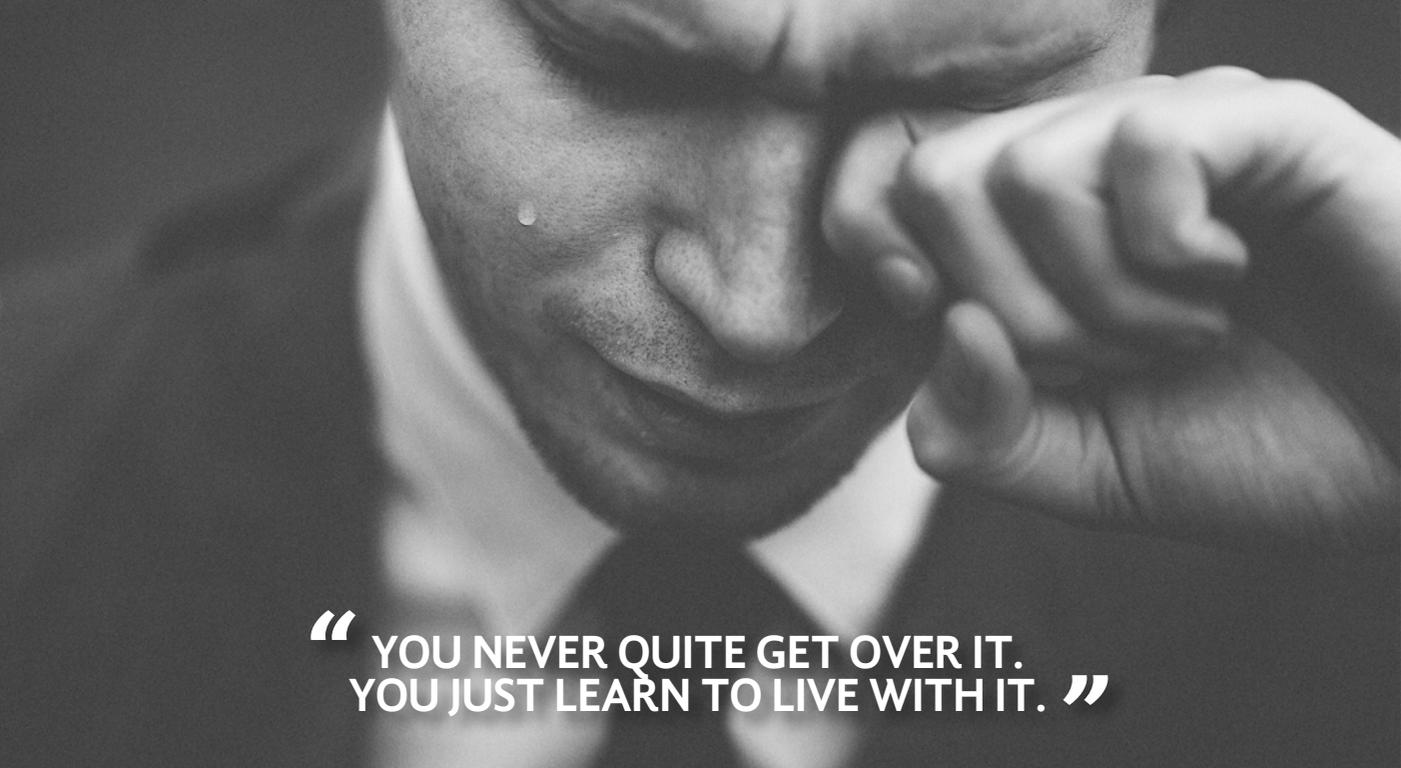


GOOD GRIEF: THINKING ABOUT LOSS



“ YOU NEVER QUITE GET OVER IT.
YOU JUST LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT. ”

At this time of the year it is just about impossible to avoid the topic of loss. This is naturally a period for reflecting and remembering and with that can come a mixture of emotions. Loss is one of those life experiences that no human being is immune to. Throughout our lives loss touches us in a variety of ways, some obvious and expected and others surprising and confusing.

So, what is loss? Perhaps we automatically assume that loss is associated with the death of someone close to us or that we care about. Loss can, of course be this however can be much broader than that. Anyone or anything that leaves our life and as result produces grief and sadness has been a loss.

Dealing with loss can be a demanding and challenging experience therefore spending anytime in questioning whether or not this loss is valid and if you should or should not be feeling it is most likely energy wasted. In short if you are feeling grief you have experienced a loss.

A number of writers have determined that

loss and grief moves through a number of stages before you arrive at any kind of resolution. This is different for us all. Even the idea of achieving some kind of resolution can be misleading. “You never quite get over it. You just learn to live with it” as a widow recently reminded me many years down the line in her journey. Crucially our journey is uniquely our journey. It can be comforting and even encouraging to hear about others experiences of coping with loss. However, this should never be something used to measure how we are doing. To measure our progress, we need to only compare where we are with where we have come from.

At PRRT we assist people in their journeys of loss every day. This can be loss of identity and job role, loss of physical health or loss of colleagues and loved ones to name but a few. It is truly encouraging to see people of all ages come from places of heart-breaking loss through the ups and downs to coping and feeling better. So, if loss is a personal journey it is worth remembering that you will move at different speeds at different times but as long as you are moving forward

you are progressing. Several people on their loss journey have shared with me that you can feel some days like you have turned a corner and then run straight into an emotional brick wall! But the important thing is keep inching forward.

It is possible to get stuck on your journey. This may show in different ways such as your grief continues to feel as raw today as it did shortly after your loss. Extremes in thinking and behaving are also a possible sign. Maybe spending too much time thinking about your loss or alternatively too little, avoiding reminders of your loss or spending all your time surrounded by these. If all your feelings and thoughts about what you have lost are all negative, things might be a bit out of balance. Sometimes we need a little help to get us unstuck. Always remember it might be your personal journey but you don't have to travel it alone!

If you would like to speak to someone at PRRT about getting some help or guidance in dealing with your loss please contact the Psychological Therapies team at the number below.

PRRT is based at Maryfield, Holywood and provides psychological therapies, physiotherapy, personal development and training to the retired police population. PSNI employees can access our healthcare services via referrals from PSNI occupational health. Serving officers can access personal development and training directly.

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