



Processing Trauma/Change and Finding Meaning

Learning to process traumatic events can be very difficult to do, but it is the first step to accepting them. This form will provide a number of questions that can begin your exploration and journey to acceptance of how your life has changed. It is not advisable doing this until you feel completely emotionally ready to do so! Doing this too soon may cause more harm than good. When you are ready though, it may help you understand the trauma in a new light. You may also consider using these questions for less severe incidences that would not be classified as a trauma. For example, a break up, loss of a pet or friendship or significant life change also need processing and these questions may help you with that process.

- How would life be different today if the incident had not occurred?
- What would I like about life if the incident had not occurred?
- What do I have today that I would not have without the incident?
- Did I gain anything because of the incident?

- In what ways could the outcome of the event have been worse than they were?
- What factors prevented these worse outcomes from occurring?
- What emotions come up when you consider that the event could have been worse? Is there any way that you could try to be grateful the incident was not worse? This may help lead you to acceptance.

- I never imagined when it happened that the tragic incident would lead to...
- When I look, I can find meaning in the event when I consider ...
- If you believe in a higher power or any form of spirituality, why would the higher power have wanted this event to occur? What benefit was there in this happening?
- Because of the event I learnt...
- Traumatic events can often help us gain a better sense of what we value. Consider asking yourself what values you uncovered because of the event.
- Did you learn anything new about yourself because of this event? Maybe you uncovered skills or abilities, like resilience or caring, that you may not have known about without this incident.
- Did you find there was a shift for you in regards to your priorities through this incident?

- Did you uncover a purpose through this event?

If someone else underwent what you did...

- What feelings might you expect they would be experiencing?
- What would you want to say to them to help them manage these feelings? Try telling yourself these things with a compassionate voice.
- Is there anything you would do to help them through this time? Can you do this for yourself?
- Would you treat this other person differently than you are treating yourself? Why? Should you consider changing how you treat yourself?