

The background of the slide features two vibrant pink lotus flowers in full bloom, positioned on either side of the central text. They are surrounded by several large, green lily pads floating on a dark, calm body of water. The flowers and lily pads are clearly reflected in the still water below, creating a symmetrical effect. The overall lighting is soft, highlighting the delicate petals of the lotus flowers.

Grief and Loss for Parents and Children

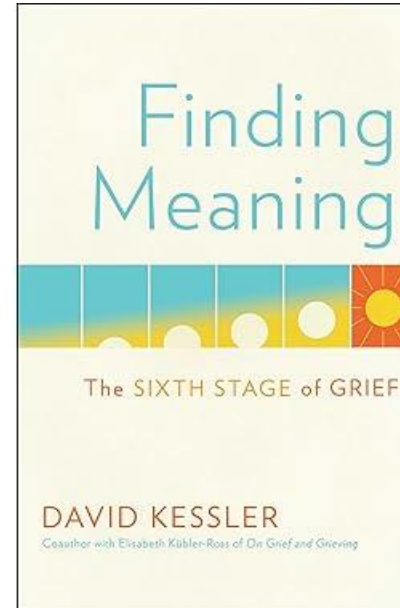
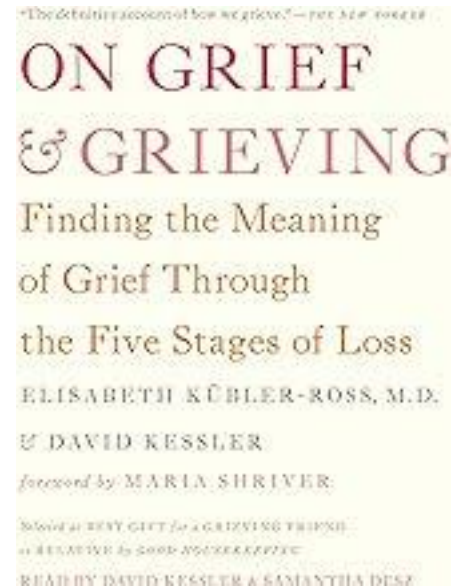
From Chaos to Meaning

Grief Comes When it will



References

Stages of Grief/ On Death and Dying



Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

Psychiatrist, author,
developer of stages of grief.

David Kessler

Author, speaker, and grief
expert.



Fostering will always mean being close to grief and loss

Choice to be a “different” kind of family

Loss of the “normal” flow of life

Constantly within the orbit of trauma

Holder of others’ stories

Placement means loss normal/ predictability

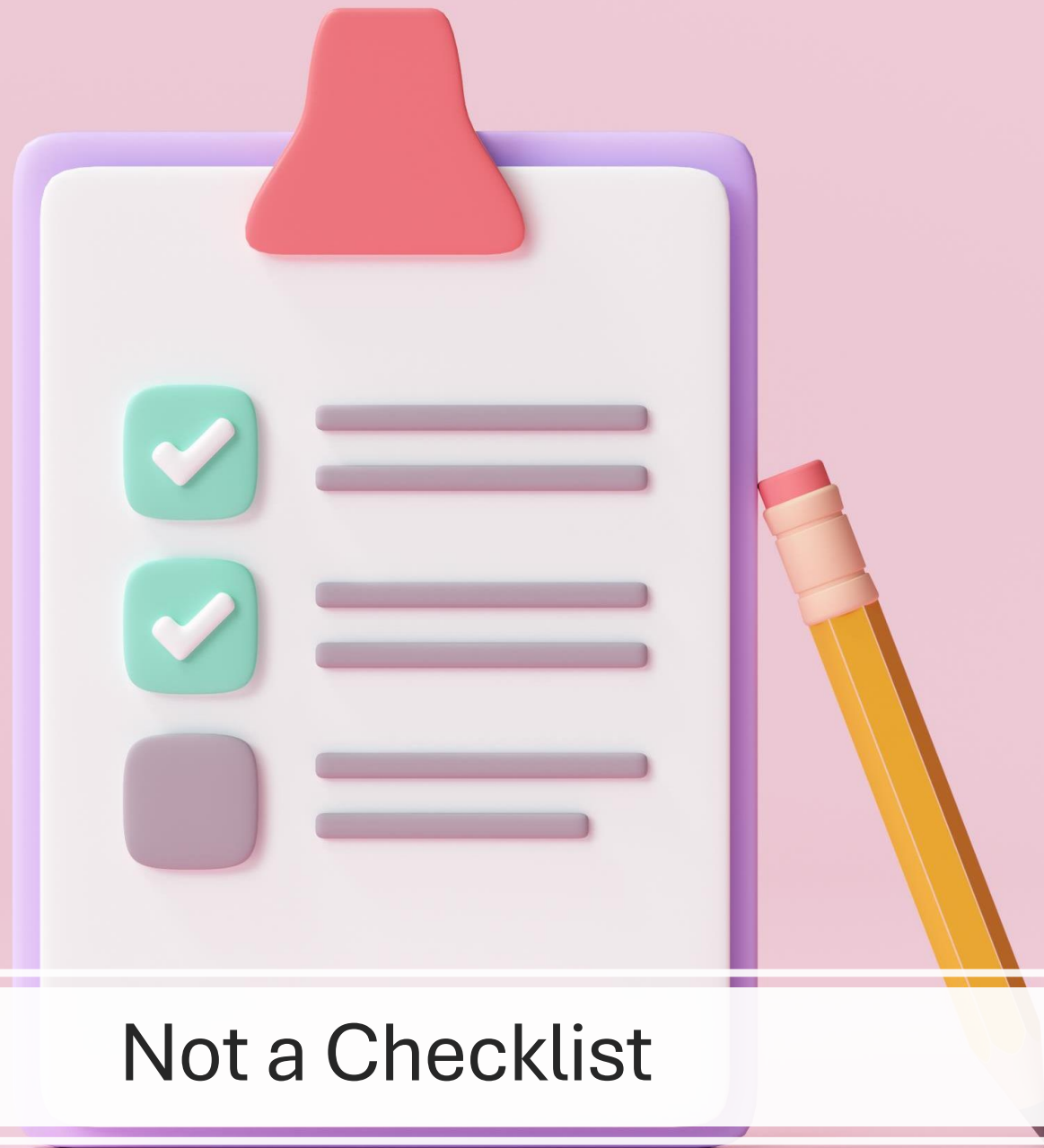
“Failed” placement means child will leave your home.

Success of case planning means child will leave your home

The weight of the job with its hardships, trials, and difficulties.

