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## Response to the Loss of a Romantic Relationship: Differences by Time Since the Loss, Gender, and Attachment Style

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RESPONSE TO THE LOSS OF A ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP:  
DIFFERENCES BY TIME SINCE THE LOSS, GENDER, AND ATTACHMENT  
STYLE

by

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Master of Arts, University of North Dakota, 1990  
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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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This dissertation, submitted by Charles J. Dahlstrom in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

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This dissertation meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

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## ABSTRACT

Approximately 25% of college students experience the loss of a romantic relationship each year. It has been proposed that such a loss results in a grief reaction similar to that experienced after a death. Theory also suggests that such major life events are an opportunity for growth. But very little research has been conducted to date to test these propositions. The review of the literature also suggested that gender and interpersonal attachment style are related to differential responses to romantic loss. This study tested Schneider's (1984) model of response to loss, which predicts that the degree of involvement in three response-tasks of discovering: What's Lost (grief), What's Left (healing), and What's Possible (growth) is related to time since the loss.

Three hundred and sixteen college students were surveyed, using a research version (RTL-Short) of the Response to Loss Inventory (RTL). Information regarding the participants interpersonal attachment style was also gathered. A between-subjects, ex post facto and correlational design utilizing Pearson product-moment correlations, ANOVA and graphic/regression was used to analyze the data. The internal consistency reliability estimates of the RTL-S subscales were excellent.

Results generally supported the three-task model. Involvement in What's Lost (grief) was higher for those with relatively recent losses. Regression analysis suggested a curvilinear relationship between time and What's Left (healing), with those participants having either recent or distant losses scoring lower than those with losses of an intermediate time. Involvement in What's

Possible (growth) was higher for those with more distant losses. There was no evidence for gender differences in What's Lost or What's Possible. Those with dismissing avoidant and secure attachment styles experienced the least grief, while those with fearful avoidant and preoccupied styles experienced the most grief. Those with preoccupied attachment also were involved in What's Possible (growth) with less intensity than the other participants.

"Resistance to change is, then, as fundamental an aspect of learning as revision, and adaptability comes as much from our ability to protect the assumptions of experience, as on our willingness to reconsider them."

Peter Marris Loss and Change



# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### Background of the Problem

The breakup of a romantic relationship for college students is a very common occurrence. Surveys suggest that each year 25% of this population experience such an event (LaGrand, 1983; Okun, Taub & Witter, 1986) and that 84% have broken up with a romantic partner at some time in their lives (Sieber, 1991). The reactions to the breakup of a romantic relationship are similar to the grief reactions which follow a death (Kaczmarek, Backlund & Biemer, 1990; LaGrand, 1986). Numerous problems may result from this type of loss. Okun, et al. (1986) found romantic breakups associated with reduced academic performance, general decreases in life satisfaction, and mental health concerns. LaGrand (1986) suggests that a breakup is often associated with college students leaving school. Other research suggests that an argument or breakup with a romantic partner is a leading precipitating event in suicide among adolescents (Brent, et al., 1988; Santrock, 1981).

The literature additionally suggests that adolescents and young adults are particularly susceptible to distress and have trouble coping with major losses at this point in their development (Headington, 1981; Sieber, 1991; Weiss, 1982). According to Erikson (1968), adolescents and young adults are grappling with two major life tasks: identity formation and developing the capacity for intimacy. Gaining a secure sense of one's gender identity, establishing independence from one's family of origin, making educational and

and career decisions, and developing a personal value system are important identity tasks (Stevens-Long & Cobb, 1983). Dealing with physical changes, developing social skills, and relationships are tasks associated with the capacity for intimacy (Stevens-Long & Cobb, 1983). Generally, the college years are a time of ambivalence; one desires independence and autonomy from one's family but still depends on them for financial and emotional support (LaGrand, 1986). Given the tenuous nature of the young adult's evolving sense of self, a significant loss during this time can be particularly traumatic (Weiss, 1982).

In addition to the tumultuous identity crisis of this period of life, another troubling factor is that the lay public, as well as professionals, have tended to treat romantic breakups as a normal and expected part of development (Doka, 1989). According to Petersen, et al. (1993), professionals often consider the intense "storm and stress" of this period to be a part of normal development. In some respects it has been viewed as a period to be endured and outgrown (Hayes, 1981). This societal expectation likely leaves many young people without adequate support for their grief from such a loss (Doka, 1989; Kaczmarek & Backlund, 1990; LaGrand, 1989).

But, just as loss and grief involve emotional pain, disruption and potential dysfunction or pathology, they also provides the potential for growth (Cassem, 1975). Although the vast majority of research into this period of life has focused on the significant risks (Hechinger, 1992), more research has been called for on the opportunities for positive development during this stage of life (Takanishi, 1993, p. 85; see also Zaslow & Takanishi, 1993).

For instance, a major tenet of crisis theory (Caplan, 1964) is that life stressors give rise to the challenging and letting go of old assumptions about

oneself and the world, and discovering new ones. Moos and Schaefer (1986) indicate that psychological development requires crisis and transition. According to Davenport (1981), loss is an opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of what we can and cannot control. "The danger in loss is that we will come through it unchanged, with all of our narcissistic illusions intact" (p. 332).

In his existential work, Turning Points, Clarke Moustakas (1977) characterizes the loss of an important relationship as a life event which can challenge one's identity. Facing this challenge entails "...an encounter with the self, an adventure into fear, mystery, and fantasy because what is crucial is most often hidden; it takes courage to face what has not been lived before" (p. 64). Attig (1981) suggests that grief can be positive and life enhancing. Strengthened character, increased confidence in one's abilities, self understanding, sensitivity to others, and an appreciation for the superficial nature of some friends are potential outcomes of a loss experience.

Although there is ample theoretical literature suggesting that responses to the loss of a romantic partner are similar to those of loss through death, there is relatively little empirical research. The primary focus of the available empirical literature is on determining the levels of emotional distress and disruption associated with romantic losses (Deutsch, 1982; Hill, Rubin & Peplau, 1976; Kaczmarek, Backlund & Biemer, 1990; Mathes, Adams & Davies, 1985; Sieber, 1991; Simpson; 1987; Stephen, 1984). Almost no empirical literature is available regarding the positive growth potential of this common and negatively perceived life event.

## General Statement of Purpose

This study extends the research on responding to the loss of a romantic relationship to include the resolution and growth, as well as the psychological distress, of such an event. More specifically, the study tests for individual and intraindividual differences in responding to a breakup. The study also tests these differences for their associations with time since the loss, gender, and interpersonal attachment style.

## Review of the Literature

### Introduction

Several areas of the theoretical and research literature are reviewed for this study. First, a selection of theories is presented to provide a background to the understanding of loss and grief. These include stage theories of grief, models of adult life transition, and theories of coping. This section also contrasts normal and abnormal grief. Because this study conceptualizes response to loss as including grief, healing, and achieving growth from a loss, a comprehensive model of responding to loss is presented.

The next major section reviews the empirical literature on grief responses to the loss of a romantic relationship. Since there is relatively little empirical research available on premarital romantic relationships, this section is augmented by selected literature on death and divorce. Because gender is one of the factors to be assessed in this study, this section includes an overview of the literature on gender differences and a review of gender-related differences in responding to loss. The effect of time on grief and response to loss is another factor of central interest to this study. The literature on differential responses to loss over time is included in this section.

The third major variable of interest to the present study is attachment style. This study proposes that romantic relationships can be understood in terms of attachment styles, which have their origin in infant-parental interactions. The attachment style literature is reviewed, including the origins of the theory and its application to adult romantic relationships. The final section provides a summary of the literature reviewed.

### Stage Theories of Grief, Adult Transitions, and Coping

The review of the literature on grief and responding to loss is, of necessity, selective. The first section provides an overview of the origins of theory and research on grief. The second section outlines a number of stage theories of grief. The third section presents two models of adult life transitions which inform this process. The next section contains a brief overview of the literature on coping, which is followed by a summary of stage, adult transition, and coping theories. Lastly, a comprehensive model of responding to loss is presented.

### Origin and History of the Study of Grief

Most reviewers of the literature on grief and responding to loss identify Darwin as the first to make systematic scientific observations and speculations (Bowlby, 1980; Raphael, 1983; Schneider, 1984). In his work, The Expression of Emotion in Man and Animals Darwin (1872) suggested that the infant's cries are the roots of the adult expression of grief.

According to Bowlby (1979), Freud largely overlooked grief as a significant psychological process until late in his life when he conceptualized

loss in terms of anxiety, his more central theoretical concern. Freud said that "missing someone who is loved and longed for is the key to an understanding of anxiety" (Freud, 1926; cited in Bowlby, 1980, p. 56). Freud's view was that the process of mourning involved two tasks. The first was an anxious reaction to the loss. The second task was a withdrawal of libidinal energy from that object. This reclaimed libido was then available for cathecting objects which could realistically gratify one's needs.

### Stage Theories of Grief

Erich Lindemann (1944) studied combat soldiers and survivors of a fire in Boston and developed another model of grief. According to Lindemann, the first 20 to 60 minutes are characterized by somatic distress such as trouble breathing, an empty feeling in the stomach, and a general lack of physical energy. These physical symptoms can be later reactivated by reminders of the loss. This is followed by a cluster of predictable symptoms. The griever is preoccupied with thoughts and images of the lost person. An active review of events just prior to the loss often results in guilt over what might have been done to avert the loss. There is a restless quality to the person's behavior. The person keeps busy, but the behavior appears to lack any meaningfulness. There are often hostile, angry outbursts at others and a pervasive loss of the capacity to behave according to their established habits. According to Lindemann, grief work entails "an emancipation from the bondage to the deceased; readjustment to the environment in which the deceased is missing, and the formation of new relationships" (p. 143).

The research and theorizing on attachment, separation and loss by John Bowlby (1979, 1980, 1982) have been influential in the field of response to loss

(Marris, 1974; Parkes, 1987; Schneider, 1984). Bowlby (1979) suggests that grief is a universal process which has developed through evolution to ensure the survival of the species. His theories grew out of his work with human infants and were influenced by the field of ethology.

Bowlby's work suggests a three-stage process of responding to the loss of a significant attachment: protest, despair, and detachment. The person will first attempt to stop or reverse the loss by an active protest. In this stage, control is being challenged and one's security is being threatened. Loss of control is a direct threat to the predictability on which the person has come to rely.

As the reality of the loss and its irreversibility is recognized, the person will drop into a state of despair. The predictability provided by the attachment is disrupted and confusion and hopelessness result. Successful resolution of this challenge to predictability occurs when the person becomes detached from the object and is able to make new connections and attachments.

Peter Marris (1974) expanded the domain of grief beyond the reactions to a death to include other types of loss and changes in a person's life. Two contributions by Marris are particularly important. He outlined the "conservative impulse" as a tendency to maintain a thread of continuity between one's past experience and one's assumptions about the world based on those experiences. Each person's experiential history results in a set of assumptions from which to derive the meaning of their current experiences. By clinging to the past the individual attempts to preserve predictability. This resistance to change by attempting to maintain the past takes an honored place in Marris's conceptualization of responding to losses and adapting to change: "Resistance to change is, then, as fundamental an aspect of learning as

revision, and adaptability comes as much from our ability to protect the assumptions of experience, as on our willingness to reconsider them" (p. 19).

According to Marris, working through grief involves a vacillation between attending to and attempting to maintain the past and adapting to the reality of what is lost or changed in one's life.

Marris also expanded on the later phases of responding to a loss. Whereas for Freud and Bowlby resolution involved detachment from the object lost, Marris saw successful resolution resulting from recognizing the fundamental meaning which the lost person or object held for the griever. For example, what needs were fulfilled by this relationship? Only by understanding the basis for their emotional attachment can the person integrate the loss and reconnect current experiences with the thread of continuity of the past.

According to Marris then, the grief process entails an initial shock with feelings of unreality. The experience of unreality results from the break in the thread of continuity. The experience of life no longer fits the purposes motivating habitual behaviors. Life, as grievers experience it, literally has no meaning. The loss has disrupted their assumptions, beliefs, and purposes.

Following the initial shock of the loss, the impulse to conserve manifests itself in a clinging to the past, often taking the form of denial of the loss; or the person may attempt to withdraw their energy and take a passive, apathetic attitude. Eventually the motive to adapt will bring the reality of the loss into focus. At this stage the vacillation between conservatism and willingness to adapt to change deepens. During this time the person appears to be in intense psychological pain.



In order for the loss to be resolved, the meaning of the loss has to be understood. Throughout their experiential history, humans are innately motivated to understand the rules and principles underlying their experience (Marris, 1974). This is the basis for predictability. When one experiences a major loss, change or disruption, this system of principles and rules no longer makes sense. In order for the loss to be understood it must be interpreted in terms of the current system of assumptions. Once this experience is accepted within the belief system, the integrity of that belief can be challenged. A new assumption can be integrated and the thread of continuity restored.

Collin Parkes' (1987) theory parallels that of Bowlby (1979, 1980, 1982), but he suggests five stages. First, the person reacts with alarm, as has been outlined by Selye (1976) in the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The body reacts with increased sympathetic nervous system arousal in preparation to fight or take flight. This may be experienced as panic. During this stage the person is unable to accept the need to change, or to look to the environment for support. Either of these responses requires that the inevitability of the loss be acknowledged. At this point the individual is not able to accept a helpless posture toward the loss or event.

The next stage is one of searching. This represents the "pangs" of grief. Parkes suggests that this stage usually begins from one to two weeks following a major loss. Pining, intrusive thoughts of the person and restless activity are most characteristic of a person in this stage. In short, this is a period of doing whatever one can to recover the loss.

During the next stage, mitigation, some relief comes in the form of "finding" a relationship or activity which serves as a substitute for the lost

person. This "found" person is likely to be similar, but definitely not of more value or quality than the person who was lost. Other forms of mitigation come through denial, emotional blunting, and numbness or feelings of unreality.

Following mitigation is a period of anger and guilt. This is similar to the period of protest suggested by Bowlby (1979). During this phase the person is working out ambivalence toward the lost person (Parkes, 1987). In one sense the person is angry with the person for leaving, yet realizes that the anger is irrational and feels guilty for having these emotions. Parkes suggests that the more ambivalence the griever feels toward the lost person, the more difficult it will be to work through the grief process. The final stage is gaining a new identity. During this period the griever identifies with some part of the lost person and integrates those roles, expectations, or behaviors into her/his life.

Probably the most popular theory of grief comes from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (1969). Out of her work with dying patients she has outlined a five-stage process of grief: (1) shock (2) denial (3) anger (4) depression and (5) acceptance. In her later work she proposed a final transformative process which suggests life after death (Kubler-Ross, 1975).

Wiseman (1975) adapted Kubler-Ross' theory to the experience of divorce. Initially, denial results because the person's homeostatic capabilities are inadequate to cope with the loss. Loss and depression follow the denial stage. Some part of the loss forces its way through the denial. In denial the person may not even be able to verbalize the reality of the divorce or separation. But once the inevitable is acknowledged, the person often lapses into despair.

Next, the person experiences a period of anger and ambivalence over the loss of the relationship. Anger which was underlying the depression

surfaces and is expressed at the partner. This stage is often prolonged and exacerbated by ambivalence. This ambivalence may manifest itself in attempts to reestablish a relationship.

Reorientation to a new life style and identity follows this angry/ambivalent period. There is less and less time and energy spent looking back to what has been lost. The primary task is to rework one's identity. Finally, there is an acceptance of the new identity and newly established level of functioning. There is often a tendency to accept the ex-partner for who they were and to feel less anger toward them.

Weenolsen (1988) used semi-structured interviews and quantitative measures to study 48 women who had experienced a variety of losses. Out of this work she developed a model to explain how loss is transcended. Working from an existential-humanist perspective, Wennolsen defines loss as: "the destruction of an aspect of life or self" (p. 43). Transcendence of loss involves overcoming the loss and a redefinition of self. Transcendence, according to the author, is a metaphor for "rebirth, resurrection and immortality" (p.49).

Weenolsen describes five levels of loss: primary, secondary, remote or abstract, loss of self-concept, and metaphoric losses. An example of a primary loss would be the ending of a romantic relationship. Secondary to this breakup may be the loss of relationship rewards. A remote or abstract loss connected to these losses could be the loss of dreams of how the future might have been with the ex-partner. Having to define oneself as no longer a partner in a romantic relationship would be a loss of self. Metaphoric losses are losses which result from a primary loss and hold some idiosyncratic meaning for the person. For example, the ending of the relationship may be experienced as an abandonment.

Weenolsen outlines three types of transcendence: situational, dispositional and general. Situational transcendence is often some specific behavior directed toward the loss, such as crying or talking about the loss. An example of dispositional transcendence would be a psychological defense mechanism that is employed in any loss situation. General transcendence is not related to specific loss. Examples of this type of transcendence are using drugs or alcohol to medicate oneself.

According to Weenolsen, transcendence can be incomplete, maladaptive, or pathological (response causes more loss than it transcends), neotranscendence (withdrawing from one attachment to reattach to another without healing), and completed transcendence. The author suggested that completed transcendence is actually a misnomer, in that the loss is integrated and becomes part of the person's identity.

Weenolsen drew the following conclusions from the research. The patterns of transcendence have their roots in childhood experiences with loss. People tend to use the same approach learned in childhood to respond to subsequent losses. Second, transcendence is dependent on loss. High loss experiences provide the potential for higher levels of transcendence. The author also concluded that the relationship between loss and transcendence is curvilinear. When the loss exceeds some limit the ability to transcend that loss is limited.

### Criticisms of Stage Theories

In The Myths of Coping with Loss, Wortman and Silver (1989) suggest that stage theorists of grief and loss have had a profound influence on the expectations of people experiencing irrevocable losses. According to these

writers, people expect to go through a traumatic or distressing period following a loss and are often pathologized when they do not show the expected response.

These authors identified five common assumptions about grief and responding to loss, which they termed myths. These myths are: (1) distress or depression is inevitable; (2) distress is necessary, and failure to experience distress is indicative of pathology; (3) it is important to "work through a loss"; (4) recovery from the loss is expected; and (5) a state of resolution is reached.

For each, Wortman and Silver (1991) cited research evidence disputing these assumptions. For example, in challenging the inevitability of depression following a loss, they cited Clayton, Halikas and Maurice (1971) who found only 35% of widows depressed 30 days after losing their spouses. In refuting the importance of working through one's grief and the expectation of eventual recovery, they cited findings by Vachon, Rogers, Lyall and Lancee (1982) that the best predictors of distress and depression two years following death of a loved one were high levels of initial distress and depression.

Wheaton (1990) provides a partial explanation for the high degree of variability of individual responses. In a review of the literature on life transitions, he suggests that there are two primary foci of explanations for individual differences in responding to stressful life events. One focus is on coping strategies, social support and personality traits. The other is on the differences in the event itself. For example, comparing events on characteristics such as undesirable or uncontrollable. Wheaton suggests the role history of the person also accounts for individual differences in adjustment to life changes.

Wheaton (1990) outlines a model based on role history to explain differences in response. The model suggests that if a role prior to the change event is highly stressful, then the result of change can actually be a reduction in stress and an improvement of functioning. A person with this role history may not experience a loss as a loss, but rather as a relief.

### Adult Transition Models

Theories on adult life transitions also provide information about with major (and minor) losses and life changes. Schlossberg (1981) integrated the theories of others to develop a broad theory for predicting how people will adapt to transitions in their lives. According to Schlossberg (1981), a period of transition is one of moving from a state of "pervasiveness" in which much of how one thinks about the self is in terms of the loss (e.g., "I am a widow," or "I am a rejected lover") to "boundedness" or seeing the event as something which has happened (e.g., "My love relationship has ended").

This model suggests that people first have a realization of some loss or an awareness that their assumptions about themselves or their world have changed. In response to this realization people will attempt to make habitual patterns of behavior work. When these behaviors do not work there is a period of assessing this change. During this time the person often realizes both the positive and negative aspects of the change.

Eventually a new lifestyle (habitual set of behaviors and beliefs) will develop in response to the change. Over time the person will invest increasing amounts of energy in this new style. A psychological reorganization of beliefs and assumptions returns the person to a relative state of homeostasis.

The model also outlines three sets of factors for predicting the degree and ease with which a person is able to adapt. The factors are: (1) those of the loss or transition event itself (e.g., whether it represents a gain or loss or whether it was gradual or sudden); (2) characteristics of the pre and post transition environment (e.g., support systems); (3) individual characteristics (experience with similar events). According to Schlossberg: "adaptation to a transition depends on one's perceived and/or actual balance of resources to deficits in terms of the transition itself, the pre-post environment and the individual's sense of competency, well-being, and health" (pp. 7-8).

Barrie Hopson (1981; Hopson & Adams, 1977) is another source of theories on transitions. Hopson outlines a seven-stage model of responding to transition. At the first awareness of the loss, shock and numbness set in and the person is immobilized. This immobilization is often accompanied closely by an attempt to minimize the loss, most likely through denial of the event of the loss or of its importance to the person. This minimization stage is thought to be a form of "buying time."

