

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES

Part 2: Understanding Grief and Loss

Grief is nothing new, but it may be new to you. If you have lost someone close to you or had other significant losses in your life, you know grief. But if not, this unsettled longing for how things used to be may be grief.

Webster's Dictionary defines grief as keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss; sharp sorrow; painful regret. If someone you care about passes away, you expect to feel grief. But with COVID school closures and confinement, grief is an unexpected consequence.

How do I feel better?

Good news! You are not alone. Millions of people around the world are experiencing similar feelings now and there are experts to help guide us through grief.

Groundbreaking grief researcher and author, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross outlined what is now referred to as the **"Stages of Grief."**

- 1) Denial
- 2) Anger
- 3) Bargaining
- 4) Depression
- 5) Acceptance

After years of working with terminally ill people, Kübler-Ross found that most people experienced some to all of these stages. Some only felt a couple of stages and many experienced them out of order and/or overlapping.

Grief can evolve. Some days you may feel a sense of acceptance then other days more anger or sadness – especially if you get new bad news or experience another setback.

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle



As discussed in previous lessons, recognizing what emotion you are feeling and why is an important first step. As researcher Dan Siegel and others say, **"You have to name it to tame it."**

Once you identify the emotion (frustration, disappointment, or something else), make peace with it. It is OK to not be OK. It is OK to be angry or sad or feel lost. Part of accepting the situation is accepting the emotions that come with it.

Then, with greater awareness, consider how you can learn and grow from this experience. Kübler-Ross later worked with David Kessler and agreed to add a sixth stage: **meaning**.

In a stage of meaning-making you look for a sense of purpose. *What good might come out of a bad situation?* For instance, some cancer survivors have gone on to help and counsel other cancer patients.

You may not see a sense of meaning yet. That's OK. Sometimes it takes years to find meaning, but sometimes the process of looking for meaning can help you be grateful for what you had and/or what you hope to have in the future.

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES

Part 2: Understanding Grief and Loss

What do you think? Which of the Six Stages of Grief can you relate to? Rank order them with #1 being the one you feel most often to #6 the one you feel least. For each stage, give an example of how or why you feel/felt that. If you have not felt that stage, write "NA" for "not applicable."

Rank Order (#1 = feel most #6 = feel least)	Stages of Grief	How/why/when have you felt this stage? Give examples.
	Denial – "COVID won't affect me."	
	Anger – "I'm so mad about _____."	
	Bargaining – "If I just stay home for two weeks everything will get better."	
	Depression – "I'm so sad about _____."	
	Acceptance – "OK. We will get through this. I will wash my hands and avoid contact with others."	
	Meaning – "During this time, I can help others and develop new skills and deeper relationships with my family."	

Read the article: "That Discomfort You're Feeling Is Grief" by Scott Berinato (<https://hbr.org/2020/03/that-discomfort-youre-feeling-is-grief>)

What have you learned? Based on the video with Mr. Matheny and the article by Scott Berinato, write three strategies you have learned about how to cope with grief:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)