Parents separated from their children

What is Grief?



Not a Checklist

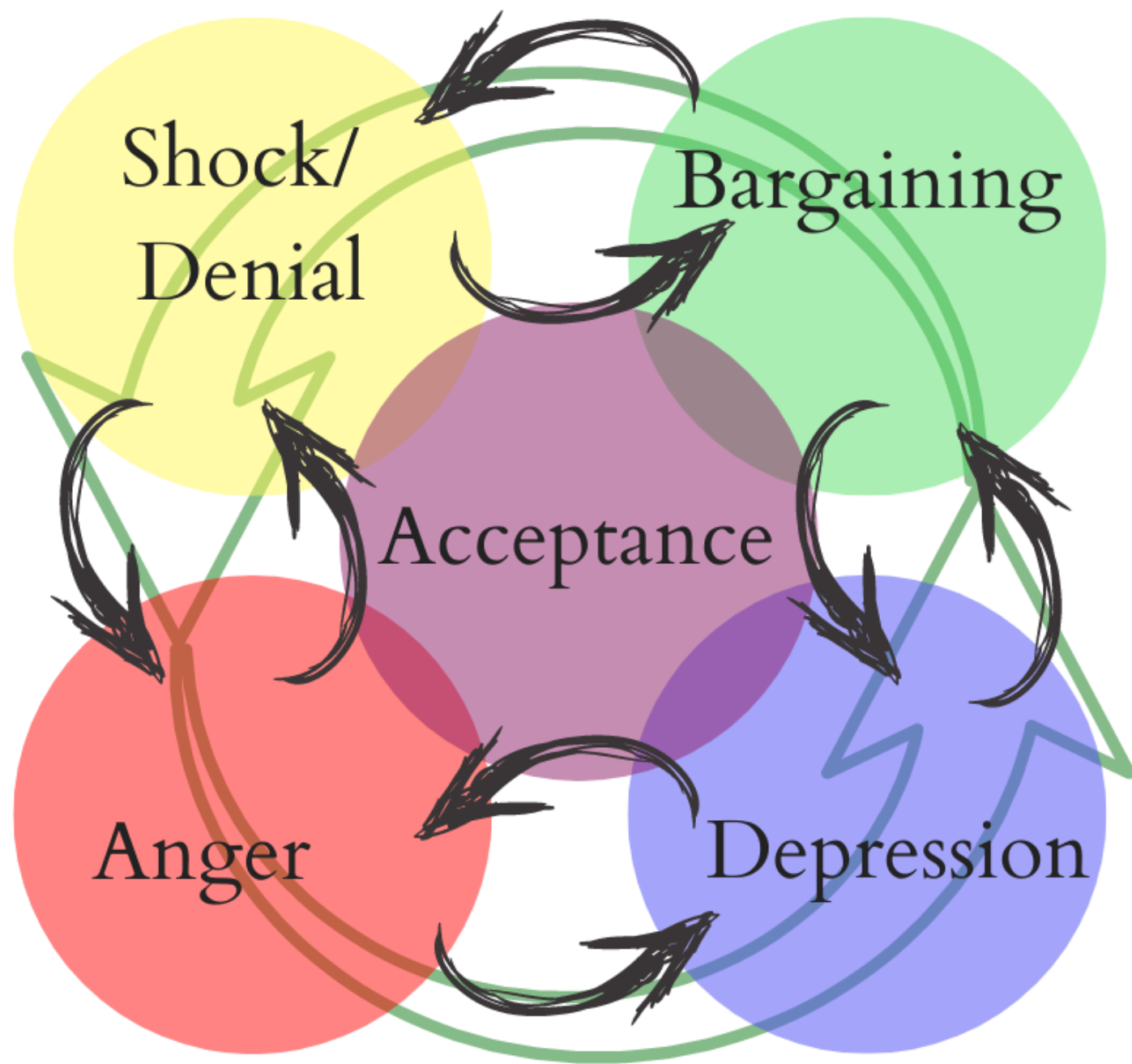


No Timeframe



“All these years later the public, the media especially, **still misinterprets her five stages as a map, as a rigid linear rule to follow.** That would have appalled her, and it bothers me to no end. People will often complain to me, ‘you’re trying to fit our grief into five neat categories, five tidy boxes,’ but there is nothing about grief that’s tidy or neat.”

