

TAKING A PEEK BENEATH

LOOKING AT WHAT OUR GRIEF BEHAVIORS CAN TELL US



Giving ourselves compassion

"Beneath every behavior there is a feeling. And beneath each feeling is a need. And when we meet that need rather than focus on the behavior, we begin to deal with the cause, not the symptom." - Ashleigh Warner

I hope the above quote makes you pause for a minute and think about how you treat yourself during tough moments of grief. As a Therapist, more times than not, I see people being harder on themselves than others. They can't quite find the compassion within, that they so freely give outward. But what if we start looking inward and rather than judging our feelings or behaviors, we acknowledge that it goes much deeper? From there, we don't have to harshly judge ourselves anymore. We can see that our inner self is asking for something. Just as a child possibly throwing a temper tantrum or getting so overwhelmed they don't know how to handle what they are feeling, we as adults can struggle with the same issues - it just might look a bit different. At the heart of it though, we as a human being trying to figure out this confusing life, is just looking to have a need filled. Even though we may have grieved other people, beings, or situations before ... we've never been here at this point in our lives, grieving the exact things and/or people we are grieving right now. It is only natural that we not have all of the answers. It's only natural that we feel a bit discombobulated and/or disoriented. But what we don't need, is shame and judgement (from ourselves and others) for trying to learn how to grieve along the way.



Making the shift

Creating a new practice to break old habits

We all know from years of New Years resolutions that it can be hard to start a new practice and turn it into a habit, but the good news is - this is why we call it a practice! These shifts can be a challenge, but the more positivity we add to the practice, the more likely we are to continue to work at it.

So let's break this down:

When something arises in us that we may scold ourselves for, let's try getting curious about it instead. You can ask yourself questions like:

- I can see that I'm struggling. What is it that is bothering me?
- Is there a specific feeling or a number of feelings that could help name what is going on right now?
- Why might these things be coming up for me and what do I need right now?

Those three simple questions addressed the different layers we want to take a peek under: behavior, feeling, and need.

Sometimes just allowing ourselves to name what is happening can help us to move forward in a more productive and compassionate way, than just "expecting" ourselves to do better. We as humans thrive on safe and meaningful connections - but many times we do not work to foster those important connections within our own bodies, brains, and hearts.

Let's just say it - grief can be hard. We need our own self-compassion and attentiveness now more than ever. Remember that the more times we gently walk ourselves through this simple practice, the more of a natural habit it becomes and the more readily available it is for when we need it most. **TRUST ME, YOU DESERVE IT!**