

From the reading in *Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner* I found several interesting points. The first was the idea of “phases” in mourning. While I know that the chapter is referring to loss via death, these phases resonated with my experience in near divorce. One day, I came home from a business trip to an empty apartment, and although I knew this was going to happen ahead of time, I went through each phase of loss – numbness, yearning, disorganization/despair and reorganization in a matter of 24 hours.

The other important point was the idea of mourning tasks. The author states that “tasks imply that the mourner needs to take action and do something.” This idea of tasks seems to help the mourner move into a place of empowerment against something for which they are otherwise helpless. While I see the importance of the tasks, I don’t see them as standing alone. Both the phases of grief and the 4 tasks for mourning (1- Accept the reality, 2- Process the pain of grief, 3- Adjust to a world without the deceased 4- Find a way to remember the deceased while also going on with life) can be used to make sense of a loss. I also see the 4 tasks of mourning as specifically relating to death. It doesn’t translate so easily into loss that doesn’t involve death.

The last point that stood out to me in this reading was the Dual Process Model. My best friend just lost her mother-in-law and when I went over to pay my respects, she described her husband’s oscillating that was discussed in the text. I could see how one minute he was focused on the work of keeping the family together and another focused on his own grief. This also resonated with my divorce experience. One minute you’re a sobbing mess but the next it’s time

to make dinner or get the kids to bed. The experience of moving on with life while simultaneously grieving the loss seems to be a healthy way to handle a major loss.