

Drawing the threads together

Disbelief, anger, depression – consequences of feared loss of love and trust

Finding new words that help us articulate

Do we deny or acknowledge our former self and our life history?

Does feeling right and resolved need to be accompanied by suffering?

Compromise or meshing with the other, being alongside each other.

Levels of acceptance from Elaine Sommers in *This is my Body*

Level One: **Intolerance.**

Level Two: **Tolerance.**

Level Three: **Acceptance.**

They will begin to see that here is a person who needs love, rather than a person with a problem. However, there will still be limits and some awkwardness when addressing trans matters. It remains something talked about as little as possible.

Level Four: **Inclusion.**

There is I believe a level beyond acceptance where the trans person is seen as somebody to be embraced and affirmed by those around him or her. This is a fuller acceptance, or inclusion.

WE TALKED

I finally got round
to doing it.

We talked, Lord,
into the early hours.
Truthfully, unemotionally.
We talked about this problem
because
it affects both our lives, Lord,
And there's no escaping that.

I didn't expect understanding,
and I didn't want pity,
But as we talked,
our love reached
a kind of crossroads.

You must have guided our steps,
Lord,
because we are walking together.....
in love and
Understanding.

SINCE WE TALKED

Since I told her, Lord,
and since
we have talked together
about my problem,
there are so many ways
in which
she has expressed
her love,
her compassion,
and her understanding
for me.

Forgive me, Lord,
for ever doubting
her love.
Thank-you Lord,
For a wonderful partner
with whom
to share my life.

Jan Goddard-Hill

Empathy

Getting close to what a family member might feel or fear after telling them

Listen to their words and allow them to feel what they feel

Then not piling demand upon demand:

‘But this is the real me’ ‘I am still the same’

They will know this in their own time.

Is this about compromise, or meshing?

‘..... made me think how we need to be able to address the thoughts which other people are concerned about, rather than tell them it all.

I guess that’s central to so many things – meeting people where they are at the time rather than unburdening ourselves on them.

Rachel Mann

Within the cycle of loss

Dialogue and mediation

Acknowledging interests and needs, finding common ground:

- Security
- Sense of belonging
- Stability
- Clarity (information and demystification)

- Telling them before doing
- Avoid simple choices that you can anticipate will lead to friction.
- Paradox – after telling them, turn attention to them, ask about what they are doing, how they are feeling about their own hopes and fears.
- Acceptance is multi-faceted – they might accept what you say, how you look, then surprise you by taking issue with some aspect of your journey.
- What Auntie Mabel will think – don't let this trump your light and hope

Common ground

The family bonds of love

Familiarity and roast dinners

Using the church and faith as common ground

God's care, God knows, closer spiritually.

The part of you they know which can still be a bridge:

Dad stuff

What is for the best

Want you to be happy

Do any of these tips make sense?

Let family members transition to me

Allow them to call you something that feels comfortable to them, such as a combination of familiar and new. Or for children what they grew up with, for continuity and stability.

Forgive their resistance – their dismay, obstructions hurt you, but it reflects their love and their security being shaken.

Meet halfway – make simple compromises to keep relations. Transition means gradual adjustment, not an abrupt change.

Switch concern to them. Notice what their own stresses and concerns are, ask about them. We can be so self-absorbed we don't notice what they are dealing with in their own life.

Wait, wait, wait for small signs, unexpected signs of acknowledgement, treat them as blessings. Don't say anything, just treasure them in your heart.

Don't forget the things that have been positive, however small they were.

Conflict resolution - Resolving broken relationships

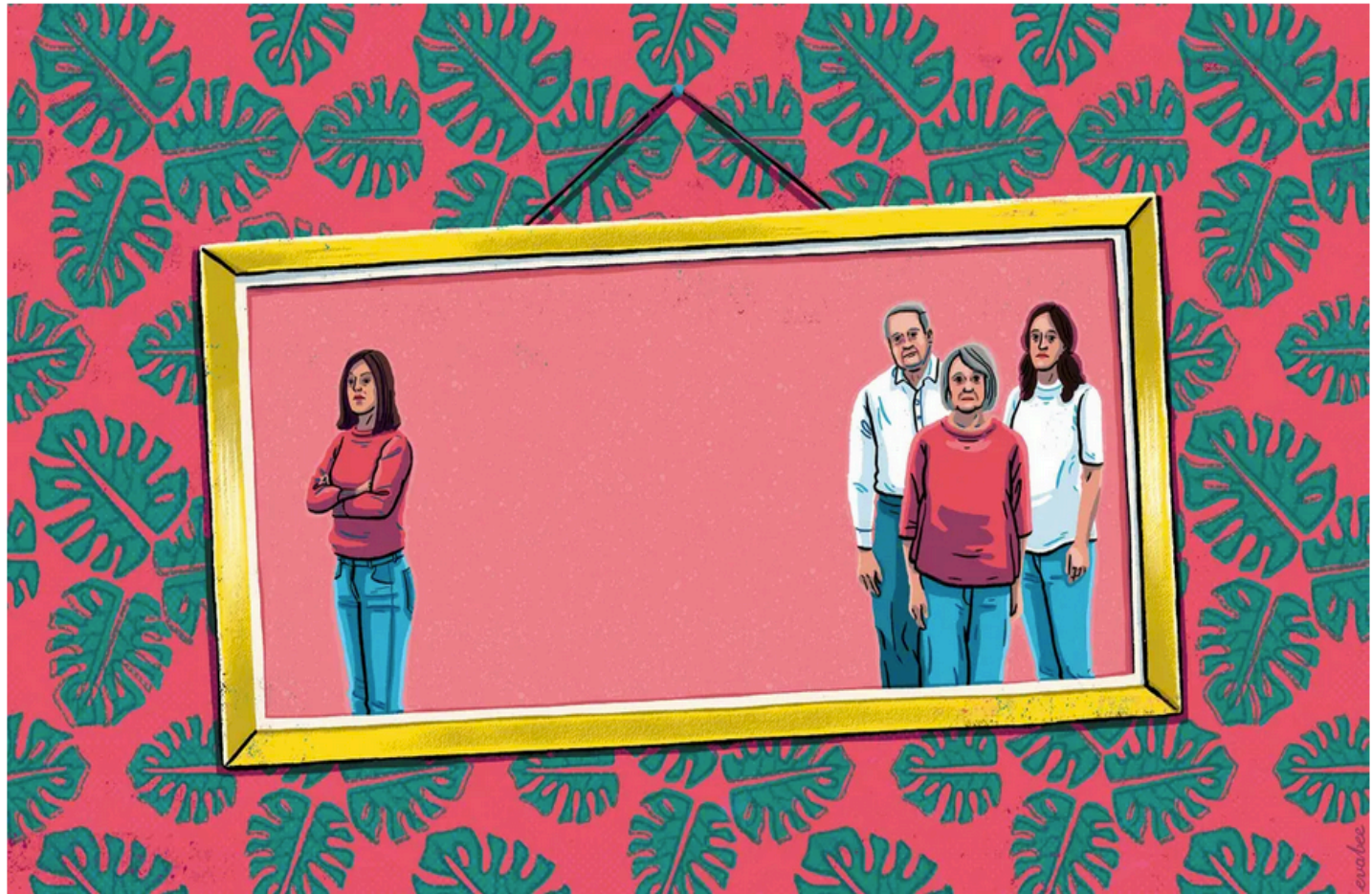
Making amends – from the 12 recovery steps:

