

SPARK 139

(Matrix Code: **SPARK139.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: Grief is not an emotion; it is the appropriate and necessary participation in a change process.

NOTES: Imagine thinking that sadness is a *bad* feeling. Imagine thinking that feeling sad about something indicates there is something wrong with you, perhaps requiring therapy or drugs to make it go away so you feel good again (numb again). Two things might arise from this kind of thinking.

First, you might need to keep your numbness level high enough to avoid feeling your sadness. Perhaps you found how to raise your numbness bar through overreacting, overwhelm, overworking, overeating, overspending, overexercising, overspeeding, overresenting, overwatching TV, overdrinking... I think you know the routine.

Second, if feeling sad is repressed, you block yourself from participating in change. You stay stuck. Why is this? Because in every change process, something new replaces something familiar. Sadness is part of the feelings-body experience of losing something familiar. If you do not grieve deeply enough to hit bottom, the maximum depth of sadness, you don't birth your new life. You don't have a bottom to push off of so as to initiate life in the change.

If for most of your life it has not been okay to feel sad, if you have been afraid to activate sadness to 100 % so it is available to you on a daily basis, if your sadness is not heard and understood by the people around you, then you are blocked from changing. You are blocked from growing up, letting go the old, changing your mind, changing direction, starting over, discovering new options, and making creative choices about your life.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, the Swiss-born pioneer of near-death studies, developed a five-stage model that maps human participation in change. In Possibility Management we extend her thoughtmap to include the four feelings plus Gremlin in the following way.

FIVE STAGES OF EXPERIENCING CHANGE

Stage 1. FEAR (what Elisabeth named *Denial*, shock, trying to avoid the change)

Stage 2. ANGER (outrage that what worked before no longer works, game over)

Stage 3. GREMLIN (what Elisabeth called *Bargaining*, trying to escape, find a clever way out of it, make a special deal)

Stage 4. SADNESS (what Elisabeth named *Depression*, the inescapable loss of the familiar)

Stage 5. JOY (what Elisabeth called *Acceptance*, taking responsible action in the new situation)

These five stages of change may continue for two or more years in the case of the death of a loved one, or three minutes in the case of the Post Office being closed, or a restaurant not having what you want for lunch:

1. (Fear) No! You can't be out of Broccoli Quiche! It's the Wednesday Special!
2. (Anger) I came all the way here especially for the Broccoli Quiche! I don't want anything else! You have deceived me!
3. (Gremlin) Perhaps I could find leftovers from last week in your fridge?
4. (Sadness) Oh, man. Now what am I going to do? My lunch plan is destroyed.
5. (Joy) Hmmm. Could you please bring me a Caesar Salad?

As Elisabeth often reminded us, it helps to recognize that the flow of change-stages is not a linear process. Stages may not necessarily occur in numerical order, and they may come around more often than once, at various levels of intensity and lengths of time throughout the changing. A change process completes through objectively *accepting what is*, in other words, through you becoming unconsciously competent in your new circumstances.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK139.01 Part One of this experiment is you going through the *Five Stages of Change* with regards to the change of making it okay to feel sadness. Get with your Possibility Team or privately with a friend and begin the five stages together, filling in your own experiences, something like this:

Stage 1. (Fear) No! Not true! Sadness is okay to feel? Can't be! Sadness is proper and useful? This is impossible!

Stage 2. (Anger) I hate sadness. It hurts. They always told me to stop crying. This means my father is wrong! The school system is wrong! Work is wrong!

Stage 3. (Gremlin) Maybe I am not ready to read this SPARK today. Maybe Callahan is wrong. Perhaps I should come back to this at a later time...

Stage 4. (Sadness) Oh, my. I have too many things to be sad about. It's too much for me. I'm too old already. It's too late...

Stage 5. (Joy) It is so good to be free to experience and express conscious sadness. It is fulfilling to have my friends repeat back what they hear me say. My grieving can complete itself and I can fully step into my new life.

These five stages accompany life changes. For many years you may have been stuck at a change in your life without even knowing it. My mother, for example, was in some ways stuck at 13 years old, because she never grieved the loss of her father, killed during WWII in the Martial Islands by a Japanese sniper in a palm tree.

SPARK139.02 Part Two of this experiment is to catch up with all the grieving you have blocked by thinking that sadness was bad, to grieve in earnest. Again, get with your Possibility Team or a friend, and listen to each other as you complete the following stories one at a time, letting your sadness lovingly flow:

I am ready to grieve my beloved pet who died (let your heart speak).

I felt so sad having to move and lose all my friends (let your sadness tell the story).

I never grieved leaving behind my brothers and sisters when I left home, or when they left me.

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I am ready to grieve leaving my parents.
I grieve my special friend leaving me. I grieve my part in causing the break-up.
I never admitted my grief when learning that the world is not as I had hoped.
I grieve each little part of me that dies every time I take a step towards growing up.
I sadly grieve the wars, the raped women, the starving children, the damaged Earth.
I grieve that the show I put on for so long has not succeeded in authentic living.
I grieve so many misunderstandings.
I grieve my arrogance.
I grieve my harshness, gripping on to what I cannot control.
I grieve not yet being who I came here to be.

Thank you for letting the tears wash away what is no more, and letting the changes finally happen in your four bodies,