

THE BRIDGE FROM PAIN AND GRIEF TO LOVE AND GRATITUDE



When you lose someone you love, you may feel like you cannot let go of the pain of the loss because letting go of the pain feels like letting go of the person.

Moving on feels like moving away from the person you lost.

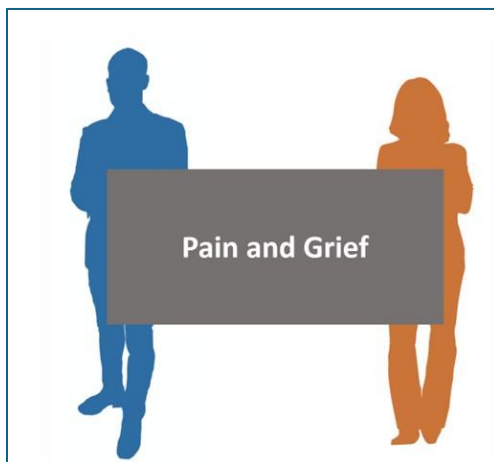
Moving forward feels the same.

You may even hear that the pain of loss is equivalent to the intensity of your love.

This is true. However, it does not mean that you must keep the pain to prove your love.

When someone you love dies or becomes estranged from you, it naturally changes the relationship. The relationship that used to include physical presence no longer includes the ability to be with each other in that way.

You still have a relationship with the person, but the nature of the relationship has changed.



Because of the strong emotions you attach to the loss of that person, you create a bridge of grief and pain to that person. This becomes the new connection.

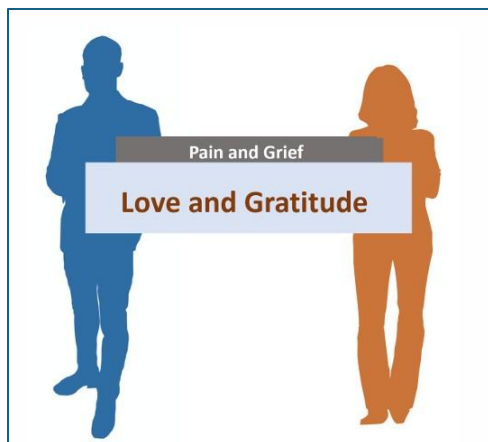
You still love and appreciate them, but the strongest bond is with the pain and grief – which can detract from your feelings of love and gratitude.

Thinking that your connection to the person can be measured by the extent of your despair makes it extremely difficult to let go of the pain and grief because that would mean letting go of the person, or not “proving” your love by your suffering.

Recognizing your current need to hold onto your pain so you can hold onto the person is an important element of understanding your grief.

Before their death or estrangement, you did not need a bridge of pain and grief to connect you. Chances are your connection to them before was love and gratitude. You loved who they were. You loved their presence in your life. You were grateful for them.

Love and gratitude for them and who they are is still available to you. As you heal, focus on strengthening the bond of love and gratitude between you in these new circumstances. As you focus your attention on those expanded feelings of care and thankfulness, you will be more and more willing to let go of the pain of loss.



As you work through your feelings of grief, you will rediscover your immense love and gratitude.

One of the signs of healing is experiencing more love and gratitude.

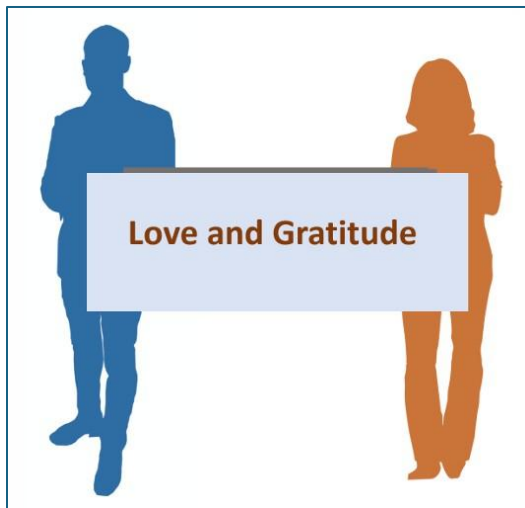
Another sign of healing is being able to remember the good times without them being overshadowed by feelings of sadness and despair.

These are sign posts along the journey of healing that let you know you are heading in the right direction. Do not worry if you are still feeling a lot of grief.

This is a process and understanding what you are working towards will help you to shape your path to get there.

Eventually your bond to the person will be predominantly love and gratitude. The pain of grief will have fallen away, and you may even discover that your love and gratitude for the person is even greater than it was before.

While it may be true that the intensity of your relationship before the loss may have a correlation to the intensity of the grief after the loss, this natural response does not correlate to how you must experience the loss in the future.



It is not necessary to prove your love by suffering for the rest of your life.

Strengthening the bridge of love and gratitude allows you to hold onto the person *and* let go of the pain of loss.