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Navigating the Exhaustion of Grief: Practical Approaches to Renewal

Overview

- Introduction
- Understanding the Grieving Process
- Grief and Exhaustion
- Practical Coping Mechanisms
- Self-Care and Soul Care
- Interactive Activity
- Conclusion

Elisabeth Elliot

Who of us in the worst pit that we've ever been in needs anything as much as we need company?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 NIV

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Introduction

- Who am I?
- What is my story?
- What is this workshop about?





Each year over 50,000 children die in the United States alone, leaving behind Bereaved Parents, Siblings, loved ones and friends.

Understanding the Grieving Process

- Grief Defined
- Individual Experience
- Common Responses
- Stages of Grief
- Myths vs Facts
- Grief and the Bible

Understanding the Grieving Process

What is Grief?

- 1828 Noah Webster – the pain of mind, produced by loss, misfortune, injury, or evils of any kind: sorrow; regret.
- Erich Lindemann – defined grief as a specific condition with both emotional and physical symptoms.
- Dr. George Engel – defined grief as a character response to the loss of a valued object.

Understanding the Grieving Process

What is Grief? (From Can You Just Sit With Me?)

"Grief is a normal yet complex and innate human experience that stems from an undesirable event, affecting not only our mental and physical well-being but also our spirit and overall quality of life. Each individual expresses grief in unique and personal ways, making it a multi-dimensional phenomenon." p.21

Understanding the Grieving Process



Individual Experience:

- No two people will grieve the same.
- Grief is as individual as our thumb print.
- Even when we experience the same loss, our grief responses are different, which is so important to note for bereaved parents and siblings.

Understanding the Grieving Process

Common Grief Responses:

- Anger, guilt, helplessness,
- Sadness, shock, numbing,
- Yearning, jealousy, self-blame,
- A sense of relief, or even a feeling of emancipation,
- A feeling of depersonalization, a sense of disbelief, and
- Confusion, or inability to concentrate or focus



Can You Just Sit With Me?

> *"Grieving can feel awkward because it goes against social norms, what you may have been taught, or what you may have seen modeled. You may feel awkward and nervous to lean into your grief, not knowing where your emotions may lead. But God, who created you, fully knows who you are, and He knows how to handle all of you, including your emotions." – Can You Just Sit With Me?, Ch 3*

Understanding the Grieving Process

Surprising symptoms via grief community:

- Shock/denial the first time, Anger the 2nd.
- Utter disbelief for the 1st 3 months
- Impact on my body – someone said it felt like I got hit by a bus, sore for the 1st five years
  - This reminds me about how the body does keep score and we have to release these emotions…
- Regret/guilt



Understanding the Grieving Process



Surprising Symptoms via grief community:

- Definitely anger and the second year is harder than the first
- Panic attacks/anxiety
- Jealousy towards those who still have their loved ones
- Fear
- Emptiness
- Brain fog

Understanding the Grieving Process



How does grief behave? Grief is often unpredictable:

- Prayer and reading your bible may feel hard.
- Being around others may even feel hard.
- You may feel alone.
- You may feel abandoned.
- You may have a lot of questions.
- You may be angry with God and others.
- You may have grief brain. Brain fog.