As more of the realization of the loss creeps through, the person will enter a stage of self-doubt which may appear much like depression. Profound sadness, anger, guilt, and helplessness are major affective elements of this period. As the person is able to release their anger and stop attempting to maintain the past, the letting-go stage is entered. This phase entails a deep experiencing of the loss and may generalize to an existential hopelessness about life in general. While the self-doubt phase is marked by a general lowering of mood, the letting-go phase is the beginning of an upward turn in mood.

As mood improves and the person feels more energy, they enter a period of testing new options. This begins with very tentative exploration of new relationships or behaviors. The search-for-meaning phase is an active attempt to articulate what this loss has meant. Whereas the self-doubt and letting-go phases were primarily affective phases, searching-for-meaning is largely cognitive. The final phase is integration, where new assumptions about one's self and the world which grew out of the search-for-meaning become the basis of future decisions and behavior.

### Coping

The literature on stress and coping also illuminates an aspect of responding to loss. Hans Selye (1991) observed that most patients exhibited symptoms of just being sick. Out of this observation he developed his General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) to account for a consistent biological response to stress. Although a complete review of this alarm reaction is beyond the scope of this study, a brief overview of the stages of GAS is presented.

Upon exposure to some negative event, the body responds with autonomic nervous system arousal. The stage of resistance follows in which the body braces itself for a more sustained defense against the threat. Eventually this resistance depletes the body's energy reserves and a state of exhaustion results.

In reviewing the literature on the concept of coping, Lazarus and Folkman (1984; 1991) suggest that there are two schools of thought. One has its roots in animal research; the other extends from psychoanalytic ego psychology. Animal research has had primarily a behavioral focus, wherein coping is accomplished by avoiding, escaping, or attacking. The



psychoanalytic ego approach has focused on cognitive models and processes which solve problems and reduce stress. According to the authors, coping is a response to emotion in both models. They suggest that each is limited by the unidirectionality of emotion (i.e. strong emotion leads to coping).

Lazarus and Folkman (1991) offer a model in which coping is defined as "...cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 210). According to this model a person-environment situation is appraised in two ways. Primary appraisal informs as to the degree of threat. Secondary appraisal informs as to the options available to the person. If the appraisal suggests that the situation is changeable, a problem-focus is adopted. If the situation is appraised as unchangeable, coping will take the form of managing emotional distress.

According to Lazarus and Folkman (1991) the appraisal is influenced by past experiences with similar situations, beliefs about self and the world, personal resources, and skills. This model also views coping as a mediator of emotion rather than a response to emotion. Primary and secondary appraisal elicits and labels emotion. Problem-focused coping mechanisms change the situation. Emotion-focused coping mechanisms change the person. Either way, change occurs. Then there is reappraisal and the emotion perceived provides feedback. In this way coping and emotion work in concert with one another.

### Summary of Theories of Grief, Transitions, and Coping

These theories were developed from work in a variety of fields. For example, Kubler-Ross (1969, 1975), Lindemann (1944), Marris (1974), and

Parkes (1987) worked with death and dying. Bowlby (1979, 1980, 1982) has done the majority of his work with infants and mothers. Schlossberg (1981) and Hopson and Adams (1977) integrated the theories of others in working with adults undergoing major life transitions due to changes in vocation, marriage, and retirement. Selye's (1991) work extends from a medical perspective. Yet there are certain common elements or experiences which are evident across these models.

Most theories articulate a process, with qualitative differences in each stage or phase. For instance, each outlines an initial awareness of the loss and a responsive shock, denial, or attempt to reduce or eliminate it. Although this has been challenged by Wortman and Silver (1989), most suggest that there is a period of depression or sadness, during which life is felt as, and thought to be, meaningless and empty.

Following this period of low energy and what has traditionally been viewed as grief, the person moves to a time of acceptance and some sort of resolution. For some theorists this entails identifying with and incorporating some part of whatever was lost. Some view resolution as a change in one's assumptions about the self or the world. Others conceptualize a turning of one's energy to new activities and relationships.

Most of the theorists put a particular emphasis on one aspect of the process (e.g., Marris's conservative impulse; Wheaton's focus on interpersonal roles). Each of them tends to emphasize a particular modality of experiencing the loss (e.g., Bowlby views grief as largely a biological process; Schlossberg emphasizes adapting with new behavioral patterns; Lazarus and Folkman focus on cognitive appraisal).

John Schneider (1984; 1993; 1994) has attempted to emphasize the commonalities and integrate the various modalities of experience into a theory to account for all types of stress, loss, or grief. In a review of the literature on grief and response to loss, Gilliland and James (1988) found the Schneider model the "...most comprehensive system we have seen." (p. 402). This theory is presented below. This study tests the applicability of this model with romantic relationship loss, by evaluating responses for the effects of time, gender and interpersonal attachment style.

### Schneider's Model of Response to Loss

Schneider (1984; 1994) has integrated the work of others in the field with his own research and clinical work into a comprehensive and holistic model of response to loss. The work is comprehensive in two respects. First, it conceptualizes the response cycle as extending from the initial shock and attempts to protect the self from the loss, to a depth of grief, mourning, and adaptation to the personal crisis engendered in the loss, to challenging one's belief system, to an existential transformation which comes from meeting and accepting the inevitability of death and non-being.

This is a phase, rather than stage model of responding to loss. A stage approach implies discrete and unidirectionality movement. Once a level is reached, there is no returning to prior levels of experience or functioning (Schneider, 1984). A phase approach implies a continuous process, with highly idiosyncratic movement forward through the phases, and with periodic regressions.

The model outlines seven phases of response to loss: (1) initial awareness, (2) limiting awareness, (3) awareness, (4) perspective, (5)

integration, (6) self-empowerment, and (7) transformation. Schneider's theory is also comprehensive through its outlining of the commonalities across various experiences of stress, loss, and grief. The Schneider model is holistic in that it describes responses across five modalities of experience (i.e. behavioral, emotional, physical, cognitive, and spiritual) in each of the phases of response to loss, except the final transformation phase.

This multifaceted approach gives a more complete picture of the response process. A holistic model reduces the problem of determining successful adaptation and coping depending on which modality of experience is assessed (Monat & Lazarus, 1991). A particular behavior may serve to increase a person's interpersonal adaptation while overtaxing their emotional resources. Secondly, the holistic approach affords an assessment of the intrapersonal congruence of the individual's loss experience. One would expect that there are individual differences in orientations to the various modalities. But an extreme or prolonged imbalance in modalities may in itself be indicative of dysfunction (Lazarus, 1989; Schneider, 1984).

According to Schneider (1984), the primary tasks of the grieving process are to determine what's lost, what's left, and what's possible. Discovering what's lost takes place during the phases of initial awareness, limiting awareness and awareness. Initial awareness is a relatively short period during which the loss information is received. The person's autonomic arousal system is activated. They are likely to experience shock, numbness, and disbelief. In reaction to the fight-or-flight response in initial awareness the person will then attempt to limit awareness of the loss through two mechanisms. These mechanisms fill the function of easing one's self into the loss, to take a little of the loss at a time, rather than to be plunged headlong into the reality of

the loss. Holding on (fight) is an active attempt to limit the loss through a denial that the loss has occurred. This can manifest itself in various ways. For instance, ruminating over what may have been done to prevent the loss, such as castigating oneself with "if only I had..." is a form of attempting to reverse the loss through bargaining. The holding on mechanism is countered by letting go.

Whereas holding on is an effort at conservatism (Marris, 1974) and an attempt to maintain the past, the letting go strategy is an attempt to limit the damage of the loss by moving to a time where the loss is not as important (future). Holding on takes a great deal of energy, whereas letting go is an attempt to conserve energy. Vacillation between these two strategies allows the person to slowly and in one's own time begin to approximate awareness of the loss.

The third phase is awareness. This is the period which is often associated with mourning and grief. The person may be preoccupied with the lost person, may feel great sadness or anger, feel physically drained and empty or agitated and anxious. During this phase people often have a sense of losing a part of themselves. One may no longer feel whole. Spiritually life often loses its meaning and purpose. Nothing makes any sense. Schneider terms this an existential crisis. The loss and its irreversibility are wounds to one's narcissism. The person is confronted with the awareness that one cannot exert absolute control over what happens in life. This can seriously challenge one's belief systems and result in a lack of confidence in one's ability to predict. Again, the task of these early phases is to discover the full extent of what's lost.

The task of the next period is to determine what's left. Awareness is followed by a period of gaining perspective on the loss. Whereas awareness is primarily a period of generalization and divergent thinking, gaining perspective

is characterized by discrimination and convergent thinking. The loss is accepted and healing begins. There is less preoccupation with the lost person and the griever is able to begin to appreciate other relationships. This is a time for reflection and solitude. It is characterized by a "sweet sadness." Physically the person is in a state of recuperation after the acceptance of what is no longer a part of their lives.

To conclude the task of what's left following a loss, a phase of resolution ensues. Resolution is an active step in the grief process and entails understanding the fundamental meaning of the loss in the griever's life. This can be a period of heightened learning about the self. Discovering what a lost relationship truly meant often results in challenges to other basic assumptions about oneself or the world. Energy which has been bound up in the loss is now freed. This can trigger awarenesses of other losses and often begins a grief process for these other previously unacknowledged losses. This often results in a review of other attachments in life and questioning of the current appropriateness and value of these attachments.

With knowledge of what's lost and what's left the person then is able to turn his/her attention to what's possible. The two phases associated with this task are reformulation and transformation. Reformulation and transformation appear to be similar processes but operating on different levels. Reformulation entails a reordering of priorities and articulating new assumptions about one's self and the world which fit one's current experience. Rather than viewing the world in terms of what limits there are to life and living it, the person views the world with an eye toward the challenges and potentials in life.

Whereas reformulation involves the reorganization of beliefs and attitudes relevant to a particular loss event, transformation of loss is a more

global experience and impacts one's philosophical view of life. The transformation of loss often involves wrestling with and resolving oneself to paradox, that what was lost was not truly lost. Schneider (1994) cites the following example: "I've discovered that the most important parts of my loss remain alive inside of me" (p.269). One may find pleasant and satisfying reminders of the lost person in other relationships or memories of the lost person provide a sense of comfort. At this point the person is able to realize the growth potential available in each and every loss. There is a tendency to commit to certain personal purposes and at the same time to let go of attachments to particular outcomes.

#### Normal versus Abnormal Grief

The normal pattern of responding to loss is adequately outlined in the above presentation on grief models. As a review, uncomplicated bereavement as defined by The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual-III-R (DSM III-R; American Psychiatric Association, 1987) will be presented and then contrasted with a selected review of abnormal grief reactions. The DSM III-R describes uncomplicated bereavement as "...a normal reaction to...a loss" (p. 361). The symptoms of bereavement are feelings of depression, poor appetite, weight loss, sleep disturbance, and guilt, usually over a time of less than three months. The DSM III-R indicates that the bereaved recognizes that they are having a normal grief reaction to a loss. Symptoms which are suggestive of a pathological grief reaction are: extended problems with daily functioning, extended psychomotor retardation, obsessive preoccupation with feelings of worthlessness, and excessive thoughts of death or suicide.

Freud (1917) was one of the first to identify pathological varieties of reaction to a major loss. According to Freud, melancholia is a response which results when the ambivalence toward the love object is not resolved. The hate and rage directed toward the object for no longer being available is narcissistically internalized and directed toward part of the ego. This self-debasement is characteristic of the familiar "anger turned inward" used to conceptualize depression in psychoanalytic terms (Freud, 1917).

Pathological grief reactions are essentially exaggerations or distortions of healthy grief. They may be the result of prior experiences with loss, personality factors, current situational factors or characteristics of the relationship loss (Parkes & Weiss, 1983; Schneider, 1984). For example, Schneider (1984) outlines two common patterns of grief which inhibit growth. The first is an exaggeration of the limiting awareness phase. An awareness of the full extent of the loss is not achieved, and the person uses the strategy of letting go excessively. The person often is able to acknowledge that the loss has occurred, but denies its importance in life. A lack of confidence in one's ability to experience and survive the intense pain of awareness often results in this approach (Schneider, 1984).

A second pattern suggested by Schneider (1984) is an "acceptance theme" (p. 75). The various aspects of the loss are explored in a way that the person feels finished with the loss. The person accepts the irretrievability of the loss. But the loss experience remains isolated; beliefs and assumptions about oneself and the world are not challenged and reformulated. There is no generalization of this experience to other aspects of life.

Raphael (1983) outlines five types of pathological reactions to loss: absent grief, delayed grief, inhibited grief, distorted grief, and chronic grief.



Absent grief is sometimes seen and admired by others as evidence of strength or positive coping skills. Reasons suggested by Raphael (1983) for such a reaction are unwillingness to acknowledge a loss or its importance. Another possible reason for the lack of grief is that the lost object simply served narcissistic needs and a replacement person is quickly found.

Grief is sometimes delayed because of other crises in the life of the person which demand attention. Once coping strategies are in place the loss is acknowledged and the grief is experienced. Inhibited grief involves a stifling of one's emotional reactions. According to Raphael (1983) this often occurs when ambivalence toward the loss is unresolved or when the griever lacks the confidence to experience intense emotion and attempts to excessively limit the grief. Distorted grief often involves either exaggerating or minimizing the nature or extent of the loss. For example, a person prone to high levels of separation anxiety may be devastated by the loss of even a superficial relationship because it elicits unresolved feelings of separation. Chronic grief is a pattern wherein the person remains preoccupied with the loss. The person may be unable to successfully form new relationships and continues to long and yearn for the person lost.

Grief is often confounded with depression. Many authors have written about the importance of discriminating between depression and grief (Parkes & Wiess, 1983; Schneider, 1984). Volkan (1966) suggested that in grieving, the person is establishing connections and meaning between what was lost and current thoughts and feelings. According to Volkan, in depression there is often a lack of awareness of what was lost or how one is affected by it. McGovern (1986) used the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, 1974) and a measure of grief with an alcoholic population in a pre- and post-treatment

design. McGovern found that over the time of treatment scores on the BDI decreased while scores on the grief instrument increased. He concluded that grief includes the ability to experience and process intense emotions.

Deutsch (1982) developed a measure of grief and compared scores on this measure with those of the BDI (Beck, 1974). Although approximately one-third of the variance of the grief measure was shared with the BDI, several differences were also found. The intensity of depression does not diminish with time, whereas grief intensity does recede. Deutsch (1982) also concluded that that depressives defensively separated their emotional responses from cognitive appraisal, whereas grievers tended to search for cognitive meaning for the emotions.

Clayton, et al., (1974; cited in Deutsch, 1982) found similarities in grief and depression in a lack of the ability to concentrate, loss of appetite, and interest in usually enjoyed activities, but found that in grieving subjects there were no suicidal thoughts, psychomotor slowdown or feelings of worthlessness, as were present in depressed subjects.

### Grief and Distress following a Romantic Relationship Breakup

#### Introduction

There appears to be consensus in the literature that grief is a common and natural experience, not only to the death of a loved one, but to a variety of disruptive or traumatic life events, such as loss of a pet (Antelyes, 1984; Stewart, Thrush & Paulus, 1989), personality change due to injury or disease (Cole, Griffin & Ruiz, 1986; Lezak, 1978), and graduating from high school (Hayes, 1981).

Relatively little empirical research has been done to understand the grief responses resulting from a loss of a romantic relationship (Cupach, & Metts, 1986; Kaczmarek, Backlund, & Biemer, 1990; LaGrand, 1989; Sieber, 1991; Simpson, 1987). The research available focuses primarily on emotional distress following such an event. As indicated above, this study conceptualizes responding to a loss as a multifaceted process which includes behavioral, physical, cognitive, and spiritual components as well as emotional responses. This study also defines response to loss broadly to include not only what has traditionally been conceptualized as grief, but also resolution and growth.

The empirical studies available which explicitly researched grief responses to the loss of a romantic relationship are reviewed quite extensively. This is followed by a somewhat more cursory review of studies of emotional distress after the ending of a romantic relationship.

#### Grief Reactions to Loss of Romantic Relationship

Kaczmarek, et al. (1990) used college students as subjects to empirically validate grief as a response to the loss of a romantic relationship. The authors used an adapted version of an instrument which has been found to validly measure grief responses to a death (Texas Revised Grief Inventory; Zisook, DeVaul & Click, 1982). The instrument asks participants to assess how they acted and felt immediately following the loss and how they are currently feeling and thinking about the loss. The authors also added items to reflect a possible positive outcome from the breakup of the relationship.

Several variables were assessed for their relationship to initial grief (depressed vs. not depressed) and positive outcome (positive vs. not positive)

from this type of loss. Positive outcome was operationalized with items which reflected relief, autonomy, endorsement of the ending as positive, endorsement that positive changes had occurred, and redefinition of a healthy relationship. Significantly more participants were initially depressed when the relationship had been very close, had been longer, and ended suddenly. Recency of the breakup was not significantly related to initial depression.

Positive outcome resulting from the breakup was also assessed. The percentage of students able to identify a positive outcome was less when the relationship ended unexpectedly (vs. breakup was anticipated) and when the relationship had been close (vs. one which they valued less).

In general, this study validates the experiencing of grief by college students suffering a loss of a romantic relationship. Support was also found for several mediating variables. Participants whose relationships ended suddenly, were relatively close, and were longer were likely to be experiencing grief. Suddenness and closeness also made a positive outcome more difficult to achieve.

But this study also had a number of limitations. Items which ask participants to retrospectively report their experiences are subject to response distortions (Simpson, 1987; Stunkard, Foster, Glassman & Rosato, 1985). A second limitation is in the operationalization of grief with a measure of depression (see earlier discussion). A final limitation of this study was in the measurement of positive outcome. This was assessed with a five-item scale which asked about relief, increased autonomy, whether the ending had been positive, whether positive changes had occurred and redefinition of a healthy relationship. The questions concerning relief and a positive termination experience would seem to be addressing a different dimension of positive

outcome than that of increased autonomy and redefinition of a healthy relationship. The former implies a release from some burden by the relationship's termination, whereas the latter implies growth as a function of having been in the relationship.

Louis LaGrand (1981a; 1981b; 1983; 1986) surveyed more than 1,000 college students on their experiences of loss, including loss of romantic relationships. Of 46 different types of loss reported, LaGrand found that the second most common was the loss of a romantic relationship (most common was death of a significant other). Approximately 25% of his participants named a romantic relationship as their most recent major loss.

LaGrand (1986) also asked the students to identify the feelings, physical reactions accompanying their loss, and coping mechanisms used to deal with the loss. These responses were not reported separately for the various types of loss. The most common feelings were depression, emptiness, anger, and loneliness. The most common physical reactions were crying, insomnia, and headaches. The coping mechanisms used most often were talking about it, gradually accepting it, crying, passage of time, and support by friends.

This research provides a useful description of what losses college students experience, how they respond physically and emotionally, and how they cope. Loss of relationships, death of a loved one, ending a love relationship, ending a friendship, and separation from loved ones accounted for 74.6% of the losses reported by the participants. Loss is a pervasive aspect of college life.

Sieber (1991) studied the loss experiences and grief reactions of 226 college students using four measures of grief, as well as measures of a number of predictor variables. A life events inventory was used to determine loss

events which the subjects had experienced. The author found that 49% had broken up with a romantic partner within one year of the study. Another 35% had such an experience sometime in their lives, leaving 16% of subjects who had not had a breakup of a romantic relationship.

Participants were administered the Zung Self-Rating Depression Scale (Zung, 1965), and the Despair, Somatization and Anger scales of the ND-GEI (Sanders, Mauger & Strong, 1985) twice, two months apart. Subjects were divided into two groups: those who had experienced a breakup of a romantic relationship within five months and those who had not had a breakup within the past year. The average time since the loss event for the breakup group was about nine weeks.

Sieber found no differences on any of the grief scales between the two groups. Measures of grief on the second testing were lower than those at the first testing for both the breakup and the non-breakup groups. Surprisingly, time since the breakup and length of the relationship were not correlated to levels of grief.

With all four of the dependent variables clustered into a single measure of grief, multiple regression was used to identify the best set of predictors for grief. At the first testing for the breakup group in total, 49% of the variance in grief levels was explained by rejection, being female, and having had sexual intercourse. The results of the second testing two months later indicate that feeling rejected and not expecting the breakup best predicted grief reactions.

This study produced a number of interesting findings. Sieber (1991) found that a high proportion of college students had experienced the breakup of a romantic relationship (84%). Also of interest were the predictors of grief.

Being female, feeling rejected, having had intercourse, and not expecting the breakup were the best predictors of grief.

