

Journaling Exercise: Grief Inventory

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” Matt 5:4
This “social isolation” from COVID-19 has brought about huge, unprecedented, and painful changes to the world. Grief is a natural response. Name it to help tame it.

Name it. Due to the coronavirus, what are some of the things I am grieving, some things I have lost, some events or gatherings I long for, some things I had hoped for, some situations that are not as they should be?

As a result of those losses, I feel (name all the emotions you can name):

Emotions show up in our bodies. How do I “feel” my emotions in my body?

Sometimes we can make unhealthy choices in grief. Let’s get curious. How do my feelings affect my thinking and my behaving? When I feel disappointed or afraid or angry from these losses, how is my thought life affected? How is my behavior affected? We can feel disappointed, fearful, hurt or angry, but the work of maturity is what to DO with emotions. It’s okay to name it, feel it. But then watch for how the emotion moves you. (Example: “When I am disappointed, I can let the irritation build up and I can be hurtful to others. Then I feel shame for acting rudely, and the cycle continues”.) Write down one of the negative cycles of how your feelings affect your thinking & behaving.

Tame it. If what I do to cope with the loss is unhealthy and violates my values of the person I want to be (and ultimately is hurting me/others more), what are some new behaviors and ways of thinking I can practice instead? How can I care well for myself while I grieve these losses? And how can I offer myself grace in this hard new territory?

One of the gifts of naming grief is the way it helps bring acceptance of the current moment. Naming the grief also keeps us from minimizing it. Additionally, it gives language to reach out as we collectively grieve together. What is one thing I can do with my grief that helps move me closer to God and closer to others, helping bring a deeper connection?

A few tips from Christine! Remember:

- Be patient with yourself. This is uncharted territory for all of us.
- Take care of yourself. Grief is exhausting.
- Adjust your expectations.
- Accept what you cannot change.
- Find strength in others. Be authentic about what you are experiencing.
- Create value from this experience.
- Live in the now. Turn to God in the present moment. He cares about your losses!