A Story Quilt of Loss, Growth, and Hope
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Background
The death of loved ones is traumatic and produces a profound sense of loss. In research, negative aspects of grief and loss are often the focus:
- pain and psychological or physical symptoms experienced by the bereaved (Gerrish, Dyck, & Marsch, 2009; Michael & Cooper, 2013).
Growing body of evidence after the loss many people grow in positive ways.
Post-traumatic growth
- persons transcend grief and develop beyond their pre-loss functioning.
- one important aspect is social support (Bray, 2013; Gerrish, Dyck, & Marsh, 2009)

Purpose
Make a quilt that represents loss and all its negative aspects, but beyond that, how one recovers and moves forward beyond grief and finds a life still worth living and enjoying. The quilt was inspired by a book, The Heart’s Journey (Pelikan, 2005).

Creative Process
Quilt’s creator is a nurse
- planned and produced the quilt as a way to process her losses
Social support
- friend, also a nurse, highlighted the quilt with embroidery
- demonstrates metaphorically, post-traumatic growth
Twelve panels that depict the heart’s journey
- from being whole before the loss, slowly breaking apart and being totally fractured after the loss
- flower seeds fill the broken-mending heart, bud, and bloom demonstrating post-traumatic growth as the heart heals.

Conclusions
The quilt reminds viewers of:
- the devastation of loss
- the struggle of the bereaved
- the hope of recovery
- the possibility that loss can be transcended, especially with the support of others.

Through the planning, dyeing of fabrics, piecing, quilting, and embroidery the creator worked through two significant losses; mother and then husband.

Future Directions
After much thought the creator wants the quilt to go to someone else who is working through a loss. Hopefully the quilt can be passed on to others when no longer needed.

Please let us know if you know anyone for whom the quilt could provide healing.