The author also found no differences in levels of grief between those who had experienced a breakup and those who had not had such a loss. This is a curious finding given that there was a reduction in grief over time, with grief scores lower two months after the first testing. It may be that those whose breakup had occurred over a year prior to testing (no-breakup group) were still grieving at levels equivalent with those of a more recent breakup. It may be that as a result of completing the life events inventory, participants were oriented to respond to questions with a particular loss in mind, but given that they were not explicitly instructed to complete the grief measures relative to a particular loss, it is possible that general distress or depression was measured rather than grief.

Another possibility is that as time passed participants felt less general distress over being away at college. A fourth possibility is that reduction in "grief" over time was the result of something other than movement through an adaptation to school or a grief process. As this study was done in a northern climate, it is even possible that weather played a role.

Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) described romantic relationships as the "testing ground" for young people to determine what they eventually wanted in a marriage partner. The authors studied college students' experiences of the ending of a romantic relationship with both interviews and quantitative measures of intimacy.

Of interest to this present study was the finding that in approximately 85% of the cases, one person wanted the breakup more than the partner. This resulted in two distinct roles: "breaker-upper" and the "broken-up-with." Both

men and women felt less emotional distress and depression, but more guilt following the breakup, when they were the initiator of the breakup.

### Emotional Distress Following a Breakup

Simpson (1987) studied the relationships of 234 college students to assess the factors which would predict emotional distress following a breakup. Simpson's research is limited to emotional distress, which is not equivalent with the present study's conceptualization of grief. It is reviewed here, along with other research on distress, because distress would be expected to covary with grief (Schneider, 1984).

Simpson asked subjects to respond retrospectively to items about how difficult the breakup was, how much disruption they experienced, and how upset they were following the breakup. They were also asked how long these conditions of difficulty, disruption, and upset lasted. The six items were aggregated into a single distress index.

Predictor variables were: satisfaction with the relationship; closeness; length of relationship; best alternative partner; best imagined partner; ease of finding alternative partner; self-monitoring (self-consciousness); orientation to sexual relations (unrestricted vs. restricted); exclusivity of relationship and whether the relationship was sexual. Results indicated that those who had had closer and longer relationships and relationships in which the participant did not believe a suitable new partner was available had higher levels of distress following the dissolution.

This study adds significantly to the understanding of the aftermath of a relational breakup. The predictive power of closeness and length of a romantic



relationship provides support for the importance of attachment as a dimension predictive of distress.

Mearns (1991) studied the ability of a person's expectancies of regulating negative mood to predict depression following the ending of a romantic relationship. Participants in this study were 583 college students who had experienced a breakup within one year of the research. The levels of subjects' depression were assessed retrospectively to the worst they had felt in the week following the breakup and how they were currently feeling. Characteristics of the relationship and subjects' expectancies for regulating negative mood were also assessed. Characteristics of the relationship which predicted depression in the first week following the breakup were: not wanting the relationship to end; higher intensity of love for the partner; a partner who wanted the relationship to end; and the perception that the lost partner was relatively more attractive.

Also of interest was the finding of a significant relationship between the retrospectively reported level of depression and current depression ( $r=.43$ ). A possible interpretation is that the impact of the breakup had a fairly long term effect on the participants. The mean length of time since the relationship had ended was over four months. Another possibility is that subjects distorted their initial experience of depression as a function of current depression.

One strength of Mearns (1991) for the present study was in the instruction to subjects to self-report their feelings of depression relative to the breakup event. Although in the present study depression is not considered equivalent to grief, this instruction probably results in an operationalization of grief which is more similar to that employed by this study.

The role of jealousy in the response to a loss of a romantic relationship was assessed by Mathes, Adams and Davies (1985). The authors tested a model of jealousy which predicts that such an event results in loss of relationship rewards (loneliness) and loss of self esteem. They predicted that a breakup due to fate (e.g., death) or destiny (e.g., partner moves away) would result in loneliness, whereas loss due to rejection or to a rival would result in both loneliness and loss of self-esteem.

Eighty college students who were currently in a romantic relationship were presented with scenarios of these four types of loss. The researchers also included a no-loss situation for control. Participants rated the degree to which they would feel lonely or would lose self-esteem.

The results indicated that regardless of the cause of the breakup, loss resulted in both loneliness and lowered self-esteem. But significantly lower levels of self-esteem were related to loss by rejection and loss due to rival. Also of interest was a finding that those with higher levels of trait jealousy reported greater loneliness and more loss of self-esteem. The finding that a breakup, regardless of type, resulted in a loss of self-esteem supports the contention that a major loss during this period of life can be particularly traumatic (Weiss, 1982).

#### Summary of Grief and/or Distress Following a Breakup

A few generalizations are suggested by the available literature. First, the breakup of a romantic relationship is a common and distressing event, which elicits a response of grief (Kaczmarek, et al., 1990; LaGrand, 1983; Mearns, 1991; Sieber, 1991; Simpson, 1987). It also appears that the degree of disruption to one's daily life is a major factor in relative degree of distress and

grief. This literature also suggests that the one in control of the breakup fares better in the aftermath (Hill et al., 1976).

A limitation to the value of this literature to the present study is the lack of discrimination between grief and depression. Many of these studies have operationalized grief with measures of depression. Although there appears to be considerable overlap between the two constructs and their manifestations, there are also substantive differences (Deutsch, 1982; McGovern, 1986; Schneider, 1992; Vachon, et al., 1982).

A second limitation is in that in much of the research conducted to date, there has been no instruction to participants to answer questions about grief or depression with a particular loss experience in mind. A final limitation to the available research is the lack of information on grief as a process.

Contemporary theories view grief as having qualitatively different phases in the process of working through one's losses (e.g. Kubler-Ross, 1969; Parkes, 1987; Schneider, 1984). The issues of resolution, healing, interpersonal learning, intrapersonal learning, and growth which are present in the loss of a romantic relationship have not been explored.

### Gender Differences in Responding to Loss

#### Overview of the Study of Gender Differences

The study of sex differences has a long and varied history. According to Deaux (1984) gender differences have been studied from three paradigms. The traditional approach has been to use sex as the biological variable of interest. The second wave of research has sought to identify what it is about gender that accounts for differences (Bem, 1981). These researchers and theorists have identified and operationalized masculinity and femininity as

separate dimensions of personality. A person who endorses high levels of both feminine and masculine traits is characterized as androgynous (Bem, 1974).

The third approach is a social constructionist perspective which focuses on the "...variables that may affect perceptions of gender" (Deaux, 1984; p. 105). According to this paradigm, the expectations and roles of one gender are largely defined in relation to the other gender. In this way, the expectations and proscriptions of each are defined by those with relatively more power.

Sex of the subject has been a variable of particular interest since the early 1970's (Deaux, 1984). The meta-analysis of gender differences by Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) concluded that only a few gender differences had been substantiated by the research. Besides relatively small differences in mathematics, visual-spatial and verbal abilities, they suggest that the only substantive difference supported by the literature was in aggression (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974).

Later research has found significant differences in several areas pertinent to this study. For example, women report that they cry more and with greater intensity than men (Jesser, 1987; Williams, 1982). Krystal (1979) found rates of pathological repression of emotions higher in males than in females.

In a meta-analysis of the literature on unipolar depression, Nolen-Hoeksema (1987) found females diagnosed with unipolar depression at almost twice the rate as men. Nolen-Hoeksema argues that this difference can be explained in part by differences in response sets to depression. Women respond by ruminating about their depressive feelings and commiserating with friends, while men distract themselves from their feelings with activity.

Winokur and Clayton (1967) point to the higher incidence of alcoholism among men and suggest that the difference in rates of depression is partially

explained by men's tendency to escape depression by increased use of alcohol. Other researchers have made similar conclusions (McGovern, 1986; Williams & Spitzer, 1983).

One explanation for gender differences is socialization. Females and males are essentially socialized into different cultures (Chodorow, 1989; Gilligan, 1982). Through these differential processes women become the "...repositories of qualities of affiliativeness, relatedness, empathy, and nurturance" (Chodorow, 1989). Brannon (1976) and Brannon and Juni (1984) propose that the male norm has four dimensions: "the big wheel", "the sturdy oak", "give 'em hell" and most importantly "no sissy stuff." Although endorsement of these traditional norms appears to be lessening, it is still a defining force in the lives of men (Thompson & Pleck, 1987).

### Gender Differences in Grief and Response to Loss

With this overview of gender difference in mind, the importance of gender in responding to the loss of romantic relationships is reviewed. Because of the paucity of empirical research on this topic, the review is augmented by a review of selected studies on grief related to death and divorce.

Although most of the major theories predict sex of the griever to influence the manner and degree of grief (Lindemann, 1944; Parkes, 1987; Marris, 1974; Schneider, 1984), the empirical research is sparse and inconclusive (Lister, 1991). In a cross-cultural study of grief by Kalish and Reynolds (1976; cited in Lister, 1991), males reported that they thought about their own deaths less than women and would fight harder to overcome a life-threatening illness than women. They found that men would attempt to control their emotions in public

more than women. Blier and Blier-Wilson (1989) assessed college students and found women more confident than men in their ability to express vulnerable emotions, such as fear and sadness (see also Balswick, 1982; cited in Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989). Men also reported that grief should be shorter (Kalish & Reynolds, 1976; cited in Lister, 1991).

Da Silva and Schork (1984-85) questioned college students' attitudes toward death and found females twice as likely to recall talking about death as a child. Males were twice as likely to recall discomfort with that childhood "death talk." Women also reported thinking more about their own death, felt life was more meaningful and were more motivated when they thought about their own death (Da Silva & Schork, 1984-85).

Based on his clinical work, Schneider (1992) suggests that for men, grief and shame are closely related. To acknowledge a loss and express grief or sadness related to that loss is a direct challenge to one's masculinity. By avoiding grief men protect themselves from shame.

Lister (1991) reviewed the social work literature on men and grief related to the death of a spouse or a child. Lister suggests that men are inhibited from the expression of grief by their own and others expectations. In his review, he concludes that a major loss experience provides a window of opportunity for self-discovery and growth. He also cautions professionals that although "...it may not be overt, a man's grief can still be deep and painful" (p. 233).

Following the death of a spouse, widowers are more likely to remarry, and to remarry sooner than widows (Osterweis, Solomon & Green, 1984). There is also evidence that the mortality rate is higher for widowers than widows, particularly in the first year following a spousal death (Osterweis, et al., 1984).

The literature on grief following a divorce illuminates response to loss from a romantic relationship. Divorce results not only in loss of intimacy and relationship rewards, but also lowered self-esteem (Kitson & Sussman, 1982; Thomas, 1982). Evidence has been found that suggests that men's self-esteem suffers more than women's following a divorce (Kitson & Sussman, 1982).

In a review of the literature on adjustment to divorce, Diedrick (1991) argues that there are significant gender differences. According to Diedrick (1991) adjustment to divorce is a process which often begins before the marriage ends. As one person begins to recognize that the relationship is no longer working and withdraws, a parallel process of individuating from the partner is taking place (Kitson & Raschke, 1981; cited in Diedrick, 1991). She characterized adjustment as primarily related to self-esteem.

Of particular interest to the present study is the conclusion drawn by Diedrick (1991) that women encounter higher levels of stress following a divorce, but that they achieve better adjustment than men. Diedrick (1991) also concluded that this adjustment is long lasting.

Mearns (1991) studied negative mood regulation expectancies and their relationship to depression following a romantic breakup. Women reported higher levels of depression than men immediately following the breakup, as well as in two subsequent testings.

Although tests of statistical significance were not reported, LaGrand (1986) found differences in his study of 1,000 college students and their loss experiences. Female subjects endorsed emotional reactions with greater frequencies in 16 out of 17 feeling categories. Women outscored men in 13 out of 15 physical reactions to loss. Particularly large differences were found in crying and headaches. Assessment of coping mechanisms revealed similar

results; women outscored male subjects in 14 out of 17 coping categories. In physical reactions following a loss, the largest differences were in talking about it and gaining support through friends, with women scoring higher in both.

In a study of college students' loss experiences and grief reactions, Sieber (1990) found female subjects higher in depression, despair, somatization and anger. Women scored between one half and one standard deviation higher than men. Feeling rejected was related to higher levels of depression for men on the various measures. Rejection, as well as being more committed, and having had intercourse, were the best predictors of grief for women. Overall, 49% of the variance in grief was explained by feeling rejected, being a female subject, and having had intercourse (Sieber, 1991).

Hill, et al. (1976) studied college students and found that men tended to fall in love more readily than women; and that women tended to fall out of love more readily (see also Rubin, 1973). Research also indicates that women recognize problems in relationships more readily than men (Thomas, 1982). According to Hill, et al. (1976) women initiated breakups more than men (Hill, 1974; Rubin, 1969; cited in Hill, et al., 1976). Also of interest to the present study was a suggestion in the data that the breakups were more traumatic for men than for women. In their interviews, Hill et al. (1976) reported that the men had difficulty integrating the experience of no longer being loved and tended to hope for reconciliation.

Mathes, et al. (1985) hypothesized that breaking up results in loneliness because of the loss of relationship rewards. But when the breakup is due to a rival or rejection by the partner, self-esteem would suffer. While results indicate that both self-esteem and loneliness are impacted by a breakups regardless of



type, female participants experienced more loneliness while men experienced more loss of self-esteem.

In a study of attachment and emotional distress following a breakup, Simpson (1990) found that avoidant men experienced significantly less emotional distress than avoidant women. They also experienced less distress than men or women who were anxious or securely attached. This effect held even after closeness of the relationship, commitment to the relationship, satisfaction with the relationship, and trust in one's partner were controlled for in the analysis.

On the other hand, several studies have found no differences between the sexes on grief or loss-related distress. For example, Kaczmarek, et al. (1990) found no gender differences in grief immediately following a breakup (retrospectively reported), nor with current grief (mean of four months following breakup). They also tested for positive outcome (single variable) from the breakup, which was operationalized with questions of relief, autonomy, a positive breakup interaction, positive changes, and redefinition of healthy relationships. No gender differences were found.

Simpson (1987) assessed distress in college students after a breakup and found no gender differences in retrospectively-reported distress. Stephen (1984) reported similar findings with 130 college student couples, although a single item was used to measure distress. A single item would be insufficient to assess a multi-faceted phenomenon such as distress or grief.

### Summary of Gender Differences in Response to Loss

Although the existing literature is inconclusive, several generalizations are suggested. Women are more aware of problems in relationships than men

and are more likely to take steps to end romantic relationships (Diedrick, 1991). Women appear to attend to experiences of loss and sadness more readily than men (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; Jesser, 1987; Nolem-Hoeksema, 1987; Williams, 1982). Women experience and express initial emotions associated with loss experiences more so than men, although men may be more vulnerable to reductions in self-esteem as a result of a romantic breakup (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; LaGrand, 1986). Men are more likely to mask or deny feelings of grief and loss (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989; Lister, 1991; Schneider, 1992). A final suggestion in the literature is that women's willingness and ability to experience their losses more intensely may facilitate better adjustment and serve to make their lives more meaningful (Da Silva & Schork, 1984-85).

#### Time Since the Loss

As in other areas of this subject, very little research has been done to understand the degree to which time effects one's current response to a romantic relationship loss. Kaczmarek, et al. (1990) studied college students' depression reactions to ending a romantic relationship and found fewer participants whose relationship had recently ended were less likely to be depressed than those whose breakup had occurred longer ago. The authors suggest that those whose loss was recent may have been in denial. Aside from this finding, level of depression was not related to time since the loss.

Mearns (1991) asked college students to retrospectively report their initial depression and current depression following a romantic breakup. Levels of depression were significantly lower at the second testing (a mean of four months after the relationship ended). Finkel (1975) studied events in college students' lives which initially traumatized them, but which was later

reformulated as a strength or life enhancement. College students provided detailed accounts of negatively perceived events which later had positive outcomes. Finkel (1975) suggested that this transformation was primarily a cognitive process which took place from two weeks to four months following the negative event. If the reformulation did not take place at that time, it was unlikely to occur at all. Finkel and Jacobson (1977) found that this tendency to reformulate was more likely to be a personality characteristic than an attribute of the situation.

Although the loss of a romantic relationship would not be expected to be equivalent to a loss through death or divorce, to gain some further insight into the impact of time on responding to loss, selected studies of widowhood and divorce are presented. Zisook and Schuchter (1991) studied 350 widows and widowers over a seven-month period following a spousal death and concluded that there had been no progress in resolution of grief. Zisook and Schuchter (1986) followed surviving spouses for four years following a death of a partner. Most of the widows and widowers indicated that they had not achieved a complete resolution at the end of that time. The researchers concluded that grief is not a process to be concluded or resolved, but rather is life long. Bowlby (1980) found that less than half of a group of widows had recovered in a year following the death of their husband.

Campbell, Swank and Vincent (1991) used a measure of grief which later was revised and developed into the awareness phase subscale of the Schneider, McGovern and Deutsch (1990) model of response to loss. Subjects for the study were widows. Campbell, et al. (1991) found a negative correlation between time since the loss and this measure of grief.

Gray and Shields (1992) developed an instrument to measure response to divorce across three stages as outlined by Bowlby (1979). These three chronological stages are: attempting to regain the lost partner (protest), disorganization (despair), and reorganization. Gray and Shields (1992) included in their model a denial stage which occurred before the attempt-to-regain stage, as well as transition periods between each of the stages. These researchers found that 85% of participants who had been divorced for more than four years were in the reorganization stage. Sixty-six percent of those divorced less than one year were in denial, attempting to regain, or were between attempting to regain and disorganization (Gray & Shields, 1992). Jordon (1989) found that men had returned to predivorce levels of psychological functioning one to two years following a divorce. Alain and Lussier (1989) found similar resolution results.

These findings, as well as the theories on responding to loss (Parkes, 1987; Schneider, 1984), suggest that grief, its resolution, and growth are highly idiosyncratic (Schneider, 1984; Parkes, 1987). Conclusions drawn from these findings need be very tentative. While resolution of grief from a divorce appears to be accomplished within one or two years, the tentative nature of the young adult's identity would likely add more variability (Stevens-Long & Cobb, 1983; Weiss, 1982). Those individuals with lesser degrees of identity integration or individuals whose identity is relatively more contingent on their relationship would experience more distress (Headington, 1981; Weiss, 1982). At the same time, it would be expected that changes in that identity as a function of the relationship loss may be more quickly accomplished. With this caveat in mind, there is some support for a tentative conclusion that the intensity of grief lessens after a few months and that life may return to a normal

level of functioning within a year. The research on turning negative events into strengths would suggest that some people are able to achieve a positive, growthful outcome after a relatively few weeks or months. But it is uncertain whether this transformation of trauma into life enhancement is a function of challenging and reformulating basic beliefs about one's self and the world as suggested by theories of grieving or a more superficial cognitive reframing. Therefore no conclusions can be drawn from the empirical literature on the amount of time necessary to accomplish growth.

### Romantic Love and Attachment

#### Traditional Views of Romantic Love

When one sees a young couple gazing blissfully into one another's eyes, love and romance are terms which spring immediately to mind. But what are the causes and dynamics of this magnificent human experience?

Romantic love relationships have been conceptualized in a myriad of ways. Freud (1926) viewed relationships as based on the cathexis of libido to a love object who will satisfy sexual needs. Sullivan (1953) was one of the first to focus specifically on the significance of love relationships. He viewed the preadolescent period to be a time when a child developed a special relationship with a "chum." For Sullivan this relationship is the first "...manifestation of the need for interpersonal intimacy" (p.246). According to Sullivan this "chum" need for intimacy collides with the "lust dynamic" during adolescence and forms the basis for romantic involvement.

Rubin (1970) conceptualized love as an attitude with three elements: a sense of needing that person, a concern for their well-being, and a desire for intimacy. Berscheid and Walster (1974) conceptualized two primary types of

love: companionship and passionate. A number of other theorists have developed taxonomies of love types. For example, Lee (1973) suggests the following: Eros (passion), Ludus (game-playing), Storge (companionship), Mania (obsessive), Pragma (practical), and Agape (selfless).

### Attachment Theory

Recently, theorists have extended Bowlby's work with infant-care giver relationships (1979, 1980, 1982) to explain the patterns and dynamics of adult romantic relationships. Bowlby postulated a primary human infant need as maintaining proximity to a care giver. This proximity provided a felt sense of security. Behavior patterns develop to maintain this proximity or to reestablish proximity when threatened.

Weiss (1982) summarized three manifestations of attachment in children: (1) the child will attempt to remain within a protective range and will close this distance if threatened; (2) in the presence of attachment figures and in the absence of feeling threatened, the child will have felt security; and (3) a threat to the accessibility of the attachment figure will be a threat to the child's well-being. In response to threat the child will attempt to regain the attachment figure and if unsuccessful, will become despairing and detach.

Attachment is more than a social bond. It does not encompass all aspects of the parent-child relationship. In an overview of the development of attachment theory, Bretherton (1985) asserts that the felt-security is the central motivating component to attachment behavior. Bretherton (1985) also differentiates between dependency and attachment. Dependency is a personality trait formed through reinforcement, whereas attachment has a biological origin. Through the routine responses of the care giver to the child's

need for felt security, a mental model of self and other is developed. These mental models become influential in determining interpersonal behavior, affect, attention, thought, and memory (Main, Kaplan & Cassidy, 1985).