‘We must take the lead. We ought to sit down with the family and analyse the past as we now see it , being very careful not to criticize them. There defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. Our behavior will convince them more than our words.

We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God’s people we stand on our feet, we don’t crawl before anyone.’



How to reconcile after a family rift



📺 'Whatever the cause, when a family is fractured it is a uniquely painful experience.' Illustration: Eva Bee/The Observer

*Fault Lines: Fractured Families and How to Mend Them, by Dr Karl Pillemer
published by Yellow Kite £16.99.*

Pillemer wanted to use his research to bring estrangement out of the shadows, but also to find out what advice reconcilers had for others who were in the same boat. He was surprised by the level of agreement among those who had managed to regain contact.

if you're serious about mending a relationship you need to be willing to look at the part you played in the estrangement. "In most cases estrangement involves two parties and both played a role. Many people - often parents - say: 'I've no idea what caused this.' But you often find the child has detailed letters explaining exactly what the problem is."

even those who had instigated the split were usually plagued by a nagging sense that something was wrong or incomplete and they questioned whether they'd made the right decision.

“Estrangement is strikingly and surprisingly common,” says Pillemer.

Whatever the cause, when a family is fractured it is a uniquely painful experience. “One of the most striking things was how shameful people found estrangement,” says Pillemer. In a society where people seem willing to

Estrangement is painful because it combines a number things that we humans find incredibly difficult, says Pillemer. First, there is prolonged uncertainty. “With estrangement people are left hanging. They don’t know

Estrangement involves not just the loss of someone, but active rejection, which is one of the most stressful things a person can deal with. “It’s this triple whammy that makes it so hard to get over,” says Pillemer. “Then, the pain is compounded by the fact that people tend to ruminate on the rift.”

How to heal a rift

1. Accept your part in the estrangement. What things might you have done that helped cause it? Write about it. Try taking the other person's point of view and write about past events from their perspective.
2. Don't expect them to see your point of view. It's not going to happen, at least not by issuing an ultimatum.
3. Don't expect an apology. Figure out what's the least you will be happy with and set clear boundaries on how their behaviour will need to change for you to engage in the relationship. Or, if you're the one who has been cut off, be clear on how you will behave differently going forward. Be very specific about what this will look like. Avoid vague promises like: "I'll be more respectful." Respect means very different things to different people.
4. Don't expect the other person to change. If you're rebuffed keep the door open. Stay in contact with cards on birthdays and key holidays, that lets them know you're still open to rekindling the relationship.

Liturgy for Acknowledging Loss

From Transfaith

Friends, we come here today to mark a change. While this is a positive and healing change, like many important changes in our lives it has come at a cost. While we rejoice, we may also have difficult feelings such as anger, grief and loss.

This is a rite of ending and beginning, in which we acknowledge both sorrow and joy and try to come to a place where we can free ourselves from feelings that are not helpful to carry into the future.

It is also a rite where we come face to face with the fact that none of us are always the people that we have wished to be. Part of the human condition is that sometimes we act in ways we later recognise have been hurtful, angry and unloving in thoughts, words and deeds.

This is a rite to lay all this to rest so that we can walk into a future as freed people. As we come together today to mark endings and beginnings, we acknowledge that both finding and losing has its proper time.

Sources of support

TRANSGENDER – SUPPORT FOR SPOUSES AND SIBLINGS.

Proposed initiative for ODL to consider offering a reaching out service for 50 + LGBTQ+ where family members have rejected them due to being gay, bi, lesbian or transgender

Aim

- Improved confidence in new role for individual.
- Improved social connectivity.
- Improved mental health
- Building bridges between family and individual.
- Possible opportunity for enabled individual to be able to assist others.



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A GUIDE FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

Information for families and friends with a transgender member

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**Finding the right time and words,
Unlocking the compartmentalised sadness
Waiting for God's leading.**

Two Quaker ideas

Experiment with light

Meeting for Clearness