

Hello,

I have had another great month business wise. A couple of new clients have started the coaching journey, a couple are taking a recess for various personal reasons, so not huge growth and I do need to gird my marketing loins. Thank you to those who have sent referrals my way. The wonderful part of this work though is being a part of the excitingly momentous breakthroughs for some clients, and the steady growth toward their goals for others.

Well, September threw a curve ball which I am still dealing with. Most of you will know that I went up to Zimbabwe just in time to say goodbye to my mother. In most ways her death is a great relief in that her quality of life has been poor, particularly the past year. But a parent's death evokes some unexpected responses. One of my first thoughts was "I'm the next generation to cross the great divide". The other was that "I can now do whatever I want". Fear of me dying on some great adventure has in some ways held me back as my death would have greatly hurt my mother. In these past weeks I have often felt thoroughly disconnected from my own life as my family live far away and of course day to day life carries on. I have found myself wrestling with all sorts of unrelated things. Never mind an internal pressure of "coach thyself out".

Years ago I lived and worked on the Isle of Skye for a few months. I felt a certain connection with that place of dancing bog cotton, purple smudged heather, vibrant yellow gorse and I was sad to leave. But I cycled from there to Glasgow and realized that to leave slowly removes some of that tearing of soul that cars and aeroplanes generate. Two days after leaving Skye I had climbed to quite an altitude and could look back and see the highest peaks of the Cuillins, so I could say good bye again and again. Grieving.

I have thought a little about the different ways of recognizing death. I know of a man who wrote a book about his wife's life. My one friend celebrated her sister's life in a garden wall mosaic. Years ago I saw a tree with a plaque commemorating a dead soldier. I liked that. All a recognition of legacies left. The annual community remembrance services amongst cultures like the Zulu's, that I have so often pooh poohed, but they do legitimise a mourning process that our instant society seldom does.

I have also been thinking about the various teachings I have received about grieving. Whilst nursing we were introduced to Kubler Ross, a few years ago I heard a Hospice nurse talking about grief. It has been good to go over those notes to remind myself that I'm not going mad or need to be "fixed". I have also thought that perhaps you might find these beneficial at some point. We live in a nation ravaged by death and its resultant loss and grief. We live in a nation that suffers from a new Diaspora and we lose friends and families as they leave for far away countries. These notes are certainly not exhaustive and it is a subject worth a little more attention as we all suffer loss of varying forms and intensities, and seldom deal with it adequately.

Notes from a Hospice talk on **Loss and Grief**

## **Loss**

Loss is the severing of any attachment that offered love or security, be it relational or material. It involves any significant change in one's life. The degree of pain is determined by the extent of the attachment.

**We all live differently and therefore experience loss differently**

Loss is a psychological trauma that is equivalent to any physical trauma. It is just not visible and because it cannot be seen we often ignore it. Each loss contains other losses which are often not acknowledged.

Loss needs to be mourned, this is a process that takes time and is called the **grief process**.

If the grief process is not completed our adaptation is impaired.

The struggle we face is threefold.

- a. We struggle with ourselves: who am I? why am I here? Why do I do the things I do? How can I change?
- b. We struggle with others: how should we deal with them given that people hurt us.
- c. We struggle with God: for if God did not exist we would be attached to nobody, responsible to nobody, linked by nobody's rules. We would be free to do whatever we liked.

Change or adaptation is inevitable if our hearts are willing to struggle with self, others and God.

## Grief

Grief is a group of intensely emotional and physical symptoms that are experienced after a loss

### Stages of grief

Stage	Possible emotion	Behaviour
1. Accept reality of loss	Shock Denial Sadness Relief	Searching Pining Restlessness Avoidance Preoccupation Confusion Hallucination Disturbed sleep
2. Feel pain of loss	Anger Depression Self-reproach	Withdrawal Anxiety Disorganisation
3. Adjust to new environment	Anger Resentment Fear	Helplessness Challenge
4. Re-invest in new relationships	Hope Guilt	Insecurity

Like most of us I always feel so inadequate in the face of others loss and pain. I was always terrified of the day death would touch those I love but in the past 4 years I have lost 2 sisters- in -law and now my mother. In these losses I have recognized the importance of acknowledging another's loss and pain. I long to have even greater courage in meeting another where they are at because as the Hospice lady said.

**The cry of loss may not expect or want an answer, but only a silent listening. At other times we are called on to show that we are trying to understand even though we have few answers to give and no comfort to take away the pain.**

## In conclusion

The Amber Valley sortie did not go as hoped with only 3 ladies coming. Still thinking about that. The roof wetting has happened, sorry I didn't get my act together to invite you all.

If you have checked out my web site [www.7-summits.co.za](http://www.7-summits.co.za) it was designed by Patricia Stannard, please ask me for her contact details if you are needing help in that arena. Another talented friend, Rheinier du Plooy designed my business card and other marketing material, again please ask me for contact details.

A great book to read is by Lewis Gordon Pugh, Achieving the Impossible. (He's the human polar bear). His journey to finding his purpose is inspiring because although it was always within, he kinda stumbled upon it. Which begs the question of you and me....what's your passion, what's your purpose that just needs uncovering?

Keep well, keep searching, keep growing

**Fiona**