

Facing Death of a Loved One

Introduction

Everything that happens in people's lives, especially in the childhood, has a huge impact on the future development of personality. Every event goes with the certain type of denotation: neutral, positive, or negative. Unfortunately, almost all negative events have the most forceful impact on every human being. Indeed, different events imply different levels of emotions. For example, a broken toy (even if it is the most loved one) will never cause such emotional damage as a death of a close family member. In fact, the death of a beloved person is one of the worst things that could happen in the whole life. This issue has already been researched by experts in psychology, but since it leads to numerous significant mental damages, new researches and programs should be implemented for finding new ways of solution.

Body

Such a serious issue as a death of a close person took place in my life. When I was younger, I had a very good friend, and, in fact, we spent almost all childhood and adolescence together. My friend had a brother, even though his brother was two years older, they were best friends. One day, the brother of my friend drowned in a river, and it was a huge loss for his family and friends. Their parents were crushed with it, but did everything possible to stay strong for their younger son. Unfortunately, it was really hard for my friend to cope with such a huge loss.

Obviously, when hard time comes, every person needs an emotional support. I also had one almost identical loss in my life, and I knew better than everybody else how hard to live with it emotionally. Talking about me and my friend, I should say that my feelings were rather contradictory, because I wanted to help him to get through this hard period, but, on the other hand, I did not even want to be near him, because, unintentionally, he was a constant reminder of my own loss. However, I did everything I could to cope with my pain to support my close friend.

While I spent time with him, I could also vividly see him passing through all stages of death acceptance. At first, he had a shock and obviously showed disbelief in what had happened. The shock resulted in his abnormal behavior as he did not say a word for almost a month. His whole appearance and actions showed that his conscious created an alternative reality to protect the mind from irreversible damage. In addition, he had problems with nutrition, as in the vast majority of cases, he refused to eat. As a result, poor nutrition negatively affected his physical health and resulted in serious problems with heart, liver, and digestion. Those diseases are successfully cured already, but back to those days his health was in a really bad condition.

In a month, he went forward to the denial stage. All of a sudden, he started talking, but he also acted like nothing happened. Such behavior is considered to be rather normal in psychology, but in the real life, the severity of mental state may vary. In fact, disbelief and denial are the parts of the defensive mechanism, which protected my friend from the dreadful reality. The mind of my friend created the scenario, where his brother was alive, but temporary moved to

another place nearby. When he was, on this stage, it was easier for us all on the emotional level, because he did not suffer as much as earlier and later. The denial lasted for few weeks, and his behavior turned into violent. When I had such a situation in life, I do not remember if I was in denial, but I surely remembered that I became a lot more irritable and aggressive.

My friend showed almost identical behavior, and became rather violent and offensive towards other people. In addition, he even was rude to his own parents, which is absolutely unacceptable. Unfortunately, there were no good psychologist in the city to treat him properly, but with our constant help and support he was on the anger stage not for long. I did my best to help him on this stage, because I remembered how important the support of the people one care about.

In addition to the abovementioned, I can say that he was on the bargaining stage as well. My friend prayed every day to God with only one asking, to bring the brother back and take him instead. This stage lasted not for a long time, because there was nothing he could do about. Bargaining had brought a serious depression and my friend had lost the interest to everything surrounded him. It was hard for his parents to see him in such condition. However, we all tried to talk to him, and I remembered what I wanted to hear in terms of my depression. It was a real pleasure for me to know that my words helped him to end depression. Every person, who had faced death of a loved one, needs to know that he or she moved to a better place and even though this person is not near physically, he or she had never left spiritually. Realizing this idea always help people to move forward from depression to acceptance.

In the end, my friend had finally come to acceptance of his brother being dead. His grief never left him completely; however, my friend learned that he can live with this loss, and his brother never left him and would stay in the heart and memories forever.

Symptoms and Ways to Cope with Death of a Loved One

Taking into account the abovementioned story, one can say that death of a loved person is one of the most stressful events that may result in serious mental and physical damages. Even though all major aspects of consequences caused by death of a loved person have already been researched numerous times, this issue remains being topical.

In fact, the death of a loved one causes the common state named grief. Since different people have different coping mechanism and life perception, every individual may show numerous kinds of reaction (Eshbaugh & Henninger, 2013). These kinds of reaction may vary from serious, but temporary depression to chronic depression that leads to the common death or suicide. In general, death of a close person causes significant issues in psychological, physical, and social aspects.

