



Chapter 13 – Grieving

There are three abstract questions about change that the human mind manipulates negatively or positively via perceptions (with no requirement to be related to reality):

- How far away is the change, or how long until a change (or an uncomfortable confrontation) arrives?
- How much impact will the change have - will this really matter?
- How long is the impact time - after a change starts, how long will that change be in progress before the new 'normal reliable reference point' is established (in the face of both the old and the new-normal are both now not well established).

Jeff Hawkins' writes in his 2004 book *On Intelligence*, "Prediction is not just one of the things your brain does, it is the primary function of the neocortex, and the foundation of intelligence." The human brain is designed to use prediction to protect itself by protecting its owner, including using intelligence to protect from excessive worries, anxieties, and stresses; although sometimes thought of interchangeably, worry, anxiety, and stress operate very differently, but they each operate on change-based assumptions.

The *neocortex* is the rationalizing and predicting part of the brain that responds to worry. The *limbic system* is an older and less evolved brain section concerning itself with the anxieties that emotion and imagination produce, and the *reptilian-brain* is the least evolved brain section and uses actions to deal with stress – the reptilian brain is always asking some survival questions such as:

- Can I eat it or drink it – safely?
- Can it eat me or cause me great harm?
- Can I mate with it?
- Is it a threat to my offspring?
- Will I have enough of the vital ‘it’ in times of shortage?

I am working out a theory that my human brain lacks the capacity to provide unique solutions for each of the billions of combinations of scenarios that my senses can bring in. I am pretty sure that my brain initially processes *all* my thoughts through what is regarded as a traditional six-step grieving cycle, and that:

- My grieving cycles treat good news and bad news both as just: something-changed-news;
- My complete grieving cycle can last anywhere from a micro-second to decades before fully resolving any new or particular problem;
- My brain may ‘bounce back-and-forth’ between any of the grieving steps tens to millions of times before reasonably reconciling and advancing toward or past the next step.
- My grieving is a natural and necessary process that might require varied accumulations of courage in varied subjects, up to and especially during the cycle’s final steps.
- When my grieving-cycle lasts for too long, this is probably a sign that I don’t have, or that I am not developing some type of courage that is needed to find peace in accepting my change.
- When my grieving doesn’t show itself to me when I expect it, I am probably grieving in a way that is so ineffective that my grief will last for far too long.

One homogenized definition of a grieving cycle's attributes is shown below:

1. Change Recognition (conscious or not) | Worry
2. Denial | Disbelief | Anxiety
3. Motivation | Anger | Stress
4. Fear | Detachment | Depression | Stress
5. Grief | Struggle | Dialog | Testing | Anxiety | Worry
6. Acceptance | Meaning | Incorporation | Empowerment

An example when I lose a loved-one (Maybe lasting from months to years):

1. **Change Recognition** – I notice I can no longer contact my loved one.
2. **Denial** – I keep trying to prove it by checking with others and confirm the truth.
3. **Anger | Impact** – I don't want major new choices, the pool of choices I have now, compared to the pool of choices before the loss is different.
4. **Depression | Detachment** – I do less because I feel less certain.
5. **Grief | Struggle** – I need to see myself rationalizing the difference between what I think should be happening, and what is happening; I work through ways to stop doing that.
6. **Acceptance | Meaning | Incorporation | Empowerment** – At some point, I accept, adapt, and become comfortable enough with a new reality; I make a life that incorporates these ideas and works with the rest of the things I have already accepted about my life.

An example when I win a lottery jackpot (Maybe lasting from days to months):

1. **Change Recognition** – I notice the lottery ticket is a winner.
2. **Denial** – I prove it, check the numbers many times and ask others to look too.
3. **Motivation | Impact** – I bring the ticket to the lottery retailer and cash it in.

4. **Fear** – This money gives me something to lose, I want to safeguard it.
5. **Grief** – The way I used to handle money is gone – a new and uncertain way is here now.
6. **Acceptance | Meaning | Incorporation | Empowerment** – At some point, I become comfortable with this new reality, and I make a life that incorporates this blessing and works with the rest of the other things I have already accepted about my life.

A simple example to my unproven analogy is that even my finding a penny on the street will put me through an entire grieving cycle (probably lasting less than a second):

1. **Change Recognition** – I notice the penny.
2. **Denial** – I figure-out this is a penny – I prove it.
3. **Motivation** – I might decide to pick the penny up or decide to leave the penny.
4. **Fear** – The penny isn't going to change my total wealth much, so I am not too fearful.
5. **Grief** – I am pretty sure that the grief is saying goodbye to the knowledge of the wealth that I used to have and that is familiar.
6. **Acceptance / Meaning / Incorporation / Empowerment** – I accept the new amount of wealth I now have.

An example when a parent hears that a trusted person molests their child (Maybe lasting a lifetime):

1. **Change Recognition** – I notice I can no longer reach-out to my loved one.
2. **Denial** – When my child is harmed so seriously, confirming that truth will be beyond devastating.
3. **Anger | Impact** – I don't want this type of knowledge; the pool of choices and problems I now will have, compared to the pool of choices I have before is incomprehensible.
4. **Depression | Detachment** – I do less because I want to keep-knowing less; I want to be less certain of this fact.
5. **Grief | Struggle** – I need to see myself rationalizing the difference between what I think should be happening, and I

am told is happening; to work through ways to stop doing that, and to start working on healing my child.

6. Acceptance | Meaning | Incorporation | Empowerment –

At some point, I accept, I adapt, and I become aware of a new reality; I make a life that incorporates the knowledge of this idea; an idea that will be hard to harness in productive ways beyond accepting that I sometimes trust the wrong people to be alone with my child.

My living at more than 40 different fixed addresses, so far in my life, shows me many things about how *my-change* and *my-grief* are more related than I first expect. I am not sure how I can control the impact of moving, or how soon until my new-normal arrives, but at least I can have a say in how soon my moving occurs – my not spending too much time waiting for this part of a change that I would rather do without.