



March, 2012 Volume 3: Issue 1

Number 22

## THIS MONTH: Managing While Grieving

Click to jump to: [Feature](#) [Promotions](#) [Resources](#) [Tip](#) [WhereInTheWorld](#)

### *a MESSAGE from SYLVIA*

#### *The First Class Manager Coach*

The longer I coach individual clients in management positions, the more I realize that MOST of them are grieving about something: chronic health problems, a past divorce, the death of a loved one, job loss, financial instability, body image, abuse, the decline of elderly parents, painful childhood memories, lack of confidence, marital discord, feelings of inadequacy, shattered dreams. The grief may be fresh, or it may be unresolved from five years ago. Whatever the case, it must be acknowledged and addressed. People do not heal and create a new future until their primary and/or secondary grief is identified, “heard”, and dealt with in a way that actually moves them forward. **Do YOU see yourself in any of the above reasons for grief?**

I say this because explosive or subtle grief impacts all aspects of work performance. There’s no escaping it. It sets the tone for the day; it colors relationships; it affects your productivity; it impedes decision-making. Grief, though a completely natural response to loss, keeps you stuck in the past until you proactively take steps to get to the other side. Grief is not meant to be a permanent state of being. It is intended to be a bridge between your loss event and the life you create as a result of that loss. Grief does not

have to define you—unless you settle for that. And if you settle for ongoing, simmering grief, then know that you’ve also settled for a limited, joyless existence. **Is that what you really want?**

The feature article below explores the impact of grief on your work and relationships. I know firsthand, because I’ve been there several times throughout my professional career. The question is not “Will I experience loss and grief?” The question is “What will I do about my grief once loss has occurred?”

*Sylvia*

[Back to Top](#)

## FEATURE ARTICLE

If you have determined that you are grieving about something—anything—you must understand that your work and relationships are impacted by your grief. You cannot file grief in a folder and expect it to stay there. Take a look at a variety of ways grief affects behavior and performance in the workplace:

**Your boss and staff view you as fragile.** Observing your isolation or roller coaster of emotions, they may feel awkward or insecure. As a result, they may avoid you. Instead of seeking you out to get answers, provide feedback, or discuss ideas, they may choose to interact with somebody else. Once they do that, your value at work decreases. Warning: You may not even be aware this is happening.

**You miss important deadlines, and the quality of your work deteriorates.** Inability to concentrate and focus leads to less productivity and effectiveness. Your mind freezes. Nothing connects. Your vision is cloudy. Simple things seem difficult. Your memory is compromised. You feel like you’re drowning. Warning: You convince yourself that working longer hours will take care of the situation when in fact this compounds the problem.

**You are emotionally unavailable to your staff and others.** Typically, grief has an element of self-centeredness about it. Your pain makes it all about you. If you’re in a place where you can’t show genuine interest in people, empathize with their concerns, and guide them toward solutions to

their own problems, you damage relationships. In addition, you demonstrate that you are not able to function as a supervisor. Warning: The stakes are extremely high with this one. Don't underestimate them.

**You sweep conflicts under the rug.** Because you lack physical and emotional energy during grief, you have little or nothing to give to unpleasant or downright troubling situations. Therefore, you take the easy way out and pretend conflicts aren't as bad as they really are. Or, you tell yourself they will go away on their own over time. Either way, you don't address them. Warning: Unresolved conflicts only get larger and uglier.

**You can't see the big picture.** Because you are in pain, you only see what's right in front of you at that moment. Flooded with overwhelm, you fail to grasp how a terse remark to a peer has undermined her trust in you. Desperate to fill a position, you fail to realize that your hasty promotion of an undeserving employee was unwise. Tired and irritable, you miss your boss's negative reaction when you turn down a proposed new project opportunity. Warning: Decisions made and actions taken with blinders come with a big price.

**You are not fully present in meetings.** While you may be physically sitting in a chair at a conference room table, your mind is probably shut down or wandering. You aren't thinking along with the group. You don't engage in the dialogue. You hear every third sentence. Your face appears flat, dull, or sad. If someone asks for your opinion, you say you have nothing new to add. You're counting the minutes until the meeting ends. Warning: Everybody around the table has privately drawn conclusions about your motivation, investment in the work, mindset, and overall health. Believe me, they usually aren't positive.

The bottom line? If you are grieving, do whatever it takes to work through it in a reasonable, responsible manner. Get help if you need it. In most cases, your job depends on it.

