

# Grieving Mindfully - Novice High

## Lesson Information

### Positive Psychology Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. identify what grief is.
2. recognize their own grief.

### Language Learning Outcomes

Students will...

1. understand grieving vocabulary.
2. use grieving vocabulary.
3. connect content to background knowledge.
4. actively participate in a conversation through proper responses.
5. listen and follow directions extensively.

### Materials Needed

- [Forgiveness: My Burden Was Made Light](#)
- [Inside Out - Tears of Joy / An Mix Emotion Memory](#)
- [A Meditation on Grief and Injustice](#)

## Overview

Grief and loss are experienced usually regarded with great fear and apprehension. That is why many of us wish to either avoid or rapidly solve them. Grieving mindfully offers the alternative of welcoming the experience as an opportunity to develop our humanity and, consequently, increase our wellbeing. Help students understand the word grief: deep sadness caused by the loss of something or someone important to you.

## **Activate Background Knowledge**

Explain that today's lesson is about grieving mindfully, and ask students how they think mindfulness and grief are connected. You can help students access background knowledge by helping them understand that we all have experienced grief at some point in our lives. It could be through the loss of a family member or maybe even during the process of moving here, to the U.S. Invite students to recall that experience and to reflect upon the way they felt to better understand what grief is and how we can grieve mindfully.

## **Activity 1: Vocabulary**

Help students understand words associated with grief by presenting the following definitions and examples.

- cope: to succeed in dealing with a difficult problem or situation
  - She had to learn how to cope after her fiance broke up with her.
- sorrow: a feeling of great sadness, usually because someone has died or because something terrible has happened to you
  - He felt great sorrow after the death of his father.
- manage: to succeed in doing something difficult, especially after trying very hard
  - The boy managed to finish school despite being very poor.
- loss: the fact of no longer having something, or of having less of it than you used to have, or the process by which this happens
  - After his accident, he suffered a loss of hearing.
- grief: deep sadness caused by the loss of something or someone important to you
  - The death of her friend caused her much grief.

Retrieved from: Longman Dictionary

## Activity 2: Speaking

\*Note: There are different levels of grief. For example, not being accepted to a school vs. losing a parent. Some students may be going through something difficult right now or not feel ready to talk about certain experiences. Remind them that they don't have to talk about something that is too heavy but can apply this lesson to something less personal.

Have the students discuss the following questions with a partner:

- What different emotions do you feel because of loss?
  - I feel \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.
- How do you feel when you lose someone important to you?
  - When I lose someone important to me, I feel \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- What helps you cope when you are sad?
  - I cope by (ing ver) and (ing verb).

Now ask the students to think of a time when they lost someone or something important to them. Ask if anyone would like to share. Have them discuss the following questions:

- How did you feel?
  - I felt \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- What reminded you of your loss?
  - \_\_\_\_\_ reminded me of \_\_\_\_\_.
- How did you manage your sadness?
  - I managed my sadness by (ing verb) and (ing verb).
- What did you do that made you feel better?
  - (ing verb) and (ing verb) made me feel better.

## Activity 3: Listening/Speaking

Look at the following questions before watching:

- What happened to the man and his family?
- How did he feel?

Watch the following (beginning-1:40) and then discuss the answers to the questions.

[Forgiveness: My Burden Was Made Light](#)

[https://youtu.be/E7zwQ\\_7q-fU](https://youtu.be/E7zwQ_7q-fU)

Have students listen for the answer to this question:

- What are some of the positive emotions he feels?

Skip ahead in the same video (7:05-end) and discuss the answer to the question.

## Activity 4: Reading/Speaking

Have students read the following story:

Kisa Gautami was a young woman from a wealthy family who was happily married to an important merchant. When her only son was one-year-old, he fell ill and died suddenly. Kisa Gautami was struck with grief, she could not bear the death of her only child. Weeping and groaning, she took her dead baby in her arms and went from house to house begging all the people in the town for the news of a way to bring her son back to life.

