

Trauma of Wife's Death

Ricky (not his real name) was referred to me in 1997 for grief counseling after the death of his wife.

At the young age of 35, Ricky's wife Sally died very suddenly. Sally had taken the day off from work to recover from a severe headache and was lying in the living room for most of the day. In the early afternoon Sally got up to go to the toilet and Ricky heard some strange noises coming from within. Sally had collapsed in the toilet and she died very shortly afterwards. Her death was especially horrific because Ricky and his two young children witnessed it.

When I met Ricky a week after Sally's death, he was in a state of shock. I asked him to go over the details with me as best he could. He described the whole episode and said that what really stuck in his head was seeing Sally slumped in the toilet with her face contorted and a horrible gurgling sound coming from her throat. This was looping around in his mind. He felt numb with shock and pain.

I asked him to run that part of the movie in his mind while I tapped on his points. I got him to describe how Sally's face was all twisted and contorted in that painful way. I asked him to reproduce the sounds she was making. We tapped on all the feelings that he was going through at that time, the shock, the horror, the disbelief, the helplessness, the fear, the loathing, the kids watching, etc. It took several rounds of tapping to get the SUDS down close to 2 or 3. We then proceeded to tap on his life without Sally and how the children would be affected.

I then walked him through a letting-go and grief process known as the 'moon-walk'. Lastly I reframed for Ricky that Sally's death could be viewed as a celebration of her accomplishments, as a loving wife and devoted mother.

When I saw Ricky a couple of weeks later, he had taken my suggestion and got his kids involved in creating a life-album and collage of Sally's achievements, her words and sayings, her photographs, her recipes, her house rules, etc. He said that the kids were happy to be involved in that project and spent hours creating this masterpiece. He said he couldn't believe how those strange tapping exercises had helped get him through that terrible tragedy so painlessly and fast!

I recently met up with Ricky and he thanked me for helping him get his life on track so fast and looking into future for his kids and himself.

