Change is Taken in Stride**

**For Some  
Change is One More Too Many**

**Be Respectful With Those  
With Different Responses**



## Change And Transition

**It isn't the changes that do you in, it's the transitions. Change is not the same as transition. *Change* is situational: the new technology, the new procedure, the new worker, the new challenge. *Transition* is the psychological process people go through to come to terms with the new situation. Change is external, transition is internal.**

**adapted from William Bridges**



# Clarifying Change and Transition

## **Change is a situational shift:**

- Getting a new hip is a change, and so is receiving an unexpected, positive gift or losing your job;
- Moving to a different home is a change, and so is remodeling your house or losing it in a fire;
- Having or welcoming a new grandchild is a change for everyone in the family
- And, of course, losing a loved one is a change – a huge one.

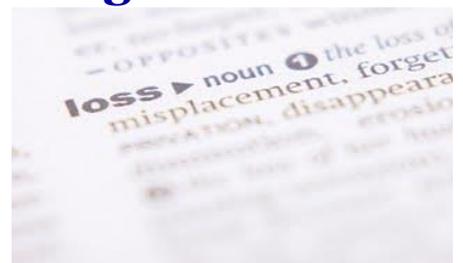
**Transition is the process of letting go of the way things used to be and taking hold of the way they subsequently become... Transition is the way we all come to terms with change.**

Wm. Bridges

## Transition Starts With an Ending

**The starting point for transition is not the outcome but the ending that you will have to make to leave the old situation behind. Situational change hinges on the new thing, but psychological transition depends on letting go of the old reality and old identity you had before the change took place.**

Wm. Bridges – *Managing Transitions*





## Examples of Loss: Transition Needed

- **A sudden and unexpected event that destroys the old life that made one feel like oneself**
- **The “drying up” of a situation or relationship that once felt vital and alive**
- **An activity that has always gone well before, suddenly and unexpectedly goes badly**
- **A person or organization you trusted proves to be untrustworthy**
- **An inexplicable or unforeseen problem crops up at the worst possible moment, to disrupt ordinary functioning**





# Things That Affect The Experience Of Loss

**Nature Of Attachment**

**Mode Of Separation (Voluntary or not,  
Crisis, Illness)**

**Personality Variables, Including Tolerance  
For Change**

**History Of Losses**

**Social Variables**

**Life-change Events**

**Shattered Dreams**

Based On Work Of Wm. Worden



## **Factors Which Exacerbate Losses**

**Loss Or Stress Accumulation/Overload**

**Loss Of Control Or Power**

**Losses Which Break Normative Rules**

**Losses Which Violate "Moral" Expectations**

**Losses That Stretch Developmental Abilities**

**Losses Which Reinforce Or Precipitate Family Conflict**

**Disenfranchised Losses**

**Losses Which Continue To Require Adjustment After Onset**

**Ambiguous Losses**

**Loss Of Dreams**

## Loss as a Broad Concept

- ◆ **Six Major Types (Mitchell and Anderson/Bowman)**

- Material Losses**

- Relationship Losses**

- Health Losses**

- Role Losses**

- Systems Losses**

- Loss of Dreams**

- ◆ **Disenfranchised Grief (Doka, 2002)**

- ◆ **Griever, relationship, and loss itself**





## **Grief in Later Life**

**Rapidity of Losses**

**Finality of Losses**

**The Ever-present Character of Loss**

**Losses are Cumulative**

**R. Scott Sullender**



## Dehumanization of Loss

Repeated experiences of unacknowledged and unmourned loss contribute to the dehumanization of loss...***It's one thing to lose something that was important to you, but it is far worse when no one in your universe recognizes that you lost it.*** The failure to acknowledge another's loss is to deny that person's humanity.

KEN HARDY



Differences:  
Chronic Sorrow and Complicated Grief

- **Both contain sorrow that can be ongoing**
- **Both contain elements of depressive emotions and experience**
- **The Key Difference Is The Ability To Grow Life, Experience Joy And Fullness Regularly, Even While Also Grieving**

**JOY**



From *Grieving: A Beginner's Guide* (2006) by Jerusha Hull McCormick. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, pp. 114-116