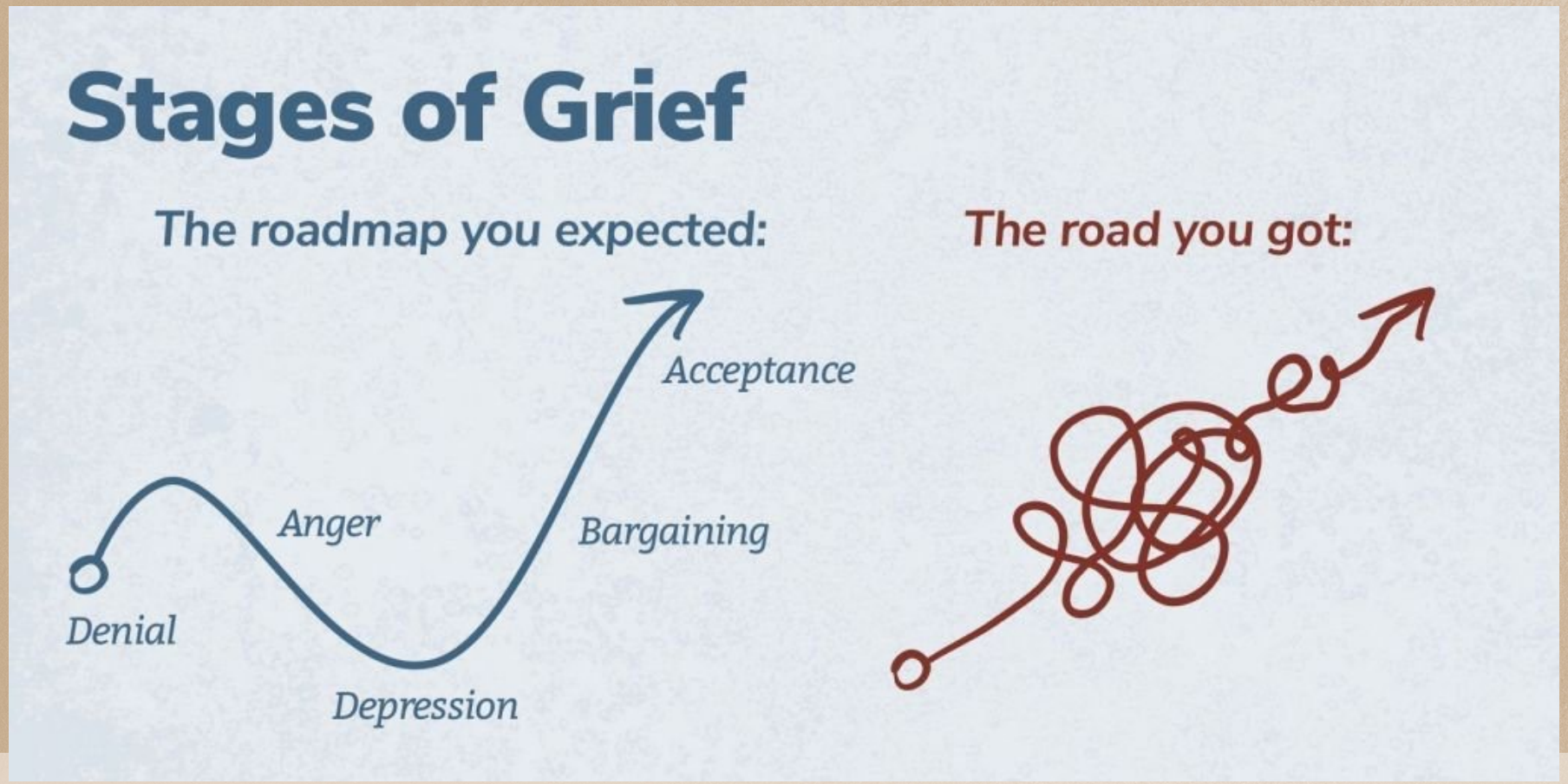
Understanding the Grieving Process

5 Stages of Grief - Most well-known grief model.

It was developed by Swiss-American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

