



LOST DREAMS

HIDDEN LOSSES AND OUR RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19

THE SITUATION

With COVID-19, our worlds collapsed into the most complicated transition stage of all...the transit stage.

WHAT TO REMEMBER

Ironically, with or without formal understanding of the process, those living with global mobility have usually developed useful skills to help them in their many transitions. Using lessons learned from those times can help us now.

THE RESULT

Unfortunately, for the most part we skipped the critical leaving stage. Because we had no awareness this change was coming, we had no time to prepare including:

- *No time to say proper 'thank you's' to significant people*
- *No time to say proper farewells to family/friendly/co-workers*
- *No time to visit our favorite place one last time*
- *No time to collect our 'sacred objects'*
- *No time to prepare for the future*

APPLY LESSONS FROM 'NORMAL TRANSITION'

FIRST, RECOGNIZE THE ENORMITY OF THIS TRANSITION

- *Normal transitions include loss as well as gain. LOSSES NEED TO BE MOURNED TO PROCEED INTO THE NEXT STAGE WELL. THAT'S WHY FAREWELLS ARE IMPORTANT. BUT THE MULTIPLICITY OF LOSSES CAUSED BY RAPIDITY AND UNEXPECTEDNESS OF COVID-19 HAS COMPLICATED THAT PROCESS.*

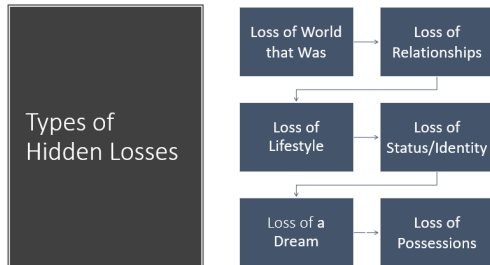
SECOND, RECOGNIZE FOUR COMMON OBSTACLES TO PROCESSING LOSS HEALTHFULLY.

- *Lack of awareness --Losses are often hidden OR 'Ambiguous'.E.G.*
 - *LOSS OF OUR WORLD*
 - *LOSS OF OUR IDENTITY/STATUS*
 - *LOSS OF OUR DREAMS*
- *LACK OF PERMISSION TO GRIEVE*
 - *Loss is discounted, denied, or compared OTHERS*
- *LACK OF TIME TO PROCESS*
- *Lack of comfort*
 - *Remember comfort must come before encouragement!*

HOW DO WE BEGIN TO MOURN WELL SO WE CAN MOVE ON WELL?

Name our losses – overt and hidden

1. Look at this list and write down particular losses that may relate to any/all of these.



2. Consider specifically what you lost in each situation besides the overt loss.

3. In particular, what were the dreams you had that COVID-19 has at least interrupted?

Give yourself permission to feel the sadness when it comes.

- Don't rationalize your loss away by comparison to others or shame that you 'should' be tougher. This is your loss despite what others have experienced and can be acknowledged for what it is.
- Recognize 'normal' stages of 'normal' grief – denial, anger bargaining, sadness, and acceptance. It is helpful if you can name your feelings and where you are in the transition/grief cycle to give yourself permission to experience whatever you are.

Give yourself and others time

- Remember we all go through mourning at a different rate and process. Particularly in a family, it is tempting to want 'one speed fits all'. Give yourself and others time even though you also believe that one day it will be better, even if today is hard.

Comfort others and allow yourself to be comforted

- Often in our attempts to console our children, friends, or ourselves, we offer encouragement for all the good that will be ahead but we forget to simply comfort for the loss that is. Encouragement is important, but comfort validates our feelings so we *can* go ahead one day.

The graphic is titled "Strategies for Moving Ahead" and is presented as a vertical list of four rounded rectangular boxes. The first box is orange and contains the text "What still gives your life meaning?". The second box is light blue and contains the text "Re-consider previous goals: do they need tweaking?". The third box is light green and contains the text "Look for new ways to recreate the lost dream.". The fourth box is light purple and contains the text "When you can't do everything, do the one thing you can".

NEW 'ENTERING' AFTER COVID-19 DISRUPTION

Go through each of these suggestions and write down your thoughts.

And when you finish, see what action you can take today to do that one thing possible, even when other things still aren't!

And don't forget the advice Ruth's dad gave her years ago:

"Wherever you go, **unpack your bags and plant your trees**. If you aren't there long enough to eat the fruit, someone else will and they'll be glad you did!"