

Grief Therapy: Healing by Deepening Connection

Part 4:

Rapid Resolution Therapy: A New Take on The Mind and Grief

I use a combination of therapeutic techniques to help people heal depression, anxiety, trauma, and grief. Two of the main modalities I use are EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) and RRT (Rapid Resolution Therapy). Both of these counseling approaches help the brain out of our conscious awareness and control to process information and emotions in a much more productive and healthy way. If you change how the brain processes information then emotions and behaviors follow. Here is a perspective on how these therapies explain and heal grief.

One way of considering grief is that grief is the result of distortions and how our brain is processing information instead of due to the loss of loved ones. If two people love a person equally who has just passed, but one person is in deep despair while the other person is free of grief then it suggests to me that it has to do with how their minds are reading and processing that information differently. Given the choice between the two, I believe that most people would choose the second. The first person in the scenario is suffering, is likely depressed, and feels disconnected from the deceased person, while the second is likely feeling more connected, more productive and connected in their everyday life, and in a place to support and uplift people. It is my goal to get people to the second position as quickly as possible by helping their minds process what has been occurring in a healthier manner.

The significant distortion involves the mind's attempt to prompt an action aimed at establishing a connection with the deceased person or rectifying past wrongdoings. This persistent urge toward reconnection proves futile as it operates in a manner that doesn't yield the desired outcome, thereby causing emotional pain. It's essential to recognize that the mind's intent is not to make one feel bad but to instigate a specific action (i.e. to reconnect with the loved one). Some individuals may mistakenly believe that their grief fosters a connection with a loved one when, in reality, the pain and depression from grief hinders this connection by associating thoughts of the beloved person with emotional distress. One aspect of my approach involves facilitating the experience of genuine connection.

Our human minds possess a higher level of sophistication compared to other life forms. Consider the ability to think about the future or the past, write a book, or even regret - arguably no other life form has these experiences because their minds process information differently than humans. The human mind can be conceptualized as having an advanced

component situated atop a more primitive one. In some ways this Advanced component is an upgrade that in others it is the source of our suffering. It's kind of like putting Tesla components on a Model T Ford. In some ways it will be an improvement in other ways the system will break down at times. My goal as a therapist is to get both aspects of mind functioning effectively and congruently with one another.

While the terms conscious and unconscious are frequently employed to delineate the dual facets of the mind, individuals commonly use the term "I" to refer to the more advanced component with which they closely identify. The remaining part of the mind is often labeled as "self." It's a commonplace occurrence to hear people express sentiments like, "I need to find a way to stop myself from thinking about these things/feeling this way/doing these actions." This distinctive differentiation between "I" and "self" is absent in other life forms. I'm pretty sure that no other animal has thought I wish I could myself from stop thinking about that or that I Am My Own Worst Enemy. I'm pretty sure that no other species suffers this way.

The primitive/unconscious mind serves as the information-processing center within us, inherently committed to survival. To ensure survival, it orchestrates internal processes like circulation and digestion. As the mind evolved, it couldn't entirely abandon these primitive concerns, leading to the construction of a more advanced section atop the foundational component. These two components of the mind perceive things differently. The primitive mind often times creates Bodily Sensations that we call feelings in order to driver behavior that promotes the survival of the organism. This part of the mind doesn't care if we feel good or bad necessarily as much as trying to drive our behavior in a manner that keeps us alive.

It's "normal" for an individual to hold conscious ideas about how they should ideally feel, think, and act. However, the conscious mind, commonly referred to as "I," relies on the unconscious mind, termed "self," to execute these intentions. Unfortunately, the conscious mind is often not equipped with the knowledge of how to influence or control the rest of the mind and in turn the body's feelings and emotions. Consequently, people may express sentiments such as "I wish I could control myself" or "I need to find ways to discipline myself." It's a widely acknowledged sentiment that individuals are often their own worst enemies, a concept not applicable to other life forms. The conscious mind lacks the know-how to regulate or impact the unconscious, which is responsible for controlling emotions, thoughts, and most behaviors.

Consciously, humans can conceive of and wish for things that may seem impossible. Unlike other life forms, humans have the unique ability to desire the unattainable and imagine the impossible while the primitive mind gets confused by this imagining and tries

to get the body to do the impossible (i.e. changing the past). For instance, wolves don't yearn to fly and catch birds. When humans wish for something, even if they consciously recognize its impossibility, the unconscious presumes it is possible simply because it is wished for. This confusion results in most of our dysfunctional emotions. For instance, regret is the conscious mind thinking "I Wish I could unbake that cake" and the primitive mind tries to get the body to actually unbake the cake using emotions (regret) to drive behavior that can't be done. You can see how this would be futile and a real waste of emotion and energy. But, most of us do this quite regularly on a daily basis.

The unconscious mind plays a pivotal role in generating emotions, thoughts, and most behaviors. It orchestrates these aspects to prompt actions and bring about desired outcomes. Following the passing of a loved one, it is common for an individual to wish for their presence and connection. Similarly, they might wish they had behaved differently in past interactions. The unconscious mind, upon recognizing these wishes, operates under the presumption that these desires are attainable and endeavors to prompt actions that could make them a reality. The primitive part of the mind trying to drive the individual to create a physical connection with the loved one without success results in the primitive mind creating negative feelings in the body repetitively causing the pain of grief in order to accomplish them possible. This, in short, it's the main cause of all of our suffering.

In the next section, I will address therapeutic approaches for helping to resolve this dysfunction of the mind and grief.

[Click here for part 5 of the series on Grief](#)

David Cummins is a therapist working in Boise Idaho and owns North End Wellness and Counseling, employing over 15 counselors, with offices in Boise Idaho and Meridian Idaho. Many of the ideas in this series have come from studying for years under Dr. Jon Connelly and his book Grief is not Sacred. I suggest getting the book for a better understanding of these concepts.