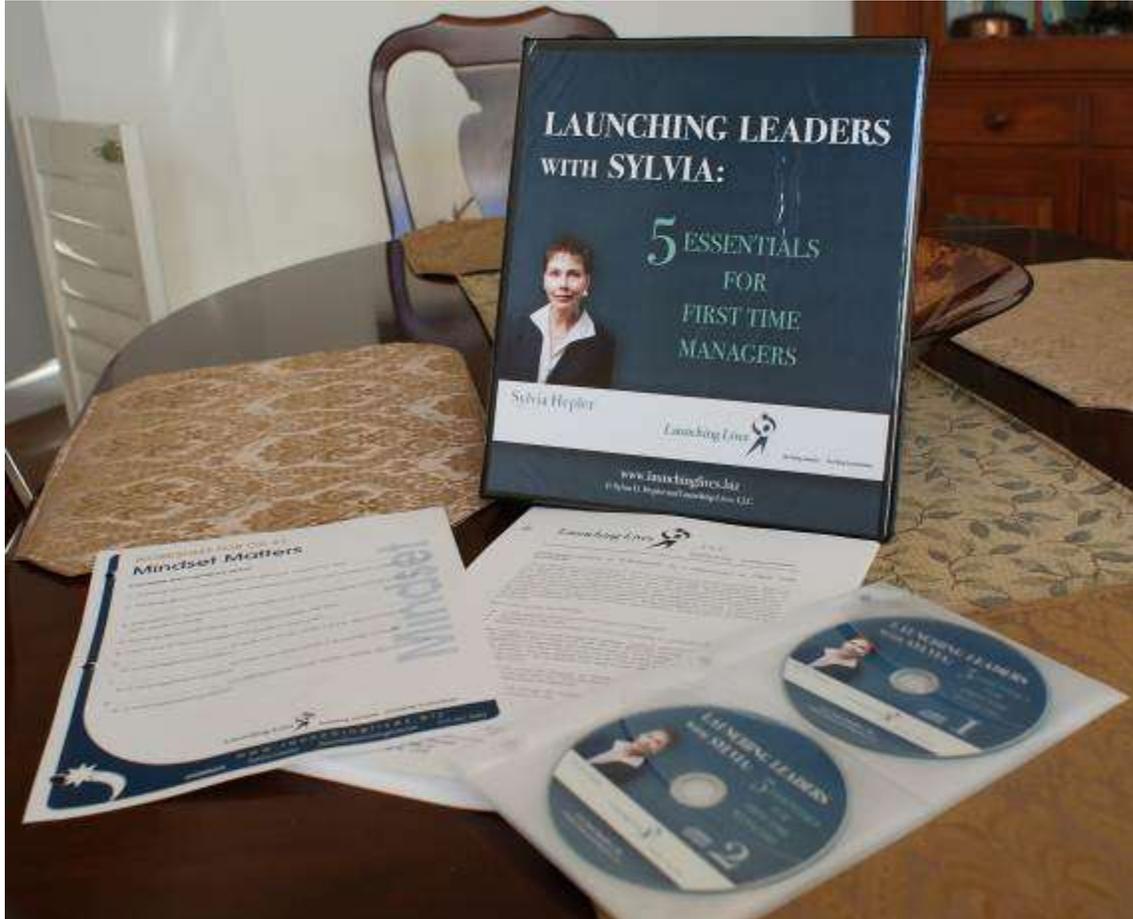
[Back to Top](#)

*Offers and Opportunities*

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[Back to Top](#)

## RESOURCES

### 2 Suggestions for Handling Grief

- Interested in a worthwhile read to move you past your grief? Pick up a copy of John W. James's book entitled: *The Grief Recovery Handbook, 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Expanded Edition: The Action Program for Moving Beyond Death, Divorce, and Other Losses Including Health*. Available on Amazon.com for about \$9.50.
- Also consider talking with Sylvia during a FREE 30 minute phone strategy session to learn more about how her coaching program, "[Change, Loss, and Grief](#)", can benefit YOU. Check out program details on her website, and contact her in the designated area thru [this link](#). Sylvia will get in touch with you promptly after receiving notification.

[Back to Top](#)

## TIP

### Steps to Take

Decide if you are struggling with current or residual grief from the past. Identify the cause(s) of that grief. List the emotions you are experiencing. Now think about how others view you at work. Recall the verbal and nonverbal feedback you have been receiving over the last several weeks or months. Connect the dots between that feedback and your feelings of grief. Identify the relationship between them. Finally, determine one single action you can take to begin dealing with your grief. Commit to taking that action.

[Back to Top](#)

## Where in the World is SYLVIA?

- On March 20, 2012 Sylvia will provide the luncheon presentation for the Women's Network of York general meeting: "Leadership Lessons I've Learned". This will be her second appearance with this group of business women over the last twelve months.
- On March 23, 2012 Sylvia will join Dress for Success (Harrisburg site) to present a workshop on personal branding and marketing to a select group of professional women who are seeking jobs and promotions. She has provided several different workshops for this organization over three years.

[Back to Top](#)

## About This Ezine

This Ezine is 1) to provide readers with valuable FREE content which contributes to both personal and professional growth and 2) to invite them to take next steps toward working directly with Sylvia.

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*Launching Lives Ezine* is dedicated, above all, to "building people...building businesses." ©2010, 2011

## About SYLVIA

**Sylvia Hepler**, Owner and President of Launching Lives, is an executive coach based in South Central PA. Her mission is to support corporate and nonprofit executives and business owners as they solve problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives. Her background includes: nonprofit executive management/leadership, public speaking, business and freelance writing, teaching, and retail sales.

A [certified executive coach](#) through The Rescue Institute in Colorado and a participant in extensive continuing education, Sylvia is a platinum level expert author on [ezinearticles.com](#). She has produced an audio CD entitled,

“Making Change”, [three special reports](#) for persons in management positions, and an audio product designed for new managers.

More information is available at her [Launching Lives Website](#)

[Click to contact Sylvia by Email](#)

Reach Sylvia by phone at 717-761-5457

## *Launching Lives SERVICES*

Launching Lives is an executive coaching company located in South Central PA. Its mission is to support managers and executives to solve their most pressing problems, develop leadership skills, and increase balance in their lives utilizing a holistic approach. Launching Lives focuses on BUILDING PEOPLE through individual private coaching, group coaching, specialized products, workshops, speeches, and retreats. Most coaching takes place by phone.

Often people don't really know HOW they might benefit from coaching. Quite simply, ask yourself these questions: “What can't I seem to resolve on my own? What is keeping me awake at night? What am I missing when I look at a certain situation? How can I get to the next professional level? How can I learn certain skills quickly? How can I narrow my professional gaps? How can I motivate my staff? How can I communicate more effectively so I serve myself and others better? How can I reduce my work-related frustration? How can I develop a viable plan of action for myself and/or my organization? How can I obtain greater job satisfaction? Coaching is the SOLUTION to any of these issues.

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