-David Kessler



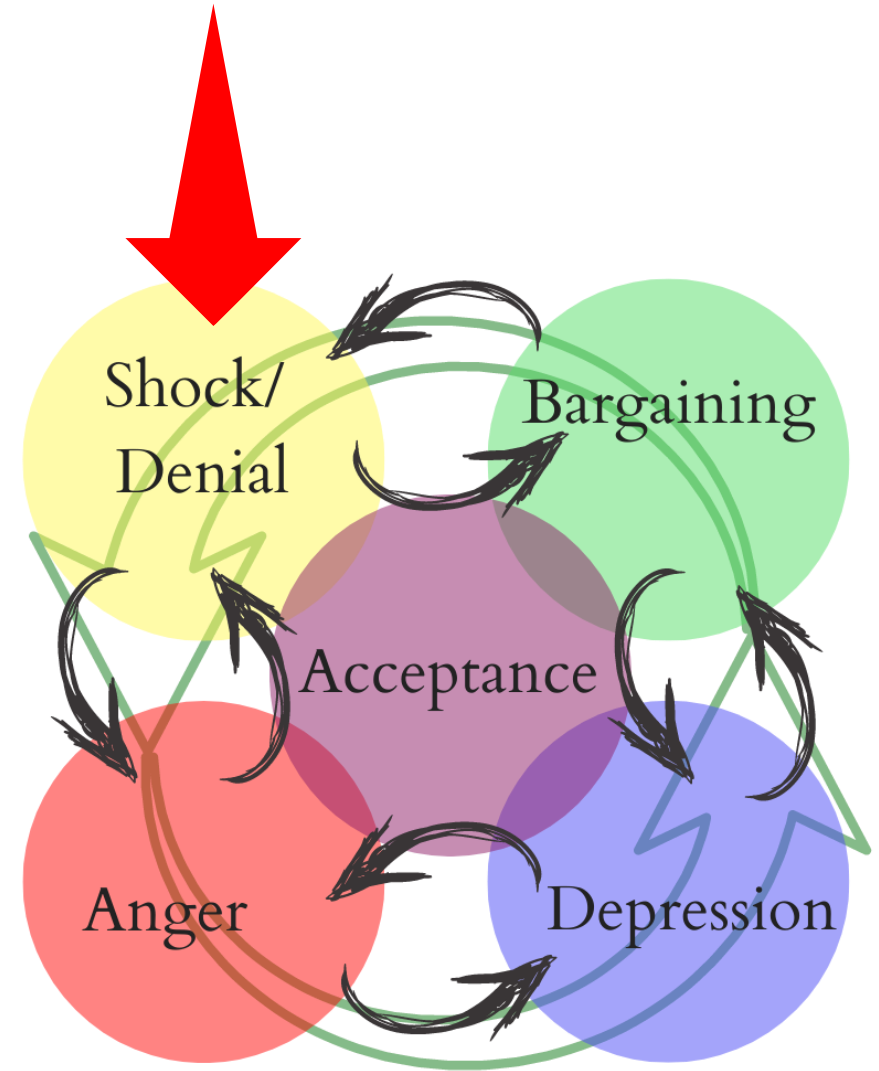
Adults caring for children

Shock/ Denial:

Unrealistic expectations about ‘saving a child’ conflict with the shock of how truly challenging it can be to parent a child who has experienced trauma. Expectations about being adored or seen as a ‘rescuer’ may not match with children who miss their parents and feel scared, angry, or sad.

Common thought: “I don’t feel trained enough” “Not sure how long this can last.”

Actions: Freeze, panic, crisis mode, or just work harder



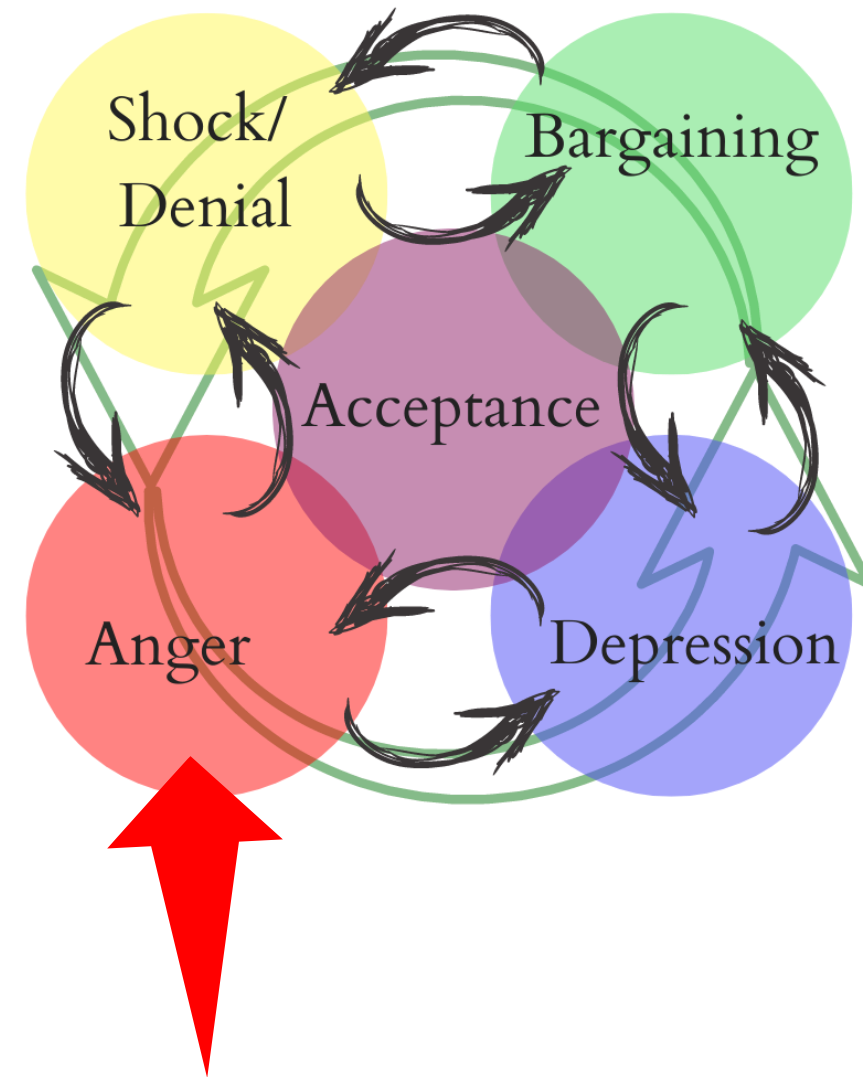
Adults caring for children

Anger:

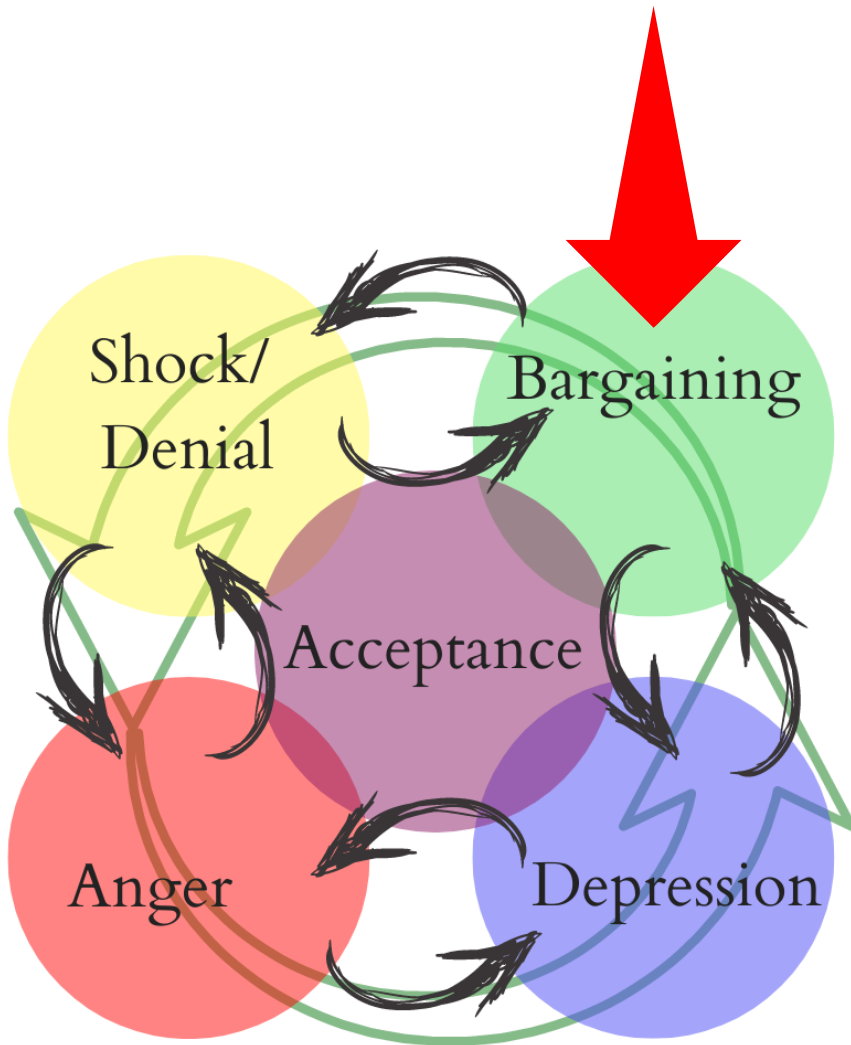
It is common for parents to feel unappreciated, disrespected, and mistreated. This could come from children they care for, well meaning friends, system involvement etc..

