



Transformational Toolbox

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I envision the aftermath of loss to be something akin to the miraculous phenomenon of the caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. For a period of time, as the caterpillar body disintegrates within the chrysalis, it becomes a mixture of imaginal cells, a cocktail of possibility, old and new combining to become something entirely different. It is nature at her best: raw, messy and painful. *But, there is so much possibility in that mess.* If you have found yourself on the threshold of loss, here are some tools for the journey that helped me and may help you, too.

The Curator of Your Life

“Curator” is from the Latin *curare*, one who cares. You can approach your life in the same way a museum curator tends to the cultural heritage of an institution. Particularly after crisis or loss, consider what is going to expand and deepen your life. In the wake of change it is particularly important to notice what is serving your best self and what needs to be released. Give yourself permission to engage in extreme self-care.

Intention

A traumatic crisis or loss will unearth your foundation. Setting an intention will ground you. Often times we do not have control of what has happened to us but we can control our reaction. Setting an intention will begin the process of reacting with integrity. It is a prayer to the universe. Connect, on a deeply emotional level, with how you want things to be on the other side and allow this to guide you.

Your Experience

The alchemy of loss is transformation. Embrace your journey as a catalyst for growth. Don't ask, “Why me?” Instead, reframe it in a way that engenders curiosity, “This situation is inviting me to courageously....” Think of it as something happening for you to expand your life.

Trust and Surrender

In the beginning of any loss there can be a need to cling tightly to the way things used to be. Accept that you are now traveling in a different direction; yield to what it is and dance with it. Resistance uses precious resources and deepens the suffering.

Your Emotions

Emotions are a direct line to your heart and your truth and they are here to help you navigate your world. Pushing them away will disconnect you from true healing. If you are angry, be angry. If you are sad, be sad. Let yourself be swept away with that feeling in a safe space until it dissipates. And it will, given the proper outlet. Our emotions only want to be expressed and honored.

Mindfulness

Befriend your mind through breath work, yoga or meditation. Harnessed and cultivated it will become a trusted ally. Untended and left to its own devices, it can be your worst enemy. Seek to become a finely tuned “*noticer*” of your behavior, your emotions and the way you interact with the world. The more you understand WHY you do what you do, the more freedom you will have being in the world.

Action and Non-Action

It is important to conserve energy when working through a loss or crisis and sometimes the best action is to do nothing in order to preserve your mental health. Always be mindful of responding to situations: consider if engaging will get you closer to a solution or push you further away.

Your Journal

There is a reason that the words “journey” and “journal” are closely related. To make every minute, every detail, of your healing the best it can be, write it down. There is a kind of practical magic to transcribing events in the moment. Even if it is just one word, one reflection or one thought. You won't remember details later.

Your Tribe

Surround yourself with passionate people who will infuse your cause with their love. Ask them if they absolutely love what they are doing. You want this kind of energy around you; in your attorney, accountant or therapist, find people who understand your situation. Share your intention with them so they know the direction you are traveling and how to respond in a way that serves your journey.

Your Eco-System

Your body is your vessel, your heart is your compass and your mind is your engine. Treat them all with devoted care and attention, the kind you would pay a dear friend. No one has ever berated themselves into harmonious health. Create a loving environment within that constantly evolves and engenders love and compassion for your being.

Nourishment

All of your systems - emotional, mental and physical – are stretched in difficult times. You have immediate control over what you put in your mouth so optimize for health by consuming food that is in harmony with your body.