## Responses To Loss

**Name Losses**

**Grieve Losses**

**Put The Loss In Perspective**

**Reinforce Or Build Support Connections**

**Set Limits**

***(Saying No To Some Things***

***So You Can Yes To Others)***

**Develop A Healing Plan**

**Use Rituals For Grieving And Healing**



## Metaphors of Loss / Grieving

**...grief never leaves only changes, it waits  
outside doors keep a place at the table**

**Susan Williams**

**One morning, cereal. The next day, cancer.**

**Richard Solly**

**...disaster sucks all the air from the room,  
swings shut doors in our brains' corridors**

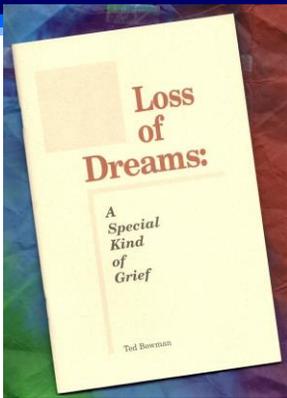
**Heid Erdrich**

**All I have is a broken voice      Wang Ping**



## Kopp Framework - Follow Metaphors

- 1) Notice metaphors**
- 2) Invite the client to explore**
- 3) “If I were seeing it the way you see it, what would I see?”**
- 4) Practice curiosity**
- 5) Describe feelings associated with the metaphor**
- 6) Invite transformation**
- 7) “What if the metaphor were a....?”**
- 8) Connect metaphor and life issues**



## **Shattered Dreams**

**Losing An Emotionally  
Important Image  
Of Oneself, One's Family,  
One's Life, One's Work,  
Even One's Death**

**Losing The Possibilities Of  
"What Might Have Been"**

**Abandonment Of Plans For  
A Particular Future**

**The Dying Of A Dream**



## Assumptive World

All of us from the moment of our birth, have been building inside ourselves a model of the world, a set of assumptions on the basis of which we recognize the world that we meet and plan our behaviour accordingly. Because this model is based on reality it is, most of the time, a valid and useful basis for thought and behaviour. We rely on the accuracy of these assumptions to maintain our orientation in the world and to control our lives. **Anything which challenges this model incapacitates us.**

C.M.PARKES



## Shattered Dreams and Aging: Examples

- **the dream of retirement**
- **the dream about how or where a home "should be"**
- **the dream of time for self (autonomy/control**
- **the dream of family privacy**
- **the dream that the family relationship could withstand any stress or challenge**
- **the American dream of "social security"**
- **the dream that plans would be sufficient...or things will work out when we get there**
- **the dream of dying and death**



## Shattered Dreams / Bereavement

**The dream of death – how, where, when, who**

**The dream of the funeral**

**The dream of dying**

**The dream of retirement, travel, marriage, travel,  
expectation unfulfilled**

**The dream of being touched**

**The dream of an “uncomplicated” death**

**The dream of never being alone**



## Variations of Shattered Dreams

- **Hindsight Dreams – dreams not known then, but known now**
- **Interrupted/Postponed Dreams**
- **Dreams Denied**
- **Dreams Ended**
- **Missed Dreams – opportunities passed, now too late**
- **Stolen Dreams – because of life circumstances**
- **Failure to Dream**
- **Frozen Dreams – dreams still held in spite of changes**



## Cue Words - Shattered Dreams

**“I didn’t expect this...”**

**“I feel hopeless!”**

**“Why did I even bother...?”**

**“I thought it would...”**

**“It doesn’t matter...”**

**“If only”**

**“I don’t care any more”**

**“I never imagined  
this”**

**“I can’t live the way I am”**

**“Will I ever...?”**

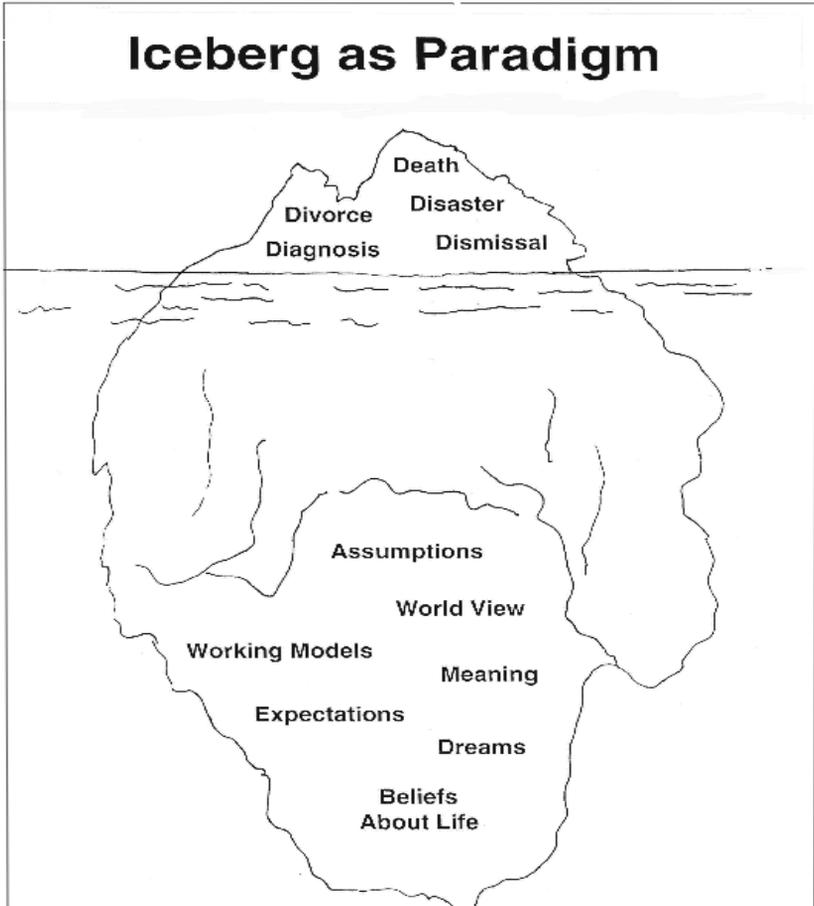
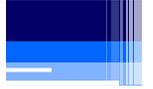
**“You decide...”**