Common Thoughts: “How dare you treat me this way,” “No one else gets it” Blame for birth families & the system, Thoughts of disrupting placement

Actions: It can be easy for parents to lash out in the only ways that they feel like they can including harsh punishments disguised as ‘consistent parenting.’



Adults caring for children

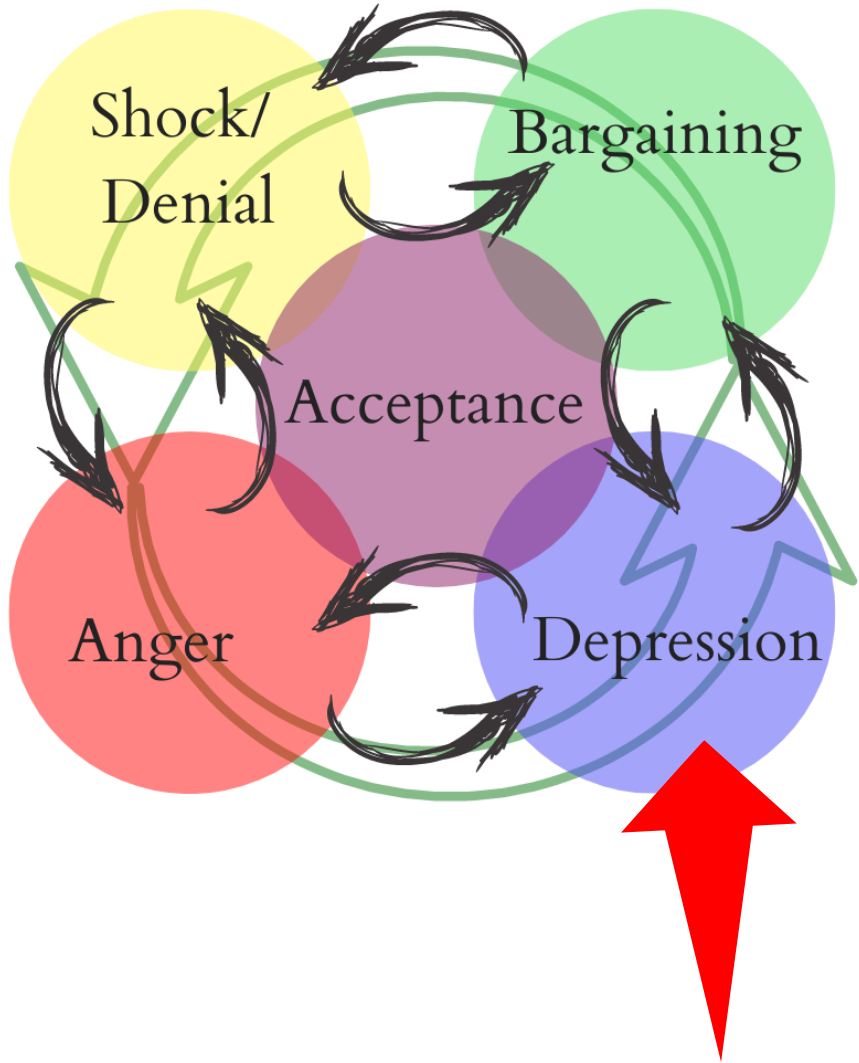


Bargaining:

This phase is often marked by rationalizations and explanations as to why it is not currently working and what could happen that would 'fix' everything.

Common thought: "This could all change if we just got the right ____ (medication, treatment placement, different caseworker, split up the siblings, etc...).

Actions: rewards for behaviors that children do not have the skills to accomplish yet such as, "if you just _____, then you get a new bike/ video games/ trip to amusement park."



Depression:

Parents often become isolated. Any failed attempts to secure respite may lead to hopeless feelings and learned helplessness.

Common Thoughts: Resentment may also build towards extended family who ‘just don’t get it.’ Can lead to avoidant attachment patterns and disconnection with children.

Action: Parents stop asking for help and see this as their burden to bear alone, further isolating them from other help.

Adults caring for children

Moments of Acceptance

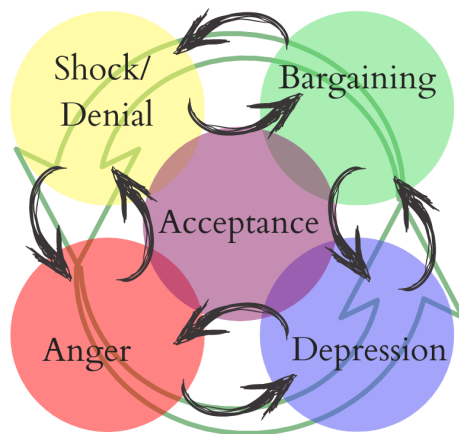
Grieving becomes normalized. Feelings come and go.

Uncomfortable feelings become manageable and lend meaning.

