

Disenfranchised Grief **Chronic Sorrow**





Disenfranchised Grief (Ken Doka)

Societies have sets of norms- in effect, “grieving rules” – that specify who, when, where, how long and for whom or what people should grieve.

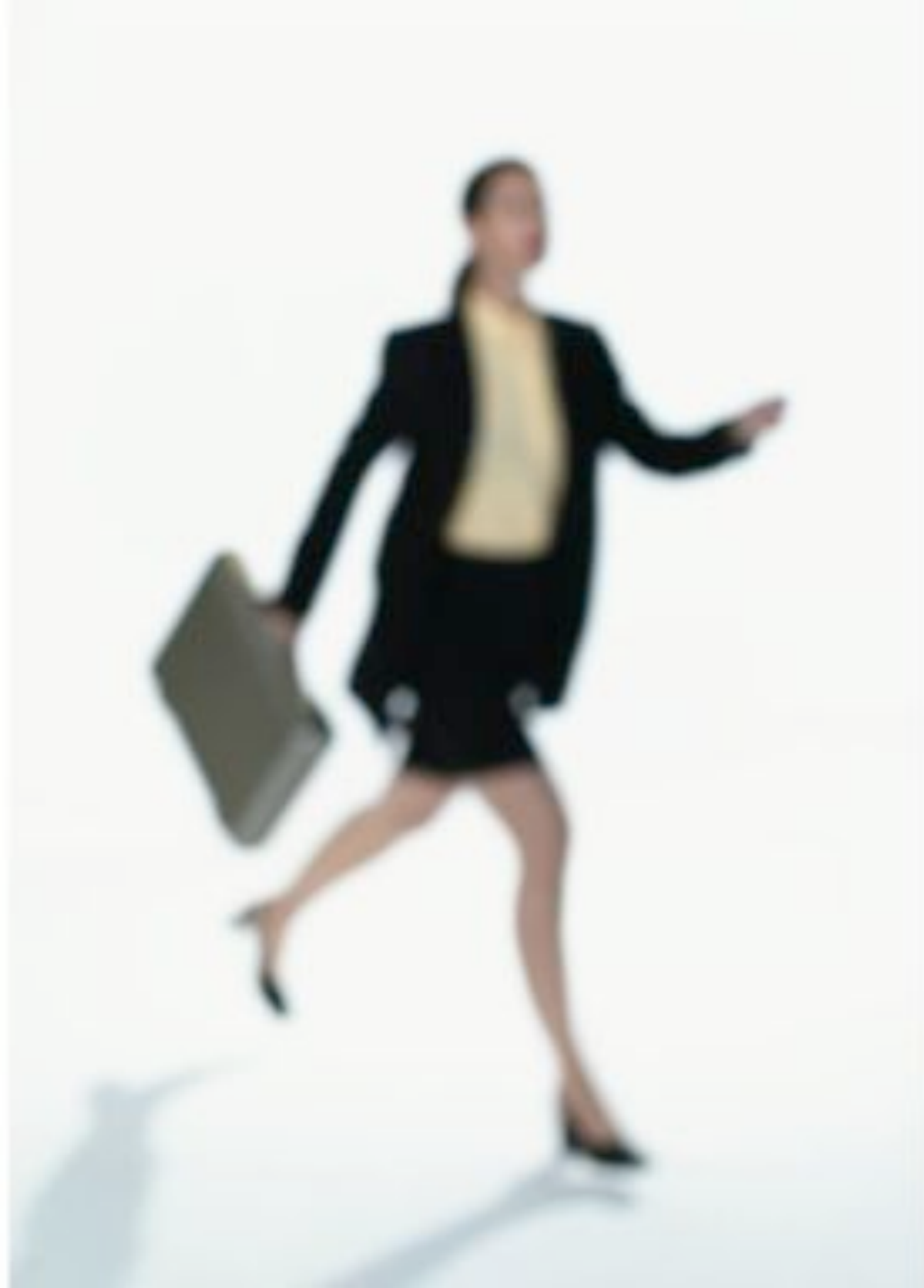


Disenfranchised grief is
grief that can not be
openly acknowledged,
socially shared, or
publicly supported.

You can only grieve when someone close has died



After a short time,
you can't grieve at
work





You should “get over” your loss after a few weeks or months

Men should be strong
(but not “in denial”)....



