

Chapter 4: The Model of Healing

You are committed to your healing. You know you want to learn how to work with your grief, to start to feel better and to ultimately claim your own healing. But the path may not be clear. In fact, grief feels messy, and erratic. Because of grief's unpredictable nature, you may feel a lack of confidence in yourself to move forward. One day you feel surprisingly good. You feel like you're getting better and that maybe there's better days ahead despite the pain that you've experienced. Then the next day comes, and you're triggered by a familiar scene or smell, and you drop into questioning again if it's possible to heal. The challenge is to hold onto hope despite daily trials.

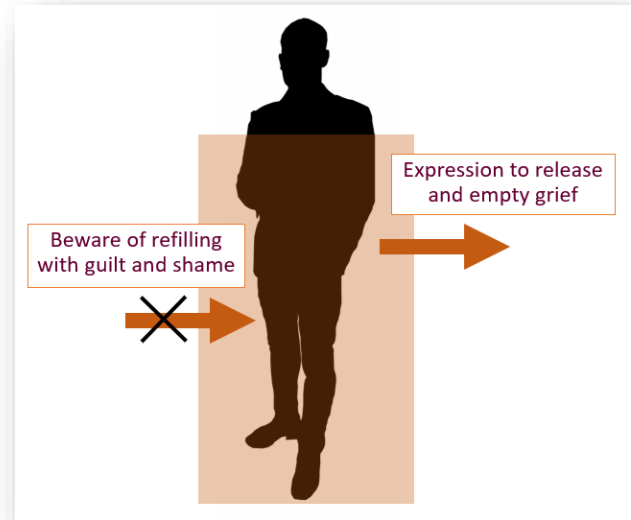
I invite you to consider that these moments of unexpected mourning are there to invite you to release a little more pain. Think of a full tub of dirty bath water. To drain the water from the tub, you must unplug the drain. If you plug the tub while it's draining it will stop draining and the remaining dirty water will stay in the tub until you unplug it again.

Your grief fills the container of your being. It stresses the limits of your emotional capacity. Each time you express your grief you are releasing the valve and allowing the grief to move through you and freeing some of the pain.

Your mourning has purpose despite how painful it may feel. Remind yourself that you are releasing the heavy emotions. Visualize those emotions moving through your being and out, allowing the feelings to dissipate into the air. You are emptying the painful emotions.

When you express or allow yourself to feel your grief, imagine that you are pulling the plug of your grief container and emptying it a little at a time. Expressing your grief in healthy ways may include, writing about your feelings and thoughts, crying, or talking to a friend about your experience. Allowing yourself to feel your grief includes allowing the painful waves and the feelings without judging your experience.

Be aware that when you feel bad about expressing your grief, you may be releasing some of the pain of grief but then filling the container back up with guilt or shame or judgment. For example, some people feel bad about crying in public or they may feel like sharing their grief with someone is too heavy. Instead, of feeling bad about having normal human emotions, they can remember that their feelings are valid and that their expression is valid. If you tend to feel



guilt or shame for voicing your grief, try to remember that grief is a season and that being honest about your current condition is healthy. It doesn't mean that's who you are or how you'll always feel. Grief is a chronic yet temporary condition.

Pretending that you are doing better than you are is even more draining than allowing the feelings and can cause you more pain than owning up to your current experience.

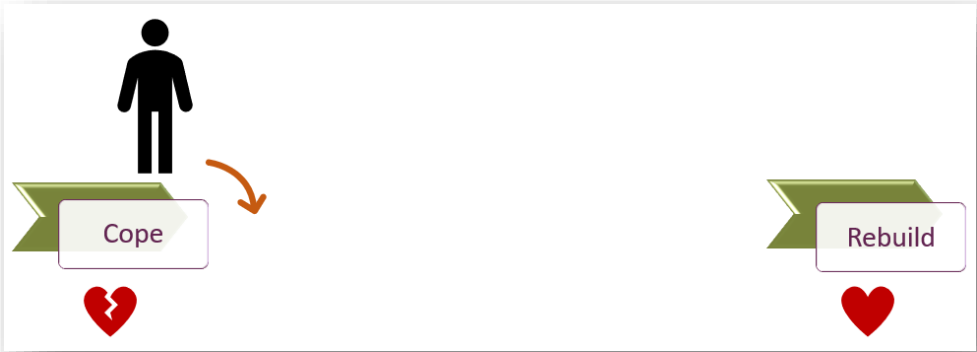
Questions to Consider

- What thoughts do you have about expressing your grief?