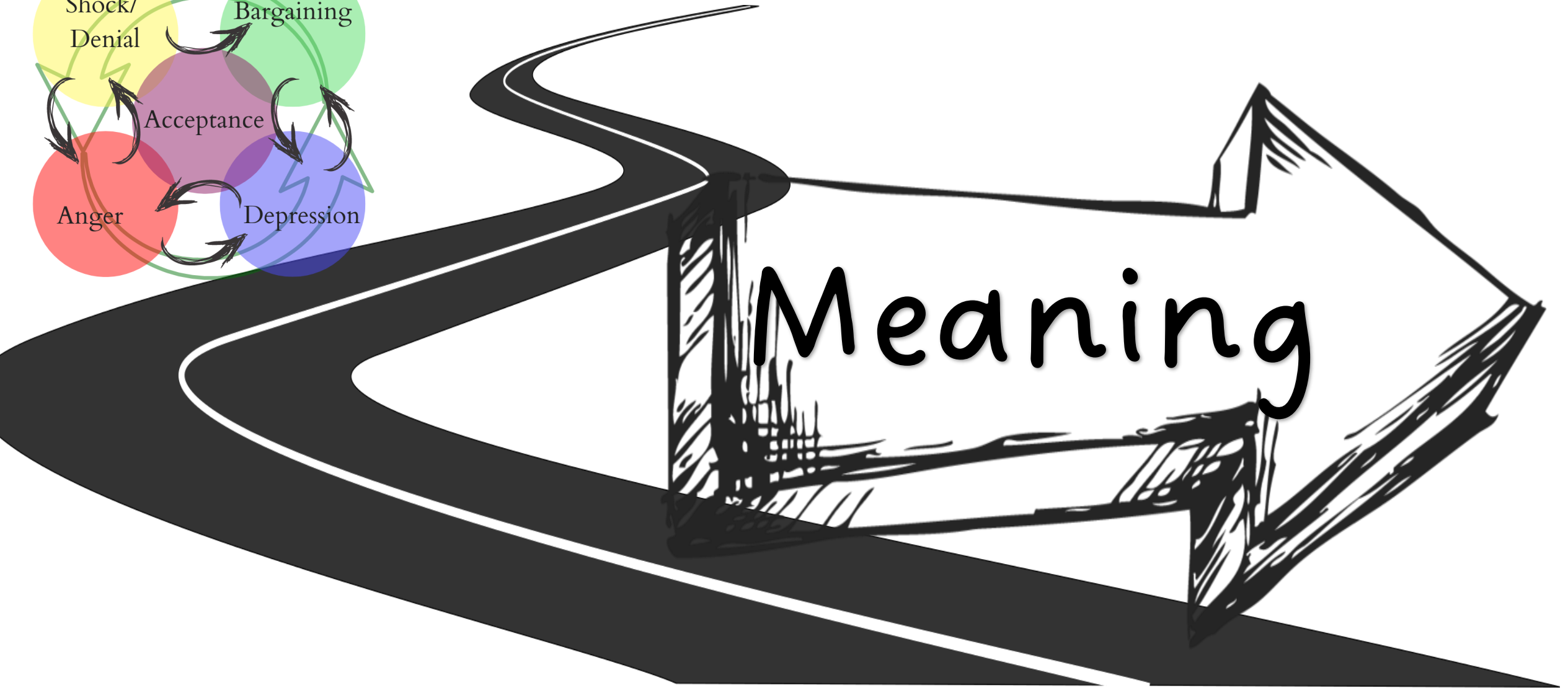
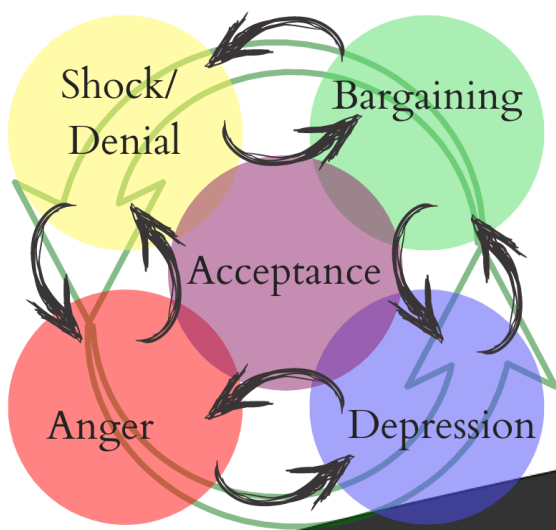
Building bridges with birth families can keep lines of communication open.

Becoming a role other than that of a parent. More like an aunt/ uncle, babysitter, respite care, mentor

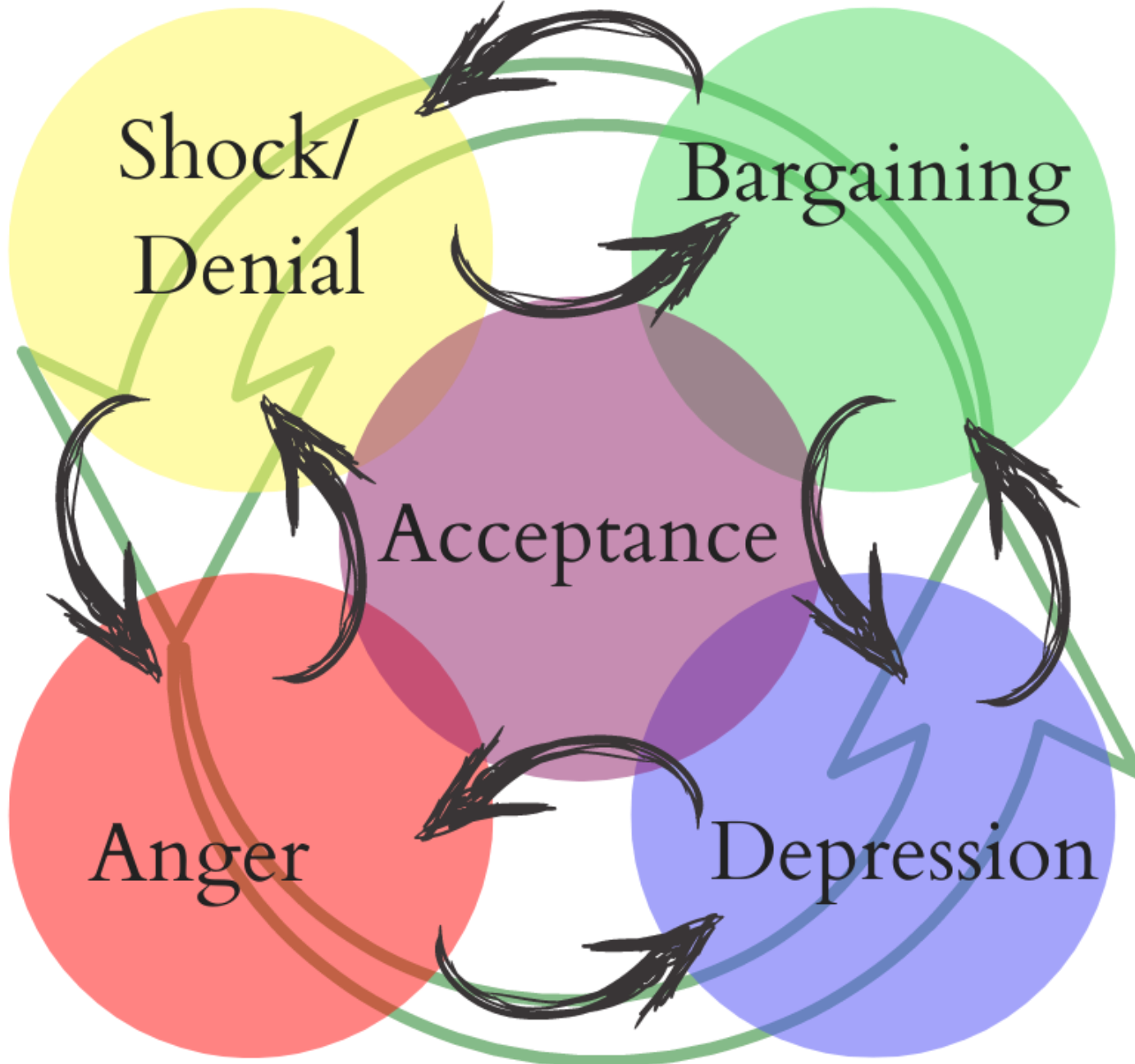
View of yourself as they one that they might call from jail or college in the future. You may be the one that they desire connection with some day.



