infinite trust which they manifest in dying is astonishing, contrasted with the terror experienced by those not given the opportunity to do grief work.

In all cases of grief work there is something about the successful completion of the cycle that establishes a deeper trust in the infinite, whether this is expressed in terms of a reality greater than oneself, a feeling of well-being, or—as in a remark which is not uncommon—"I feel like God is inside me and all is well!"

LOSS OF THE BOTTLE

Another significant loss among most alcoholic persons is also overlooked—the loss of the bottle. When the alcoholic person discovers that for the rest of his life he can no longer depend upon alcohol to sedate or release his emotional feelings, the shock he experiences is unbelievable. He still has to work through the same old emotions of depression, anger, and guilt before he can resolve his grief. It is important to be aware of these dynamics every time the alcoholic person approaches a sobriety anniversary (or "birthday" in the terminology of Alcoholics Anonymous), for at that time he may face danger of regressing and getting drunk, because once again he may experience grief from loss of the bottle. For that reason, it is good to assign an alcoholic person approaching a "birthday" to a grief work group where he can once again review and experience all emotions resulting from the loss of the bottle.

The symptoms of abnormal grief are too numerous for complete listing here. However, close analysis of depression, hostility, and the like will often reveal that one or more of the six phases of grief work have been left unresolved. The sooner one begins his grief work, the better, for normally it takes three weeks before the client begins to accept the loss and move on to reconstruction. The longer the task is delayed, the more difficult and time consuming it is. Every alcoholism clinical program should be sensitive to the need for providing special modalities and groups to treat the alcoholic patient in an acute or chronic state of grief.

SUMMARY

Grief work is the process of passing through the successive stages of grief over some loss. The stages may be summarized as the loss itself, shock, depression, anger, guilt, and reconstruction. A person who is fixated at one stage or skips one without proper resolution must often be helped to recognize the situation and perform the omitted grief work in order to effectively adjust to his loss. Unresolved grief work has been found to be an important factor in the problems of at least one-fifth of the alcoholic persons treated at the Fort Logan Mental Health Center, Denver, Colo. Group therapy, art therapy, and psychodrama are among the modalities used in grief work at the center.