

Lesson # 2 Emotions & Board of Directors FOWTA Chapters 1, 2

This week, we tackle what I think is one of our biggest challenges on our journey: our emotions. Most of us experience feelings so intense, we think we've become a different person. We're specifically going to talk about grief, depression, fear, and anger. Hard stuff. But if we're going to be real about facing forward, these emotions that have us wondering if our upside down world will ever right itself, must be addressed.

While grief may be our first and most intensely felt emotion, others grip us at different times. Being real here, there are moments that our emotions seem to rule, and we may even feel our mind has spun out of control. It's not fun to wonder if we're going crazy! I can say, 'I understand,' and mean it. Grief alone can make us feel that way.

Here are some important truths about our emotions.

Our emotions are intense. Why? Two became one and now half of us is ripped away. Every aspect of our life changes like it or not, ready or not.

Our emotions must be acknowledged. Denial is not a healthy permanent option. Admitting what we feel is the beginning of moving forward and being able to make changes in our new life.

Our emotions can become empowering and energizing and a positive force as we create a new life. I realize this may be hard to believe especially if you are in those early months or even years.

Story: Margaret Nyman

Facts about emotions:

Grief is the normal response of anguish and sorrow to loss. While often described in stages of shock, disbelief, denial, and acceptance, our grief does not fit neatly into stages.

Moving through grief

Be kind to yourself.

Give yourself time to heal.

Write a journal.

Surround yourself with positive people.

Depression is the *normal* reaction to loss, crisis, or any traumatic event. Symptoms may include

1. moodiness (or sadness)
2. painful thinking (negative thoughts about self, lack of motivation, indecision)
3. physical symptoms of sleeplessness and loss of appetite
4. anxiety resulting in irritability
5. delusional thinking

Here's good news about depression:

It's normal. (We are not crazy!)

It's manageable. (We will move through it.)

It's treatable. (For some, medical and/or therapeutic assistance is needed and helpful.)

Fear is being afraid of an unknown or negative expectation. It is normal in times of change and facing the unknown, but temporary.

Anger is a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility. Its not unusual in the wake of great changes that we feel anger about the circumstances, people's behavior, even at institutions with whom we had to interact regarding our loss.

May I introduce you to a concept that is helping me navigate change? I introduce it here because this concept is particularly helpful in addressing emotions. It also is helpful with the myriad of decisions we have to make.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Imagine a board room with a large impressive table. High back chairs surround it. You sit at the head of the table. Each chair represents a person to advise you, to vote on your actions, and bring you information. You listen to these people whether you wish to or not. They are your VIP's, the movers and shakers of your world, the POI's (people of influence) in your life.

What determines who sits in each chair? Likely two were, and perhaps are, your parents. You invite favorite teachers or relatives to join your board. Life events may result in an intruder. If your parents divorced, one parent may vacate their chair and someone not of your choosing sits down. Their power over your life may give them VIP status whether you like it or not.

These may be relatives, coworkers, people you admire, even people you don't admire but might have controlled some of your decisions in the past.

You're life has changed now. You need people at that board to give you good advice, to help you navigate through this time.

I'm going to suggest to you 6 specific types of people that YOU need to select for your board. These are people that you want to influence you, advice you. Remember these are people you invite to your table.

Chart with Board of Directors If Justin Strode can give you his that we used in the DVD in a way that's workable for you, his email is justinmichaelstrode@gmail.com

A godly widow

A person with financial wisdom

A practical friend

An encourager

A person with spiritual discernment & courage

A relative whose priority is YOUR well-being

You'll have the opportunity to personalize your board in your personal reflection time.

It has been said that a crisis is a terrible thing to waste. How true. This is our opportunity to change and grow strong.

Table talk

What impact do our emotions have on our decision making?

Why is grieving so different in each of us? What should be our response to each other, considering these differences?

While you many not experience depression, many do. Why should we not judge our friend suffering from depression?

What are some of the fears we as widows experience in our new life alone?

What is the value of creating your personal board of directors? What does each contribute in your new circumstances?

Prayer: Pray for each other for discernment of those whose advice is not spiritually sound or in YOUR best interests.

Personal Reflection: Create your Board of Directors

Chart with Board of Directors with additionally a blank space for them to write in a name.

Create your personalized Board of Directors here. Write the name of the best person who can help you in each category.

What role do each of these people play in your life today?

Do you need to remove some from your table?

What new people might you contact and seek their council in your new circumstance?

Reach out and rely on these 'directors' to help you with decisions.

You may feel that circumstances are ruling your emotions. Making changes may be necessary, but starting with small steps is at least a start.

List some circumstances you wish were different.

What specific steps can you take?

Your list may be overwhelming. Select 2 to address this week.

Remember, only you can change your personal circumstances.

Scripture for reflection on hope

I Thes 4:13 ¹³ Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

Lamentations 3:19-25

- ¹⁹ I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.
²⁰ I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.
²¹ Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:

²² Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
²³ They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."

²⁵ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;

Psalm 118:6

- ⁶ The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalm 145: 14-19 ¹⁴ The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

- ¹⁵ The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
¹⁶ You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.
¹⁷ The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
¹⁸ The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
¹⁹ He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.