**Making a difference in a child's life has a price.
Resist the urge to make acceptance the goal.
It is a part of the process that often comes and goes...
All feelings are important and welcome!**

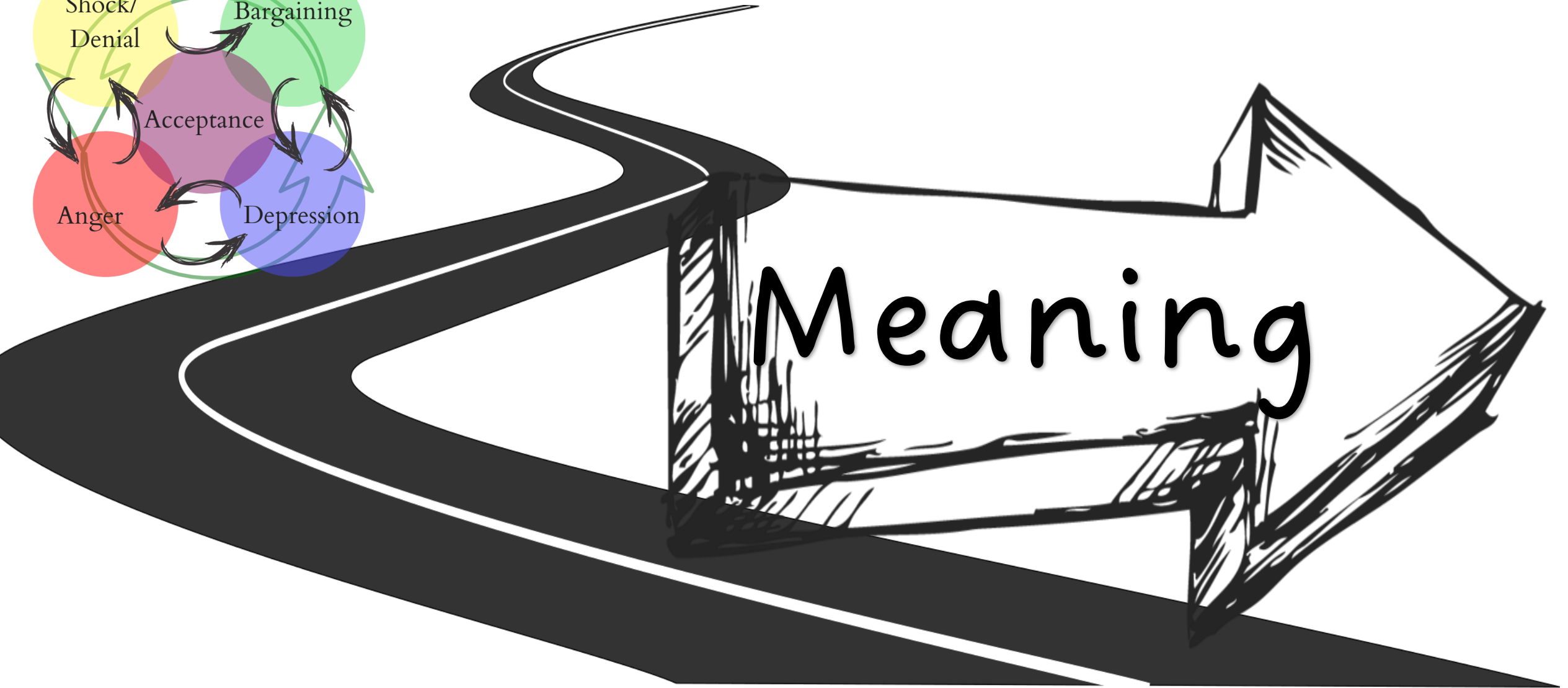
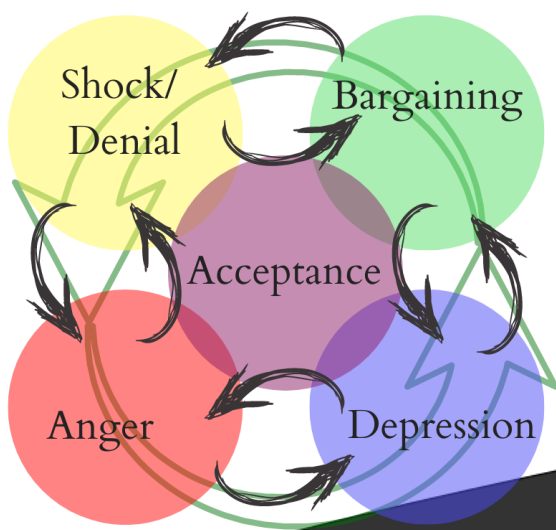


