

WORKBOOK FOR
FROM HEARTBREAK TO HOPE...
COPING WITH LIFE ALONE

A Beginning Experience International Ministry, Inc. program for those who have
experienced the loss of a marital relationship

Session 3: Coping with Grief

In this session, we will learn that grief is a normal reaction to loss. Each of us is here because we have experienced the loss of a marital relationship.

Purpose:

To help you identify, understand, and cope with your feelings as you adjust to being single again:

1. Understand the grieving process.
2. Deal with memories, both joyous and painful.
3. Work through the loss by going through the stages of grief.

The Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle

The grief cycle is a roller-coaster of emotions, some active and some passive, as the person struggles to deal with his or her grief. Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her book, *On Death and Dying* (1969), explains the emotional stages a person goes through as he or she struggles to accept the change to reach stability. A person does not go through the grief cycle in an orderly manner. Each of these stages may be experienced many times and in any order. This experience is normal.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, On Death and Dying, Macmillan, NY, 1969.



Session 3 Prayer Service: Coping with Grief

LEADER: God of love, help me to be strengthened by your love. Help me to be aware of my image—my love, my loss and my grief. Help me to overcome my feelings of denial, anger, bargaining and depression. Help me to be open to the gift of acceptance, to accept my life situation and myself with the good and holy as well as the negative. Help me to accept all that makes me who I am.

ALL: Amen.

SIDE I: Because of your love for me, I know that you will take the circumstances of my life and use them in a constructive way for my growth.

SIDE II: Because of your love for me, I know that you will not keep score of my faults and mistakes, and use them against me.

SIDE I: Your love is deep and lasting; you continue working patiently with me even when I am overcome with anger and depression.

SIDE II: When denial and bargaining seem to have drained all hope from my life, you are there with your everlasting love to give me new life.

SIDE I: I love you, God, because you never say there is no hope, even when I have given up.

SIDE II: You are constant in your love. You stand with me when I am feeling abandoned, when I am feeling empty. You are there at my side to encourage me when my grief seems more than I can cope with.

ALL: Thank you God, for the greatest of all gifts, your perfect love.

READING: 1 Corinthians 13: 4 - 8

SILENT REFLECTION

LEADER: God of us all, help us to accept your love and your word. Your word and your love are the base on which we build positive feelings about ourselves. Help us to deal and cope with our grief; help us to be positive in our words and actions so to reflect your love, and to know that we can be and are lovable and whole persons. We ask this in your name.

ALL: Amen.







Session 3 Points to Remember: Coping with Grief

1. It is important to utilize memories (good and bad) in the healing process.
2. Loss manifests itself in various ways:
 - Feelings of helplessness, pessimism, numbness, and worthlessness may be symptoms of loss.
 - Experiencing a loss may affect concentration, hope, energy, and motivation.
 - Changes in appetite, sleep patterns and sex drive are often affected by loss.
 - A tendency to be tired, error-prone, and slower in speech and movement may occur after experiencing loss.
 - Positive feelings such as relief, hope for the future, and peacefulness are possible as well.
3. The stages of grief may be experienced in any order:

Denial:

- Denial is being unable to accept what is happening.
- We feel that “This cannot be happening to me.”
- We subconsciously or consciously look for our former spouse in familiar places.
- We pretend our spouse is just away on another business trip, working, or with friends.

Anger:

- Anger may be expressed in our thoughts, emotions, and behavior.
- We wonder, “Why me? How could he or she leave me with all this responsibility?”
- We want to fight back or get even with God, people around us, children, relatives, our former spouses and/or even ourselves.

Bargaining:

- Bargaining often takes place before the loss.
- We attempt to make a deal with God: “If only you will make him/her well again, I’ll go to church more often.”
- We tell the former spouse such things as: “I’ll change if you come back,” or “I’ll keep the house in order, if you’ll just come home,” or “I’ll be better in bed, if you come back to me.”

Depression:

- Feelings of hopelessness, frustration, bitterness, and self-pity are symptoms of depression.
- We face the loss of hopes, dreams, and plans for the future.



- We feel a lack of control in the situation; we believe nothings we do will change anything. We feel as if everything in life is falling apart.

Acceptance:

- There's a difference between resignation and acceptance.
- Recognizing the reality of our new state in life is part of acceptance.
- As we accept the pain of our loss, we recognize that some good has come out of it.
- Goals focus on personal growth.

4. You will survive:

- Feeling pain after a loss is normal; it's proof that you are alive.
- Be open to change; don't fight it.
- Keep in mind that things will improve; you will feel better in time.

*What soap is for the body, tears are for the soul.
– Jewish Proverb*