**“You don’t understand”**



## Inquiries about Shattered Dreams

- *When you pictured this time in your life, what did you picture?*
- *When you thought about being \_\_\_\_\_, what did you picture?*
- *If and when you thought of losses in your family, how did you think it would be, how would it happen?*
- *Tell me about the plans you and (the name of the person had)?*





## Ambiguous Loss

**Losses that are:  
unclear,  
confusing, and for which  
future stories / outcomes  
are unknown**

**Etymology: “driven in both ways”**

Boss



# Ambiguous Loss: Conundrum

**Psychological Presence**

**And**

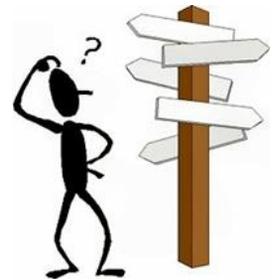
**Physical Absence**

**Physical Presence**

**And**

**Psychological Absence**

**Ambiguous loss is inherently traumatic because the inability to resolve the situation causes pain, confusion, shock, distress, and often immobilization. Without clarity/closure the trauma of this unique kind of loss becomes chronic.**





## Responses to Ambiguity

- **Label what people are experiencing (responses will vary)**
- **Provide a structure and setting for contact**
- **Provide information**
- **Increase tolerance for ambiguity**
- **Be flexible, adapt routines, minimize helplessness, normalize situation**
- **Emphasize what can be changed or addressed and what can not...**
- **Move from “either/or” choices to “both/and choices’**



## Two Principles

- **If Something Is Unmentionable, It Is Also Unmanageable**

*FOLK WISDOM*

- **Not Everything That Is Faced Can Be Changed, But Nothing Can Be Changed Until It Is Faced**

*James Baldwin*



## What Helps?

**It Is Those Who, Instead Of Giving Advice,  
Solutions Or Cures, Acknowledge The  
Pain And Touch Our Wounds With A  
Gentle And Tender Hand**

**Someone Who Can Be Silent In A Moment  
Of Despair Or Confusion Who Can  
Tolerate, Not Knowing, Not Curing, Not  
Healing And Face With Us Our Loss**

OKUN AND RAPPAPORT / NOUWEN

# Dual-processing model

(Stroebe and Schut 2001)

## Loss Orientation

Grief work

Intrusion of grief

Denial and  
avoidance of  
restoration changes

## Restoration Orientation

Attending to life changes

Doing new things

Distraction, denial,  
avoidance of grief

New roles, identities,  
relationships

# Hope

Definitions usually include:

**EXPECTATION**

**DESIRE**



Which can involve **GOALS, ATTRIBUTES, REDEFINITION, MEANING, PEACE, ENERGY**



## Reasonable Hope: Characteristics

- **Reasonable hope is relational**
- **Reasonable hope is a practice**
- **Reasonable hope maintains that the future is open, uncertain, and influenceable**
- **Reasonable hope seeks goals and pathways to them**
- **Reasonable hope accommodates doubt, contradictions, and despair**      Weingarten



**Hope includes a future story.**

**Hope includes a shared story.**

**Hope includes stories of meaning.**

**Hope includes an affirmative story.**

**Hope includes the real story.**

**I have only one small grain of hope –  
I need more  
I break off a fragment to send you  
Please take this grain of hope  
So mine won't shrink  
Please share your fragment  
So that yours will grow  
Only so, by division,  
Will hope increase**

Denise Levertov

