



Fact Sheet

How to Deal With Loss Positively



GUESTS:

Andrew Darbyshire – Self-made business leader and Philanthropist Andrew Darbyshire, began his career as a broadcast engineer at 3DB Melbourne in 1976. In 1985 he founded the software business PacSoft, to develop accounting and inventory management software for independent hard-goods and timber merchants, throughout Australasia and North America. In 1993, Andrew took over Retsysco USA and renamed it Pacsoft USA. He is a Director and major shareholder of MCM Entertainment Limited. In memory of his 8-year-old daughter Caitlin who passed away as a result of a brain tumour in 2006, Andrew founded *Caitlin's Fund* at the Florey Neuroscience Institute to raise funds for research into child related brain conditions. Andrew is also the founder and major benefactor of Caitlin's Retreat, a short stay host farm for special needs children and their families on the banks of the Yarra at Eltham. Andrew was made a Member of the Order Of Australia in the 2012 Australia Day Honours for service to the community as a supporter of research into child-related brain conditions, through contributions to special needs children and their families, and to the arts.

Michal de Willoughby – Michal de Willoughby is the Senior Bereavement Counsellor and Educator at the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement. She has trained extensively in the field of psychotherapy and counselling, and has been working with therapeutic groups and one-to-one counselling since 2003. She specialises in trauma (extreme stress), trauma (grief and loss), and bereavement counselling and intervention. Michal also has broad experience in training and educating adults in counselling and group work. In her role as Educator, Michal has delivered customised workplace training, university lectures and professional development workshops.

DEFINITIONS:

Acute grief: Acute grief is the initial reaction to loss, which differs from bereavement or mourning. It may present physical symptoms such as shortness of breath and a tightness of breath in addition to emotional, spiritual and behavioural responses. Read more: http://www.ehow.com/facts_7679367_acute-grief.html



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THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT GRIEF:

1. Common Responses

Intense feelings which may include: overwhelming sadness, anger, anxiety, disbelief, relief, irritability and numbness. The feelings may be so intense that you may feel like you are going crazy, but in most cases this is very normal even if it feels very uncomfortable.

2. Grief is a unique and individual experience

Different grieving styles (open and expressive, or more private and keeps busy), cultural factors, gender and belief systems can all influence the way people grieve.

Everyone grieves in their own unique way, and as long as you are not causing harm to yourself, or others, there is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to grieve. We also need to be respectful of how other different people grieve, even if we do not understand it.

3. Life can integrate our grief

After a loss, especially the death of a loved one, we may never be the same again. When people grieve they are coming to terms with what has changed in their lives, there isn't a return to normal. In many cases after a huge loss, people create a new kind of normal-relearning the world, and re-learning ourselves in it.

4. Grief doesn't have a timeline

After experiencing the death of a loved one, or another traumatic loss, grief can be triggered at any time, and felt over an extended period, including months, years, even decades.

HOW TO HELP SOMEONE EXPERIENCING GRIEF:

- Be kind and compassionate to yourself
- Trust in your own inner knowing of what is right for your own grief journey. Other people can be very quick to administer their own version of what is good for you. Thank them and then listen to what you know is true for you.
- Delay any major decision-making that cannot be reversed for 6-12 months.
- Do things that are relaxing and soothing.
- Exercise is very helpful, because it releases the body's natural pain relief called endorphins. It also helps with pent up energy.
- Keep a diary or journal.
- Some holistic or self-care ideas that may include meditation, distractions such as gardening, relaxation or massage.
- To help with sleeplessness, exercise, limit alcohol and caffeine, and try to maintain a routine, especially around bedtime.
- Draw on your spiritual/religious beliefs and practices.



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- Explore other people's experiences-through books, movies, articles etc.
- Allow yourself to express thoughts and feeling privately, eg, poetry, letters, art, crying etc.
- If there has been a death, create a memorial to honour your loved one, or develop a ritual such as lighting a candle, listen to special music, or a special place to think.
- If it helps, be around supportive people, including family and friends, it can reduce a sense of isolation, and loneliness that can come with grief.
- Don't be afraid to allow people to help you, it may be that you can reciprocate another time.
- Speak to a counsellor, especially if you are finding your situation difficult or complicated

WHERE TO GET HELP and ONLINE RESOURCES:

Grieving can be very painful, but most people find that through their own resources, and the helpful support from other people that they find ways to gradually live with, integrate, and make sense and meaning of the loss.

However, there are some circumstances involving trauma, a sudden death, or other complications which may make the grief more acute. If you are finding it difficult to function on a day to day basis, then it may be helpful to see a health professional such as your GP, a counsellor or a psychologist.

- <http://www.beyondblue.org.au/grief+loss> – web chat is available, or their phone lines are available: 1300 22 4636
- <http://www.grief.org.au/> - they give great advice on their site, as well as allowing you to search for support services close to your post code.
- <http://www.opentohope.com/?gclid=CNe61NuXur8CFQR8vQod0hAAiQ> – hear other people's stories, and be encouraged to keep moving forward.
- www.starlight.org.au
- www.helpguide.org/mental/grief_loss
- www.lifeline.org.au
- www.grieflink.asn.au
- www.earlytraumagrieff.anu.edu.au
- www.headspace.org.au/is-it-just-me/find-information/grief

BOOKS:

- *The Little Book of Loss & Grief You Can Read While You Cry: Liz Crowe*
- *Coping with Grief (4th ed): Mal McKissock and Diane McKissock*
- *Loving Someone Who Has Dementia: How to Find Hope While Coping With Stress and Grief: Pauline Boss.*
- *Rain, Hail, or Shine: Exploring Change, Loss and Grief in a Carer's World: Skylight, NZ*
- *When Tough Stuff Happens: Skylight, NZ*
- *Living Through Loss: Interventions Across the Life Span: Nancy R. Hooyman & Betty J. Kramer.*



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- What Does Dead Mean? A Book for Young Children to Help Explain Death and Dying: *Caroline Jay & Jenni Thomas.*
- The Power of Persistence and Purpose: *Andrew Darbyshire*

USEFUL WEB LINKS:

- <http://executivebrilliance.com/blog/three-ways-you-can-positively-deal-with-grief/>
- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2691160/>
- http://www.helpguide.org/life/unemployment_job_loss_stress_coping_tips.htm

REFERENCE:

- www.dictionary.com – definitions of grief and loss.