Of course, nobody could help her but Kisa Gautami would not give up. Finally, she came across a Buddhist who advised her to go and see the Buddha himself.

When she carried the dead child to the Buddha and told Him her sad story, He listened with patience and compassion, and then said to her, "Kisa Gautami, there is only one way to solve your problem. Go and find me four or five mustard seeds from any family in which there has never been a death."

Kisa Gautami was filled with hope and set off straight away to find such a household. But very soon she discovered that every family she visited had experienced the death of one person or another. At last, she understood what the Buddha had wanted her to find out for herself — that suffering is a part of life, and death comes to us all. Once Kisa Guatami accepted the fact that death is inevitable, she could stop her grieving. She took the child's body away and later returned to the Buddha to become one of His followers.

After they finish reading, have them discuss the following questions:

- What happened to Kisa Gautami?
- What made Kisa feel better?
- How can this story help you when you are grieving?

## Activity 5: Speaking

Show the following video from Inside Out. You may need to explain that blue is sadness and yellow is joy. Sadness and joy are making a memory together for a girl that is grieving.

[Inside Out - Tears of Joy / An Mix Emotion Memory](#)

<https://youtu.be/zAd0KtPgNoI>

After watching the video, explain that usually, things are not only sad. Even when something sad happens, we might have good memories or learn new things from a sad experience.

Have students think about the following questions before talking about them with a partner.

- Have you ever felt the same way as the girl in the video?
- What did you learn from being sad?
- What good memories do you have from your loss?

## **Activity 6: Listening (Meditation)**

Remind students that meditation can help them feel relaxed and calm when they are in pain. Here is a guided meditation on grief that can be used in class. Have students listen and follow directions.

[A Meditation on Grief and Injustice](#)

[https://youtu.be/\\_EN8sYGjy3g](https://youtu.be/_EN8sYGjy3g)

## **Homework**

There might be students who are currently going through a grieving process so you can ask them to think about that situation and how they could possibly grieve mindfully. Some ideas presented in this class that they could use are changing their perspective, sharing their experience with others, or even allowing themselves to feel the pain, feel sad and then move on. If students are not currently experiencing grief, invite them to make a list of things they can do next time they feel grief.

## **Follow-Up**

### **Tuesday:**

Share the list you made with a partner. You can also invite students to think of someone they know who might be currently experiencing grief. Based on the ideas they wrote down in their lists, how could they help that person?

### **Wednesday:**

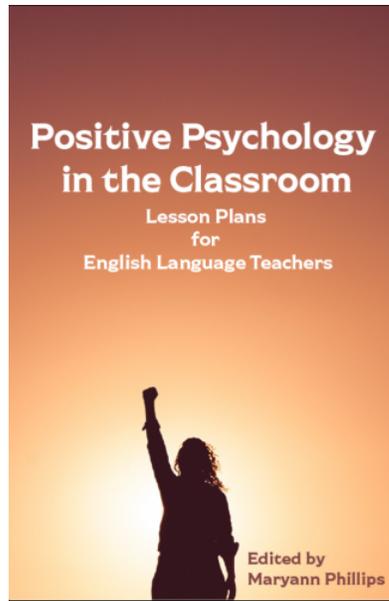
Discuss the following question:

- Why is it important to feel the pain of grief?

Help students understand that by allowing ourselves to feel the pain we are able to consciously accept what happened to us and move on to find happiness and well-being in our lives again.

### **Thursday:**

Write down how you feel about grieving mindfully. Help students understand that we all have experienced grief at some point in our lives. It could be through the loss of a family member, a great job opportunity or even a valuable belonging. Invite students to recall that experience and to reflect upon the way they felt, and how they dealt with sadness in that situation. By doing this you can help students identify what strategies worked for them in the past so that they better know how to grieve mindfully in the future.



Phillips, M. (2022). *Positive Psychology in the Classroom: Lesson Plans for English Language Teachers*. EdTech Books.

<https://edtechbooks.org/PositivePsychologyintheClassroom>