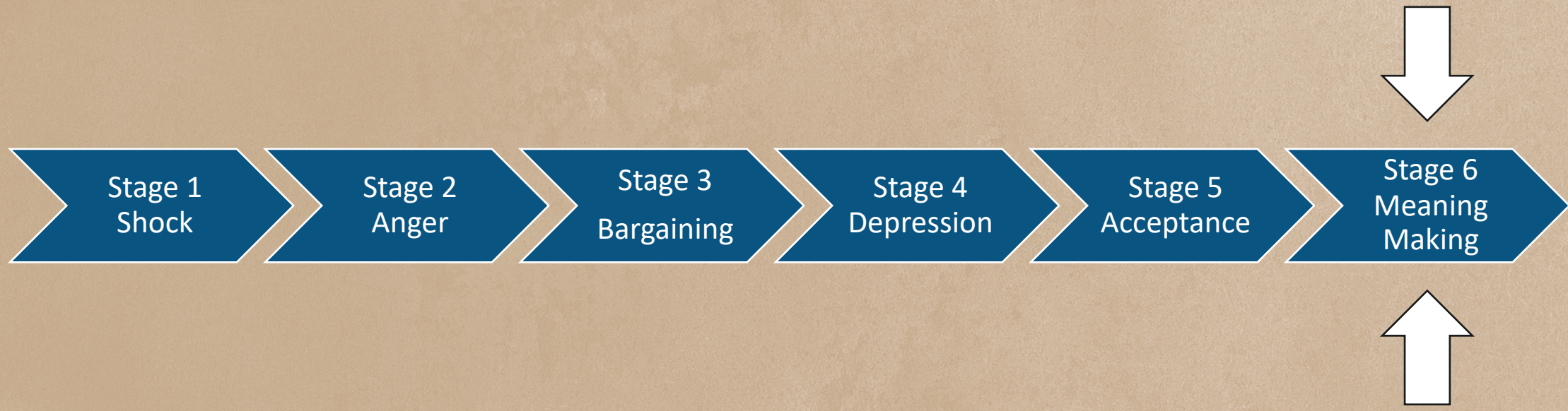


Understanding the Grieving Process



Understanding the Grieving Process

6th Stage of Grief – Coined by world renown grief expert David Kessler



Understanding the Grieving Process

Myth	Fact
Everyone grieves in stages.	Grief doesn't follow the rules.
Grief and mourning are the same.	Grief can produce many behaviors; mourning is one of them.
Women cry more than men.	All people grieve differently.
Ignoring your pain will help it go away.	Ignoring your pain is a temporary solution at best.
The first year is the hardest	Grief is hard period.

Table 1.1 Myths vs. facts about grief
Can You Just Sit With Me, p.25

Understanding the Grieving Process

Grief and the Bible:

- We are made in the image of God, we have a great capacity for emotion.
- Jesus wept (John 11:35)
  - Over his friend Lazarus
  - Over his cousin John the Baptist
  - Over his assignment



Understanding the Grieving Process

What did Jesus do? The WWJD of Grief:

- Jesus made space for grief.
- Jesus showed emotion.
- Jesus asked questions.
- Jesus prayed.
- Jesus trusted God.



Understanding the Grieving Process

Permission to grieve (Mourner's Bill of Rights):

- You have the right to experience your own unique grief.
- You have the right to talk about your grief.
- You have the right to experience "grief bursts".
- You have the right to search for meaning.
- You have the right to treasure your memories.



How long can I expect grief to last?

This is also different for everyone.

- Grief is a journey. A marathon, not a sprint.
- Time doesn't heal all things.
- Give yourself grace.
- Move at your own pace.
- As, Christ-followers, we have hope that grief does end.

Revelation 21:4 NIV

“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

Grief and Exhaustion

Emotional Toll



Physical Impact



Spiritual Impact



Isaiah 40:31 NIV

“[b]ut those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Grief and Exhaustion



Emotional Toll

- Mental fatigue/fog
- Racing thoughts
- Rumination
- Sleep Disruptions

Grief and Exhaustion

Physical Impact

- Body aches
- Headache
- Joint/muscle pain
- Digestion Issues



Grief and Exhaustion



Spiritual Impact

- Crisis of faith
- Decreased spiritual engagement
- Struggle to find meaning
- Reduced sense of hope

Practical Coping Mechanisms

Mind



Body



Spirit



Practical Coping Mechanisms

For the mind:

- Journaling
- Engaging in a hobby
- Practicing mindfulness
- Talking it out with a safe person, community, or therapist/counselor



Practical Coping Mechanisms



For the body

- Regular Sleep Schedule
- Balanced Nutrition
- Hydration
- Light Exercise
- Rest and Relaxation

