How to Deal with Grief, Crisis & Emotional Devastation:

By Gary Acevedo, M.S.W.

When truly terrible things happen to good people, it can be completely devastating. For example no one should have to live through the loss of their own child.

As a young therapist it terrified me the first time a couple came in who lost a young son. “What could I possibly do for these people?” I asked myself. So I did all I could to help them, and was very surprised that at the end of their grieving process, they hit upon a revelation, a spiritual discovery which seemed to make sense to them, and put into a higher perspective the grief they had endured.

Then another couple who lost her child went through receiving the very same kind of blessing at the end of her process. So I took note. By the third parent who received a similar blessing, I realized that if parents who lose a child will simply allow themselves to go through the process of grieving, and release the overwhelming emotions involved, they will get to a resolution and a peace that is eye opening and quite surprising. In many instances since then, their new perspective was profoundly moving and inspiring and brought a peaceful resolve.

The sad news is that in our culture, people are rarely taught how to go through such a devastating process. Quite often friends or family are at a loss to help. Most people never really work through the process and stay unfinished, unresolved, conflicted and stressed to some degree for the rest of their lives. This can result in loss of careers, marriages, families. It can result in disease and even suicide.

The following guidelines are provided in order to assist with this process. It should be emphasized, that seeing a counselor or coach skilled in this area is the most vital thing to do. The rest of these are helpful, but will not replace the ear of a skilled counselor or coach. I’ve been able to help people get resolved in a matter of weeks or months, where on their own many people take years to recover, get functional and many never get complete or heal.

It must also be noted that it may feel impossible to do anything but sleep or curl up in bed for a while. The sooner you can either do these things or get the person you love to do them, the sooner you or they will start to feel better.
10 Ways to Deal with Grief, Crisis & Emotional Devastation:

1. **Release:** Do not suppress, restrict or hold back your emotions. Let yourself cry when it comes up. Take whatever time you need to allow yourself to grieve. Find a place where you can yell, scream or cry unrestricted. Do not worry if your feelings don’t make any sense or you have two feelings that contradict each other. Feelings rarely make any logical sense. Express them completely and with gusto. Holding these emotions back simply prolongs the process and unnecessarily lengthens the stress and heartache. (See “How to Move Your Emotional Energy”)

2. **Gestalt Two Chair Technique:** The single most profound yet simple tool for resolving the anguish, and coming to a healthy completion is to put two chairs facing each other; you sit in one chair, and put the person you’ve lost into the other chair. Talk to them out loud and say it all. Say everything you’re going through, both positive and negative, say what you didn’t say, say how you feel, and say it all as BIG as it is! Don’t be afraid to express any illogical upset or anger or resentment. Express yourself as fully as possible. Saying these things **out loud** is absolutely essential. Then when you said what you want to say, switch chairs and role play the person you’ve lost and respond to what you’ve said. It will feel surprisingly like the actual person is actually there and talking to you. Keep going back and forth and keep the conversation going until you feel complete and resolved. It may take a few sessions. Even though this may feel “silly” or embarrassing, you will be surprised by what comes to the surface using this technique.

   It was discovered by Fritz Perls - the genius who founded Gestalt Therapy. By talking out loud and switching chairs, you will bring insights from subconscious to conscious. It is a profound tool of never ending amazing discoveries.

3. **Spiritual Guidance:** Although you may go through feeling like there is no God and that is understandable. If you can pray, it will bring you comfort. You can also ask the person you’ve lost to bring you signs that they are O.K. and then watch for them. If you’re open to it, you can also talk to them in your prayers. You wouldn’t want to substitute this tool for the other 2 chair process where you do it out loud.

4. **Service:** As soon as you are able, find something that serves someone else and do it. Volunteer at a senior home, go give food or clothes to the homeless; visit someone in prison, etc. This will re-contextualize your grief, and make the process much more bearable. Start small in little increments, move to a little time a few times a week, and then daily when you can, until you get through the major part of the emotional devastation.

