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## the Emergence Explorer

Questions for the Week of September 18, 2006



### "Grieving a Mother's Death"



- Is death a Layer 10 experience?
- Can the significance of death resurrect a meaningless relationship?
- Is it possible that what we think death is, is just a composite of our wounds about death?

*Do you know?*

#### **This Week's Questions**

[These questions were posed by Ed D'U.]

Questions asked from [The Layers of Aloneness - Introduction](#)

(please note: I am answering these questions many months later, as, at the time, responses which included theory would have been far too cold and impersonal.)

**[Question 1]** My mother and I were estranged from each other for over five years. We were caught in a blame-lock. I mistook the distance that this blame created for the actual meaning of the relationship. It was impersonal and distant, with no new information (experiences) coming in, and I took this to mean

that I had resigned myself to our distance.

Now, with my mother's passing, I am confronted with tremendous heartache, and the relationship has great meaning to me again. As I write this, I realize that her death is a huge piece of information. I imagine it would be a ten if I were to plug this event into the Consciousness Formula ( $M=IT$ ), where ten is the highest possible value for any of the three variables. As such, I think it may have recharged our relationship, infusing it with great meaning.

Can death do that? Can the significance of a death resurrect a meaningless relationship?

**[Answer]** Not only can death add meaning to a relationship, it pretty much always does add meaning. At least, in the eyes of a conscious person. In fact, why do you think so many famous people, scientists to musicians, become acknowledged only after death. Their death adds meaning to their life's work.

How does this happen? For one thing, because there won't be any more "new" information, at least not directly from this person, the time value for the existing information increases to a constant; "ten." Why? Because what has been done by this person will now be all that will be done. For all of eternity. And "eternity" is a ten in reference to time. Thus, even if we discover previously unknown things about people after they die, the fact that none of this information would be newly created (it would come from the same time period) means the time value for what we know about this person increases to the maximum value; ten.

This in fact is why, after someone dies, we often become interested in even the most trivial and mundane things this person did. And value these things far more than we normally would value them. In effect, even trivial information, when multiplied by eternal time, equates to great meaning.

Applying this "eternal" time value idea to your relationship with your mother, because there will be no new, real world, living interactions between you two, the time value of what has gone on between the two of you now increases to a ten, just as I've been saying. And this increase applies to every single thing, great and small, which you now know about her and may come to know about her.

Plugging this into our  $M=IT$  formula then, shows why. When  $T=10$ , the value of everything ( $I$ ) increases in meaning ( $M$ ).

A second way to see how death alters the meaning of a relationship is to realize that once a person is dead, the information about what this person did in life (this person's information variable) becomes a theoretical "constant" as well. Like the time variable, it is what it is, forever and ever. There simply will be no more. And while we, of course, can discover previously unknown things about this person even after death (as you did with your mom and her pictures of your son), there is a theoretical limit to how many of these discoveries you can make.

In a sense, then, increasing the information variable to this theoretical limit makes the information you do know about your mom increase in value too. How? The value of the information variable rises to a ten as well. At least in theory. Why? Because ten is the highest possible value, the "whole amount." And since there can be no *new* information created after death, the existing information becomes the "whole life" amount. Which is simply another way to say, after death, the information about this person's life increases to the "whole ten units."

To sum it all up, death increase the values for both the time and information variables, by transforming both into "constants." This then increases the meaning of everything we know about this person's life. Ultimately, then, the point is, yes, death changes the meaning of all relationships, by increasing the time variable to ten and the information variable to ten as well.

Plugging these values into our formula ( $M=IT$ ), it becomes  $(10)(10)=100$ . It seems even in referring to death, our little formula works perfectly.

**[Question 2]** I am beginning to believe that grief is a roller-coaster which recycles between connect, alone, and need. As I am writing this, it occurs to me that my most powerful, and painful, moments follow the ones wherein I feel connected to my Mother. When I picture her happy, a movie runs on the screen of my mind, and I feel connected. Then, when this movie runs out, I feel sort of startled like when old reel to reel movies finish and run off the reel. In other words, each time I disconnect from my mother, I get slammed with a new wave of pain.

Earlier today, my sister told me, my mother has pictures of my son, and gifts for him, all over the house. Because our separation meant my mother never got to meet my son, when my sister told me this, it set off my worst crying jag so far. I thought I would explode from the pain. In truth, I have never had someone close to me die. So I have little perspective on what this is like. My question is, am I experiencing my birth separation each time I realize my mother is dead? Could this explain the depth and intensity of the grief I have been experiencing over the past two hours?

