

Reasons for life-long grief

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The death of a child especially if sudden is a traumatizing event to the attached parent. There is no true recovery from trauma. Therefore, the death of a child has the potential of eliciting life lasting grief in the parent.

The whole traumatizing event/an element has frozen in time in an instant occurrence. The memory of the event is then imprinted in every 'cell' of our being, and replays itself during the life cycle.

Irreversible physiological changes that have lasting effects take place as a result of trauma.

Environmental stimuli (sight, sound, smell, sensation) elicit complete/partial recollection of the traumatic event, and a resurgence of prior trauma.

Initial or original grief reactions that appear shortly after the child's death are different than derived, secondary reactions that appear later. These grief reactions differ in their frequency and in their existential conclusions/worldview, but not necessarily in their intensity.

The initial reactions are characterized by a sense of 'gloom and doom,' while the derived reactions lead to a different existential conclusion: the bereaved had survived what s/he thought they might have not. This by itself provides 'proof' that the bereaved individual can survive the ongoing pain of recollection/reliving the traumatic event.

A cognitive analytical style was found to be more effective in coping with trauma than an emotional style. It would be interesting to find out which style is more prevalent in lifelong grief.

The evolvment of a 'shadow image' of the deceased as an indication of the intensity of attachment in life and after death.

A haunting co-existence of an awareness of the finality of death and that there is no rectification with an inherent inability to conceptualize 'forever.'