

On Mourning

What is mourning?

You have likely heard people say, “you should mourn if you want to move forward,” but we were never really taught how to mourn, were we?

Mourning is a process, mostly about being with and accepting personal loss . . . about an “unmetness” of something very important to you.

You can also see it as a need in and of itself—one that helps open doors to other needs/longings of yours that want very much to be fulfilled.

Mourning is not something to do, but something you can allow to happen. It is simply to be with the unpleasant feelings/sensations when they come—always in the present moment. It’s not something you can necessarily schedule; it often arrives unexpectedly.

NVC trainer, Yoram Mosenzon, finds that life is just a movement between celebration and mourning . . .

about 50% of the time we spend with unpleasant feelings and 50% with pleasant feelings. “The unpleasant feelings are there to serve life, to call our attention, to bring us closer to ourselves, to take care of precious longings.”

Mourning is the time taken to get used to a new situation and slowly learn that reality is actually much safer than that which is imagined.

Byron Katie says, “Suffering happens when I fight with reality. When I am in reality, there is no suffering.”

So, mourning is the process of getting back to reality when you are lost in thoughts. Think of it as a bridging process—from imagination, story, or interpretation land into reality. This means a conscious effort to *not* believe the “should/shouldn’t” thought as truth, but instead to be with your very real (unmet) longings.

How to mourn

- It can help to have someone who can listen compassionately; OR to write it out (with you or someone else as the later listener)
- Welcome the memory (if there is any, e.g. the moment of action or inaction)
- Welcome the unpleasant feeling/sensation in your body and try to identify it. Give it the message: “Feeling, there is room for you to be here—I give you space,” and breathe.
- Stay in the present moment—keep asking, “how is it now?”
- Be with the “unmetness” of your needs/longings (with a focus on how important these are for you instead of with the “should” or “shouldn’t” thoughts).
- How is it to connect with yourself, your actual longing(s)—can you envision them being met?
- For more understanding, check where might be among the grief stages (Elizabeth Kübler-Ross):