- When you have expressed your grief, what has worked and what hasn't?

Missing Pieces

In the early days of grief all you may want to do is focus on surviving. Breathing in and breathing out. As illustrated earlier, our mind and heart are consumed with the loss and grieving. There just isn't room for anything else. Over time, you naturally start to adjust to the changes. And yet, you find yourself still squarely in grief, but starting to consider what you want to do next.



You know you want to heal but you don't know where the path is. That's when you realize that you don't know the way. There doesn't appear to be a path to healing your grief so stepping forward feels like you're falling further into the abyss. The steppingstones to get from coping to rebuilding are missing.

The Hope Model of Healing offers the way from coping to rebuilding. Each element in the model is a step which creates a path and a foundation for healing your grief.

Hope Model of Healing

- **H**onor Your Grief
- **O**pen to Understanding
- **P**repare through Discovery
- **E**mbrace Resolution and Rebuilding

HOPE offers a pathway to healing and leads to transformation

The Hope Model of Healing

I've spent the past 20 plus years discovering and refining what causes our pain and grief, how to allow our grief to heal us and what effort is required of us to claim healing. There are five Foundations of Growth necessary to move through grief, release the pain and move toward healing which then leads to more purpose and joy in our life.



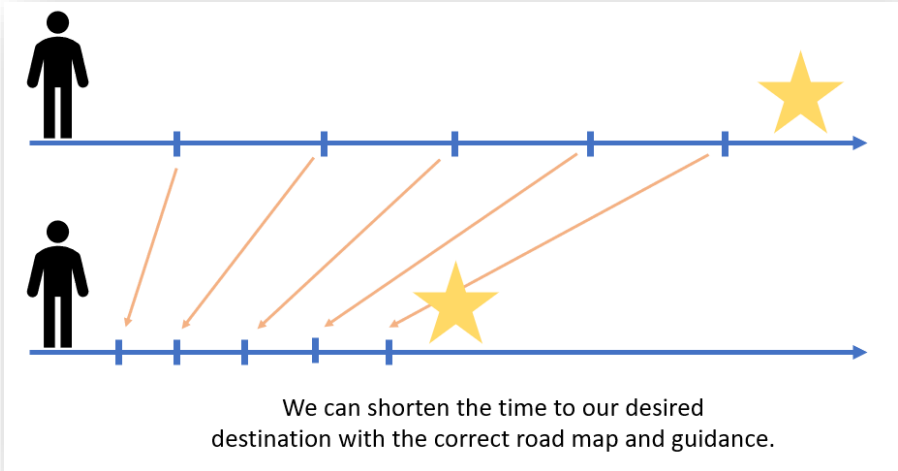
After loss, life can feel shattered and unrecognizable. As you learn and apply these principles you will see how the elements fit together to guide you from grief to hope to rebuilding your life. Without the elements of effective coping, understanding your grief, discovering the underlying pain, and resolving that pain, you will find that your loss experiences will continue to be a drag on your energy for much longer than is necessary. Even though grief is our normal reaction to loss, it does not mean that it must last a lifetime.

The premise of the Build a Life After Loss Personal Plan of Healing After Loss is that grief is normal, and with time, effort and skilled support, feelings of grief can be healed when correct understanding and principles are applied.

