

The impact that grief has on actions

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The only way someone can overcome grief is by speaking up or standing up for himself or herself. Grief can cause people to be hesitant to open themselves up and allow their emotions to be shown to other people or even to themselves. The process of grieving has a life-changing impact for some people who go through it. Grief has many aspects to it, which is why there are different stages.

But most of all, grief can make people scared to act upon their emotions, causing them to do nothing about how they are feeling. Modern sources and Laurie Halse Anderson, the author of the novel *Speak*, explore the impact that grief has on actions. In the article, “Understanding and Supporting Grieving Adolescents and Young Adults” and the novel, *Speak*, the authors explain how individuals going through grief usually isolate themselves from others who care about them. Some may feel as if it is impossible for other people to understand what they are going through which makes them further distance themselves because they think they are alone. The article by Michelle Palmer, Micah Saviet, and Jeremy Tourish states, “Adolescents typically strive to appear independent and may seek a sense of privacy by detaching emotionally from their parents or other caregivers” (Palmer, Saviet, and Tourish 277). Teens going through grief believe that if they are alone it will be easier to understand and accept what triggered the grief.

Instead of talking to other people and letting out their emotions, they decide to keep everything locked up inside them which is worse. This causes them to avoid doing anything that might help overcome the grieving process in a more efficient and quicker way. This relates to the novel, *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson, because the main character, Melinda, has to deal with the

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death of her childhood because she was raped at a party during the summer. At first, she finds it hard to talk about anything because she believes that the topic of rape will be present in every conversation, so she decides to isolate herself from everyone, especially her parents. The author states, “ I look mom square in the eye, then rinse my plate and retreat to my room” (Anderson 36). When her mom was tries to make Melinda talk about school, Melinda chooses to leave the room.

Instead of telling her parents what is going on in her mind, she escapes the perfect opportunity to take action by letting others help her. If she were to express her emotions and explain the tragedy to her parents, they would try to understand. This could help Melinda with working on accepting what happened to her and who she is now. By separating oneself from people who want to help, the difficulty of overcoming the grieving process grows exponentially. Throughout the process of grieving, people experience anger and depression which makes them cope with their emotions in negative ways as shown in the article, “ Reducing Depression among Adolescents Dealing with Grief and Loss: A program Evaluation Report,” and the novel, *Speak*. The individual is starting to let out their emotions in different ways that may end up affecting them physically.

In the article by Paulette Walker and Michelle Shaffer, the authors write, “ When teens experience severe emotional pain, they are tempted to ‘ numb out’ to avoid the painful and unfamiliar emotions” (Walker and Shaffer 67). By “ numbing out” the individual circumvents their chance to feel better. Teens think that they will be able to stop feeling useless by themselves so they can worry about a physical pain instead of an emotional one. An <https://assignbuster.com/the-impact-that-grief-has-on-actions/>

example of “ numbing out” is self harm which can consist of someone scratching himself or herself to the extent of bleeding on purpose. The outcome of this could be worse in the future, which will make them regret their actions and realize what they could have done that could make them recover in a positive way. Melinda goes through this in the novel because she thinks that if she hurts herself physically, she does not have to think of the devastating event that happened to her.

Anderson writes, “ I open up a paper clip and scratch it across the inside of my left wrist... I draw little window cracks of blood, etching line after line until it stops hurting” (Anderson 87). Melinda is tired of the constant thought of rape in her mind so she decides to let out those feelings in a physical way leaving her with the scar of her emotions on her wrist forever. The grief that shadows Melinda does not only impact her in an emotional level but it also made her have the urge to hurt herself to make her feel better.

Later on in the novel, the reader realizes that hurting herself does not help her overcome her emotions in any way. This explains how grief can cause someone to do something that could make the situation worse. Even though the individual is taking the opportunity to act upon how they are feeling, they are doing it in a negative way that hurts their state of being to a larger extent. When people decide to stand up for themselves and act upon their emotions, it allows them to overcome their struggle and eventually grow as individuals which is explained in the article “ Reducing Depression among Adolescents Dealing with Grief and Loss: A program Evaluation Report” and the novel, *Speak*. At the last stage of grieving which is acceptance, the person who is going through this process, begins to understand what

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happened to them, finally realize that it is in the past, and that they cannot do anything about it. Lori A.

Bolden, the author of the article states, “ Acceptance. At this stage, individuals are at a point where they recognize the current state of their lives, without their loved one, as the reality and can live with that understanding” (Bolden 236). To achieve this final stage the individual goes through something that triggers their emotions and causes them to be a bigger person and accept who they are. All past emotions contribute to the growth of independent and strong people because it allows them to let out their anger leaving them with a happier and healthier life without grief. This relates to Melinda because towards the end of the novel, the same boy, Andy Evans, tries to rape her once again but this time, she stands up for herself.

The author writes, “ I reach in and wrap my fingers around a triangle of glass... I push just hard enough to raise one drop of blood” (Anderson 195). Instead of letting Andy take advantage of her like the first time, Melinda uses self defense to stop him.

By standing up for herself, she is able to stop mourning the death of her childhood and she realizes that what she went through made her a stronger person in the end. Throughout her experiences of the grieving process Melinda learns a lot about who she is and accepts it. When she stops ignoring her feelings, she opens a new door to her future where she will be happy with who she is and proud of herself because of what she went through. By taking action to stop feeling locked up with depression, it allow individuals to understand and accept what happened to them in their earlier

life. By exploring grief, the authors of the novel and modern sources are able to understand the impact it has on actions. It is better to do something that may help overcome one's feelings instead of keeping their emotions in the dark and not letting them out.

This way, they are able to accept their past experiences even if they would rather forget about them because they are tragic. Everyone will go through the process of grief at least once in their life because nothing is meant to last forever. Since grief usually comes from the loss of something or someone special and important, it is impossible for a person to go through life without it. But the only thing that will make a person overcome this feeling is to let others in and try to make them understand so they can help. Also, acting in positive ways to make one feel better can allow a person to understand what it is like to live a happy life again without the weight of sadness on their shoulders.