**[Answer]** Let me start by saying this. Ed, for a man in the midst of such terrible pain, you sure to have a lot of courage. And ability for insight. As for your question, the answer is, yes, you are indeed experiencing the sequence of connect, alone, need. Over and over again.

What would be good to keep in mind here is, what this means. It means your mother's death injured you.

It also means, each time you cycle from remembering her when she was alive to realizing she is dead, you relive this injury. Thus the cycles of connect, alone, need.

More important still, please try to remember that most people feel shame whenever they recycle through these painful cycles of connect, alone, need. And if you think about it, in reality, this just plain crazy. Really. Why wouldn't we first feel sympathy for ourselves during this kind of terrible suffering? We usually don't, though. At least, not until we come out of shock and can again sense we exist.

What I'm saying is, most people, post injury, either blame out or blame in. And while feeling blame is an absolutely normal response to having been injured, unfortunately, this blame displaces our feelings of sympathy and compassion, including for ourselves.

As for my saying this event injured you, consider this. Being born physically separates us from our mothers. And causes us to, for the first time, experience the sequence of injury; connect, alone, and need, in this order. In a way, we could call this experience, our first "physically separating from our mothers" wound.

Because the birth experience also creates in us the fractal pattern from which all future injury occurs, we could also say that being born is the "mother of all wounds" too. It literally is.

This contrasts sharply with what just happened to you in that, perhaps, your present physical separation from your mother then (the one caused by her death) could be said to be the "balancing wound"; your last "physically separating from your mother" wound.

What I'm saying is, being born wounds us by physically separating us from our mothers. As such, it is our first experience of aloneness and need. Perhaps having our mothers die wounds by separation again, but in a "closing the cycle of wounding" sense of being wounded.

In truth, this may be the most basic continuum of injury we humans ever experience; physically separating from our mothers; first, when we are born, and last, when she dies. As such, these experiences must hold the keys to much of what we struggle to overcome in life. Given, of course, we can learn to see the fractal sequence of experience hidden within these experiences; the sequence of connect, alone, and need. And given we are as courageous as you, Ed, in facing what is certainly one of the most painful things any human being can face. Consciously, anyway.

**[Question 3]** As I sit here, I realize, I have no picture for my mother's death. I suppose I am in shock about her death. I also realize that I have never previously pictured my mother's death. Is this what is helpful about open-casket funerals; that they help give us a picture of our loved one's death?

Also, if this is true and if I have no picture for death itself, are my symptoms coming primarily from my inability to picture her dead and not from the death itself? Is it possible that what we think death is, is just a composite of our wounds about death? I sense there is a lot more to see here, but I cannot see yet it.

**[Answer]** I think each of us seeks a picture for death during the course of our life times. I think we also seek relief from the pictures we do find, and that religion plays a big part in both these desires.

What I'm saying is, I am not surprised to hear you say that you have no picture for your mother's death. She died young, and we rarely picture people dying, let alone dying young.

Moreover, I'm not surprised you have no picture for death itself yet, Ed. You, yourself, being still in your thirties, are relatively young, and most developmental theorists (including me) believe, we humans develop a deeper awareness for things like death only later in life. Unless, of course, we have had to witness death at a younger age, for instance, had your mother died when you were very young.

What may be helpful here would be to realize, most pictures we urban Americans associate with death are more the visual evidence of "how" the person died (the illness or injury) rather than a picture for death itself. Thus, your comments about open caskets giving people this picture are probably true.

Then too, this probably contrasts quite a bit with what people in less urban cultures experience, as they probably witness death, and dying, much earlier in their lives. Thus, they probably get personal pictures for death and dying quite early on.

I, myself, being almost sixty, have developed many pictures for dying, but only one picture for death; the picture I saw when I woke from a dream in the week following my nearly fatal car accident two years ago. Even here though, my picture for death may very well be something my mind produced, albeit, it has profoundly altered my fear of death. How? I now feel a closeness to death, as what I saw was a sort of kind being come to take me home, rather than a frightening being come to take my life. In fact, I've shared this with my father who is now close to dying himself. It seems, my picture for death eased his anxiety as

well.

To answer your question then, I think you are absolutely right when you say your current symptoms are coming from your lack of a picture for death. However, there are actually two missing pictures here; the Inner Layers vision for your mother being dead (which is still blinking in and out in you), and the All Ten Layers vision for death itself. For most people, this second picture only comes to them in the actual moment of their own death. Thus, it may or may not ever actually come to you. If it doesn't don't worry. You've been scheduled to take this class at a later time.

