

# Seasons

## The Loss of the Come and Go of Life

Seasons and loss . . . each are part and parcel of the other. Life is fluid, not static. It's always changing in ways that we sometimes see, but most often in ways that we don't see or at least don't entirely recognize. That's how life works. Without change we would stagnate, yet in many cases we abhor change because part of change involves the reality of loss. Change is loss and loss is change. Yet if we are to change and if we are to move forward and progress, loss is an unalterable part of it all. In fact, the oddity of it all may be that the most powerful, growth-inducing part of change is the loss that we experience in it. So the very thing that we want to avoid is the very thing that may benefit us the most.

Yet we tend to define loss as simply that . . . loss. Loss comes in various ways. Sometimes it's a result of our own choices, whether those choices are those we've made intentionally or those we've made unintentionally. Either way, we caused it. Other times loss is entirely out of our control, being the result of someone else's choices or a series of circumstances that have come together through events or situations that we had no hand in creating and often didn't even know was happening. Sometimes loss is nothing more than a natural part of life, being an absolutely normal progression of how it all works.

Sometimes loss is entirely right and healthy. At other times it's entirely cruel and unfair. Sometimes we can recoup the loss or replace it with something greater than whatever it was that we lost. At other times the hole remains empty, dark and painful. Sometimes loss makes sense and at other times it makes no sense at all despite how much we want to make some sense of it. However it comes, loss comes. What it does, it does. Yet, it naturally carries a strongly negative stigma that we rarely question, and because we do we miss the opportunities and positive progression that's often a natural outcome of our loss.

### **Missed Opportunity Because of a Skewed View**

We don't conceptualize loss as something of the ebb and flow of life, where things come and things go in some sort of natural rhythm. We don't see loss as letting something go whose time has possibly come, or something that leaves to make space for something else new and potentially grander to take its place. We don't see it as being a time to close down one piece or part of our lives in order to open up something entirely new and fresh somewhere else. In loss we can't see beyond the loss itself to the purpose inherent in the loss. And we typically can't do that for two fundamental reasons.

First, we automatically and quite naturally focus on the pain in the loss. Sometimes to varying degrees we can predict loss. However, experiencing an actual loss is much, much different than the anticipation of it. Most often the actual intensity of the pain, the timing of the pain, the nature of the pain and reverberations of the pain involved in loss is such that it's in large part unanticipated and unexpected. Therefore, it consumes the entirety of attention; in other words we become engulfed in it. The pain that we feel in loss is most often very significant because it's never quite what we expected. This dynamic can make the pain in loss both deep, frightening and something of an emotional tornado.

Second, because of the intensity of the pain, the pain becomes the point of our focus over the actual loss itself. Initially we feel the loss as well as the pain associated with loss. However, at times the intensity of the pain itself replaces the actual loss; in essence pain

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becomes our loss as it displaces so many other things in our lives. When that happens, we're focused largely on our pain rather than grieving the loss that caused our pain. With the focus on the pain alone we obviously get no resolution to the loss as the loss isn't our focus. Subsequently, the loss itself devolves into something of a vicious tyrant whose intent was to steal and inflict pain in the stealing, rather than being an agent of opportunity and a causeway to growth.

### **Ebb and Flow – Come and Go**

Many times we're not attuned to what's transpiring in our lives. We're not attentive to the larger picture; to a grander scheme that's bigger than just preserving the status quo. We're typically focused on preserving whatever gains we think we've obtained and solidifying the aspects of our lives that we feel give us a sense of security. We lock whole areas of our lives down in our efforts to construct what we perceive to be a life that's safe, secure and stable. Anything that jeopardizes the status quo that we perceive as providing that stability is seen as the enemy and something that we adamantly stand against.

While preserving those stable areas of our lives can be wise, this preservation must be tempered with the reality that in many instances change and loss can actually birth greater stability. Change often involves loss which is seen as destabilizing. Yet, if we are daring enough to embrace the larger picture, loss is often the precursor to a host of things that import deeper stability and a more profound security.

The problem is that loss brings temporary instability by virtue of the loss itself. The stability that loss can ultimately bring is often something a bit more long-term and less immediate. Wisdom involves making changes and embracing loss in the present with an eye towards the long-term outcome of enhanced stability. Loss is an investment in very things that we think loss is causing us to lose. Quite often loss is the very avenue through which all the very things we fear losing are actually obtained, deepened, solidified and expanded. Such is both the marvel and oddity of loss.

### **Loss as Necessity**

If we really want to maximize the life that we have, and if we are really desirous of living fully and broadly we must be willing to experience loss. Loss is the building block to something greater. Loss clears away that which is dead or expended or outdated or completed. It makes room to build upon whatever we've lost; assuming that the thing we've lost was part of a larger progression of growth in our lives. Loss is part of gain. It's a natural process where gain is the ultimate outcome and loss is a part of process, not the final outcome of the process. Loss is journey, not destination; a step, not the point of stepping off. Loss is fundamental to gain, not the end-game.

Maybe we need to move beyond the pain attached to loss and the apprehension regarding the instability we think it creates. Maybe we need a bigger vision that embraces loss as a natural phenomenon that creates space for something new and enhanced to come into our lives. Maybe we need to be less concerned for security and more concerned about growth.

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Maybe we need to be a whole lot less present-focused and whole lot more possibility-focused. We just might need to realize that security and stability is important, but it's not paramount. Maybe we need to embrace loss not because of the pain that comes with it, but because of the possibilities inherent in it. Rethink your loss. Underneath the pain, it's probably got a whole lot more promise than you thought.