

Building a New Life

The opportunity that accompanies loss is as real as the pain, but often is overlooked. Times of crisis, such as the period following a death, uncover people's abilities, as well as their vulnerabilities. It is possible to use this time to resolve old conflicts and to build a new life.

Reconstructing one's life after a loss is enhanced by doing it deliberately. It requires thought, patience, a willingness to be honest with oneself, and the courage to change. One way to begin is to study one's talents, resources, and options, as well as blocks to self-fulfillment. Support groups and counseling can contribute to self-discovery and needed connection with others.

A next step would be to set some attainable goals and to develop a plan to accomplish them. This provides direction and feelings of security, self-esteem, and hope, all of which tend to be lacking during bereavement.

The actual shifting of energy from the past to the future is a gradual process that is aided by achieving one's goals and by letting go of unattainable wants. Hope comes from choosing what is possible.

In attempting to build a life without someone who has died, the following thoughts may be helpful...

Even though you may feel that a part of you is missing, you are a whole person. There may be undeveloped parts of you that can grow now.

Intensity of grief is related to how much of our self is invested in the lost person.

A relationship with a person does not end with death ... It changes.

Being a friend to others who are mourning can enable you to share what you have learned, and turn grief into creative energy.

Confronting a death can lead to a reevaluation and deepening of faith and spiritual life.

The best memorial to a loved one is a full and growing life.

