

Grief

The "crazy" feelings of grief are actually a *sane* response to grief. The following examples are all symptoms of normal grief:

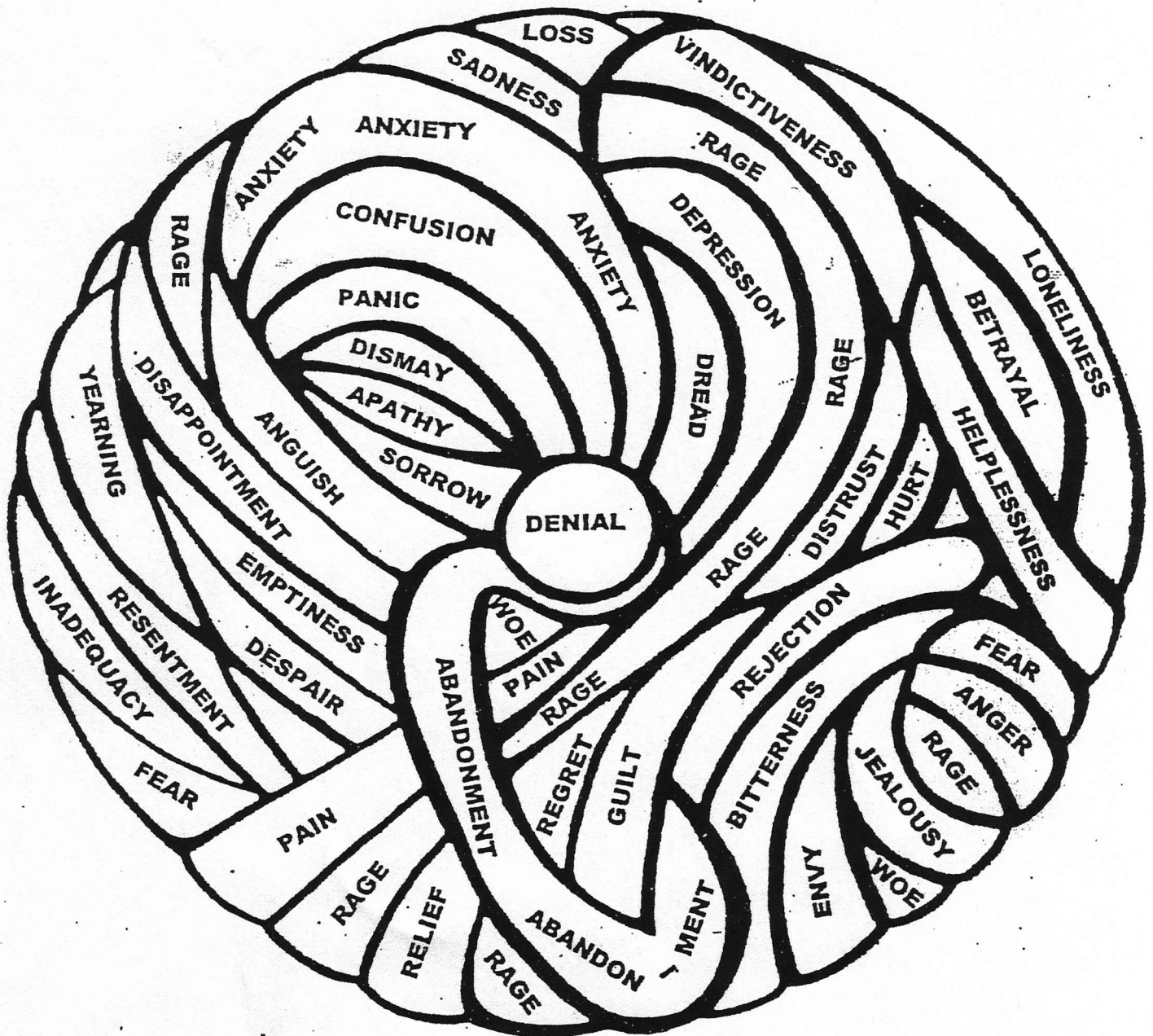
- Distorted thinking patterns, "crazy" and/or irrational thoughts, fearful thoughts
- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Out of control or numbed emotions
- Changes in sensory perceptions (sight, taste, smell, etc.)
- Increased irritability
- May want to talk a lot or not at all
- Memory lags and mental "short-circuits"
- Inability to concentrate
- Obsessive focus on the loved one
- Losing track of time
- Increase or decrease of appetite and/or sexual desire
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep
- Dreams in which the deceased seems to visit the griever
- Nightmares in which death themes are repeated
- Physical illness like the flu, headaches or other maladies
- Shattered beliefs about life, the world, and even God

Grief will take longer than you've ever imagined. It tends to intensify at three months, special dates and the one year anniversary.

Grief is a journey, a process and there is resolution.

GRIEF . . .

A TANGLED 'BALL' OF EMOTIONS



Dear Friend, (family, pastor, fellow workers...)

Recently I have suffered a devastating loss. I am grieving and it will take months and even years to recover from this loss.

I wanted to let you know that I will cry from time to time. I don't apologize for my tears since they are not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. They are God's gift to me to express the extent of my loss, and they are also a sign that I am recovering.

At times you may see me angry for no apparent reason. Sometimes I'm not sure why. All I know is that my emotions are intense because of my grief. If I don't always make sense to you, please be forgiving and patient with me. And if I repeat myself again and again, please accept this as normal.

More than anything else I need your understanding and your presence. You don't always have to know what to say or even say anything if you don't know how to respond. Your presence and a touch or hug lets me know you care. Please don't wait for me to call you since sometimes I am too tired or tearful to do so.

If I tend to withdraw from you, please don't let me do that. I need you to reach out to me for several months. Pray for me that I would come to see meaning in my loss someday and that I would know God's comfort and love. It does help to let me know that you are praying for me.

If you have experienced a similar type of loss, please feel free to share it with me. It will help rather than cause me to feel worse. And don't stop sharing if I begin to cry. It's all right, and any tears you express as we talk are all right too.

This loss is so painful, and right now it feels like the worst thing that could ever happen to me. But I will survive and eventually recover. I cling to that knowledge, even though there have been times when I didn't feel it. I know that I will not always feel as I do now. Laughter and joy will emerge once again someday.

Thank you for caring about me. Thank you for listening and praying. Your concern comforts me and is a gift which I will always be grateful for.

Secondary Losses

friend	provider
handyman	cook
lover	bill payer
gardener	laundry person
companion	confidante
sports partner	mentor
checkbook balancer	prayer partner
mechanic	source of inspiration
identity	or insight
encourager	teacher
motivator	counselor
business partner	protector
errand person	organizer
tax preparer	couple friends
in-law support	couple's class
financial adjustment	social adjustment
feeling of safety	