

Working with loss: Beyond re-membering

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What Makes a Difference?

1. Being heard and having an audience

Things that get in the way of people having an audience:

- Discourses about how they should be responding
- Worry about burdening others, especially others who have losses
- Sensing discomfort or disapproval

What to listen for:

- Whatever people want to say, as many times as they want to say it
- For the effects of the loss
- For what is most troubling
 - Guilt of surviving when others haven't
 - Regrets
 - Lost future and possibility of fulfilling dreams
 - Loss of purpose
 - Experiencing feelings as unbearable or not feeling
 - Worries such as "I'll never see her again"

2. Hope (stories & practices of hope, content of hope can shift)

Things to consider that have led others to hope

- Being in touch with things we most value
- Widening perspectives to be open to other ways of seeing
- Humor
- Allowing commitments & passions to guide us
- Believing that things change & challenges will pass
- Taking a stance of compassion and courage or spirituality
- Trusting ourselves
- Remembering how we have gotten through other difficult times

3. A shift in focus

- To response (from the experience or from loss)
- To what one still has or can do
- Making meaning through small moments rather than whole trajectory
- Re-membering
- Transitioning well
- Beliefs (faith, beliefs about what's important)
- Stories of sustenance
- Life change as a second chance. Doing what is important
- Purpose (doing for next generation or helping others)
- Constructing identity (deciding who to be going through this or reclaiming identity through review)