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) added to the attachment theory by identifying three distinctive patterns of behavior: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant. The secure child will actively explore the environment, and when a threat arises returns to the care giver for support and safety. When given this support, secure children show signs of reduced distress. The anxious/ambivalent child will return to the care giver when threatened, but will resist and not appear to benefit from any support offered. The avoidantly attached child will actively avoid the care giver in times of distress. According to Ainsworth, et al., (1978) the avoidant child shows signs of distress, such as autonomic arousal, but will appear to distract her/himself from this distress.

According to attachment theory, these patterns are consistent into adulthood (Bowlby, 1979). The mental models of self and other which are the basis for these patterns of behavior are proposed as the mechanism of continuity of attachment style across development. A growing body of longitudinal research supports this continuity well into the elementary school years (Shaver & Hazen, 1992; Hazen & Shaver, 1987).

### Adult Romantic Attachment

Robert Weiss studied attachment in adults with clinical interviews and found these same three attachment behavior patterns in, for example, functional and dysfunctional marriages (Weiss, 1973), committed romantic

relationships (Weiss, 1978), soldiers in combat (Weiss, 1982), and in single parents in relation to an oldest child (Weiss, 1975).

Weiss (1982) also outlines the continuity of attachment. He suggests that attachment remains relatively stable up until adolescence. Through this period a gradual attachment to others (usually peers) takes place, rather than a detachment from parents. A loss of an attachment figure in the absence of other significant emotional attachments can be highly traumatic. Weiss (1982) suggests that because of the tenuous nature of this internalization process, adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to distress from a major loss.

But there are also differences in attachment behavior between adults and children (Weiss, 1982). Children display attachment to care givers. Adults usually attach to peers. The felt-security motive is more overt in children, possibly because of less well developed coping skills or defenses. In adults, attachment operates in a more subtle manner, and is more disguised by coping skills. A third difference is that in adults, the relationship has a conscious reciprocal sexual component.

According to Kitson (1982), another important difference operates for adolescents. In infants, attachment develops very slowly through repetitive interactions with the care giver. But adolescents are at a point in their lives when identity is much less stable (Erikson, 1968; Weiss, 1982), therefore they form attachments much more quickly. These relationships are often crucial to the adolescent's sense of identity (Kitson, 1982).

Attachment researchers have also discriminated relationships based on attachment with those based on friendship. For example, Weiss (1982) studied two groups of people experiencing relationship distress. One group consisted



of people who were recently divorced. The other group was comprised of people who were satisfied with their marriages, but who had recently moved to an area where they had no close friends. The recently divorced group described themselves as lonely. This loneliness could not be allayed by contact with friends. Only a sexual or intimate relationship appeared to reduce this loneliness.

The group without close and available friends also experienced distress. This distress was "...characterized as affiliation-associations in which shared interests and similarity of circumstances provided a basis for mutual loyalty and a sense of community." (Weiss, 1982; p. 174) This affiliation distress was not reduced by sexual and intimate contact with their marriage partner. Weiss (1982) concluded that attachment is found only in relationships which are of "central importance" to the individual.

Hazen and Shaver (1987) have extended Weiss' work and conceptualized romantic relationships as attachments. These authors studied 620 adults through a newspaper survey. The measure of attachment style used was a one-paragraph description of each of the three styles; participants checked the paragraph which most described themselves. Measures were also administered to assess differences in love experiences, attachment history, and mental models of self and relationship.

Participants categorized themselves into the three attachment styles with the following percentages: secure=56%; anxious/ambivalent=19%; and avoidant=25%. These percentages are similar to those found in studies with infants (Campos, Barrett, Lamb, Goldsmith & Stenberg, 1983).

The predicted differences in love experiences were found to be of statistically significant levels. Secure styles reported longer relationships, with

more trust, acceptance, and support than the two insecure types. The anxious/ambivalent type reported love as obsessive, desiring merging with the other, more jealousy and extreme sexual attraction to their partners. The avoidant types expressed more fear of intimacy, more emotional highs and lows and more jealousy than those who were securely attached. The authors also noted that although these mean differences were statistically significant (partially due to the large sample size,  $n=620$ ) they were relatively small. For example, a significant difference was found between the means of the secure ( $M=3.43$ ) and anxious/ambivalent groups mean ( $M=3.13$ ) on trust. According to the authors, the findings indicate that, along with meaningful differences, the styles all share a common core of love experience.

They also found that mental models differed in predictable ways. Secure subjects indicated that in some relationships "love never fades, but most of the time there is an ebb and flow to love intensity" (p. 517). Avoidants said that the "head over heels" romantic love as it is found in the popular press doesn't happen. Anxious/ambivalent types reported that they frequently fall in love, but rarely find "true love."

For attachment histories, the best predictors of style were the "...perception of the quality of their relationship with each parent and the parents' relationship with each other." (p. 516). Relative to insecure subjects, the secure attachment histories had "...warmer relationships with both parents and between their two parents" (p.517). Avoidant histories were characterized with mothers who were cold and rejecting. Anxious/ ambivalent subjects, in comparison with avoidants, reported more humorous and likable mothers and unfair fathers.

Another finding was that there were remarkable similarities between the genders. Relatively minor differences were found on the perceptions of same and opposite sex parents. Both men and women tended to see the opposite sex parent as more positive and the same sex parent more negatively. There were no sex differences in the percentages of each attachment style.

In summary, Hazen and Shaver (1987) report that these findings are similar to the research results found by Ainsworth, et al. (1978) in studies of infant attachment. They conclude that their results support the theory of attachment style having continuity well into adulthood, as well as applicability in understanding adult romantic relationships.

The findings of other researchers provide support for Hazen and Shaver's (1987) conclusions. Collins and Read (1990) studied the working mental models of the attachment styles as outlined by Bowlby (1979) and Hazen and Shaver (1987). Collins and Read (1990) broke down the descriptive statements of the Hazen and Shaver instrument into a 21- statement measure to which college students responded in rating scale format from (1) not at all characteristic to (5) very characteristic.

Subjects with a secure attachment style were comfortable with being close and depending on others and not concerned with abandonment. An anxious/ambivalent person was comfortable being close and somewhat able to depend on others and very concerned with not being loved or being abandoned. The avoidant style person was not comfortable with closeness or with depending on others, and not concerned with being abandoned (Collins & Read, 1990).

Collins and Read (1990) also found support for the mental model aspect of attachment theory. In general, they found that securely attached people had

a more positive view of themselves and the social world than either avoidants or anxious/ambivalents. As with the Hazen and Shaver (1987) studies, no significant gender differences were found.

Attachment style has been found to correlate in meaningful ways with other personality traits. Shaver and Brennan (in press) correlated their three category measure with the "Big Five" personality traits of neuroticism, extroversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness as measured by Costa and McCrae's (1985) NEO Personality Inventory. They concluded that attachment is related to these traits in meaningful ways, but is not redundant with these factors. They also found that attachment was a better predictor of several elements of interpersonal relationships than were these Big Five traits (Shaver & Hazen, 1992).

Simpson (1990) studied the attachment styles of 144 college student couples and the influence these styles had following the dissolution of romantic relationships. A 13-item instrument (adapted from the three single-paragraph descriptions by Hazen and Shaver, 1987) assessed attachment styles (secure, anxious/ambivalent and avoidant). Other measures were used to assess relational closeness, commitment, trust and satisfaction. The dependent variable of emotional distress was assessed with a six-item instrument of degree and length of "difficulty, disruption and upsetness."

Those who were higher in avoidant attachment experienced significantly less distress than those who endorsed either secure or anxious/ambivalent attachment. The negative correlation between avoidant attachment and emotional distress remained significant even after partialing out the effects of closeness, commitment, trust and relationship satisfaction (Simpson, 1990).

Another group of researchers has argued that the Hazen and Shaver model is incomplete. Bartholomew (1990) and Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) presented and tested a model with four categories of attachment style. Mental models are comprised of views of the self and others based on the child's developmental history (Bretherton, 1985). One can believe in others as positive or negative and in the self as positive or negative. This makes four possible cells in a 2 by 2 matrix. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) present a model which completes each cell in this configuration.

The key difference in this model compared to the Hazen and Shaver model (1987) is the addition of another type of avoidant attachment. A person who views both self and others positively will have secure attachment. A preoccupied style views the self as negative and others positively. A fearfully avoidant style sees self and others as negative. A dismissing avoidant would view self as positive but others as negative. The fearful avoidant style is consciously aware of self-doubt, feelings of unworthiness and need for close contact with others. The dismissing avoidant has repressed dependency needs and adopted a behavioral approach which insulates from further rejection. The motivation for each is different. The fearfully avoidant is afraid of intimacy while the dismissing avoidant is not aware of the need for intimacy. According to the authors, the dismissing avoidant is likely to displace attention and energy into achievement.

To test the model, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) studied 40 female and 37 male college students. Each of the subjects was required to bring a same sex non-romantic close friend. Three methods were used to identify attachment type. A one-hour interview was conducted with the participants. This interview covered a variety of issues salient to relationships. Three

judges rated these interviews on 15 dimensions thought to be indicators of attachment style.

The second method was a self-report in which each of the four types were described and participants reported the degree to which they viewed themselves as similar to the description. The third method was to have the participant's friend rate the subject on each of the types.

Participants also completed measures of demographics (e.g., siblings, parents' marital status, personal activities), friendships (factual and personal information about a friend) two measures of self-esteem, a sociability scale, and an inventory of personal problems.

Results supported the four-style model of attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Forty-eight percent of the sample was rated secure. The preoccupied group comprised 15%; 19% were fearful avoidant and 18% were dismissing avoidantly attached. The interview data revealed that the secure attachment style was related to higher levels of coherence, intimacy, balance of control in relationship, level of involvement in relationship, self-confidence, and warmth.

Preoccupied attachment was characterized as having higher levels of elaboration, emotional expressiveness, level of romantic involvement, disclosure, reliance on others, use of others as a secure base, care giving, crying frequently, and crying in presence of others. Preoccupied attachment was negatively associated with balance of control in relationships and coherence. Fearfully avoidant group membership correlated negatively with the following characteristics: self-confidence, coherence, self-disclosure, intimacy, involvement in relationship, reliance on others, and using others as a secure base. Dismissing avoidant group membership correlated negatively

with self-confidence, elaboration, emotional expressiveness, frequency of crying, warmth, care giving, self-disclosure, intimacy, involvement in romantic relationships, depending on others, and using others as secure base.

Also of interest to the present study were gender differences in two of the styles. Females subjects scored significantly higher on preoccupied than the men in the study. Men scored significantly higher on dismissing avoidant than females subjects. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) suggest that this gender difference may have been obscured in the Hazen and Shaver (1987) model.

In general, Bartholomew and Horowitz concluded that the data support a two-dimensional model of adult attachment. These dimensions correspond to a four-celled mental model of self (positive or negative) and other (positive or negative).

In a review and test of the two models, Brennan, Shaver and Tobey (1991) studied 840 male and female college students. Results indicate that the styles outlined by the two models, as measured by their instruments, were highly correlated in expected ways. Eighty-one percent of the Bartholomew securely attached group came from the Hazen and Shaver secure group. The preoccupied group was composed primarily of those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. The major difference was contained in the avoidant categories. The Bartholomew dismissing avoidants came primarily from the avoidants of Hazen and Shaver grouping, but a significant number came from the Hazen and Shaver secures. The Bartholomew fearful avoidants came from the Hazen and Shaver avoidants and anxious/ambivalents group. The authors noted that this fearful avoidant group was also larger than expected. They also interpreted that the contribution to dismissing avoidant group by the Hazen and

Shaver secure group may have been a function of those with a defensively high self-esteem being forced into the secure category.

Also of interest to the present study were significant gender differences in the measures. As expected from past research, no gender differences were found with the Hazen and Shaver instrument. But gender differences were found in two of the four categories of the Bartholomew measures. Mean differences were found with women rated higher than men on the preoccupation and men rated higher on dismissing avoidant than women.

### Conclusions From Adult Attachment Literature

The literature on attachment presents a strong case for the importance of this personality characteristic in understanding romantic relationships. It would logically follow that it would be an important dimension in understanding how people respond to loss, in particular the loss of a romantic relationship at a time of particular vulnerability (Doka, 1989; LaGrand, 1986; Schneider, 1984; Weiss, 1982).

### Summary of Literature Review

#### Grief and Response to Loss

The theoretical literature on grief indicates that responding to a loss is a naturally occurring process which entails psychological movement through several qualitatively different stages or phases. The Schneider model (1984, 1992, 1993) comprehensively details aspects of these phases across multiple modalities of experience. These phases can be summarized by three response-tasks of discovering: what's lost through the dissolution of the relationship; what's left once full awareness of the loss is achieved; and what's



possible in one's life given what has been learned in the prior phases (Schneider, 1984; 1993). The vast majority of research efforts to date have been directed toward the emotional distress and disruption of what would be considered the task of what's lost; almost no empirical study of the later phases has occurred.

The theoretical literature suggests a broad range of individual differences in response to loss and several categories of factors that influence how a person will currently be responding to a major loss. For example, Parkes (1987) suggests three groups of factors: antecedent, concurrent and subsequent. Examples of antecedent influences are past experiences with loss, previous emotional problems, nature and strength of the attachment to the person lost, degree of involvement with the person lost, and the degree to which the loss was anticipated.

Some of the concurrent influences suggested by Parkes (1987) are gender, age, psychological development, personality characteristics, cultural and family factors, and socioeconomic status. Factors that fall into the subsequent category are social support, degree of disruption in one's daily life, subsequent stressful events and/or opportunities, and time since the loss.

Substantive differences (as well as similarities) between depression and grief have been identified in the review. A major difference is that in depression there is an absence of meaningful connections between how one is feeling and losses related to those experiences. Feelings of worthlessness, thoughts of death and/or suicide, and extreme psychomotor retardation are usually more indicative of depression than grief. With grief there will likely be occasions when the person can function quite well for a period of time. For

example, employing a strategy of letting go allows for a conservation of energy, a reprieve from the loss.

Schneider (1984) describes two common patterns which tend to become habitual and are then used in all loss situations. One is an unchanging state of limiting awareness of the loss or its importance. The other encompasses becoming aware of the loss and its many facets, healing from the effects of that loss, but failing to generalize what was learned to other areas of one's life.

### Grief Reactions to the Loss of a Romantic Relationship

The empirical literature suggests that a substantial number of college students experience a romantic loss each year and that for many this can be a very disruptive and distressing event (LaGrand, 1983; Sieber, 1991; Simpson, 1987). Only two studies explicitly studied grief as a response to a romantic relationship loss. This review of the literature found mixed support for the proposition that romantic breakups results in grief. Kaczmarek, et al., (1990) used a grief instrument which detected grief as a response to a romantic breakup. On the other hand, Sieber (1991) found no differences between breakup and no-breakup groups on measures of depression, despair, anger, and somatization. Other researchers have studied the ending of romantic relationships and found breakups highly distressing (LaGrand, 1983; Simpson, 1987; Mearns, 1991; Hill, et al., 1976; Stephens, 1984).

### Gender Differences

Evidence for gender differences in response to loss of romantic relationship is also equivocal. Women appear to recognize problems and take steps to end an unsatisfactory relationship more readily than men. The

research also suggests that the distress associated with being the "dumpee" is greater than that of the "dumper" (Hill, et al., 1976). This would lead one to expect that men would report higher levels of grief in response to loss, but the empirical literature suggests just the opposite. The majority of the research has found higher levels of grief and/or distress in female subjects (Sieber, 1991), particularly early in the aftermath of a breakup. Male subjects, on the other hand, tend to fare worse in eventual adjustment to breakup (Diedrick, 1991). A possible explanation is that women are more willing to report negative and vulnerable feelings (Blier & Blier-Wilson, 1989); or it may take men longer to become aware of those feelings. Men are socialized to inhibit signs of weakness or vulnerability (Lister, 1991; Pleck, 1981). Another possibility is that men and women manifest their grief in different ways. Women seek support and more openly express their pain. Men may take a problem-solving approach to their grief (Lister, 1991, Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). A final gender difference is suggested by the literature on responding to a loss of a spouse through death or divorce. According to this literature, male subjects found another relationship more quickly, and when they didn't, were at risk for higher levels of physical disorders and death (Osterweis, et al, 1984).

### Attachment

Attachment has long been viewed as a critical component of human psychosocial development (Ainsworth, et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1979). The pattern or style of this attachment has been found to be predictive of infants' behavior when responding to the absence of the attachment figure. This literature suggests that patterns of relational attachment, developed in infancy with parents, continue into adulthood (Bartholomew, 1990; Bowlby, 1979;

Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Weiss, 1982). The mechanisms for this continuity of these patterns are the mental models of self and other. Essentially, one views others as dependable and trustworthy, or inconsistent and undependable in meeting one's security needs. Similarly, one develops an evaluation of self as either worthy or unworthy of the support and aid of others.

These mental models and relational patterns have been found to be related in expected ways to variations in characteristics of relationships as well as to other personality traits (Collins & Read, 1990; Shaver & Hazen, 1992). Bartholomew (1990) and Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) have outlined and tested a four-cell model of attachment style based on the dimensions of self and other as either positive or negative. A securely attached person views both self and others positively. A person who views both self and other negatively is fearfully avoidant. A person with a preoccupied attachment style perceives others, but not the self, as dependable and trustworthy. Viewing the self as positive but others as unreliable characterizes a dismissing avoidant attachment style.

#### Conclusions of the Literature Review

Schneider's three-task model of discovering what's lost, what's left, and what's possible comprehensively and holistically integrates the theoretical literature on grief, healing, and growth in response to loss (Gilliland & James, 1988; Schneider, 1984). The empirical literature supports the proposition that ending a romantic relationship is highly distressing and often results in a grief reaction (LeGrand, 1983; Sieber, 1991; Simpson, 1987). Virtually no research has been conducted to test the proposition that grieving a romantic relationship is related to growth. The literature on gender differences in a relationship breakup is equivocal (Diedrick, 1991; Lister, 1991; Sieber, 1991).

Finally, interpersonal attachment style appears to be an important element in understanding individual differences in responding to loss, but very little empirical research has been conducted to specifically test this proposition. Based on the findings of the literature review, the problem addressed in this study is presented along with the conceptual hypotheses to be tested.

### General Statement

The problem addressed by this study is college students' responses to the loss of a romantic relationship.

### Specific Purposes

There were two primary purposes to this study. The first was to test college students' responses to romantic losses for the relationships between time and the three response-tasks outlined by Schneider (1984). The second purpose was to test for variability in responses associated with gender and attachment style.

There is general consensus in the theoretical literature that grieving a major loss is a process, consisting of stages or phases that are qualitatively different (Bowlby, 1979; Kubler-Ross, 1969; Lindemann, 1944; Marris, 1974; Parkes, 1987). There is also a great deal of theoretical support for the proposition that working through these phases results in resolution of grief, and is often growth promoting (Headington, 1981; Kubler-Ross, 1974; Moustakas, 1974; Schneider, 1984).

The existing research literature, however, has primarily addressed the early stages of responding to loss. The focus has been on assessing the

degree of grief, depression or distress associated with ending a romantic relationship. There is virtually no research literature available on the phases of resolution and growth from that loss.

Another related limitation in the existing research has been the operationalization of grief using depression measures. Although there appears to be overlap between the two constructs, there are also substantive differences (McGovern, 1986; Schneider, et al., 1990; Sieber, 1991; Volkan, 1966). A final limitation on this research has been the use of retrospective reports to assess response to loss. This type of assessment is particularly vulnerable to distortion (Stunkard, et al., 1985).

This research tested a model proposed by Schneider (1984) which conceptualizes responding to a loss as a comprehensive and holistic process. This model proposes that time since loss is predictive of the intensity of involvement in the three response-tasks of determining: What's Lost as a result of a romantic relationship breakup; What's Left following this loss and What's Possible given what was learned from this loss (Schneider, 1984).

This study addressed the above limitations by conceptualizing responding to a loss in a broad-based experiential manner. Each response task was operationalized with items representing cognitive, emotional, behavioral, physical, and spiritual responses. Although these experiential modalities were not assessed separately, this operationalized grief in a holistic manner. This study also addressed the limitation imposed by retrospective self-reports by assessing current responses to relationship losses.

The second objective of this study was to test for the relationships between responses to loss and gender and attachment style. Although most theories on grief and responding to a major loss suggest that women and men

respond differently (Bowlby, 1979; Marris, 1974; Parkes, 1987; Schneider, 1984), very little research has been conducted to test this assertion with romantic relationship loss. The research which has been conducted on gender differences in grieving focused primarily on the emotional reactions to such an event (Kaczmarek, et al, 1990; Sieber, 1991). The results of this research have been mixed.

