

Individual & Family Development

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April 25, 2023

Seven losses

Leaving my country: which was a major loss for me. My family decided to move to the United States when I was in my second year of medical school. I told my parents that I wanted to stay by myself and finish my degree. I wanted to become a doctor to help people. In December 2011, I came to visit my family in New Jersey. One day when I was with my parents, God spoke to me and said, "I want you here, do not go back." I cried so much that night. I told my parents that I was going to stay. I remember waiting for one year, hoping that God would speak again and tell me to go back, but it did not happen. I was getting hopeless. I did not want to start all over again. Then one day, while walking in the street, God spoke to me and let me know that I would not return back, that I would not be a doctor, but He would use my life to heal people in another way and through His word. After that, I accepted my reality. I knew that it would be hard. I did not know what my future would look like, but I decided to move on.

Furthermore, I **lost my church:** I left behind the church where I received Christ. I stayed there for only a year, but I learned so much from the pastor's preaching, and it impacted me deeply. It was hard to listen to other people preaching for a while, over time I learned to like it. But still I missed his preachings.

In my romantic life, I lost my boyfriend, a good guy whom I thought I was going to marry. After a long time, I adapted to the new life that awaited me. In every loss, there are inevitable changes that take us down different paths, but I think the key is to move on and process our losses in a healthy way, knowing that it is part of what happens in this life.

Loss of friends: when I was in high school, I met Belyiny, Orfa, Cindy, Marlene, and Maria. They became my friends, and we studied together for two years, sharing many memories. They knew I loved soccer, so I decided to form our own soccer team to play against other students. They supported me, and even though only two of them could play, the other two played just to be together. I remember feeling both happy and sad at the same time because as a teenager, I thought that everything was going to last forever, but in reality, it was only for a time. I enjoyed being with them, and we fit together perfectly. When we graduated from high school, everyone took different paths. I was the most affected person, and I tried so hard to keep us together, but everyone moved on with their lives. I did not, and it was only with Belyiny that I kept a close relationship with. Eventually, she moved to the United States, and it took me a long time to accept that we were not going to be together anymore.

Now, I have great memories, and I text them once in a while. I have them on social media, and I can live without them now, but before, I could not. I realized that my grieving process was long, and for a long time, I refused to lose the friendship we had. In this class, I learned that it is normal to grieve when we lose a friendship

Loss of father. I did not grow up with my biological father and was only raised by my mother. I never met my father, but I know that when I was one year old, he was around. He had another family, and my mother did not know. She eventually discovered it, and they separated after that. When I was seven years old, my mother started a relationship with my stepfather. As a kid, I wanted to meet my father, but he disappeared and did not come back. At the time, my mom wanted me to call his new partner father, and I was forced to do so. I did not like it at all and did not feel it in my heart. If I refused, my mom would punish me, so I got used to it, but it did not mean anything to me.

On the other hand, when I was eleven years old, I received a call from my father. It made me feel happy that I wanted to meet him. He always said he would send me some gifts and to wait for the bus that is called San Pablo. They would stop, and someone would meet me at the bus stop. I remember waiting every day for that, but the bus did not stop. He called me again when I was fourteen, and at that time, I understood everything. I was not excited like I was before. Then he asked me what I wanted for my birthday, and I said nothing. He got mad, and I knew he was lying.

After that, all I wanted to do was see him and hit him hard. First, because he hurt my mom when they were together - he was abusive. Second, he lied to my mom and left her, and lied to me. When I became a believer, God healed me, and I forgave him. When I was already living in New Jersey, I decided to go to my country and look for him. It was not easy, but I found out that he had died. I read his death certificate, and it stated that he died because of AIDS. I was surprised because he died in his mid-40s, and I wanted to tell him that I forgave him. I was going to tell him that I had become a Christian and wanted to share the gospel with him. Years later, I

found out that my uncle shared Christ with him before he died. I learned something that makes me feel good is that death and loss are very personal issues, and individual responses to them vary. In this loss, I feel that I did not lose anything - perhaps the opportunity to forgive him and share the gospel. When I think about it, I do not feel any pain. I believe that is because I did not have any attachment to him."

The loss of home: When I moved out of my parents' house, I was not looking for freedom without my family, but for peace in my life. It took a lot of courage to tell them I was leaving the house. My stepfather, especially, told me the reason why I was moving was that I wanted to do what I wanted. Honestly, I did not care about him. I was just sad leaving my mother, my brother, and my sister. But I could not see my mother suffer with my stepfather. I was going crazy; I was in a toxic atmosphere. For a couple of nights, I cried because I missed them. I wanted to know how they were doing. I had to work to support myself and study. I lost being with them, but I gained peace in my life. It was a meaning-making process for me; I was able to move forward by myself. It's important to recognize that the loss of home can be a challenging and emotional experience, but it can also be an opportunity for growth and self-discovery. I believe I showed resilience and determination in navigating this difficult period in my life and should be proud of the progress I have made.

After moving out for the first time and gaining some much-needed peace in my life, my mother asked me to move back in for some reason. Despite my reservations, I agreed to move back in with the hope that things would be different this time. However, as time went by, I realized that the toxic atmosphere I had experienced before had not changed, and I began to feel

the same way you did before you moved out. The pandemic made it difficult for you to move out immediately, and you had to stay with your family for a year. Eventually, I couldn't take it anymore, and I made the decision to move out again.

However, this time, I chose not to tell my stepfather about my plans, instead informing only my siblings. I informed my mother on the same day you were moving out. Perhaps this decision was based on my previous experience of telling my stepfather about my first move, which resulted in negative feedback. Also a way to avoid conflict and keep the move as peaceful as possible.. I took control of my situation and made the best decision for myself without letting anyone else's opinions or reactions affect my choices. It can be challenging to navigate family dynamics and make decisions that are best for ourselves, but by moving out and making choices on my own terms, I have taken a step towards personal growth and independence.

Spiritual loss: I became a Christian in 2011, and my whole life changed. My life was going up as I sought the Lord with so much passion. Everything was for Him - my time, my thoughts, all my love. He was first. However, I do not remember when that changed, probably around 2019. I felt that I had lost my relationship with God. Although I had been attending church since my salvation, it was not the same anymore. For a few years, I was sad because I lost that connection with God. That loss pushed me back, and I grieved because things were not the same anymore. I blamed myself for a long time for not being the same person anymore.

Now I understand that our spiritual journeys are not always linear and that we may experience periods of growth and change as we navigate through life. It's okay to acknowledge the challenges we face and recognize that we are not perfect. It was hard to learn to find a balance between my responsibilities and my relationship with God, so that I can continue to grow

spiritually without neglecting our duties. By prioritizing my relationship with God and making time for Him in my daily life, I can continue to fill my soul with His love and guidance. I know that God loves me unconditionally and is always there for me, no matter where I am in my spiritual journey. I Trust in His love and guidance, and continue to seek Him with passion and dedication.

In conclusion, losses are an inevitable part of life. Whether it's a loss of a loved one, a relationship, a home, or a sense of identity, we all experience losses at some point. It's important to allow ourselves to grieve and process these losses in a healthy way. By doing so, we can learn and grow from these experiences, and ultimately find meaning and purpose in our lives.

Reference

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