Questions to Consider

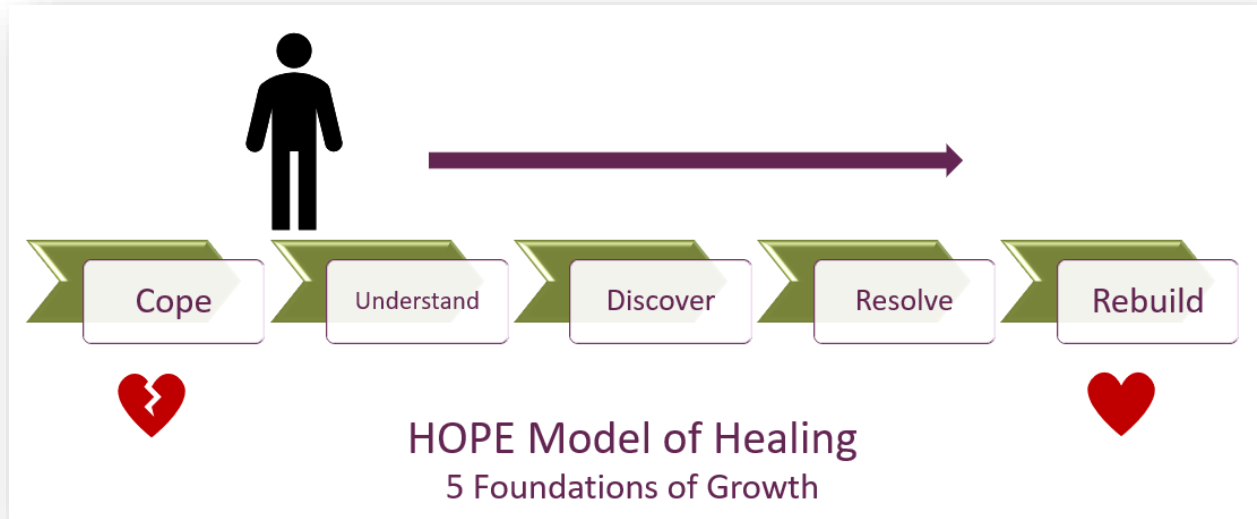
- In what ways have you felt the void of the missing path to healing?

- What has helped you and your grief so far? And what just isn't working?

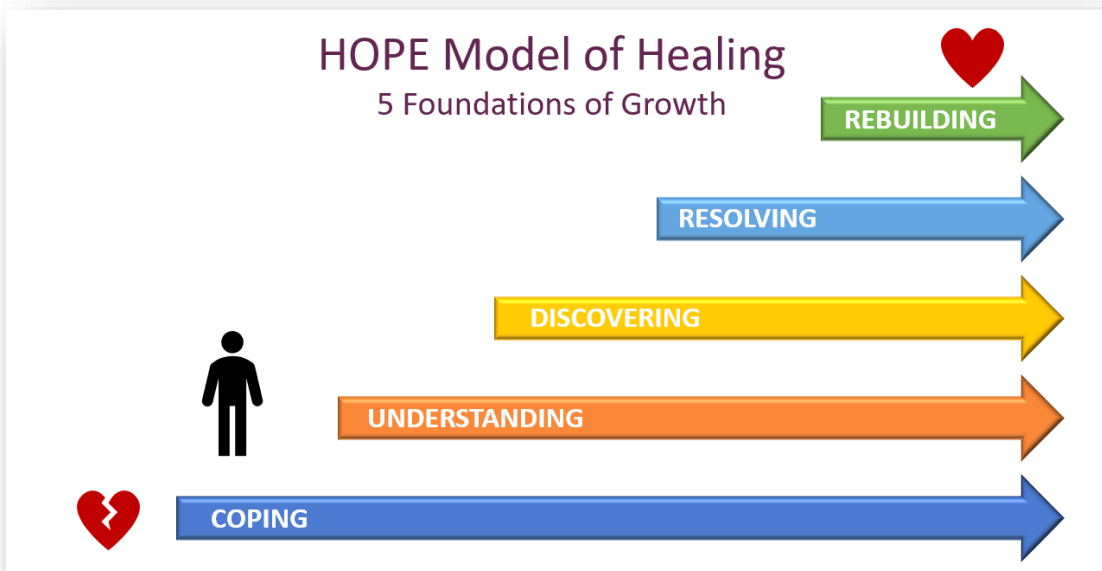


The diagram above illustrates that you can shorten the time it takes to get where you want to go if you have the correct road map and the proper guidance. Athletes have known this for years as they've relied on coaches and good information to create the results that they want. You are now applying this principle to healing after loss. This coaching program is designed to provide the correct road map, and the guidance and support for you to achieve your goals.

The Hope Model of Healing is the road map. It provides the framework to step from coping to understanding to discovering to resolving and then to rebuilding. You take the skills that you learn throughout your journey, and you rebuild your capacity and strength all along the way.



The diagram below is another way of looking at it. Notice how each step continues with an arrow headed towards the future. This is the foundation that is created in each step along the way of learning and applying.



Let's take a brief look at each one and then in the subsequent chapters we'll take a deeper dive into each.