There is also a paucity of literature on the effect of personality in responding to a romantic relationship loss. The relatively recent theories on adult interpersonal attachment style offer a model for assessing these effects (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1990; Weiss, 1982). Adult attachment theory predicts that the style with which an individual forms basic interpersonal relationships will be highly predictive of how they respond to the loss of these relationships in adulthood (Bowlby, 1980; Weiss, 1982). But, there has been almost no empirical research done to test this proposition of attachment theory.

### Conceptual Hypotheses

#### Tests of the Phase-Related Model of Response

*Hypothesis I.* Involvement in the task of discovering What's Lost is higher for relatively recent losses; and those whose loss has been more recent are involved in the task of What's Lost with greater intensity.

*Hypothesis II.* Involvement in the response task of discovering What's Possible is higher for relatively more distant losses; and those whose loss has been more distant are involved in the task of What's Possible with greater intensity.

*Hypothesis III.* Involvement in the response task of discovering What's Left increases and then decreases over time; and involvement in the task of discovering What's Left is relatively higher for losses occurring an intermediate length of time in the past than for those more recent or distant.

Tests of Response to Loss by Gender and Attachment Style

*Hypothesis IV.* During the first three months following a relationship loss, women are involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with greater intensity than are men.

*Hypothesis V.* During the first three months following a relationship loss, men are involved in the response task of determining What's Left with greater intensity than are women.

*Hypothesis VI.* Women are involved in the response task of What's Possible with greater intensity than men.

*Hypothesis VII.* Those persons with a preoccupied attachment style are involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with more intensity than persons with any other attachment style.



*Hypothesis VIII.* Persons with a dismissing avoidant attachment style are involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with less intensity than persons with any other attachment styles.

## CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

The problem addressed by this study is college students' responses to the loss of a romantic relationship. More specifically, this study tested a phase model for its applicability to romantic losses and for the relationships among responses, time since the loss, gender, and attachment style. Hypotheses were developed regarding these relationships. This chapter presents the methodology employed to perform the necessary tests.

### Participants

This study was conducted under the auspices of the Department of Counseling, and with the authority of the Institutional Review Board, of the University of North Dakota (see Appendix A). Participants in the study were college students attending classes in the social sciences at the University of North Dakota during the summer and fall semesters of 1993. The size of the sample was determined by the results of power analysis.

### Power Analysis

Power analysis was used to determine the sample size for the study (Cohen, 1992; Kraemer & Thiemann, 1987). The statistical power of a significance test is the probability of obtaining research results which lead to the rejection of a false null hypotheses. The elements of power analysis are:

the significance criterion (alpha), power, sample size, and size of the effect which is hypothesized and for which the tests are being conducted (Cohen, 1992).

Determining the alpha level is based on a decision as to the degree of risk the researcher is willing to take that the null hypothesis is falsely rejected. In this study the probability of falsely rejecting the null hypotheses was set at .05. Power is also set a priori by the researcher. There is conventional wisdom that an adequate power probability is .80 (Cohen, 1992). This level was therefore used for this study.

Determining the effect size to hypothesize for a study is somewhat more complicated. With the guidance of theory on the research topic, the researcher must address the issue of the hypothesized effect size. Cohen (1992) has outlined conventions for estimating effect size. According to Cohen's (1992) three categories, a medium effect size "...represents an effect likely to be visible to the naked eye of a careful observer" (p. 156). In terms of mean differences, this represents approximately one-half of a standard deviation. This level of mean difference has been found in results of gender differences in distress and grief following a loss of a romantic relationship (Sieber, 1991). The researcher therefore set the hypothesized effect size at this medium level for the purpose of determining sample size.

With these three elements established, the sample size necessary to test the hypotheses can be determined (Cohen, 1992; Kraemer & Thieman, 1987). This study employs analysis of variance to test for the existence of mean differences by group membership. According to Kraemer and Thieman (1987) these conditions require that each testable cell have a minimum frequency of 22. With expected frequency percentages (based on past research results) in

mind, the total sample size necessary to achieve this minimum cell frequency was 300 participants.

### Procedures

With prior permission of the course instructor, the researcher or an assistant attended a regular class period and introduced the study. Students were informed that the purpose of the research was to explore the ending of college students' romantic relationships. They were told that in order to participate in this study they must have experienced the ending of a romantic relationship at some time in their lives. This ending did not have to be recent. The students were advised that participation would require them to complete a self-report questionnaire packet outside of class time and return the completed questionnaire. They were advised that this would involve approximately one hour and that they would receive additional course credit for their participation. Questionnaires were distributed by the researchers, and students were instructed to read the attached consent form (see Appendix B). Approximately one week later the researcher or assistant again attended the class to receive completed questionnaires.

Four hundred and four questionnaire packets were distributed, with 326 returned completed. Of those questionnaires returned, 10 were excluded from the data analysis because of missing information or failure to complete as instructed. Three hundred and sixteen completed questionnaires were used in the data analysis. This represents a response rate of 78%.

## Variables and Instruments

### Demographic and Relationship Characteristics of the Sample

Relevant demographic and lost relationship data were gathered by a one-page self-report instrument, which included the following variables: age, sex, race, hometown population, year in college, major, religion, whether or not the person was currently in a romantic relationship, current living situation, length of the lost relationship, time since the ending, suddenness and degree of control of the ending, and the significance of this relationship compared to other relationships (see Appendix C).

### Response To Loss (RTL)

Schneider and Deutsch (1990) have developed a 451-item paper and pencil measure called the Response To Loss inventory (RTL), to assess responses across the seven phases and five modalities outlined by Schneider (1984). The first section of the RTL contains demographic information, a listing of loss events and characteristics of the identified loss. The instructions include explicit directions to keep an identified loss in mind when responding to the items. Respondents are instructed to leave items blank if they are true about them, but are not related to the identified loss. Participants complete the RTL by responding in rating scale format from 0 ("this isn't accurate about my current response to this loss") to 4 ("this is definitely accurate about my current response to this loss").

This instrument has been found to have very good internal consistency reliability (range of .88 to .97) as well as content validity (Schneider, McGovern & Deutsch, 1991). The complete RTL is a relatively new instrument and its construct validity has not been adequately tested. Two studies used

earlier versions of the Awareness scale to successfully discriminate between depression and grief (Deutsch, 1982; McGovern 1986). Several validity studies are currently being conducted, but results were unavailable (Schneider, personal communication, May 1994).

### Response to Loss-Short Form

Because of the extreme length of the RTL (451 items), and with the permission of the developer (see Appendix D) this study shortened four of the RTL subscales into a research version, Response To Loss-Short (RTL-S; see Appendix E). This included three 20-item scales corresponding to the three response-tasks outlined by Schneider (1984). The questions designed to gather demographic, identified loss and characteristics of the loss were deleted from the RTL-S. The instructions direct the respondent to answer the items with the identified lost relationship in mind.

*What's Lost.* At the suggestion of the test developer (Schneider, personal communication, May 20, 1993) What's Lost was assessed by 20 items taken from the Awareness scale. The Awareness scale includes five subscales, one for each modality (i.e. behavior, cognition, emotion, physical, and spiritual). The four items with the highest item-subscale correlation were included in the What's Lost scale. The RTL-S is answered in the same manner as the RTL. Each statement is responded to on a five-point rating scale from 0 ("this isn't accurate about my current response to this loss") to 4 ("This is definitely accurate about my current response to this loss"). The scale is scored by first multiplying the number of non-blank items by a factor of 4. The sum of the endorsement values is then divided by this denominator. Higher scores on the

scale are interpreted as indications of currently being more involved in that response-task. The range of scale scores is 0 to 1.00. An example of items in this scale is: "Because of this loss, I feel lonely and alone."

*What's Left.* What's Left was assessed with 20 items taken from the Gaining Perspective and Integration scales of the RTL. The two items with the highest item-subscale correlation were taken from each of the modality subscales of Gaining Perspective and Integration (Schneider, personal communication, May 20, 1993). The response format for the What's Left scale, scoring, interpretation of higher scores, and range of scores are identical with What's Lost. An example of items in this scale is: "In the time since this loss, I no longer struggle to accept what has happened."

*What's Possible.* What's Possible was assessed with 20 items taken from the RTL's Reformulation subscale, again with the four items with highest item-subscale correlations taken from each modality subscale (Schneider, personal communication, May 20, 1993). Response format, scoring, interpretation of higher scores, and score ranges are identical to the other two response-task scales. An example of items in the What's Possible scale is: "I've changed in ways that would not have happened otherwise."

#### Pilot Study of RTL-S

In a pilot study of the RTL-S, 10 participants were asked to complete a split-half version of the RTL (RTL-ODD; Schneider, et al., 1991) and the RTL-S. The RTL-ODD has been found to have high split-half reliability with the RTL (Schneider, et al., 1991). Participants were asked to complete these measures

one day apart and with the same loss in mind both times. Bearing in mind the inadequacy of the sample size, the RTL-S yielded coefficient alphas of .94, .91 and .94 for What's Lost, What's Left and What's Possible, respectively. Two of the RTL-S subscales correlated highly with the corresponding RTL-ODD subscales (What's Lost with Awareness,  $r = .86$ ; What's Possible with Self-empowerment,  $r = .81$ ). The correlation between What's Left and the composite of the Perspective and Integration scales was much smaller ( $r = .46$ ). The reason for this small correlation is unclear, given that many items are shared by both instruments. This relatively small correlation may be an artifact of the small sample size.

### Attachment Style

Participant attachment style was assessed with two closely related measures. The first is a four-item measure developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991; see Appendix F) and used with permission of the developer (see Appendix G). Each item is a short description of one attachment style. Respondents are requested to check the description which most closely describes themselves. This measure has been found to have good alternate form reliability in categorizing subjects (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Several researchers have suggested that this single item format is insufficient to correctly classify attachment style and additionally has undesirable psychometric properties (Hazen & Shaver, 1987; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Simpson, 1990). In order to address these criticisms, participants were instructed to rank order the descriptions from 1 ("most like you") to 4 ("least like you"). An example of the description is given below for the Fearfully Avoidant attachment style.



*I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others* (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; p. 244).

The second measure was developed by breaking down each of the four items of the Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) instrument into individual sentences (see Appendix F). This results in a 15-item measure, with four subscales corresponding to the attachment styles. These items are responded to in rating scale format of 1 ("strongly agree") to 4 ("strongly disagree").

#### Time Since the Loss

The results of previous studies suggest that grief or distress abate after three to four months following a romantic loss (Mearns, 1991). The literature on divorce has found that recovery from such an event takes over 12 months. (Gray & Schields, 1992; Jordon, 1989). Based on these very tentative findings, Time since the loss was categorized into three groups: 0-3 months, 4-12 months, and over 12 months.

#### Response to Loss Open-ended Questions

A series of open-ended questions was posed to participants to address the following issues: (1) current feelings about this loss, (2) relative significance of this loss (3) aspects of this loss which were most difficult (4) turning point in grief experience (5) how the person has changed since the loss (see Appendix H). The full analyses of these data are the subject of another

research project and are not included within this study. Excerpts from these questions are presented anecdotally in the discussion section of this study.

### Design and Statistical Procedures

This study utilizes a between-subjects, ex post facto, and correlational design. This design was chosen for several reasons. This research is in the early stages of development. Very little empirical work has been done to test this model or its instrumentation. Research on factors associated with ending romantic relationships is also very limited. Bordens and Abbott (1988) suggest correlational designs are more appropriate for research projects which are in the early stages. These writers also propose correlational research when it is not possible or feasible to manipulate independent variables (Bordens & Abbott, 1988) as was the case with this problem.

A major component of this study was assessing the degree of effect for time since the loss, therefore a within-subjects longitudinal design would have been ideal. The decision to employ a between-subjects was made based on economic and time constraints.

Upon completion of the questionnaires, the data were entered into and analyzed with the SPSS-X statistical package. The analyses included frequencies to describe the participants and the lost relationships, Pearson product-moment correlations, analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-tests to test the hypotheses. A graphic analysis, with a least squares regression solution was used also used for hypothesis testing (Rafferty & Norling, 1987).

Relative frequency statistics were calculated on the responses to the variables: Sex, Race, Education Level, Religion, Hometown Population, College Major, whether or not the person was currently in a romantic

relationship, their current living situation, whether the ending of the romantic relationship was sudden or anticipated, and whether or not the person had control over the ending. The SPSS-X Reliability subprogram was used to determine the coefficient alpha of the subscales (Cronbach, 1951).

Dependent variables of this study were What's Lost, What's Left, and What's Possible. Independent variables were Attachment Style, Time since the loss, and Sex. A Pearson correlation matrix was used to assess the magnitude and direction of the relationships among the RTL-S subscales and Time since the loss. A 4 (Attachment Style) by 3 (Time since loss) by 2 (Sex) factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare groups on each of the dependent variables of the RTL-S. One-way ANOVA was used to identify groups which differed significantly on each of the analyses the RTL-S variables. Because of a small cell size for males with losses within three months, a modification to the hypotheses was introduced, with t-tests utilized to test for mean differences.

The data analysis included an exploratory component which attempted to account for suspected differential effects of a period of time recent to a loss, as opposed to more distant from a loss. The transformed data were then analyzed with a graphic/regression statistical program (Rafferty & Norling, 1987). These analyses are presented in graphic form of group means on each of the RTL-S variables over time. These analyses included a least squares regression line, along with the resultant equations.

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

This study had two primary purposes. The first was to test a model of responding to loss, which predicts that the length of time since a relationship ended would be related to the degree of involvement in each of three response tasks. The second major purpose was to test for relationships between gender and attachment style and these response tasks.

The study included self-report questionnaire data from 316 college student subjects. The data included demographics, characteristics of the lost relationship, interpersonal attachment style, time since the relationship ended, and how the person was currently responding to the loss.

The analysis is presented in the following order. First there is a presentation of the descriptive analysis of the subjects and the lost relationship. This is followed by the results of the subscale reliability analyses for attachment style and the RTL-S subscales. The RTL-S subscale intercorrelations and their implications for alternate form reliability are presented next.

This is followed by the Pearson product-moment correlations of the relationships between Time since the loss and each of the dependent variables. Next, the results of the 4 (Attachment style) by 3 (Time since loss) by 2 (Sex) factorial ANOVAs are presented for each of the dependent variables, along with the followup one-way ANOVAs and t-tests. Included within each dependent variable section is the exploratory analyses utilizing the

graphic and regression procedures (Rafferty & Norling, 1987). The results of the analyses are referenced to applicable hypotheses. Finally, a summary is provided for the findings related to each hypothesis.

### Descriptive Analysis of the Subjects

Ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 54 years, with a mean of 21.9, a standard deviation of 5.0, and a mode of 19 years. Table 1 includes information on gender, race, educational level, religion, hometown population, and college major. Females and males comprised 63.9 percent and 36.1 percent of the sample, respectively. The race of the participants was primarily Caucasian (94.9%), with African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic and Native-American/other accounting for 1.6, .3, 1.3 and 1.9 percent, respectively. The majority of the sample were in their sophomore year of college (55.9%), followed in frequency by juniors (16.8%) freshmen (15.6%) and seniors (11.7%). The religious backgrounds of the subjects were Catholic (39.9%), Protestant (55.6%) and other (4.5%).

Over a third of the subjects had hometown populations of 10,000 to 100,000 people, while 24.9 percent were rural or were from towns under 1,000 people. College majors were classified according to Holland (1985) codes, with the majority of the subjects in Social majors (52.5%). The next largest category (except undecided) was Enterprising majors (13.6%), with Investigative, Realistic, Conventional, and Artistic at 12.7, 3.5, 2.8 and .6 percent, respectively. In general, the modal subject was female, Caucasian, in her sophomore year, 19 years of age, majoring in psychology with a Christian religious background.

Table 1Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=316)

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	%
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	202	63.9
Male	114	36.1
<b>Race</b>		
African American	5	1.6
Asian-American	1	.3
Caucasian	300	94.9
Hispanic	4	1.3
Native American/other	6	1.9
<b>Education Level</b>		
Freshman	49	15.6
Sophomore	176	55.9
Junior	53	16.8
Senior	37	11.7
<b>Religion</b>		
Catholic	126	39.9
Protestant	176	55.6
Other	14	4.5

Table 1 (continued)

Summary of Demographic Characteristics of Sample (N=316)

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	<u>%</u>
Hometown Population		
Rural	50	16.0
Less than 1,000	28	8.9
1,000-10,000	97	31.0
10,000-100,000	114	36.4
Greater than 100,000	24	7.7
Major <sup>1</sup>		
Realistic	11	3.5
Investigative	40	12.7
Artistic	2	.6
Social	166	52.5
Enterprising	43	13.6
Conventional	9	2.8
Undecided	45	14.3

<sup>1</sup> Majors classified by Holland (1985) code.

### Descriptive Analysis of Relationship Characteristics

Table 2 presents a summary of relationship characteristics of the sample. Approximately 60 percent of the subjects were currently in a romantic relationship. The largest group of subjects (other=37.3%) did not fit one of the designated current living situation categories. It is highly likely that a large percentage of this group lived in campus housing and/or with friends. The mean length of the lost relationship was 22.3 months (SD=30.9, range=1-366, mode=6). The average length of Time since the relationship ended was 22.5 months (SD=25.4, range=0-316, mode=12).

### Reliability Analyses

Table 3 is a presentation of the coefficient alpha statistics (Cronbach, 1951) for the attachment and RTL-S subscales. For Secure, Dismissing Avoidant, Preoccupied and Fearful Avoidant subscales the alpha levels were .36, .54, .45 and .62, respectively. As these reliability levels are considered inadequate for research purposes these composite scales were dropped from further analysis (Nunnally, 1967). The category of attachment style for each subject was determined by the single item endorsement method (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). As presented the Table 3, the analysis of the RTL-S subscales resulted in alphas of .96, .90 and .93 for What's Lost, What's Left and What's Possible, respectively. These alpha levels have been determined to represent excellent internal consistency reliability (Nunnally, 1967).

RTL-S interscale correlations are presented in Table 4. The correlations between the RTL-S variables were as follows: What's Lost with What's Left ( $r=.174$ ,  $p<.01$ ), What's Lost with What's Possible ( $r=-.312$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and What's Left with What's Possible ( $r=.587$ ,  $p<.01$ ).



Table 2Summary of Relationship Characteristics (N=316)

Characteristic	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Currently in a Romantic Relationship</b>		
Yes	183	59.8
No	123	40.2
<b>Current Living Situation</b>		
Alone	82	26.4
With Partner	42	13.5
With Parents	39	12.5
With Children	9	2.9
With Family	23	7.4
Other	116	37.3
<b>Ending of the Relationship</b>		
Sudden	94	29.7
Anticipated	222	70.3
<b>Control Over Ending</b>		
Some Control	226	71.7
No Control	89	28.3

Table 3

Subscale Reliability Coefficient Alphas: Attachment Style and RTL-S (n=127)

Instrument/Subscale	Alpha
Attachment Style	
Secure	.36
Dismissing Avoidant	.54
Preoccupied	.45
Fearful Avoidant	.62
RTL-S	
What's Lost	.96
What's Left	.90
What's Possible	.93

These interscale correlations are largely similar to those found between the full RTL subscales (Schneider, et al., 1991). The pilot study, outlined in Chapter 2, which found high correlations between the RTL-S and a split half version of the full RTL (RTL-ODD; Schneider, et al., 1991), and similar intersubscale correlational patterns between the RTL-S and RTL-ODD subscales, provide support for the alternate form reliability of the RTL-S.

Relationships Between RTL-S Subscales and Time

Table 4 also presents the results of the correlational tests of the RTL-S subscales with Time since the loss. The Pearson correlations for What's Lost, What's Left and What's Possible with Time since the loss were:  $-.161$ , ( $p < .01$ ),  $.106$  (ns),  $.181$ , ( $p < .01$ ), respectively. These correlational results were used to test Hypotheses I and III, which proposed that What's Lost is negatively correlated with Time since the loss and What's Possible is positively correlated with Time since the loss. Therefore, the correlational results modestly support Hypotheses I and III. Longer periods of time since the loss were associated with lower scores on What's Lost and higher scores on What's Possible.

Results of ANOVA: What's Lost

Table 5 presents the results of the 4 (Attachment Style) by 3 (Time) by 2 (Sex) ANOVA for the What's Lost variable. There was a significant main effect

Table 4

Correlations Among RTL-S Subscales and Time Since Loss

Variable/Subscale	Time	What's Lost	What's Left	What's Possible
Time	----	----	----	----
What's Lost	$-.161^{**}$	----	----	----
What's Left	$.106$	$-.174^{**}$	----	----
What's Possible	$.181^{**}$	$-.312^{**}$	$.587^{**}$	----

$^{**}p < .01$ .