5. **Exercise:** Even a walk around the block will make a difference. You will be surprised at the effect just moving your physiology makes to change your state. NLP practitioners and Tony Robbins have emphasized that when you want to change your state, you change your physiology.
6. **Gardening:** Those who garden know the calming and grounding effect of putting your hands in the earth. It has a major affect on your state and keeps you grounded. Many believe the earth will accelerate your healing any time you simply take a 20 minute nap on the earth. Even if you just put your hands into a planter of earth for 10 minutes a day, you will notice the difference.

7. **Eat protein:** It’s an interesting phenomenon that when people grieve they tend to avoid protein and easily get out of physical balance, which magnifies the stress. So remember to eat whatever kind of protein works for you. Ask your loved ones to remind you.

8. **Friends:** If you have friends you feel close to and can share with, take advantage. This will serve them to be able to be there for you. It helps you to talk, to share and verbally expressing is one of the quickest ways through the process.

9. **Fun:** You may not be able to laugh for quite a while, but as soon as possible, it’s one of the quickest ways to anchor in subconsciously that life has good as well as bad in it.

10. **Create:** Create a painting, sculpture, a song, a collage, a poem, a story, mission statement, a declaration of vision, or goals, or anything you can think of. The act of creation is again one of the most profound healing process to connect one with the core of their self and goodness.

### 10 Ways to Deal with Grief and Emotional Devastation

1. Release your emotions
2. Gestalt Two Chair Technique
3. Spiritual Guidance
4. Service
5. Exercise
6. Gardening
7. Eat Protein
8. Friends
9. Fun
10. Create

For more assistance, coaching or information contact Rise Leadership Group @ (801) 247-0445 or Gary Acevedo (801) 414-7020. [www.riseleadershipgroup.com](http://www.riseleadershipgroup.com)
Dealing Effectively with Emotions: How to Move Your Emotional Energy

On Emotions: Without special education – Few people have been educated as to the true nature of feelings or the impact they have on our lives. Since we have all been raised to suppress our feelings, we don’t realize the devastation it creates when we “stuff” our emotions. We don’t realize that by the law of attraction, we are always attracting positive or negative situations, based on the states we are carrying in our personal space.

So we have an upset, have a lot of feelings, “shove them under the carpet,” unaware that these suppressed emotions will attract situations in our circumstances, that match those emotions, so we attract another negative situation, get more feelings, suppress them, attract more negative situations...until we are so emotionally constipated, that we attract one negative situation after another. We look up at life, and say, “What do you want from me?” We don’t realize that by suppressing our emotions, we are the ones unwittingly creating by attracting these negative emotions.

There are advanced level tools, but this handout is the 101 version to get you started. There are innumerable success stories and personal miracles from this potent tool. Here are the steps:

1. Find someplace where you can make a lot of noise without being disturbed. (I.e. a car in the garage – or go find an empty parking lot.)

2. Put a chair facing you, and put the situation or person in front of you, and allow yourself to express all of your feelings; any resentments, anger, rage, etc. no matter how irrational or nonsensical. Don’t worry if they seem unfair or illogical. Feelings rarely make logical sense.

3. Yell, scream, cry, laugh, or anything that expresses all of your emotions. Do this for 5–10 minutes each time. There will be a very noticeable shift in your emotions when you have released enough emotions. How often you do this will determine your personal value and impact. For instance, doing this daily for 3 weeks can actually move someone from being extremely depressed, to being beyond their depression, and being able to get off their depression medication.

4. When you have a big upset on one person: After 3 – 5 times of yelling at one person, you can add a twist that will accelerate your movement with them. After you yell at them, switch chairs and become them! Respond naturally according to the conversation. Once you get where you’re done yelling, and switch to conversation, your version of ‘them’ (which is truly your creation) will dialogue with you, until you come to a resolve. If not the first time, within a few sessions.

In Rise Leadership Group – Lore Acevedo teaches our more advanced tools in courses on Peer Counseling. She also leads “Connected Breath” Sessions monthly for a nominal fee, that will introduce you to the power of your emotions, and releasing them in a way that brings you the blessings you deserve. Her phone # is (801) 520-1911 or (801) 739-7552. My # is (801) 414-7020.