

MEANING AND PURPOSE

Finding meaning after loss is hard to do in the beginning. As we move through grief, we slowly begin to think about our purpose in life and how to live in a more meaningful way.

Sometimes, meaning can be found by exploring the gifts received from the person who is gone. What we learned from them, how we changed and grew in relationship to them when they were alive can offer levels of meaning and hints to how to live our lives now.

Many people find meaning by connecting to memory. Some even create foundations or host memorial races or tournaments to raise funds in honor of the person who died or to fundraise for a cure of the disease they suffered.

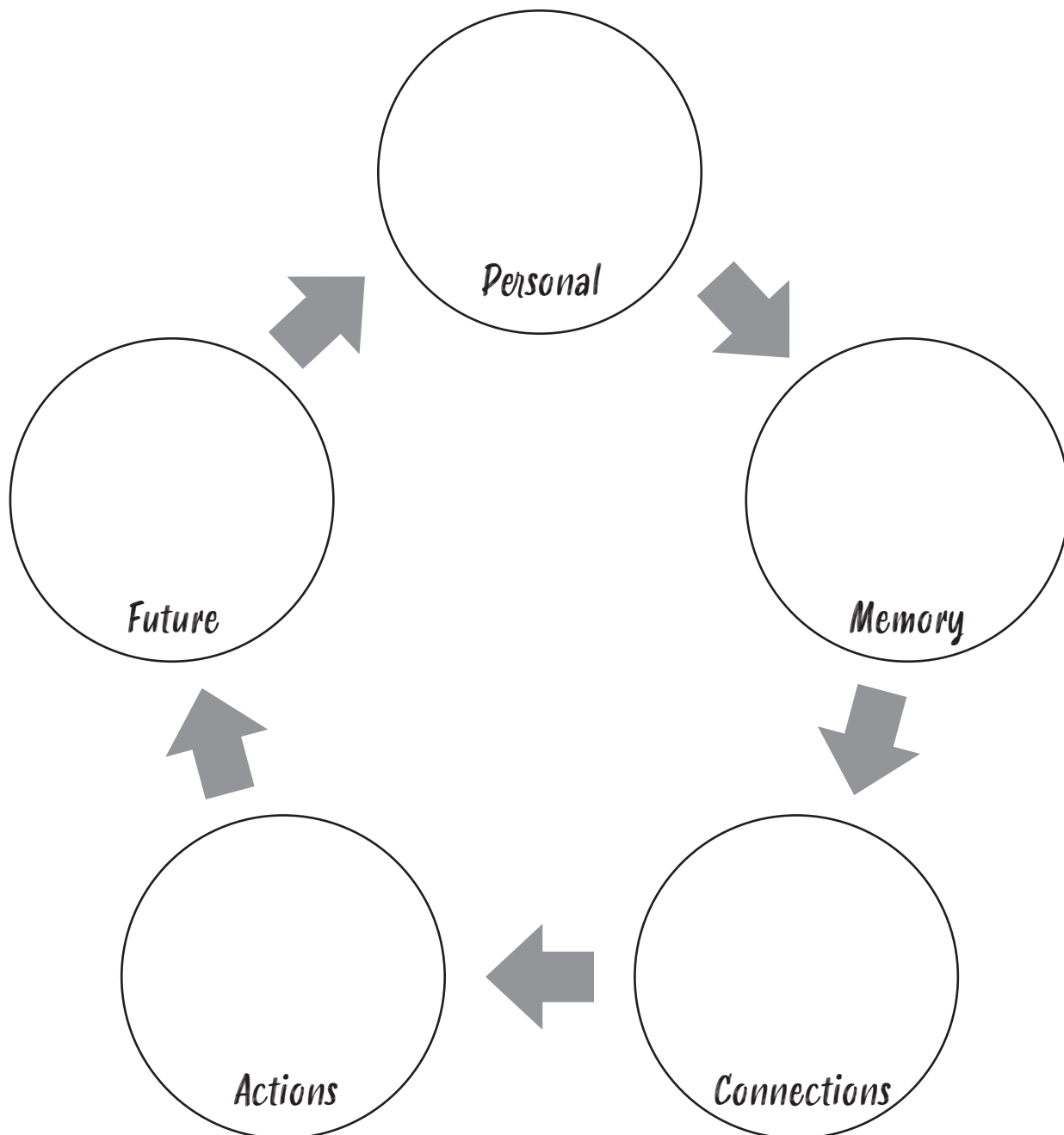
Meaning can be found in simply re-engaging in one's life after the upheaval of death. This does not mean forgetting; integration of experiences, good and bad, deepen our view of life—which in itself is meaningful.

A quote, attributed to George Herbert, says that living well is the best revenge. In grief, living well is where meaning can be found.

Invite your client to investigate what makes their life have meaning for these different realms:

- Personal
- Memory
- Connections
- Actions
- Future.

MEANING AND PURPOSE



DREAMING THE FUTURE

Re-engaging in life is hard after someone dies. The hopes and plans for the future have changed, and in the midst of grief, the bereaved person has difficulty imagining life after loss.

Dreaming up ideas by considering specific areas of life may open the client to some possibilities.