Table 5

Results of ANOVA: Attachment Style by Time by Sex on RTL Subscale

What' Lost

Effect	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Main Effects	1.39	6	.232	6.78	** .00
Attachment Style	.605	3	.202	5.90	** .00
Time Since Loss	.661	2	.331	9.67	** .00
Sex	.009	1	.009	.252	.62
2-way Interactions	.220	11	.020	.586	.84
Attachment by Time	.192	6	.032	.937	.47
Attachment by Sex	.005	3	.002	.046	.99
Time by Sex	.025	2	.013	.370	.69
3-way Interactions	.177	6	.030	.863	.52
Attachment by Time By Sex	.177	6	.030	.865	.52

\*\*  $P < .01$ 

for Attachment Style,  $F(3,283)=5.00$ ,  $p < .00$ , and Time since the loss,  $F(2,283)=9.67$ ,  $p < .00$ . There was no significant main effect for Sex  $F(1,283)=.252$ ,  $p < .62$ , nor were there significant 2-way,  $F(11,283)=.643$ ,  $p < .79$ , or 3-way interaction effects,  $F(6,283)=.063$ ,  $p < .99$ ).

Table 6 includes the means and standard deviations for What's Lost by three categories of time, as originally planned for Hypothesis IV. One-way ANOVA procedures were used to analyze the main effects for Time, utilizing Tukey's Least Significant Differences post-hoc analyses (LSD; Hays, 1988). The mean of the What's Lost score for the 0-3 month group ( $M=.269$ ), was significantly higher than the mean of the 4-12 month group ( $M=.158$ ), and significantly higher than the mean of the Over 12 month group ( $M=.109$ ). The 4-12 month group mean for What's Lost was also significantly higher than the Over 12 month group mean. These results support Hypotheses I, which predicted that the scores on What's Lost would be significantly greater for persons whose loss was recent and significantly lower for those with more distant losses.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of What's Lost by Time Since the Loss<sup>1</sup>

0 - 3 months			4 - 12 months			Over 12 months		
<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
38	.269 <sup>a</sup>	.223	104	.158 <sup>a</sup>	.177	172	.109 <sup>a</sup>	.183

Note. Means with common superscripts are significantly different ( $p<.05$ ).

<sup>1</sup>  $df = 2,310$      $F = 11.92$      $p = .00$

In order to provide a more informative analysis of the main effect of time on the What's Lost (as well as What's Left and What's Possible) variable, time categories were reorganized and then transformed on the rationale that recent time is more salient for response to loss than relatively more distant time. Therefore, 12 groups were formed by two-month intervals for the first six months, three-month intervals for the next 18 months, six-month intervals for the next 12 months and one grouping for those with losses over 36 months in the past. One-way ANOVAs procedures were performed for each of the three RTL-S subscales, with the results for the What's Lost subscale presented in Table 7.

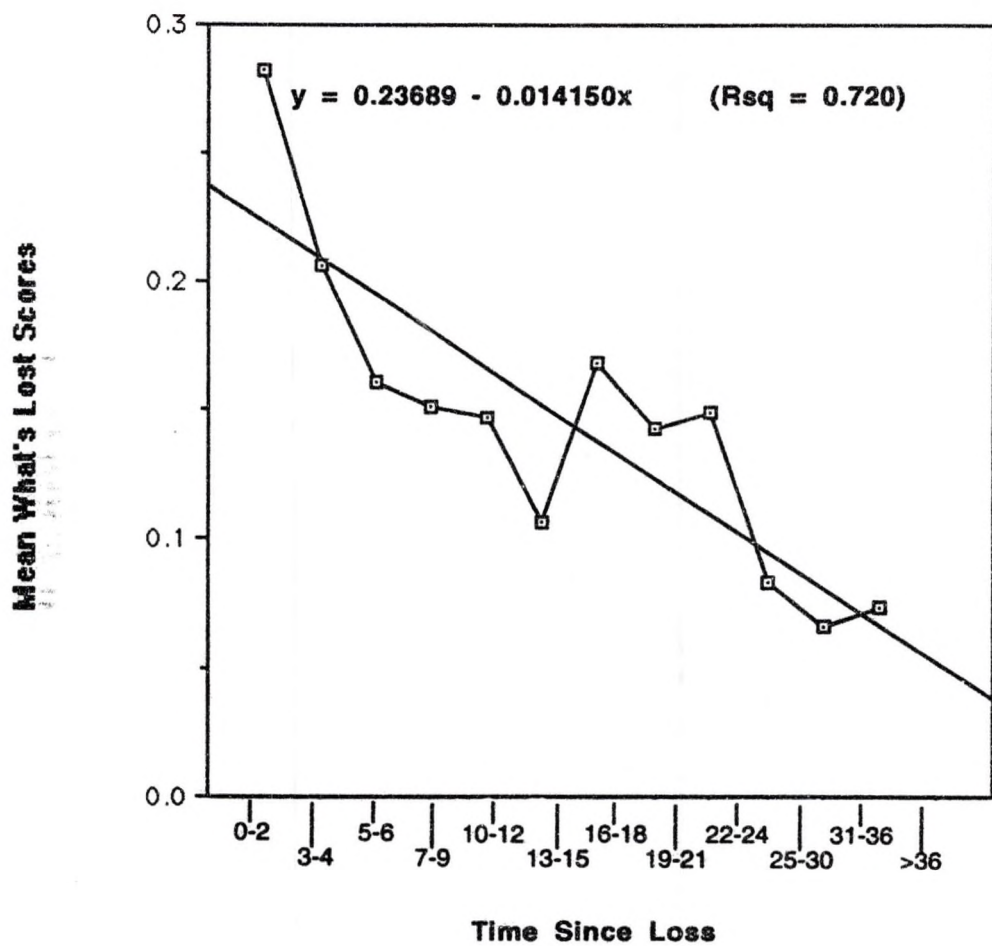
ANOVA results for What's Lost were significant,  $F(11,300)=2.81, p<.00$ ). These group means are presented graphically in Figure 1, which also includes a regression solution (Rafferty & Norling, 1987). The linear regression solution accounted for 72% of the variance between group means across Time since the loss. The results of this analysis provide further support for Hypotheses I. Scores on the RTL-S subscale What's Lost were higher for person's whose loss was relatively more recent.

Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations of the RTL-S subscale What's Lost by Attachment Style and includes a one-way ANOVA with LSD post hoc tests. In order of magnitude, the group means on What's Lost for Fearful Avoidant, Preoccupied, Secure, and Dismissing Avoidant attachment styles were: .223, .186, .117, and .107. Scores for those participants with Fearful Avoidant attachment were significantly greater than for Dismissing Avoidant and Secure participants, but not different from those with Preoccupied attachment styles. Preoccupied group scores were significantly greater than the Dismissing Avoidant group, but not than the Secure attachment group.

Table 7Means and Standard Deviations of RTL-S What's Lost by Time: 12-GroupModel

Time Since Loss	What's Lost <sup>1</sup>		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
0-2 months	25	.282	.206
3-4 months	28	.206	.235
5-6 months	27	.161	.163
7-9 months	14	.151	.167
10-12 months	46	.148	.175
13-15 months	16	.107	.153
16-18 months	28	.168	.216
19-21 months	10	.143	.265
22-24 months	30	.149	.213
25-30 months	17	.084	.113
31-36 months	28	.067	.106
> 36 months	43	.074	.181

<sup>1</sup>  $df = 11,300$        $F = 2.81$        $p = .00$



**Figure 1.** Means of What's Lost on 12 Group Model of Time: Graphic Presentation and Linear Regression Solution



Conversely, What's Lost scores for those with Dismissing Avoidant attachment style were significantly lower than for Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied attachment groups. These results provide partial support for Hypotheses VII and VIII, which proposed that scores on What's Lost would be highest for Preoccupied and lowest for Dismissing Avoidant attachment style.

**Table 8**

Means, Standard Deviations of What's Lost by Attachment Style

Attachment Style	What's Lost <sup>1</sup>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Fearful Avoidant	74	.223 <sup>ac</sup>	.242
Preoccupied	31	.186 <sup>b</sup>	.216
Secure	129	.117 <sup>a</sup>	.163
Dismissing Avoidant	80	.107 <sup>bc</sup>	.160

Note. Means with common superscripts are significantly different ( $p < .05$ )

<sup>1</sup>  $df=3,310$   $F=6.733$   $p=.00$

According to Table 5 there was no significant main effect for Sex on the What's Lost subscale. Therefore Hypothesis IV, as proposed by this study, was not supported. There were no differences in What's Lost scores between men and women. But because of the unexpectedly low cell size for men with losses of 3 months or less ( $n=8$ ), Time since the loss was extended to six

months. This resulted in cell sizes of 25 men and 56 women. A t-test for independent group mean differences was used in the analysis, with results displayed in Table 9.

The What's Lost group mean for women was .226 and for men it was .199, a non-significant difference,  $t(1) = .55, p < .58$ . This analysis fails to support the modified hypothesis that females would score higher than men on What's Lost during the first six months following a romantic loss.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations and T-tests on RTL-S Subscale What's Lost by Sex

Subscale	Female(n=56)		Male(n=25)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
What's Lost	.226	.212	.199	.201	.55	.58

Note. Participants with Time since the loss of six months or less.

Results of ANOVA: What's Left

The results of the 3-way ANOVA for the RTL-S What's Left variable are presented in Table 10. There was a significant main effect for Sex  $F(1,283) = 4.59, p < .03$ . The main effects for Time,  $F(2,283) = 2.95, p < .06$ , and Attachment Style,  $F(3,283) = 1.60, p < .19$ , were not significant. There were no significant 2-way,  $F(11,283) = 855, p < .58$ , or 3-way interaction effects,  $F(6,283) = 1.07, p < .39$ .

The lack of a significant effect for Time on the What's Left variable has implications for Hypothesis II, which predicted that scores on the What's Left variable would be higher for losses occurring in the 4-12 month group than for those in either the 0-3 or Over 12 month groups. These results fail to support Hypothesis II.

Table 10

Results of ANOVA: Attachment Style by Time by Sex on RTL-S Subscale

What's Left

Effect	Sum of <u>Squares</u>	<i>df</i>	Mean <u>Squares</u>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Main Effects	.480	6	.080	2.56	*.02
Attachment Style	.150	3	.050	1.60	.19
Time Since Loss	.184	2	.092	2.95	.06
Sex	.143	1	.143	4.59	*.03
2-way Interactions	.293	11	.027	.86	.59
Attachment by Time	.234	6	.039	1.25	.28
Attachment by Sex	.079	3	.026	.84	.47
Time by Sex	.003	2	.002	.05	.95
3-way Interactions	.200	6	.033	1.07	.38
Attachment by Time By Sex	.200	6	.033	1.07	.38

\*  $p < .05$

Refer to Table 11 for the group means, standard deviations and results of one-way ANOVA for the What's Left variable on the 12-group model outlined earlier. The results indicate significant group mean differences,  $F(11,301)=2.294, p<.01$ . These group means are presented graphically in Figure 2 and Figure 3. Hypothesis II predicted a non-linear relationship between Time and What's Left, with lower values for recent and distant losses, and higher values for intermediate Time since the loss. Figure 2 presents a linear solution, which accounts for only nine percent of the variance in group means. The hypothesized curvilinear relationship was tested with the quadratic regression solution, presented in Figure 3, which accounted for 20 percent of the variance in group means. The results provide support for Hypothesis II which predicted that scores on the What's Left subscale increase and then decrease with Time since the loss, a curvilinear relationship between Time and What's Left.

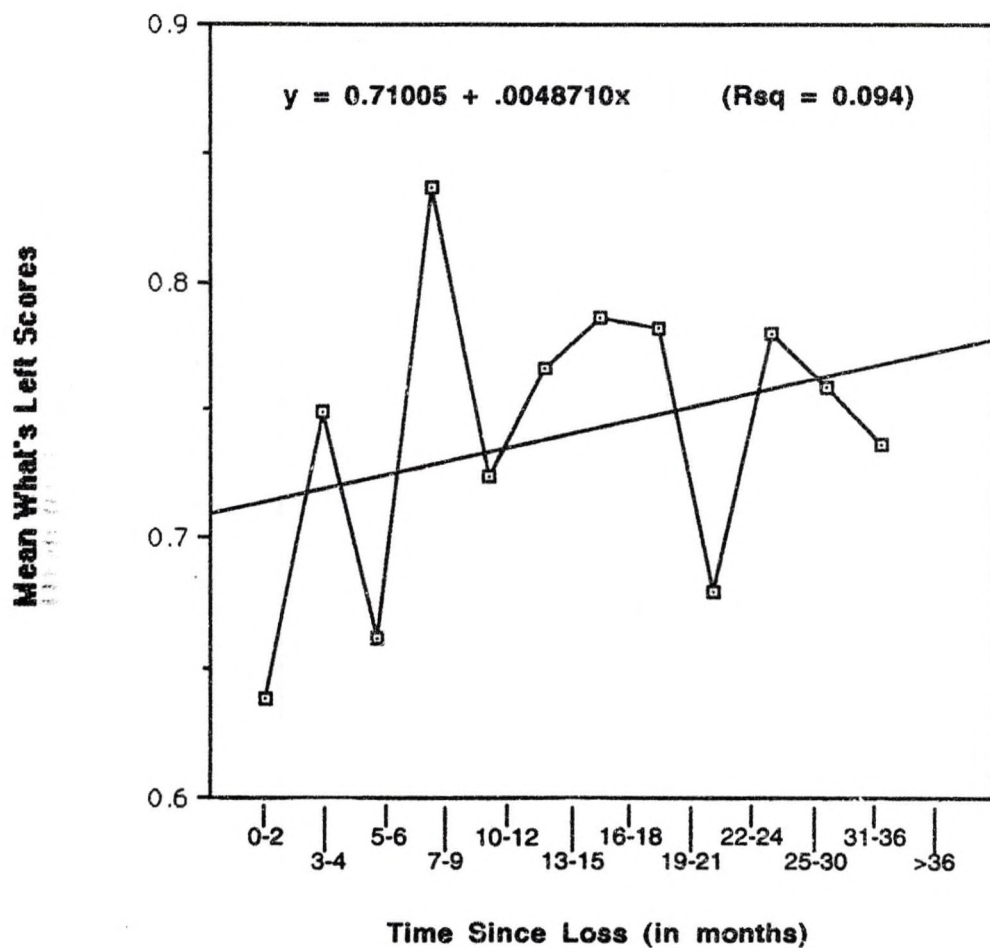
Hypothesis V predicted that during the first three months following a relationship loss, men would score higher on What's Left than women. As reported earlier, the low cell size for men with losses within three months necessitated an extension of Time since the loss to six months. Table 12 presents the means, standard deviations and results of t-test for independent group differences. The group mean on What's Left was .697 for women and .662 for men, a non-significant difference,  $t(1)=.82, p<.41$ . There was no difference between men and women with losses six months or less on the What's Left variable.

Table 11

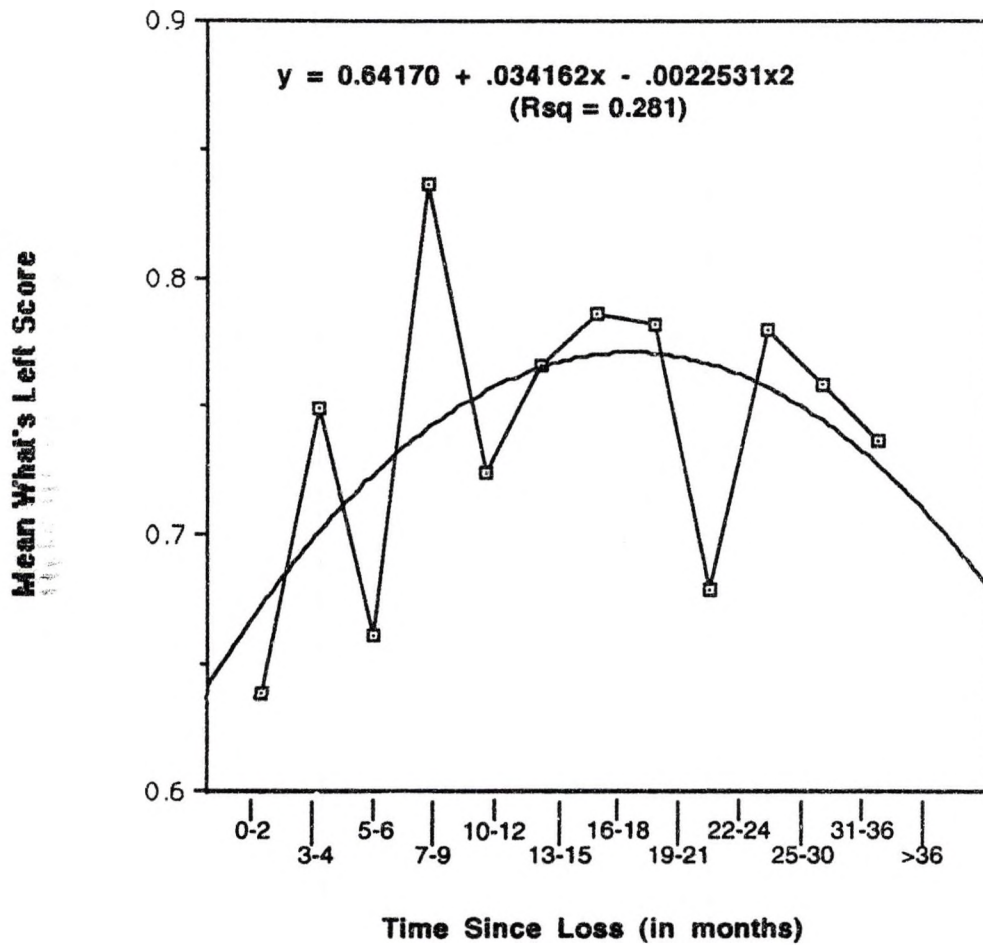
Means and Standard Deviations of RTL-S What's Left by Time: 12-Group Model

Time Since Loss	What's Left <sup>1</sup>		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
0-2 months	25	.639	.171
3-4 months	28	.749	.124
5-6 months	27	.662	.217
7-9 months	14	.836	.093
10-12 months	46	.725	.165
13-15 months	16	.767	.231
16-18 months	28	.786	.127
19-21 months	10	.782	.153
22-24 months	30	.679	.211
25-30 months	17	.780	.137
31-36 months	28	.759	.155
> 36 months	43	.737	.223

1df = 11,301    F = 2.29    p= .01



**Figure 2.** Means of What's Left on 12 Group Model of Time: Graphic presentation and Linear Regression Solution



**Figure 3.** Means of What's Left on 12 Group Model of Time: Graphic Presentation and Curvilinear Regression Solution

Table 12

Means, Standard Deviations and t-test on What's Left by Sex

Subscale	Female(n=56)		Male(n=25)		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
What's Left	.697	.179	.662	.175	.82	.41

Note. Participants with Time since the loss of six months or less.

Although it was not hypothesized, the ANOVA procedures found a main effect for Sex on the What's Left variable,  $F(1,283)=4.59$ ,  $p<.03$ . The group mean for all female participants in the study ( $M=.755$ ), was significantly higher than the group grand mean for men ( $M=.715$ ).

#### Results of ANOVA: What's Possible

Table 13 presents the results of the 3-way ANOVA for the What's Possible variable. There were significant main effects for Time since the loss,  $F(2,283)=6.19$ ,  $p<.00$ , and Attachment Style,  $F(3,283)=3.49$ ,  $p<.02$ . The main effect for Sex was not significant,  $F(1,283)=.40$ ,  $p<.53$ , nor were there any significant 2-way,  $F(11,283)=.643$ ,  $p<.80$ , or 3-way interaction effects,  $F(6,283)=.063$ ,  $p<.99$ ).

See Table 14 for a presentation of the means, standard deviations and results of the one-way ANOVA procedures for Time on the What's Possible variable. The means and standard deviations for the 0-3, 4-12 and Over 12



Table 13

Results of ANOVA: Attachment by Time by Sex on RTL-S Subscale What's Possible

Effect	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Main Effects	.969	6	.162	4.13	** .00
Attachment Style	.410	3	.137	3.49	* .02
Time Since Loss	.484	2	.242	6.19	** .00
Sex	.016	1	.016	.40	.53
2-way Interactions	.276	11	.025	.64	.79
Att. St. by Time	.125	6	.021	.53	.78
Att. St. by Sex	.041	3	.014	.35	.79
Time by Sex	.134	2	.067	1.71	.18
3-way Interactions	.015	6	.002	.63	.99
Att. by Time					
By Sex	.015	6	.002	.63	.99

\*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$

month groups were: .660, .711, and .774, respectively. The Over 12 month group mean was significantly higher than both the 0-3 and 4-12 months groups. There was no significant difference between the 0-3 and the 4-12 month group. These results provide support for Hypothesis III; scores are higher on What's Possible for losses over 12 months.

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of What's Possible by Time Since the Loss<sup>1</sup>

0 - 3 months			4 - 12 months			Over 12 months		
<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
38	.660 <sup>a</sup>	.153	104	.711 <sup>b</sup>	.195	172	.774 <sup>a,b</sup>	.206

Note. Means with common superscripts are significantly different ( $p < .05$ ).