Every individual with a psychological trauma caused by the death of a loved one starts to show certain symptoms, which indicate the severity of his or her condition. Psychological symptoms imply mood swings, sadness, anger, anxiety, irritability, denial, concentration difficulties, etc. Accordingly, the abovementioned symptoms may also be presented on different levels of seriousness. While some individuals may have temporary and hidden behavioral manifestation, others show the reaction symptoms more vividly. In addition, some individuals may perform rather controversial reaction on the death of a loved one. This can be caused by the serious

damage of the connection between left and right parts of the brain. Therefore, logical and emotional sides can be reduced with their normal activity, which may result in significant and even irreversible mental damages.

The physical aspect of the issue should also be taken into consideration, because the abnormal emotional state reflects on the physical health condition of every individual. The most common physical symptoms are heart problems, high or low blood pressure, pains, muscle tension, constant fatigue, sleep disorders (nightmares or insomnia), etc. (Shear, 2012). Since both psychological and physical states are closely connected, the death of a loved one leads to negative physical changes in the body. In fact, some of the symptoms may be performed only on the emotional level (for example, pain), and the lab results may not show any biological changes. Therefore, some physical symptoms may be only the result of self-induced hypnotism and cause minor physical damage. On the other hand, in such cases, individuals with the abovementioned issues need help of professional doctors. Even if the physical damage is not significant at the beginning, without proper treatment it may worsen and result in serious disability, coma, or even death.

Death of a loved one also brings changes in terms of the social area. Such serious psychological trauma makes individuals aggressive or reserved towards other people. As stated above, different people may have different reactions on the same negative event. On one hand, people with psychological trauma gain the tendency to more violent and offensive behavior in order to bring other people on the same emotional level intentionally or unintentionally. On the other hand, psychological trauma may change normal behavior of the person to unsocial, which leads to withdrawing from other people. Both states of mind, aggressive and reversed require help of a professional psychologist since without treatment it will lead to irreversible mental damages. In the cases, if a person shows social signs of his or her trauma, without professional help and support from family members and friends, the changes in behavior may become permanent.

In the cases of death of a loved one, people pass through five stages of acceptance: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This classification mostly refers to people who are dying themselves, but in many cases, individuals who had faced death of a loved one pass these stages as well. In general, denial is a rather normal reaction on a psychological trauma and is considered to be one of the defense mechanism manifestations. Denial reflects in refusal to accept reality or information with negative background. The anger stage of acceptance can be performed in different ways. Thus, individuals with psychological trauma can be angry with themselves, close people, or strangers. Therefore, this stage is very important to control because a person in the state of anger may commit violent actions, which result in serious physical damages. In fact, individuals on this stage require support and treatment more than ever because it is a critical point in coping with death of a loved one.

The third stage of acceptance is bargaining, and it is less mentally severe than the previous one. Bargaining involves some alternative scenarios created by the mind of the individual coping with death of a loved one. Also, this stage implies bargaining with God or other higher forces in different religions. Furthermore, the depression stage of coping with death of a loved one is the first indication of acceptance. On this stage, people began to accept the real facts and events but remain being in a constant depressed state. However, moving to this stage is a rather good sign, because it shows the progression in the mental condition of emotionally damaged person. The final stage is the acceptance itself, and it can be presented in different ways, for example, suicide or coping with the loss.

Therefore, when the first signs of abnormal behavior appear, the treatment should be started immediately. The treatment of physical damages can be drug-induced and imply various

medical procedures (Furer, Walker, & Stein, 2007). Unfortunately, if psychological treatment fails, the treatment of physical symptoms and damages may not have a good result in the end or turn into recurrence. As a matter of fact, professional treatment is the key element in solving the health problem caused by death of a loved one. Moreover, the main aspect of the treatment grounds on the psychological therapy that may take a period from few weeks to more than a year.

Conclusion

Taking into account all abovementioned, one can say that death of a loved one negatively affects every individual and is reflected in serious or irreversible damages in mental, physical and social aspects. Individuals coping with the loss tend to pass certain stages of acceptance and require professional help in order to return to the normal physical, mental, and social condition. Lastly, the individual differences in life perception determine the results of treatment and further psychological recovering.