Turn and Talk



Every child you
Care for
Is grieving
A Life
They left behind

Turn and Talk



Helping the children you care for find meaning

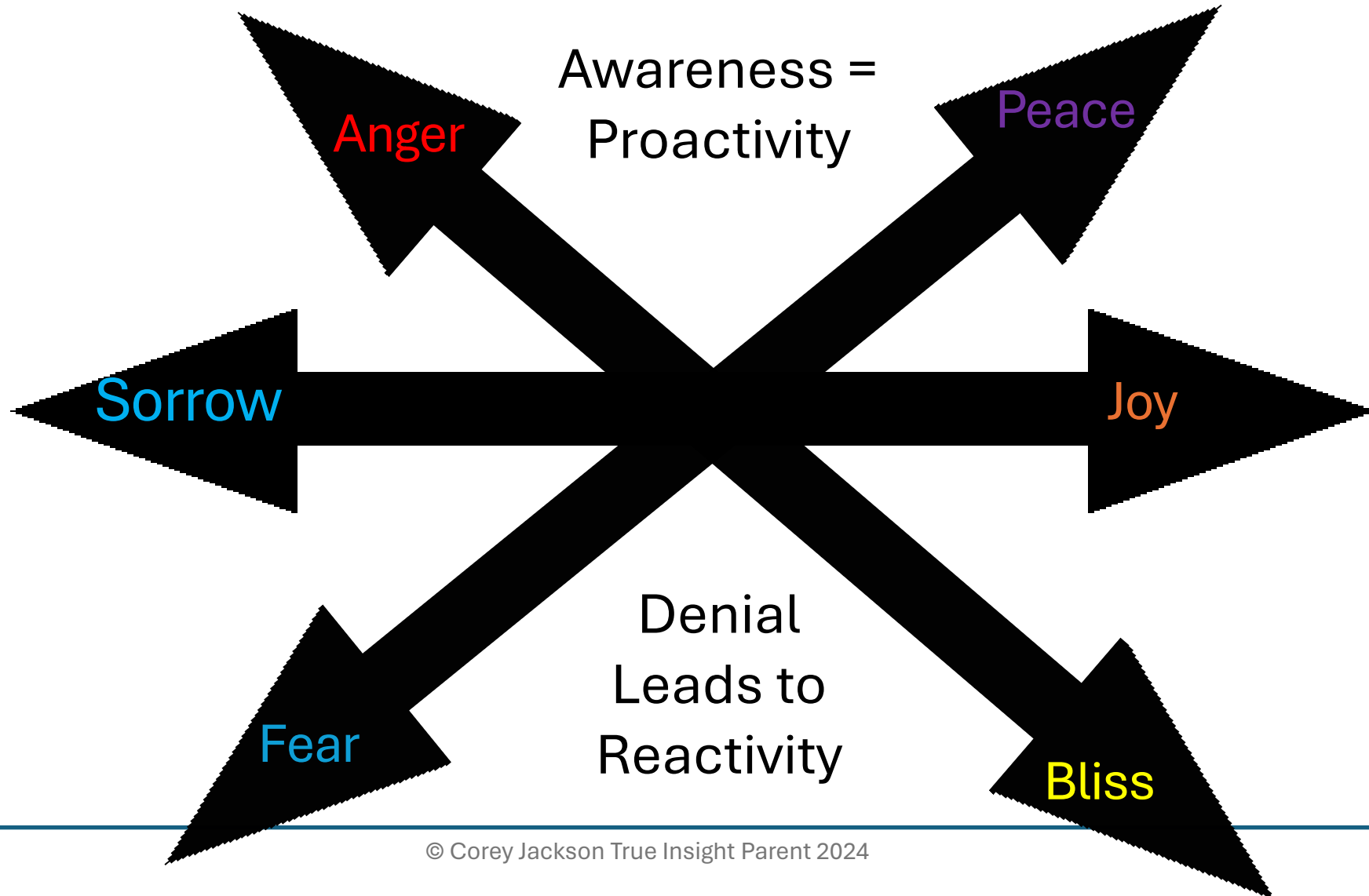
David
Kessler after
losing his 21-
year-old son
to an
overdose.

“This wasn’t what my life was supposed to look like, but I faced a decision that everyone faces in grief. **Is this just hideous, or can it be part of my son’s legacy and meaning that he comes with me to so many cities to help people?”**



Being with the feelings

Grieving is a Range of Emotions



Emotions are Like Waves

**You cannot control the waves,
but you can learn to observe
them, and ride them.**

(DBT Distress Tolerance Skills)