<sup>1</sup>  $df = 2,306$   $F = 6.80$   $p = .00$

The 12 group model analyses was also performed on the What's Possible variable, with the means, standard deviations, and results of one-way ANOVA presented in Table 15. A significant effect for Time since the loss was found,  $F(11,296) = 2.419$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Figure 4 presents these means graphically, and includes a linear regression solution. Forty-two percent of the variance in group means on the What's Possible variable was accounted for by Time. This results provide support for Hypothesis III; scores on the What's Possible variable increased over time.

The lack of a significant main effect for Sex on the What's Possible variable has implications for Hypothesis VI which predicted that female participants would score higher on the What's Possible variable than male participants. The results of the analysis fail to support this hypothesis. There were no significant differences between women and men on What's Possible.

Table 13 also reports a significant main effect for Attachment Style on the variable What's Possible. Although these differences were not hypothesized,

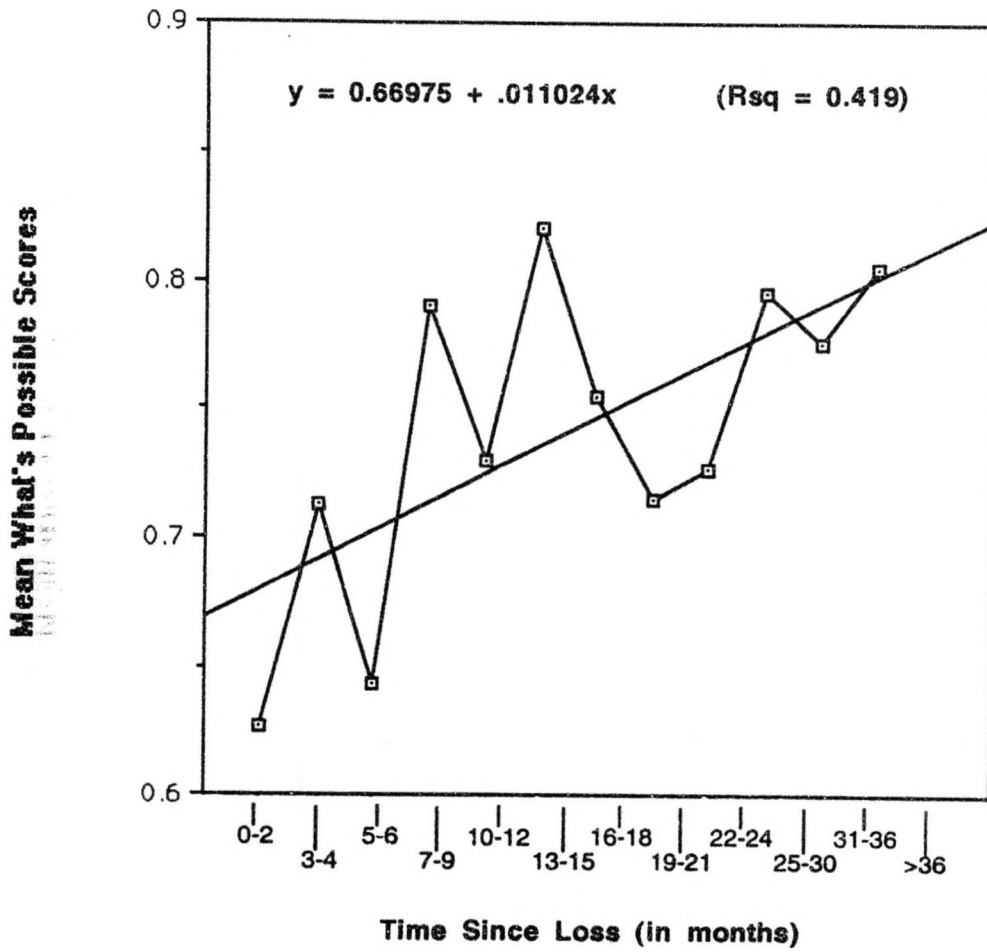
they are presented in Table 16. In order of magnitude, the means for Secure, Dismissing Avoidant, Fearful Avoidant, and Preoccupied attachment style were:

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations of RTL-S What's Possible by Time: 12-Group Model

Time Since Loss	What's Possible <sup>1</sup>		
	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
0-2 months	25	.627	.145
3-4 months	28	.713	.172
5-6 months	27	.644	.245
7-9 months	14	.791	.125
10-12 months	46	.729	.176
13-15 months	16	.820	.124
16-18 months	28	.755	.246
19-21 months	10	.715	.235
22-24 months	30	.726	.237
25-30 months	17	.796	.159
31-36 months	28	.776	.113
> 36 months	43	.805	.229

<sup>1</sup>  $df = 11,296$   $F = 2.42$   $p = .01$



**Figure 4.** Means of What's Possible on 12 Group Model of Time: Graphic Presentation and Linear Regression Solution

.769, .767, .685, and .681, respectively. Mean scores on What's Possible were significantly higher for the Secure group than for Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied groups, but were not different from the Dismissing Avoidant attachment group. The mean of the Dismissing Avoidant group was higher than Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied group means. There was no difference between Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied attachment groups on the What's Possible variable. Persons of Secure and Dismissing Avoidant attachment styles scored higher on What's Possible than those with Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied attachment styles

Table 16

Means and Standard Deviations of What's Possible by Attachment Style

Attachment Style	What's Possible <sup>1</sup>		
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Secure	126	.769 <sup>ab</sup>	.202
Dismissing Avoidant	80	.767 <sup>cd</sup>	.174
Fearful Avoidant	74	.685 <sup>bd</sup>	.211
Preoccupied	31	.681 <sup>ac</sup>	.201

<sup>1</sup> *df*=3,306 *F*=4.243 *p*=.01

Note. Means with common superscripts are significantly different (*p* < .05)

### Summary Results of Hypotheses

Hypothesis I: *Involvement in the task of discovering What's Lost is higher for relatively recent losses.* This hypothesis was supported by correlational, univariate ANOVA and the graphic/regression analyses results. What's Lost decreased over time.

Hypothesis II: *Involvement in the response task of discovering What's Possible is higher for relatively more distant losses.* Correlational, univariate ANOVA and graphic/regression analysis support this hypothesis. Involvement in the response task of discovering What's Possible increased with time since the loss.

Hypothesis III: *Involvement in the task of discovering What's Left is relatively higher for losses occurring an intermediate length of time in the past than for those more recent or distant.* The univariate ANOVA analysis of group mean differences as hypothesized with the 3-group model do not support this hypothesis. On the other hand, this proposition was supported by the 12-group model and graphical/regression analysis. Involvement in the What's Left response task increased and then decreased with time since the loss.

Hypothesis IV: *During the first three months following a relationship loss, women are involved in the response task of discovering What's Lost with greater intensity than are men.* Because of small cell sizes, this hypothesis was modified to include losses within six months. The results of t-tests of independent group mean differences did not support this hypothesis. There were no significant differences between men and women with recent losses on the response task of What's Lost.

Hypothesis V: *During the first three months following a relationship loss, male participants are involved in the response task of discovering What's Left with greater intensity than are female participants.* Because of small cell sizes this hypothesis was modified to include losses within six months. Results of t-tests failed to support this hypothesis. During the first six months following a romantic loss, male participants were not involved more intensely than female participants in the response task of discovering What's Left.

Hypotheses VI: *Female participants are involved in the task of discovering What's Possible with greater intensity than male participants.* This hypothesis was not supported by the univariate ANOVA results. Females were not involved in the response task of discovering What's Possible with greater intensity than males.

Hypothesis VII: *Those persons with a preoccupied attachment style are involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with more intensity than persons with any other attachment style.* This hypothesis was partially supported by the results of univariate ANOVA tests. Persons with Preoccupied attachment styles were involved in the response task of discovering What's Lost with greater intensity than those with Dismissing Avoidant styles, but were not different from those with Fearful Avoidant or Secure attachment styles.

Hypothesis VIII: *Persons with a Dismissing Avoidant attachment style are involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with less intensity than persons with any other attachment styles.* The results of univariate ANOVA analysis partially supported this hypothesis. Persons with a Dismissing Avoidant

attachment style were involved in the task of discovering What's Lost with less intensity than persons with Fearful Avoidant and Preoccupied styles, but were not different from those with Secure attachment.

#### Significant Findings Not Hypothesized

The results of univariate ANOVA analysis found two main effect differences which were not hypothesized. Female participants scored higher on the What's Left variable than did male participants. The second non-hypothesized finding was that those participants with Secure and Dismissing Avoidant attachment styles scored significantly higher on the What's Possible variable than those endorsing Preoccupied or Fearful Avoidant attachment styles.



## CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This study had two primary purposes. The first was to test a model of responding to loss, which predicts that the length of time since a relationship ended would be related to the degree of involvement in each of three response tasks. Hypotheses concerning the relationships between time and the response tasks were developed and tested.

The second major purpose was to test for relationships between gender and attachment style and these response tasks. The review of the literature on responses to the loss of a romantic relationship suggested that gender and attachment style are related to the degree to which individuals would be involved in each of the response tasks (Diedrick, 1991; Jesser, 1987; Lister, 1991; Simpson, 1987; Simpson, 1990; Weiss, 1982). Hypotheses about these relationships were developed and tested within this study. In order to accomplish these purposes, a research form (RTL-S) of the Schneider and Deutsch RTL (1990) was developed to operationalize the three phase-related tasks of discovering What's Lost, What's Left, and What's Possible (Schneider, 1984).

This chapter first presents a discussion of the results of testing the relationship of time since the loss on the three response tasks. This is followed by a discussion of the tests for gender and attachment effects. A summary section is then presented. Next, limitations of this study are considered and

recommendations for future research are proposed. Finally, conclusions are stated and a post script is presented to close the study.

In order to simplify and summarize this discussion, one-word descriptors are used to describe the experiential aspects of each of the three response tasks. The term "grieving" has popular appeal and is used here to describe involvement in discovering What's Lost (Schneider, 1984). "Healing" is used to summarize What's Left and What's Possible is characterized as "growth." Quotations of participants' responses to the series of open-ended questions are included in this chapter to punctuate aspects of the discussion.

#### Relationship Between Time and Responses to Loss

The results of this study provide support for the three-task model for its applicability to responding to the loss of a romantic relationship. But the distinction between healing and growth is not as clear as between grief and healing, and grief and growth. The RTL-S interscale correlations are largely similar to those found by the developer (Schneider, et al., 1991), and are consistent with expectations of the model. The small negative correlation between grieving and healing suggests that the two processes are quite distinct. In terms of the model, the person is shifting attention from grieving to healing by attending to other relationships and resources within her or his environment (Schneider, personal communication, 1994). For example this shift is apparent in the description of a female participant who had ended a romantic relationship 10 months earlier. She related this as her experience:

*It was a very significant [loss] to me. It was a huge loss. It was very hard to deal with but I've realized it's right to move on...a turning point for me*

*was when I started seeing someone new and put this other relationship in the past. (Subject #298).*

The more substantial negative correlation between grieving and growth is also consistent with theory. Growth through a loss involves a review of memories and a reorganization of the meaning of those experiences (Schneider, 1994). For example, in reviewing her relationship this woman gained a new understanding of what she "deserved in her relationships."

*After I saw him, I stepped back and looked at him objectively and I saw (FINALLY) that I deserved much more out of a relationship partner. Everyone had told me that but it wasn't until that day that I realized it was TRUE. I have become more aware of my needs...how I want/deserve to be treated. (Subject #309)*

There is substantial overlap between healing and growth (35% of the variance is shared). This is consistent with other results of testing this model (Schneider, et al, 1991) and indicates that many of the behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are common to these two tasks. The following excerpts are from young men reflecting on their losses:

*I've changed my attitude toward the worth I place on people. I value the relationship I have now much more than before. I'm more aware of others feelings and reactions. I still feel saddened by this loss, but I know it's time to keep moving on til I find someone new. (Subject #324).*

This 20-year-old man expressed his thoughts on his loss metaphorically:

*I feel like time has healed itself. There are still some open sores, but the doors left open will lead to promising trails. (Subject #241).*

Each of these subjects express a sense of perspective (healing) on their losses, as well as growth and change related to their breakups.

Overall, the intercorrelations suggest that a significant shift takes place between grieving and healing, but the healing and growth phases are much more closely related. Schneider (1984) has named the shift between grieving and healing an existential crisis, wherein the griever makes the decision to get beyond their grief or to recycle back into limiting awareness phases.

The results of testing hypotheses I, II, and III also support the model. It was hypothesized that grief is initially quite intense and then decreases over time. As time passes, healing processes increase and at some time this energy in this task also abates. Growth from the loss increases over time.

Results directly support the propositions that grief abates and growth increases with time since the loss. By grouping the participants to adjust the data for the differential effects of time relatively soon after a loss as opposed to more distant, an analysis was conducted which suggested that healing does increase and then decrease over time. It is necessary to note that these analyses were conducted on a between-subjects basis, and therefore conclusions about changes over time are subject to the limitations imposed by cross-sectional, as opposed to longitudinal, research.

These findings are consistent with those of Campbell et al., (1991) which found that grief decreased over time. The results are also consistent with Gray and Shields' (1992) finding that subjects moved through sequentially-related stages following a divorce.

An interesting finding was the degree to which grieving decreased during the first six months following a loss, yet after one and one-half years participants were still quite strongly endorsing grief responses. One

interpretation is that grieving a romantic loss is a long-term process. This is consistent with findings that losses are not gotten over, but tend to be periodically revisited as sorrow (Zisook and Schuchter, 1986). Another possibility is that participating in this study aroused forgotten thoughts and feelings about the loss.

#### Relationships Between Gender and Response to Loss

This section discusses the results of Hypotheses IV, V, and VI related to gender differences. There was no support in the findings for gender differences in grief or healing during the first six months following a romantic loss. Furthermore, the results do not support the proposition that women realize more growth than men from this type of loss.

The finding of no differences in grief is consistent with that of Kaczmarek, et al. (1990), but at variance with Sieber (1991) who found that the best predictor of distress following a loss was being a woman. It is very possible that there are no substantive differences between men's and women's expression of grief. Another possibility is that women and men differ in the modalities with which they express their grief and loss responses (Diedrick, 1981; Jessor, 1987; Lister, 1991). While a strength of this study was its operationalization of loss responses with behavioral, cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual items, a limitation was that these modalities were not assessed separately. It is possible that gender differences are contained within various modalities. For example, men may emphasize physical aspects of grieving, whereas women may emphasize emotional aspects of responding to loss (Jessor, 1987; Lister, 1991).

The researcher proposed (Hypothesis V) that men bypass their grief by focusing their attention on what remained (healing). The finding of no gender difference in What's Left during the first six months suggests that if men do distract themselves from their losses during the early period of time following a loss, they do not accomplish this by moving more quickly to healing. This finding indirectly lends general support for the model, which proposed that addressing what parts of self and life remain (healing) takes place within the context of an understanding of what has been lost (grief).

But a confounding finding of this study was that, overall, women were more involved in the process of healing. The meaning of this finding is unclear, but may be consistent with Diedrick (1991), which found that women achieved better adjustment to a divorce than men.

Related to this finding is the theoretical proposition that gaining perspective and integrating a loss is characterized as an active phase of responding to loss (Schneider, 1984). The finding of this study that women were more involved in healing processes is at variance with suggestions in the literature that men utilize problem-solving (active) methods in dealing with loss (Lister, 1991; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1987). It may be that men keep themselves busy to distract themselves from their losses, but women's active phases of responding to loss is more productive in achieving healing.

A major problem with this interpretation is that women's' more effective healing processes would theoretically be expected to result in higher levels of growth, which was not found in this study. It may be that this gender difference in healing is an artifact of the multiple statistical tests performed within the study.

There was also no evidence of gender differences in growth following a romantic breakup. This hypothesis was based on the empirical findings that

women are more willing to consider their losses (Kalish & Reynolds, 1976; DaSilva & Schork, 1984-85) and hence would be able to achieve more growth and learning from these events (Hill, et al., 1976). These results indicate that women do not appear to grow more than men from their losses. Women may be more capable of processing their losses with others (LaGrand, 1986), but men achieve growth as well.

Given that there were no gender effects in other loss phases, this was not a surprising finding. The intensity and degree of growth is contingent upon the degree of challenge to, and reformulation of, one's beliefs about self and others (Headington, 1981; Marris, 1974; Parkes, 1987; Schneider, 1984). If these beliefs and attitudes are not differentially challenged during grief, it is unlikely that differences in growth would emerge. As was suggested above, differences by modality of experience may contain gender differences which were not detectable in this study (Jesser, 1987).

As an illustration of similarities between men and women, the elaborations of two participants is presented. These participants explained their responses to breakups, approximately a year after their losses. A 20-year-old man related that:

*It was something that had to happen and I've accepted it, but sometimes I still miss her and long to have her back again someday. I was devastated initially; comparable to losing a very close family member. It took me six months before I started seeing other girls. I had to learn not to compare others to (X), because doing that made me miss her even more. I'm more sensitive and caring, and I've learned to enjoy the finer things of life. (Subject #256).*

A 19-year-old female participant, who initiated her breakup explained her responses this way.

*I'm glad that it is over because toward the end it got hard. We both have moved on but I sometimes wonder if we would still be together if I hadn't moved away. I still find it hard to go home even though I don't see him, but because it brings back memories. For several weeks before and after our breakup I went through a mourning period. It wasn't until after we broke up (when I saw him 1 1/2 months later) that I no longer grieved and mourned because I realized our relationship wouldn't work & I started seeing other people. I've matured & realize more what I want out of life.*  
(Subject #316).

Each of these subjects experienced grief. For Subject #316, some of this grief process took place prior to the actual breakup, apparently during a period of assessment of the relationship as suggested by Hill, et al., (1976). Both of these descriptions contain evidence of gaining perspective and healing. For example, Subject #316 "went through a mourning period" but is "glad that it is over." Male Subject #256 was "devastated initially; comparable to losing a very close family member" but approximately one and a half years later, he reflects that: "It was something that had to happen and I've accepted it."

These excerpts also suggest personal growth related to these events. Subject # 256 views himself as "more sensitive and caring, and I've learned to enjoy the finer things in life." Subject # 316 has "matured & realize more what I want out of life."



### Relationships Between Attachment Style and Response to Loss

This section provides a discussion of the results of testing Hypotheses VII and VIII, which were consistent with expectations. Attachment style was implicated in differential responses during grieving and growth. Based on the theories that ambivalence is problematic in resolving loss (Freud, 1926; cited in Bowlby, 1980; Marris, 1974; Parkes, 1987), this study proposed that preoccupied individuals would be more intensely involved in grieving than those with other attachment styles. The study also proposed that those with dismissing avoidant styles, who tend to view others as unreliable, would experience less grief than other attachment styles. The pattern of means for the four styles is generally consistent with predictions. Participants with dismissing avoidant and secure attachment styles experienced the least grief, while those endorsing preoccupied and fearful avoidant attachment experienced the most grief.

Consistent with other findings on attachment (Simpson, 1990), those persons endorsing a dismissing avoidant style (negative view of others, but a positive view of self) report the least grief following a romantic loss. Subject #230, a 20-year-old man with a dismissing avoidant style, whose relationship ended seven months ago, stated his experience of grief this way: "Not much grief, just coping fine." Yet in response to a question about his current feelings about the loss he reveals his ambivalence: "I'm glad it's over, but i miss it at times." The subtle conflict is also apparent in his "just coping fine"..."but I miss it at times." Denying the importance of close interpersonal relationships in their lives is a defense mechanism employed by persons with dismissing avoidant attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

On the other end of the spectrum of grief intensity is fearful avoidant attachment. The following excerpt is from a man with a fearfully avoidant style, whose relationship ended two years prior to participating in the study. He writes:

*I haven't changed much lately. It's been two years and I'm still bitter about it. Admitting just one more failure. Trusting women; I still don't. Trusting myself. Being able to even talk casually to women. I haven't even been on one date since the end of this relationship. I have more self doubts [now]. I don't trust women's motives. I don't trust myself to have the power or wisdom to get out of another bad relationship. (Subject #152)*

It is readily apparent that this man's life was seriously disrupted by the breakup and that he has been unable to integrate this experience in a positive way. An explanation for the high intensity of grief responses for fearful avoidant attachment style is in the mental model thought to underlie attachment style. Fearful avoidant style is related to a negative evaluation of the responsiveness of others to self and to doubts about one's worthiness of other's responsiveness (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It appears that a negative evaluation, per se, has a cumulative effect on responding to loss.

No doubt, if one views others as unresponsive and self as unworthy, one would expect that losing a relationship (any relationship) would be a relatively more intense experience than for someone with a relatively more positive picture of the world, either self or others (Simpson, 1987).

