

Reflection #25  
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### **Dealing with Loss and Crisis: Past – Present – Future**

The first step in grieving a loss or dealing with a crisis is to give permission to talk and express strong emotions. Part of our culture sends the following message when experiencing a loss or crisis. “Don’t Talk – Don’t Trust – Don’t Feel”. This makes life seemingly go by smoothly, but it takes a devastating toll on people. The second step is to be aware that we deal with loss or a crisis in all three tenses – the Past – the Present – the Future. When confronted with a loss or crisis we need to ask the following questions:

1. Does this event bring back emotions of previous losses or crises that I may need to work on?
2. How am I coping right now with this loss or crisis?
3. Will this loss or crisis define who I am as a person?

Several years ago, I conducted a group at a Long-Term Care Facility for 12 female residents that had experienced the death of a child. This group took place on the Friday before Mother’s Day and was to last no more than an hour. The residents were from 89 to 97 years of age. The focus of the group was for the residents to share about their experience of living without their child in a safe caring environment. The group lasted for 2 and a half hours and was one of the most powerful experiences of my life. At the end of our time the eldest resident stated: “I have not talked about my daughter in 67 years..... this is going to be the best Mother’s Day ever!”

We need to provide for ourselves and others a safe place to work on loss or crises as they touch our past, present and future.