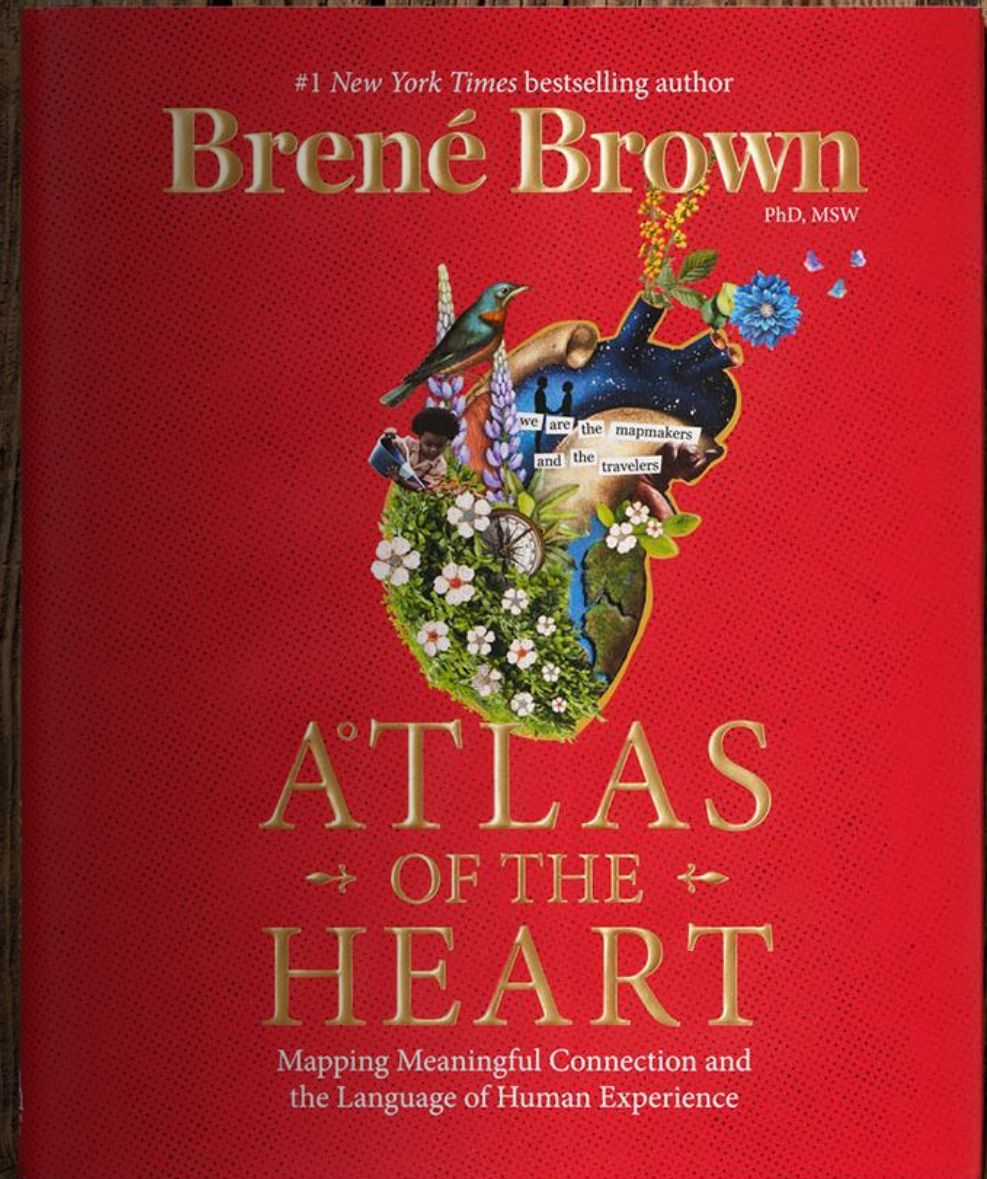
Some Waves are Bigger than Others



The Weather Inside (From Sitting Still Like a Frog)

- **Checking in on feelings like doing a weather report**
- I feel bright and sunny
- I feel kind of gloomy and rainy
- There are huge thunderstorms and lots of lightning

For More
Exploration on
Emotional
Granularity.

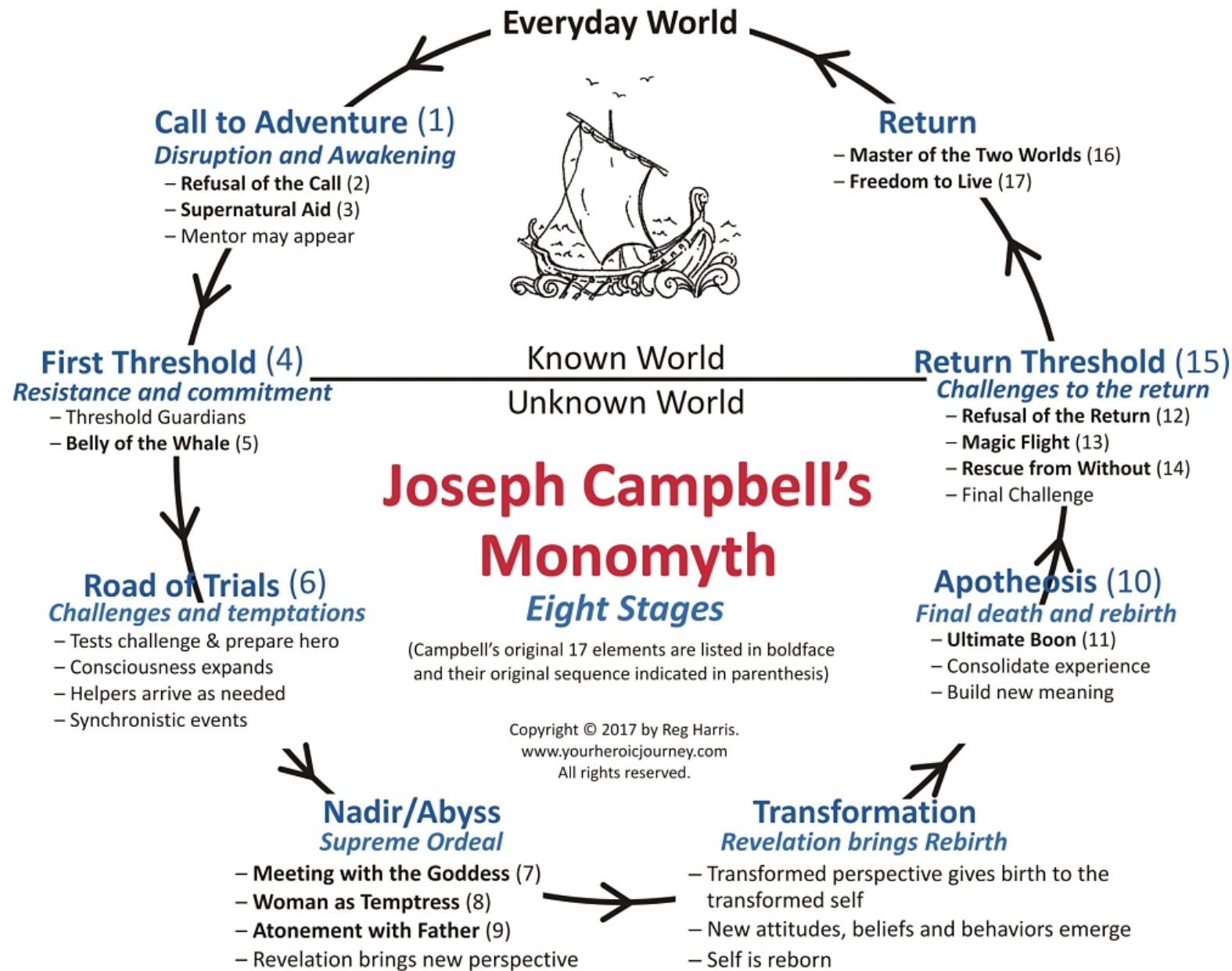


Managing the Feelings of Grief

- SELF CARE
- EXERCISE
- SOLITUDE
- NATURE (GREEN SPACES & BLUE SPACES)
- LITERATURE (NOT SELF-HELP OR CLINICAL)
- FAITH
- RITUALS
- COMMUNITY (BOOK CLUBS, GARDEN CLUBS, SPORTS, ETC...)



You Are a Hero!
You Will Grieve



A hand holding a compass over a road at sunset. The hand is wearing a green long-sleeved shirt. The compass is a standard analog compass with a white face and black markings. The background shows a road curving through a landscape with a body of water and hills under a warm, golden light.

Grief is Inevitable

Finding Meaning is a Journey

“Every person grieves in his or her own way — some with dry eyes, some with floods of tears. Don’t hurry them through it, there is no greater gift you can give someone in grief than to ask them about their loved one, and then truly listen.”

-David Kessler

Resources/ Events/ Stay in touch...

