Dealing with Pain is a Process (Grief/Loss/Mourning)

Experiencing a major loss is never easy, be it a loved one, a home, a marriage, a career/job or having to give up a good thing for a better thing. Loss is loss.

Even though the above mentioned losses are different in many ways, there are some common elements to the grieving and mourning process no matter what our grief and loss story.

Grief and loss professionals believe that the difference between "acute grief" and "mourning" need to be distinguished. Acute grief is the period immediately after the loss. Mourning occurs a little bit later after some time has passed, when everyone has gone home, no one is cooking meals anymore, friends and family stop checking in on you as much and so on. Mourning is the period when you have to begin adapting to your new world and finding your new normal without the deceased, without the spouse/marriage, without the four bedroom home or without the career that you loved .

When speaking about a deceased loved one, you have to start making decisions without input from the deceased, eating meals without the deceased, no longer being able to call them on the phone, spending the holidays without the deceased, waking up without the deceased beside you, and a whole host of other daily realizations that this person is no longer present in the physical.

If you search the internet, you will find armfuls of information on grief and loss, however there is one particular illustration that I think hits home with most people. It's called the Grief Wheel. It goes like this....

LOSS -> SHOCK -> PROTEST -> DISORGANIZATION -> REORGANIZATION -> RECOVERY

**Loss** - you discover that your loved one or an important aspect of your life is gone.

**Shock** - you feel numb, the loss has not sunk in just yet, you may experience outbursts of crying.

**Protes**t - you may be preoccupied with thoughts of the deceased, you may feel angry or you may yearn to have them back.

**Disorganization** - you may find yourself withdrawing, sad/depressed, restless, or having trouble focusing or feeling confused or out of sorts.

**Reorganization** - in this phase you may find meaning in the loss, you try new patterns of behavior and develop new interests or renew your socialization habits.

**Recovery** - you accept that the loss has occurred even though it is painful but you make a conscious decision to actively keep living and actively keep striving for what God has in store for you.

The last and most concerning stage of the Grief Wheel is the **Deterioration** stage. In this stage a good amount of time has passed but you still feel as if it is the first day that you discovered the loss. You can't sleep, you can't eat, your crying constantly, you're irritable, you may exhibit physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, digestive problems or shortness of breath. If you reach this stage, it is time to seek help to get unstuck. Time to start taking steps forward versus standing still and dealing with the loss in a healthy way.

If you need help jump starting your mourning process, I'm here for you....call me.