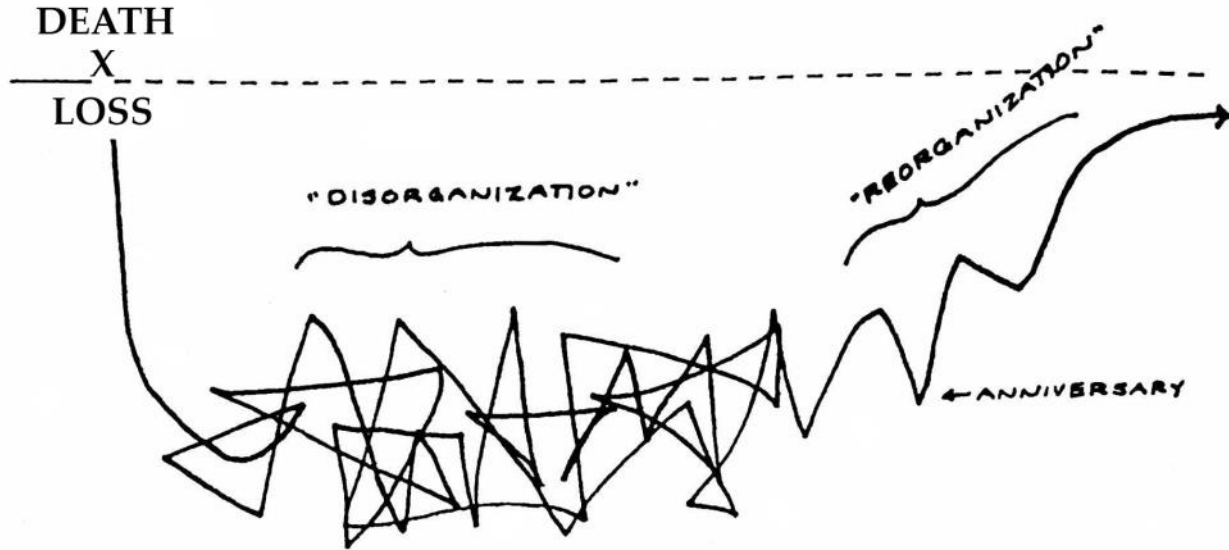


The Grief Process

with credit and special thanks to John S. Stephenson, Ph.D



"Grief is a blob." (See diagram)

It is NOT linear, but rather unpredictable, capricious, uncontrollable, full of ups and downs and backwards and forwards. There is no timetable for grief - WE GRIEVE IN OUR OWN WAY AND IN OUR OWN TIME! It is characterized by sudden and unexpected PANGS of anguish, sadness, and longing, prompted by a memory, a voice, handwriting, a scent, a place, a date, a song. Grief can be lonely and isolating. It often seems like no one wants to talk about your loss when talking about it is what you need more than anything else. It affects the body as well as the mind and the emotions. Symptoms such as headache, insomnia, loss of appetite, forgetfulness, shortness of breath, tightness in the chest are all normal expressions of grief. Unfortunately, our culture often ignores the demands of grief once the funeral is over. Friends and relatives may try to hurry you through your grief, with encouragement to not dwell on the past, to not look back, to get on with your life. Try to listen to, yourself and your needs. Friends mean well, but sometimes don't understand what you are going through. Take care of yourself while you grieve. Grief is not measles. You will eventually get through the loss, but you will never get over it. —John S. Stephenson Ph.D.