It appears that ambivalence which characterizes the preoccupied style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazen & Shaver, 1990) not only intensifies

the experience of grief, but also affects the ability to grow. Although differences in growth were not hypothesized, the finding that those with preoccupied attachment scored lower than those with other attachment styles on What's Possible lends support to this interpretation. Apparently viewing one's self as unworthy of support intensifies grief and also inhibits growth.

For example, a 21-year-old male endorsing preoccupied attachment style reported the following experiences when reflecting on a loss which occurred 12 months prior to participating in the study.

Current feelings: *"Not good, I feel alone and emotionless."*

Significance of this loss: *"Very bad, I felt like I had lost everything."*

Turning point in your grief: *"It hasn't happened."*

How you've changed: *"I feel bitter."*

Similar to the Fearful Avoidant attachment style, this person has apparently been unable to achieve resolution to this loss and grow from the experience.

### Summary

This study has yielded a research version of the RTL (Schneider and Deutsch, 1990), which has excellent internal consistency. The results of the study provide evidence for the alternate form reliability of the RTL-S.

Overall, the results provide substantial support for the three-phase model in its applicability to the ending of romantic relationships. Furthermore, the results are consistent with other findings on the RTL model that a significant event takes place between grief and healing. This may well be what Schneider (1994) has termed an existential crisis.

The study hypothesized differential effects in the response to loss by gender and attachment style. While the findings support theories which propose attachment differences, the results found little support for response differences related to gender. The finding that women were more involved than men in healing processes was counter to a prediction of this study, and somewhat inconsistent with the theory and other findings.

#### Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, the sample was very homogeneous, with approximately 95 percent being Caucasian and Christian. This sample was also homogeneous in terms of major chosen. Holland (1985) codes were used to classify majors for this study. This typology suggests that choice of occupation and/or major is dependent on personality (Holland, 1973). The finding that more than 50 percent of the sample had chosen Social majors suggests that there was a high degree of similarity in personality within this sample. This homogeneity limits the generalizability of the results to other groups of people.

A second limitation is the design of the study. This research was cross-sectional and hence requires the cautions of biases based on cohorts. This applies particularly to conclusions concerning the changes in various responses to loss over time. These comparisons were performed on a between-subjects basis. The research was also correlational and hence no causal conclusions can be drawn from the results.

A third limitation lies in the validation of the instrumentation. The RTL has been determined to have content validity (Schneider, McGovern & Deutsch, 1991). Also earlier versions of the RTL awareness scale have been found to

differentiate between grief and depression (Deutsch, 1982; McGovern, 1986). But more research needs to be done to validate that the RTL is measuring the constructs as outlined by theory. More construct validation studies need to be performed. Although the pilot study outlined within this study provides support for alternative form reliability of the RTL-S, more research needs to be done with this research version as well.

The reader is also cautioned in the interpretation of the graphic/regression analyses of the RTL model and time. As stated within Chapter 3, Figures 1 through 4 depict group means. The least squares lines of best fit and their associated equation solutions apply to the amount of variance between group means and not between individuals.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The RTL-S appears to have promise as a research tool, but as suggested in the previous section, more research needs to be performed to adequately assess the construct validity. Factor analytic procedures could be applied to the data to provide validation for this instrument. In order to improve the generalizability, this study needs to be replicated with a more heterogeneous sample. It is also recommended that gender differences in response to loss be studied by exploring the various modalities of experience, and also by analyzing the data item by item. This line of research would also likely yield useful information for clinical application (Lazarus, 1989). For example, anecdotal evidence for a gender difference in emotional expression is contained within an excerpt from one male participant who stated that: "My ego (as a male) has interrupted my ability to express my true feelings." (Subject #230).

One interesting finding of this study was that those persons endorsing dismissing avoidant attachment style achieved growth from their losses at levels equivalent to those with a secure attachment style. There was also no difference in levels of grief between securely attached and dismissing avoidantly attached groups. In comparison to those with secure attachment, dismissing avoidant attachment is associated with relatively less of the following characteristics: self-confidence, emotional expressiveness, warmth, care-giving, intimacy, involvement in relationships, and using others as secure base (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Given these substantial differences, it is curious that equal levels of growth through romantic loss is achieved. It is highly likely that an analysis at the item level would provide important information on the nature of this growth. It is therefore recommended that item response analysis procedures be applied to these groups.

### Conclusion

The ending of a romantic relationship is a common and distressing event in the lives of college students. These endings often result in intense grief reactions which can challenge one's beliefs about the world and self. But these events also contain the potential for meaningful personal healing and growth. The three-task model of discovering What's Lost, What's Left, and What's Possible as proposed by Schneider (1984) has application for understanding these responses to romantic relationship loss. Time since the loss and the interpersonal attachment style with which a person forms and maintains relationships to significant others are important dimensions in understanding these loss responses. In a relatively more limited manner, gender also informs aspects of these loss responses.

Postscript

The following excerpts from participants of this study are poignant descriptions of responses to losses depicting the three phases explored in this study. These excerpts are presented here, with the researcher's thanks, as a closing tribute to the participants of this study and to the pain, healing, and growth they experienced in their losses.

What's Lost

*I find it hard to say the word love now after the breakup.*

*I wish you were*

*by my side*

*In the dark of night*

*these faces they haunt me*

*And I wish you were close to me.*

*By my side.* (One month since the breakup; Subject # 163)

What's Left

*I am still very sad. I feel terrible that I hurt this person and I miss him, and having him there to depend on. I know the worst is over. The first few weeks after were very tough, trying to adjust to being on my own. I felt as if wouldn't make it. But, now I'm in the rebuilding process. (Four months since the ending; Subject #302).*

What's Possible

*I feel badly about our breakup even now. It made me realize how much I depended upon him for my happiness. Now I look inside myself for happiness. (Three months since the breakup; Subject #165)*

*It wasn't so much a realization that the grief was over, but I finally came to terms with the idea that we weren't going to get back together. When we first broke up, I cried a lot, but then I concentrated on the idea that I would get him back. This summer, I went to visit him, and realized (after almost two years) that what we felt for each other had been on a high school maturity level, and that there was no longer anything there for either of us. I've learned that, in a relationship, I have to remain my own person even while feeling very strongly for and depending on my partner. I never again want to invest all of who I am in a man or a relationship. I've grown a lot and become more independent because of it. (Twenty-six months since the breakup; Subject #264).*

*At first I lost my appetite, couldn't sleep, and didn't associate with anyone. It was hard to let go of something that was such a large part of my life. I knew I had to go on and I would be fine alone. I started going out and got over the pain. [Now] I have higher standards for relationships. I know I can be by myself and be happy without a boyfriend, so I am not scared to lose someone. (One and a half years since the breakup; Subject #164)*



*I was crushed at first, because he broke it off with me while I still cared deeply for him. [But] I have become more aggressive when my concerns or wants are addressed. I used to be very passive and agreeable, but now I have learned to voice my opinion, as it can make a world of differences.*  
(One year since the breakup; Subject #238)

*I thought this was as bad as him dying, because he was not in my life. [Now] I realized I could make in on my own. I feel I have grown from this experience.* (Twenty-one months since the breakup; Subject #317)

## Appendices

## APPENDIX A

### UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA'S INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: June 4, 1993  
NAME: Charles J. Dahlstrom DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE Counseling  
PROJECT TITLE: Response to Loss of Romantic Relationship: Gender and Attachment  
Differences

The above referenced project was reviewed by a designated member for the University's Institutional Review Board on June 7, 1993 and the following action was taken:

- Project approved. EXPEDITED REVIEW NO. 9.  
Next scheduled review is on June, 1994.
- Project approved. EXEMPT CATEGORY NO. \_\_\_\_\_. No periodic review scheduled unless so stated in REMARKS SECTION.
- Project approval deferred.  
(See REMARKS SECTION for further information.)
- Project denied.  
(See REMARKS SECTION for further information.)

**REMARKS:** Any changes in protocol or adverse occurrences in the course of the research project must be reported immediately to the IRB Chairman or ORPD.

*At the end of your consent form,  
should be  
Principal Investigator (not Principle Investigator)*

cc: C. Barke, Adviser  
Dean, Graduate School

David O Lambeth June 7 93  
Signature of Chairperson or designated IRB Member Date  
UND's Institutional Review Board

If the proposed project (clinical medical) is to be part of a research activity funded by a Federal Agency, a special assurance statement or a completed 596 Form may be required. Contact ORPD to obtain the required documents. (9/87)

APPENDIX B  
CONSENT FORM

Introduction and Invitation to Participate

My name is Charles Dahlstrom. I am a third year Counseling Psychology doctoral student. I am doing research for my dissertation. The research is being conducted under the auspices of the Department of Counseling here at the University of North Dakota. My advisor for this research is Dr. Chuck Barke'.

The topic of this research is how college students react to the ending of a romantic relationship. The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of college students' are currently thinking and feeling about the ending of a romantic relationship they have had in their lives.

You are invited to participate in this study. In order to participate you must be 18 years of age or older and have experienced a breakup of a romantic relationship **at some time** in your life. **It does not have to be recent.** If you decide to participate you will need to identify the **most recent** romantic relationship in which you have been involved, **but which has ended for you.**

What You Will Do to Participate

To participate you will be asked to complete a series of questionnaires. The first set of questions are about you. The second are about the **relationship which has ended**. The third set of questions is called the Response to Loss Inventory (**RTL**). The statements on this questionnaire are designed to assess how you are thinking, feeling and behaving right now, in relation to the ending of this relationship. The final questionnaire asks you to write (briefly) about what this breakup was or has been like for you.

After reading this form and if you decide to participate, and if you decide to participate, complete the questionnaires and seal them in the envelope provided with the packet. You will be indicating your informed consent by completing the questionnaires. Keep the consent for your records.

It should take approximately one hour to complete the questionnaires. It will be best to set aside a period of time when you are alone and will not be disturbed. The information will be most useful if all questions are completed at one sitting and if you complete the questionnaires in order. Do not put your name on any of the questionnaires.

Bring the completed questionnaires with you to class, where they will be collected. This will conclude your involvement in the project. If you decide not to participate, please return the unanswered questionnaires to me or my assistant.

### Benefits and Risks to Participation

All information obtained in connection with this study will remain anonymous. In any written reports, publications or presentations of the data, no one will be identified or identifiable. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. A decision to discontinue will not prejudice your further relations with the UND, this department and/or its instructors.

There are some potential benefits to participating in this study. You may gain a better understanding of how they are currently thinking and feeling about their breakup. You may also benefit from knowing that you have contributed to the scientific understanding of this event.

There are also some risks associated with participation in this study. Some people may feel uncomfortable providing personal information about themselves or their reactions to the ending of a romantic relationship. You may find responding to these questions difficult because some questions may bring up memories or feelings which are painful. You may not wish to finish these questionnaires. If the romantic relationship (and breakup) you are considering have occurred recently, or if answering these questions provokes strong feelings, you may wish to postpone filling out these questionnaires.

It might be helpful to discuss your reactions with someone. You are invited to contact me at the phone number provided below. You are also invited to record your thoughts about participating in the study on the back of the last page of questions.

Thank you.

If you have questions regarding this project, please contact:

Charles Dahlstrom (Principal Investigator, Dept of Counseling	777-2729
Home Address: 3326 Royal Circle, Grand Forks	772-8928
Mike Ewing (Research Assistant)	772-6862
Dr. Chuck Barke' (Advisor) Dept. of Counseling	777-2729

## APPENDIX C

### DEMOGRAPHICS AND RELATIONSHIPS CHARACTERISTICS

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: F M

Race: White African Amer Native Amer Asian Amer Hispanic  
other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown population: Rural Less than 1000 1000 to 10,000  
10,000 to 100,000 more than 100,000

Year in college: Fresh Soph Junior Senior Grad

Your college major: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: Catholic Protestant Judaism other(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently in a romantic relationship? Yes No

Current living condition: Alone with partner with parents with children  
with family (partner & children) other

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MOST RECENT ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN BUT WHICH HAS ENDED FOR YOU.

Sex of this person: F M

How long were you in a romantic relationship with this person? Please indicate the number of years and or months.

(example, 1 year(s) 2 months)

\_\_\_\_\_year(s) \_\_\_\_\_months

How long ago did this relationship end?

\_\_\_\_\_Year(s) \_\_\_\_\_months

This breakup was (check the one which best describes):

Sudden and unexpected

One I could anticipate happening for more than a few days or weeks

I had (check the one which best describes):

some degree of control over this breakup

no control over this breakup

Compared to other romantic relationships I have been involved in, **the relationship I am considering for this study was** (check the one which best describes):

more important to me

about as important to me

less important to me

APPENDIX D  
PERMISSION LETTER: SCHNEIDER

*John Schneider, Ph.D.  
Rt. 2 Box 75  
Colfax, WI 54730  
(715) 235-1724*

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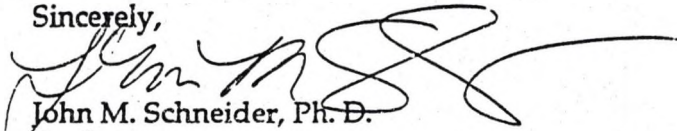
May 26, 1994

Charles Dahlstrom  
111 S. Violet Lane  
Carbondale, IL 62901

Dear Charles:

You have my permission to use the Response to Loss Inventory and to adapt it to fit the design of your dissertation.

Sincerely,

  
John M. Schneider, Ph. D.  
Professor  
Michigan State University

## APPENDIX E

### RESPONSE TO LOSS-SHORT (RTL-S)

This is an inventory of ways people respond to losses in their lives. Answer each statement with your **most recent romantic relationship (which has ended for you)** in mind. No one reacts in all these ways, and not all possible reactions to ending a relationship are included in this questionnaire.

You may find responding to this questionnaire difficult because some questions may bring up memories or feelings which are painful.

It might be helpful to discuss your reactions with someone. You are invited to contact me at the number on your consent form or to record your thoughts about answering these questions on the additional sheet of paper provided with the answer sheets.

As you read each question, ask yourself if the statement is true about you **right now, or in the past few days**. You may find that you have changed from how you would have responded even a few days or weeks ago. You can indicate the degree to which you are having these responses according to the following scheme:

**0= this isn't accurate about my current response to this loss**

**1= occasionally this is true about my response**

**2= some of the time this is true about my response**

**3= most of the time this is true about my response**

**4= this definitely is accurate about my current response**

**NOTE: If a statement is true about you, but is not related to this loss, leave it blank.**

Please read all questions, even if you leave some of them blank.

**Since this relationship ended,**

It's been hard to concentrate.

I am less confident.

I've not been interested in meeting anyone new.

I don't seem to have much to say.

**When I think about this relationship having ended,**

I am scattered and ineffective.

There is nothing to look forward to.

I feel slow and stupid, as if I've lost my ability to think.

I can't see how things will get better.



## Page 2:RTL-S

**0= not true about my current response to the ending of this relationship**

**1= occasionally true about my current response**

**2= some of the time this is true about my current response**

**3= most of the time this is true about my current response**

**4= this is definitely accurate about my current response**

**Because this relationship ended,**

- I feel empty, like a shell, like I am just existing.
- I feel lonely and alone.
- I long for whom I've lost.
- The tears are hard to stop.
- I feel restless.
- I feel tense.
- I am exhausted by any effort.
- My body feels heavy.
- The future seems empty.
- Everything else seems trivial and meaningless.
- There is nothing positive or redeeming about it.
- My beliefs don't give me the comfort they once did.

**In the time since this relationship ended,**

- Hearing about other people's similar experiences helps.
- Being by myself has felt healing.
- I think about the effects of ending this relationship, how I have changed, what is different.
- I can take what comes.
- My feelings make sense when I think about them in light of the ending of this relationship.
- I no longer struggle to accept what has happened.
- I can enjoy simple pleasures of life again.
- My body is healing from the stresses of this experience.
- I realize that sadness and peacefulness can co-exist.
- I have learned to accept that endings and changes are a part of life.
- I've found ways to get back my integrity and self-respect.
- At least one person knows how I've changed since this happened.
- I realize how important it is to say good-bye to who's gone.
- Life has more to it than just this event.

**Page 3:RTL-S**

**REMINDER: If a statement is true about you, but is not related to ending this relationship, leave it blank.**

**In the time since this relationship ended,**

- I've felt what I've needed to about it.
- I no longer feel anger.

**Since this relationship ended**

- I make sense out of the messages from my body.
- I have the energy I need.
- I feel free to move on to other things.
- It's time for me to get on with life.

**In the time since this relationship ended,**

- I'm more self-disciplined.
- I enjoy being alone.
- I discovered what I want in life.
- I laugh at myself, especially about how serious I've become.

**Since this relationship ended,**

- I feel confident.
- I'm more creative in my approach to life.
- I've changed in ways that would not have happened otherwise.
- I've grown from this loss.

**In the time since this relationship ended,**

- I feel like a whole person.
- I like and respect myself.
- I am not as hard on myself when I make mistakes.
- I don't need to avoid my feelings.
- I am efficient and creative at doing things.
- I feel strong.
- I am active in caring for myself physically.
- I get the exercise I need.

**Since this relationship ended,**

- I've discovered that there is more to me than what meets the eye.
- I trust my intuition, dreams, fantasies or my inner sense to let me know what I need to know.
- I can love and be devoted to another without losing myself.
- I am more consistently aware of what's important.

## APPENDIX F

### ATTACHMENT STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

The following are descriptions of how people are in relationships. **FIRST**, read all four paragraphs. **THEN**, **rank order** the four paragraphs from 1 (most like you) to 4 (least like you).

\_\_\_ It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

\_\_\_ I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or to have others depend on me.

\_\_\_ I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

\_\_\_ I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

The following are statements about how people think, feel and behave in their relationships with other people. Indicate in the space to the left of each statement the degree to which you agree or disagree.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree

\_\_\_ I prefer that others not depend on me.

\_\_\_ I don't worry about others not accepting me.

\_\_\_ I am uncomfortable without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

\_\_\_ I am comfortable depending on others.

\_\_\_ It is very important to me to feel independent.

\_\_\_ I am comfortable having others depend on me.

\_\_\_ I am uncomfortable getting close to others.

\_\_\_ I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

\_\_\_ It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.

\_\_\_ It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others.

\_\_\_ I don't worry about being alone.

\_\_\_ I prefer not to depend on others.

\_\_\_ I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them.

\_\_\_ I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

\_\_\_ I am comfortable without close emotional relationships.

APPENDIX G  
PERMISSION LETTER: BARTHOLOMEW

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY



BURNABY, BRITISH COLUMBIA V5A 1S6  
Telephone: (604) 291-3354  
Fax: (604) 291-3427

June 7 1993

Dear *Charles Dahlstrom*

Thank you for your interest in my methods for assessing adult attachment according to a four-category model. Although in my own research I rely primarily on semi-structured interviews to assess adult attachment patterns, I have used two self-report measures as well.

The single item measure (the Relationship Questionnaire, RQ; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) is self-explanatory. The measure can either be worded in terms of general orientations to close relationships, orientations to romantic relationships, or orientation to a specific relationship (or some combination of the above). It can also be reworded in the third person and used to rate others' attachment styles. For instance, I have had close same sex friends and romantic partners rate subjects. This measure can be used to categorize subjects into their best fitting pattern or, preferably, to obtain continuous ratings of each of the four attachment patterns.

I've also included a multi-item measure (the Relationship Scales Questionnaire, RSQ; Griffin & Bartholomew, in press). The coding of the four styles is noted at the bottom of Appendix B in Griffin & Bartholomew (in press). The three Hazan styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) can also be coded by simply going back to their original measure and matching up the phrases, or the three dimensions used by Collins and Read (1990) can be coded. Alternately, and I think preferably, you can use the questionnaire to derive scales (for instance, see Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992) of the underlying two dimensions. This measure can also be worded in terms of general orientations to close relationships, orientations to romantic relationships, or orientation to a specific relationship.

Please also find enclosed copies of a couple recent papers on the measurement of adult attachment that may be of interest to you.

If you require any additional information, I am most readily reached by email. Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kim Bartholomew".

Kim Bartholomew  
email: bartholo@sfu.ca  
(604) 291-3094

KB:es

## APPENDIX H

### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

There is not one right way to respond to a loss. The following questions ask you to reflect on the loss experience you have had with this breakup and write briefly about what it is (has been) like for you. It may be helpful to read the questions, take a break to give them some thought and then write about them. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

1. How do you feel about this loss today.
2. Compared to other losses you have had in your life, if any, how significant **to you** is (was) the loss of this romantic relationship? Please explain.
3. What is (was) **most difficult**, if anything, **for you** about this loss?
4. People grieve losses in their lives very differently. Some (not all) people describe the grief process associated with a loss as having a **turning point** at which time they sense that they are through the worst part of their grief. If this has happened for you in relation to this loss, please describe that experience.
5. How have you changed, if at all, since this loss?
6. Is there anything else about this loss which would help me understand how it is (has been) for you? Explain.

If you would like to express your thoughts and feelings about participating in this study, you may use the back of this page.  
**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.**  
Charles Dahlstrom

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