The image of the butterfly is offered because of what occurs inside a chrysalis. Most people imagine that a caterpillar encloses itself inside the cocoon and grows wings, then breaks out of the container and flies off. In fact, the caterpillar disintegrates into a cellular goo, which re-forms into the butterfly. This is an apt metaphor for what beginning to focus on life after loss can feel like, to many people.

Out of the disintegration of life as they knew it, the structure exists. Out of the plans and dreams they had prior to the death, new ideas can emerge.

What kind of person do they want to be, now and in the future?

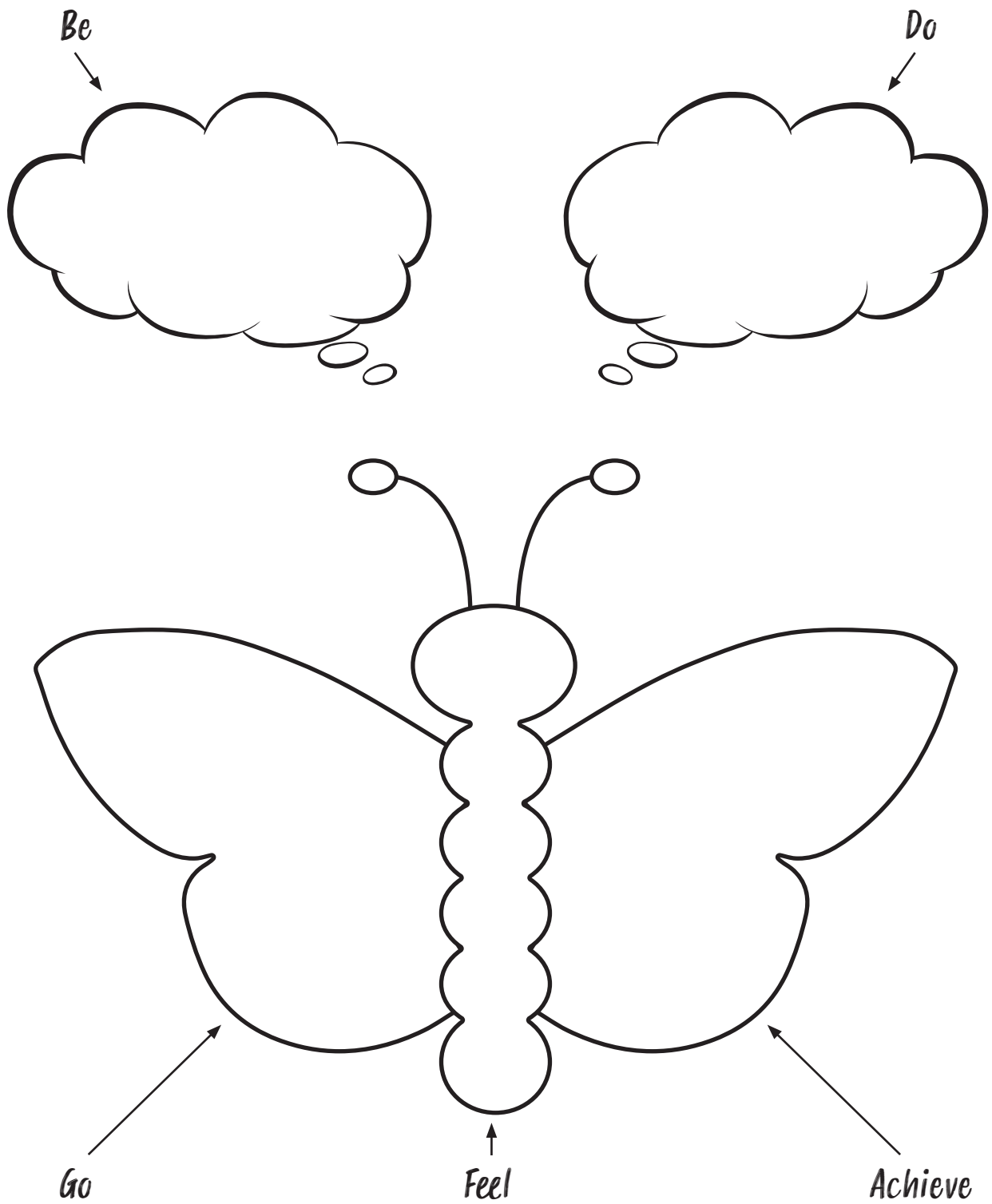
What would they like to do?

Where would they like to go?

How do they want to feel about themselves and their life, going forward?

What would they like to achieve?

DREAMING THE FUTURE



TRY SOMETHING NEW

Trying something new doesn't have to be a big thing. Breaking out of routine can be as simple as sitting in a different chair or taking a different route to work.

Trying a new routine can encourage the bereaved person to accept that change doesn't have to be a scary or bad thing.

By practicing a small shift in routine, the client can open up to possibilities. At first it may be driving down a different road or choosing a different cup to have coffee or tea in. Later, it may be going to a concert that they always wanted to go to, or going out to dinner by themselves or with a new friend.

Ask your client to consider what small shifts in their regular routine they might make. They can write some ideas down on the activity sheet. Invite the client to draw or write something new they can engage with in the suggested categories or use the activity sheet as a springboard for conversation in your office.

Encourage them to try something new every day before they come back to see you again.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

New morning routine

Changing one small thing

Learning something new

Enjoying something different

Connecting with friends