

The loss of illusions. How does the analyst mourn?

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As illustrated in the film *La Stanza del Figlio* (Moretti, 2001), painful disillusionment of the analyst may be caused by a real loss. This contribution will look at the disillusionment caused by a serious illness of the analyst and how it is dealt with. Psychoanalysts, like everyone else, face loss experiences. Our losses include not only deaths and divorces but also the conscious and unconscious loss of our romantic dreams, impossible expectations, illusions of freedom and power, illusions of security, the loss of our young self that thought it would always be wrinkle-free, invulnerable and immortal. Mourning over lost illusions in the analyst will be discussed. Psychoanalysis as a profession has to deal with painful disillusionment that it has to bear, think through and process. Disillusion in the analyst has to do with unrealistic goals, irrational rescue fantasies, early disillusionments in the life of the patient and difficult acceptance of illness and aging. This is illustrated with clinical vignettes.

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