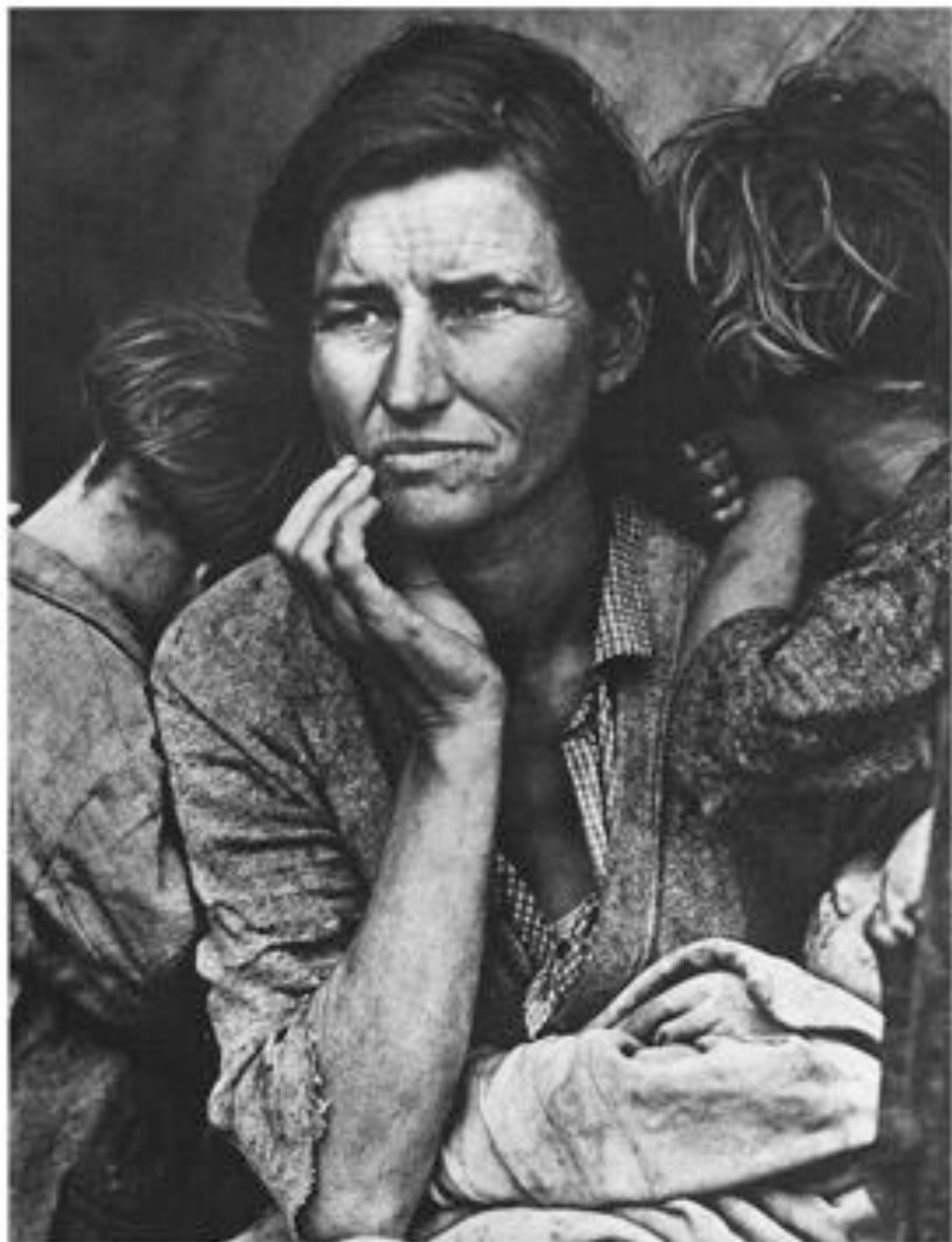


...and women
should be emotional
(until it's time for
them to "move
forward")

You should be cheery and strong and make other people feel comfortable



Being angry about your
loss is not OK (especially if
you're a woman)



You should be grateful for small blessings





People whose grieving falls outside the “rules” often feel lonely, alienated, ashamed or abandoned

Chronic Sorrow



Chronic Sorrow is “a set of pervasive, profound, continuing and recurring responses resulting from a significant loss or absence of crucial aspects of oneself or another living person to whom there is a deep attachment” (Susan Roos).

Or...

The gap between how things are, and how they could have or should have been.

How is this different from death?

- Chronic Sorrow is a living, ongoing loss
- The loss is unacknowledged
- There are constant triggers



When does Chronic Sorrow arise?