Practical Coping Mechanisms

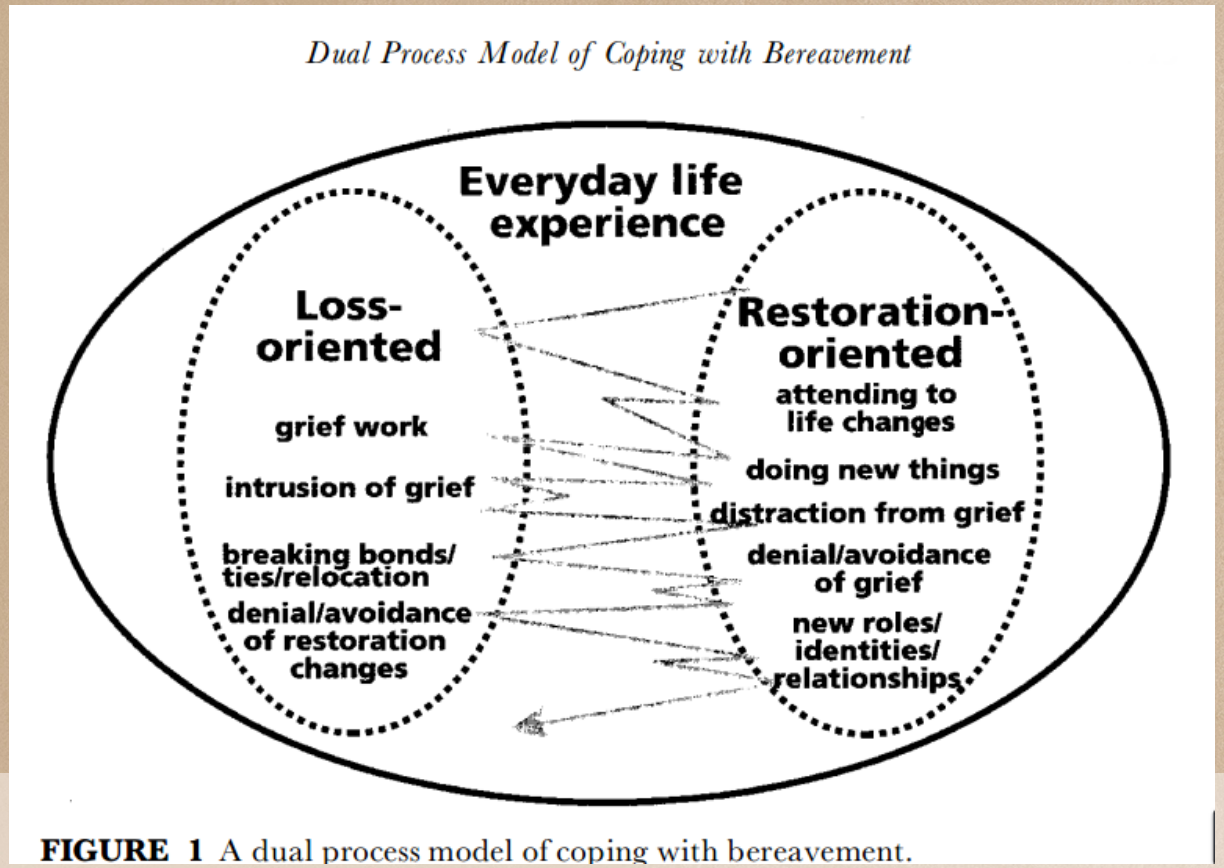
For the spirit:

- Reading the Bible
- Prayer and meditation
- Worship
- Fellowship with other Believers



Practical Coping Mechanisms

Dual Process Model of Grief



Jeremiah 31:25 NIV

> *“I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint.”*

Self-Care and Soul-Care

Self Care



Soul Care



Self Care and Soul Care

What is self-care?

Self-care is intentionally taking actions to nurture and maintain your physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

Self Care and Soul Care



Self Care

- Identify Needs
- Learn to Say No
- Self-Care Routine
- Time Management
- Support System

Self Care and Soul Care

What is Soul Care?

Soul care is the intentional nurturing of your inner life, encompassing spiritual, emotional, and existential dimensions to promote overall well-being and growth.

