

# Coping with Rejection & Loss

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# Rejection



Rejection can be defined as the act of dismissing of a proposal, idea, or pushing someone or something away. Rejection can be experienced on a large scale or in small ways in everyday life.



One may experience rejection from one's family of origin, a friend, or a romantic partner, and the resulting emotions can often be painful.



Rejection can also result from life events not involving relationships, such as being turned down for a desired position at work or receiving a rejection letter from a college.

# Brain and Rejection

- As human beings, we are extremely sensitive to rejection, especially forms of social rejection.
- A 2011 study from the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* showed that social rejection activates the same brain pathways as when we experience physical pain (Chan, 2017).
- 2017 study published in the journal *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* shows that the same parts of the brain that light up when we experience social rejection are also activated when we witness others experiencing social rejection (Chan, 2017)

# Brain and Rejection

- The researchers have discovered that the area of the brain that is active during pain is the same part of the brain associated with motivation, reward, and addiction cravings (Chan, 2017).
- Brain imaging shows similarities between romantic rejection and cocaine craving.
- We can relive and re-experience social pain more vividly than we can physical pain.

# We Aren't That Good at Dealing with Loss

In general humans aren't good with dealing with loss. We tend to view loss as much more significant than gain.

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman received the Nobel Prize for his work in Prospect Theory. Using empirical evidence as the base, the theory describes how individuals evaluate potential losses and gains.

Individuals view the pain of losing \$50 as much stronger than the joy of receiving \$50. Thus, we tend to be loss averse and will be motivated to avoid risks that involve losing rather than take risks involved in the potential for gains.

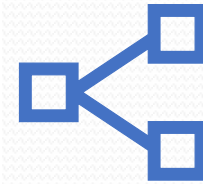
# Impact of Rejection



Rejection can create surges of anger and aggression



Rejections can impact our self esteem in a negative way.



Rejection can temporarily lower our IQ.

# Learned Helplessness



Learned helplessness refers to the condition in which animals or human beings learn to behave helplessly, viewing their actions as producing no effective result even when attempting to avoid an unpleasant or harmful situation.



We can learn Learned helplessness vicariously!

# Ways to Cope with Rejection

Don't take	Don't take it personally.
Maintain	Maintain your focus of control.
Reconsider	Reconsider the process, not just the outcome.
Learn	Learn from the rejection.



# Ways to Cope with Rejection

- Recall.
- Remember you are not alone.
- Expect to succeed (but understand you might not)
- Avoid a victimized Mindset

# Loss



Grieving is a common and natural reflection to any loss that brings on strong emotions (Ending of a relationship, losing a job, or death of a loved one.)



Stages of grief- a variety of reactions that may surface as an individual makes sense of how a loss affects him or her.

# The Grieving Process

- Denial or Numbness- it may be difficult to believe the loss has occurred.
- Anger- the person uses anger because he or she feels powerless and unfairly deprived
- Bargaining- as the reality of the loss sets in, the person may promise to change if what was lost can be returned.
- Depression- beyond the feelings of sadness, feelings of isolation, alienation, and hopelessness may occur.
- Acceptance- the person faces the reality of the loss, and experiences closure, or the acceptance of a loss

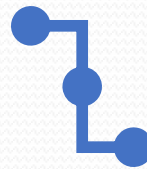
# Points to Remember

- The stages don't always occur in order
- People grieve at different rates of time
- Cultural differences, race, gender, age, and personality affects the way that people grieve.

# Coping with Loss



Acknowledge and accept the feelings:  
Experiencing and accepting your feelings during grieving is necessary for healing. These feelings are part of coping, or *dealing successfully with difficult changes in your life*



Find meaning in your experience.



Adjust your expectations.

# Coping with Loss



Accept what you  
cannot change



Find strength In  
others



Forgiveness



Engage in letter  
writing.



Take care of  
yourself