- At birth or time of diagnosis
- When an additional diagnosis is made
- When a child has difficulty making friends
- Special days such as birthdays
- During a subsequent pregnancy
- Times of greater developmental milestones by siblings
- When serious health problems occur

Common losses for families affected by **CHARGE**



- Normal family life (whatever that is!)
- Money
- Hopes and dreams for yourself and your child
- Expectations of how you thought things would be – the future you planned
- Relationships with friends and family
- Stability
- Time



- The ability to plan ahead with confidence
- Spontaneity
- Energy
- Privacy
- Sleep
- Sex
- Lifestyle options

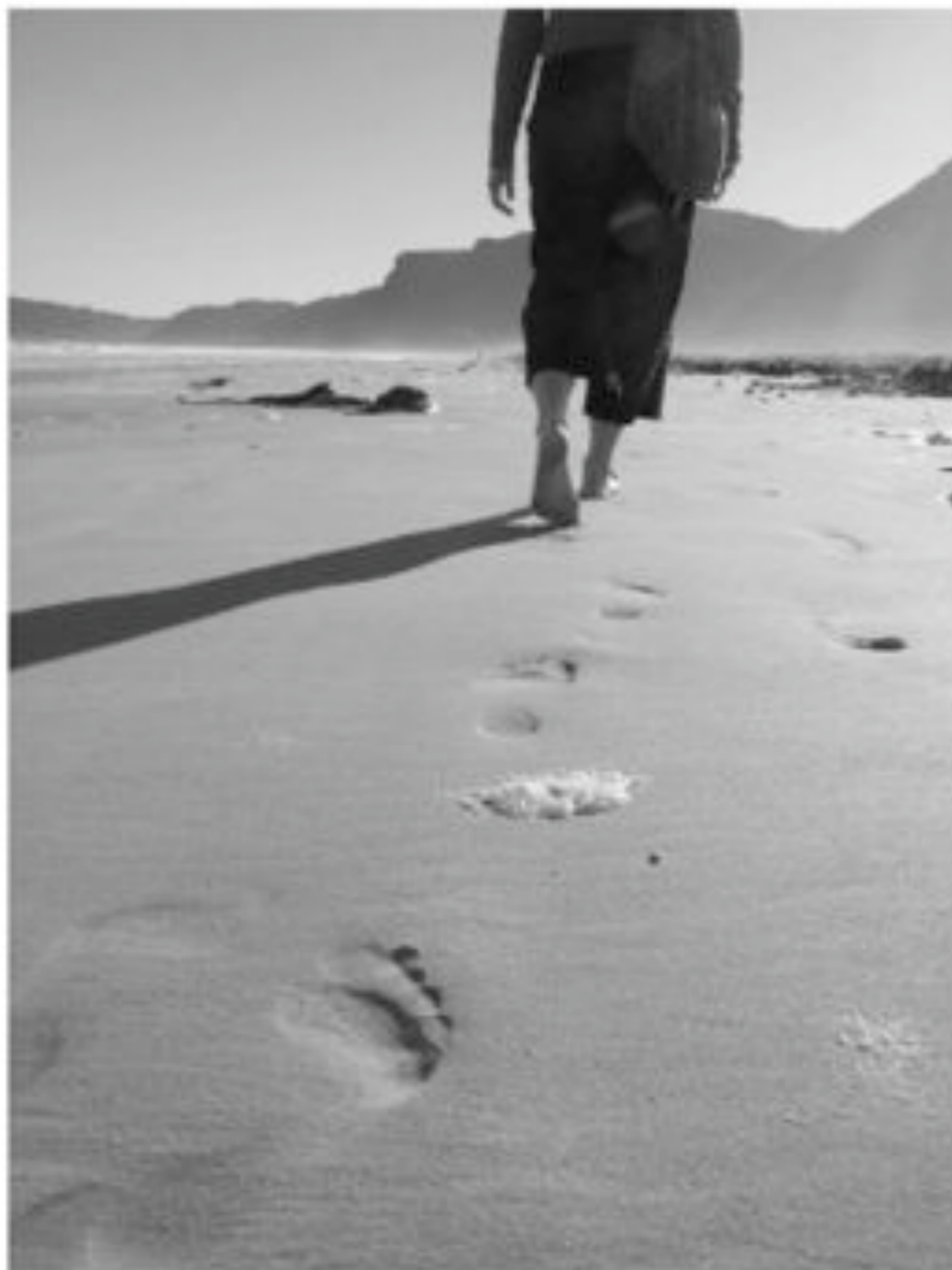
Why do people struggle with the notion of Chronic Sorrow?



- You may simply not experience it
- You may be using all your energies in managing life
- Staying positive might be your key coping strategy
- Other people might discourage you from expressing your grief
- You may not want to see your child as a “problem”

How do people cope with Chronic Sorrow?

- Acknowledge it and let yourself off the hook about it
- Identify the things help you and do them as often as you can. Acknowledge that others do things differently
- Get curious about how other people manage it. Talk about it with others in a similar situation
- Use your strengths



- Exercise
- Plan good distractions
- Use professionals
- Plan for the long haul – prioritise your own needs, your relationship and your family





What are the positives?

- Closer relationships
- Changed priorities
- Seeing yourself differently
- Greater appreciation of life and family
- The gift of your child