Self Care and Soul Care

Soul Care:

- Practice gratitude
- Engage in spiritual practices like Lament
- Individual/Corporate Worship

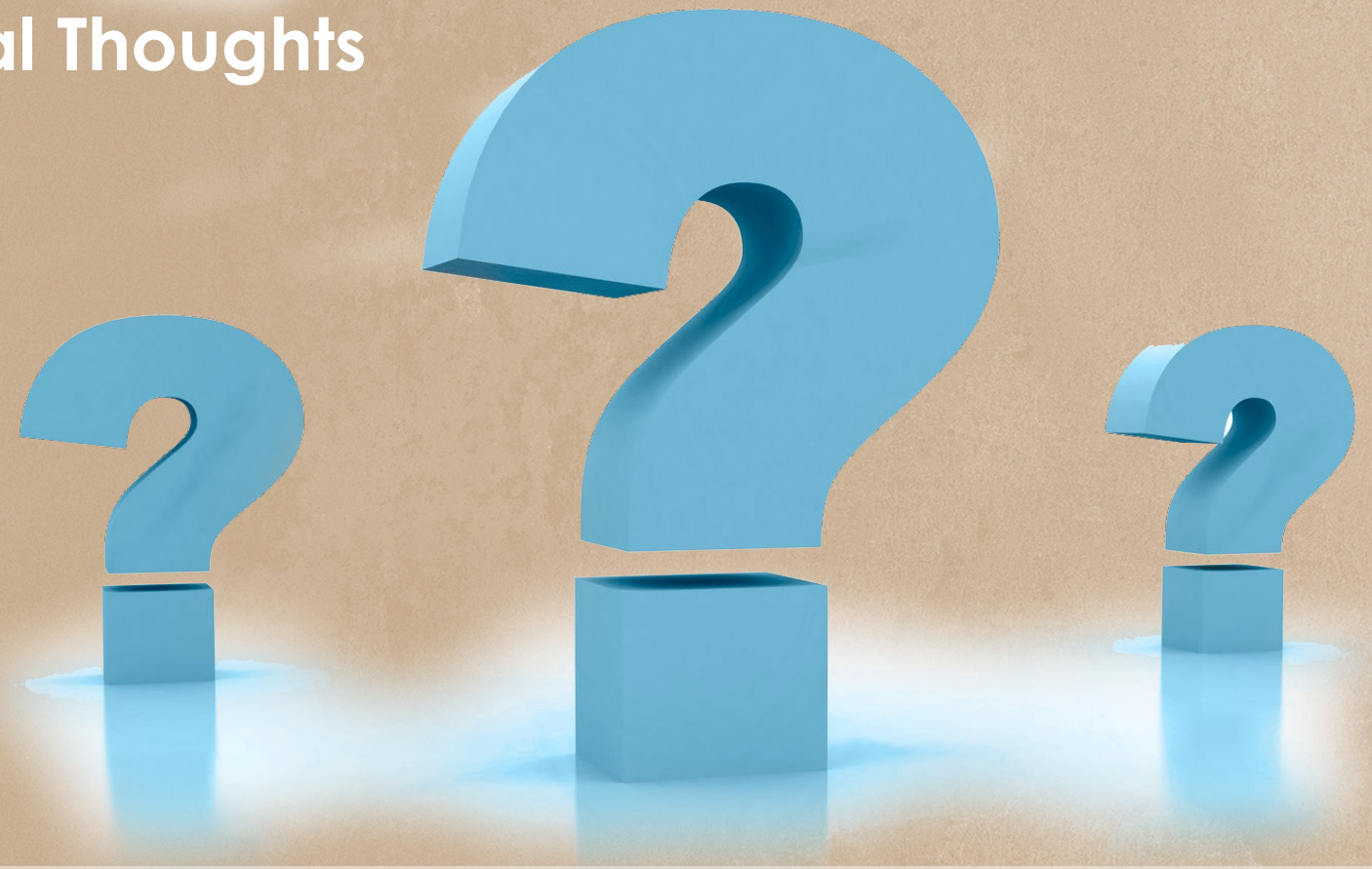


Interactive Activity

Mindfulness Exercise

Conclusion

Q&A/Final Thoughts



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