



Anxietylab.org
3-4-5 Program Course

Method #8 Grieving and Retrieving

Abuse survivors must grieve the loss. Then retrieve what we can.

- The loss of our childhoods.
- The loss of dignity.
- The loss of calm.
- The loss of happiness.
- The loss of our self-image.
- The loss of knowing our families are damaged. (Or that the rapist took something from us.)
- The loss of having society heap shame on us.
- The loss of trust.
- The loss of desire (to live or be loved).
- The loss of the ability to be comfortable with other people.
- The loss of the possibility of a normal life.
- The loss of the ability to ever feel good or feel safe.
- The loss of what our lives could have been.
- The loss of time.
- The loss of affection.
- The loss of innocence.

There's a lot to grieve. We also must get back (retrieve) what we can.

Part I: Exercise

Take some time to grieve your losses, just as if a person you love died. Grieve what you lost when you were treated badly and abused.

Acknowledging the loss helps end the bad feelings and clear the way for better feelings to grow. It could feel like crossing a threshold – ending the old times and beginning the new better times.

It may help us feel better when we express the feelings of loss and disappointment that this is the life we were given. Our negative experiences are what we had to live through before claiming our happiness later in life.

Steps:

1. Decide on how long you want to grieve (A day? A week? A month? A year?)
2. Make a schedule in your notebook or digital device
3. Wear black
4. Light a candle
5. Do whatever your religion or faith tradition requires, if any
6. Pray or meditate or draw or sing a song about how life will get better now
7. Plan to RETRIEVE what you can (it's not too late for love, success, happiness)

Part II: Retrieval list

Make a list of the things you thought you would never have or experience because of what happened to you – things that you may be able to have after all. What can you “get back”? Did you write off the possibility of being happy? Now you can retrieve it. Did you give up on the possibility of having a happy marriage? It's not too late. Did you give up hope of relieving the pain of your past? Do the work to

make it end and retrieve your ability to feel good.

I can get these back if I work hard:

1.

2.

3.

4.