Coping: When a loss occurs, you immediately go into coping as you carry the heavy weight of early, Level 5 All-Consuming Grief. Your reactions may seem automatic, reactive and out of your control. This is normal. As your early grief moves to Level 4 Deep Grief and Level 3 Functional Grief you have more awareness of your actions and your responses. This greater awareness allows you to take more ownership and make decisions about the way you're coping. In chapter 5, we'll look at constructive coping versus destructive coping. We'll also explore healthy coping options, and how to be patient and curious. In addition, we'll look at where your emotions come from on a deeper level.

Understanding: In previous chapters, we looked at some of the challenges of grief and the vibrational quality of grief. Grief is a season that is intended to lead to healing. In chapter 6, we'll discover why it's important to learn about grief, and how grief affects our body and mind. Then we'll take a closer look at what healing is and why it's important.

Discovering: We tend to look at the pain of grief as one big event but the feelings of grief and the often-accompanying feelings of guilt, shame, fear, etc. are caused by many painful underlying thoughts and beliefs. In order to start healing it's important to identify the things that are causing our pain. Again, it's not just looking at the one big loss but rather identifying the components of our specific unresolved feelings. We'll delve into this further later in the program.

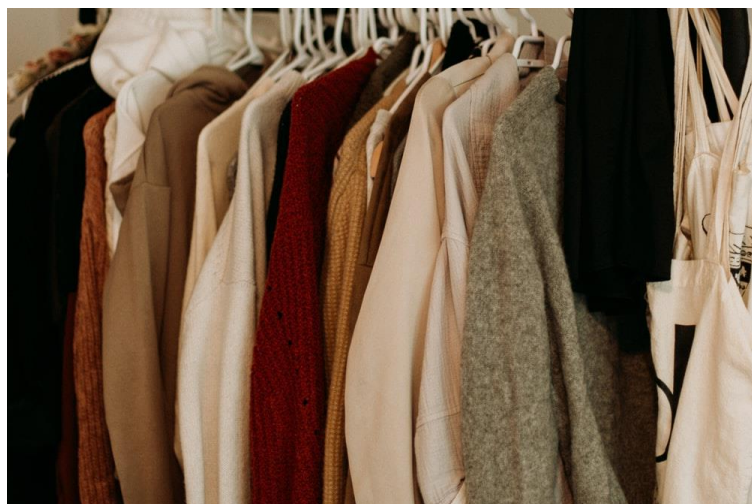
Resolving: Whether your grief is due to the hurtful acts of others, to the unexpected loss of a loved one or to any other significant loss, healing your grief will involve resolving the conflict in your emotions so you can work towards letting go of the pain.

Rebuilding: You'll start looking to the future. As you start to resolve your grief, you'll feel yourself expand and grow and you'll have a renewed desire to create a life that you want. In the beginning of this journey, it is natural to want to move away from the pain which is why you were seeking answers. Eventually you will want to not just move away from pain, but also move toward more happiness and purpose in your life.

Grief is Messy

Have you ever cleaned out a closet? You get tired of having to put up with the mess, not being able to find things and having to shove everything back in so you can shut the door. You decide to clean it up. You pull everything out. You drag the coats, shirts, shoes, boxes, bags and all the random things out of the closet. You discover you have shirts that you haven't worn in 5 years, shoes that are worn out and broken pieces that you thought you would fix one day. You begin sorting and organizing but as you look around at the debris scattered across the floor, you notice that you have created a bigger mess than you started with.

But you're encouraged because you have a goal, and you know this is the process to the goal.



Now you can see it all. Random stuff is no longer hiding behind all the disorganization. You can make decisions. You decide what you are going to keep, what you are going to put back in the closet and how you want to organize what's left. When the job is done, you've created beauty and order and it feels great!

Grief is messy. When we finally get tired of putting up with the mess and shoving all the heavy feelings down, we are encouraged to start the process of healing. Don't worry about the mess in the meantime. You're in the right place. The Model of Healing will assist you in creating some order and beauty from the mess of grief. You will feel encouraged and uplifted!

Suggested Build a Life After Loss Podcast Episodes:

Ep. 84 The Model of Healing

Ep. 81 Doing It Right

Ep 79 The Chaos of Grief

Ep. 65 Perfectionism