



Healing The Death of a Dream

- **Be honest and name the dream**

Be specific about the dream you've lost. Keeping this dream a secret will only delay your healing.

- **Educate your friends**

Let your friends know the nature of your grief. You may want to clarify that you're not necessarily grieving because you miss your narcissistic partner.

- **Tell your story**

We all need to metabolize our grief by telling our story and having it witnessed by people we trust. Just because you may get bored with your story, don't assume that others are bored. We can also express our story both verbally and creatively through art or journaling or even music.

- **Create safety**

Create a sanctuary for yourself where you can feel at ease. While you're grieving the loss of dreams, be gentle with yourself and be careful of putting yourself in situations that are too stressful or that may trigger your pain.

- **Borrow hopefulness**

While we're grieving, it may be difficult to experience optimism or hope for our future. Friends, therapists, relatives, or even coaches are people available who can be the "container" for our optimism. These are people who can oftentimes foresee a better life for you even when you cannot and you can dip into their hopefulness when you need a boost. Our challenge is to reach out to others for this support.

- **Keep dreaming**

If you've ever lost a dream that was precious to you, then the phrase "dare to dream" makes sense. To put your heart and soul around another dream may feel daunting. Yet humans are hardwired with the ability and the need to have visions and dreams. Slowly allow yourself to think about, write, or draw a vision for yourself that embodies your deepest longing.

- **Gain perspective**

Perspective is our ability to see the whole picture of our existence instead of focusing on the aspects that don't work. If you've been in a personal or professional relationship with a narcissist, your perspective becomes so skewed that joy and gratitude become absent from your life. Through volunteering, getting involved in some service project, and beginning a daily gratitude ritual, you can learn to see the totality of your life rather than only the pain and sorrow.

Rokelle Lerner, *The Object of My Affection is in My Reflection: coping with Narcissists* (Deerfield Beach Florida: Health Communications, Inc 2009) Permission to use material granted, September 20, 2010.