**[Question 4]** I believe that when we die, our bodies and souls return to the universe that gave birth to them; that the spirit and the body reconnect to the universe. As I write and remember that I have no picture for death though, I realize what I just said is merely logic; in other words, only a Layer 2 experience.

What I'd like to ask then is, do you know what Layer death happens in? In all ten Layers? Or is death a Layer 10 experience?

What Layer does death push the survivors into? Is there a pattern of Layers grieving people go through? And is this pattern similar to the four fractal patterns for consciousness you have discovered? Or is death, the "ultimate wound," and is life, the "picture of living" what gets BLocked?

**[Answer]** You've asked quite a few questions here, Ed. I'll do my best to answer each at least briefly. Know, I'm also only guessing, Ed, even with all my theoretical knowledge and shamanic and near death experiences.

**What Layer is death in? All ten Layers?** Yes, death exists in all ten layers, albeit, our experience of death itself is probably much like how the light of a television set dies when it gets shut off suddenly. What I'm saying is, imagine a television screen with one of those old fashioned, circular, late-nite television test patterns on it. Now imagine the power in the house suddenly cuts off. If you were to have been watching the television when the power failed, what you would witness is that the test pattern would first collapse on itself. Then it would collapse to a small dot of light in the center of the screen. Then finally, it would simply blink out.

I imagine the pattern of experience we go through during death very much resembles this kind of visual journey, and that we travel from a high up view of all of the Layers and all of our lives inward toward the Inner Layers, and finally to a tunnel which leads us back through Layer 10.

If this is true, then, perhaps the last image we see in death is actually a circular little dot just like the movies portray death to be and just like what we'd witness on a dying television screen. Perhaps too, this last dot of light becomes the tunnel people talk about in near death experiences.

**What Layer does death push the survivors into?** Here, I have some personal experiences from which to draw on, and from my personal experiences, I'd say it depends on the person's ability to picture what happens in and around death and dying. Thus, some people may be quite able to picture the last moments right before a person dies and even experience these pictures in all ten Layers, from one to ten. Others may be able to experience this only in the Outer Four Layers; for instance, by being mad at the person for dying (Layer 4); by saying to themselves things like, "In time, this will pass" (Layer 3); by explaining

how death comes to all beings (Layer 2); and by finally simply zoning out (Layer 1).

Crying, of course, would be a Layer 5 experience (symptoms.); Denial, a Layer 6 experience (the blocked inability to picture parts of the experience).

Then we come to the Inner Layers, and here things get a bit messy. The abject neediness we sometimes can touch would be a Layer 7 experience. The profound aloneness, wherein nothing and no one else exists let alone can comfort you is a Layer 8 experience.

Layer 9 would hold the experiences wherein we feel reconnected to the dying person. And in those moments, we may feel like we will never forget them let alone let them go. And Layer 10 would be the realizations wherein we feel connected to all of the deeper things in life, as in, "all is as it should be" and that death and birth is the framework for everything within our world.

**So is death a Layer 10 experience?** Not specifically, albeit, I believe, like you, that life ends as it begins. Thus you could say that both death, and birth, begin as Layer 10 experiences.

**Is there a pattern to how people grieve?** Experientially, Kubler Ross's five stages seem pretty accurate to me, including from my own personal observations of people dying. And if you were try to fit these experience into our system of personality, you'd probably see a lot of overlap with the way I suggest we journey through the Layers inward.

- Denial and isolation: "This is not happening to me." (Layers 1, 2, and 3)
- Anger: "How dare God do this to me." (Layers 2, 3, 4)
- Bargaining: "Just let me live to see my son graduate." (Layers 3, 4, 5)
- Depression: "I can't bear to face going through this, putting my family through this." (Layers 5, 6, 7, and 8)
- Acceptance: "I'm ready, I don't want to struggle anymore." (Layers 8, 9, and 10)

Obviously, nothing here is linear, meaning, people do not grieve in neat and well ordered experiences. Even so, I'm sure knowing the Layers can help people to feel less out of control. And to feel less like there is something wrong with them, for instance, when they are numb and loved the person and wonder why they are not crying.

**Finally you ask, is this pattern similar to the four fractal patterns for consciousness you have discovered? Or is death, the "ultimate wound," and is life, the "picture of living" what gets BLocked?** Ed, with regard to these questions, I'm at a loss. I simply have not done enough work to even venture a guess. This and the fact that you have asked eternity sized questions makes me reluctant to simply answer with human time sized answers.

My prayers are with you and your family; for your mother's safe journey home, and for you and your family members' spiritual recoveries.



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