

The Pain of Grief

Grief is a natural response to losing someone who mattered deeply. It is a reflection of love, and when someone has been a part of your daily life, your routines, or your sense of who you are, can be drastically affected. Their absence can feel overwhelming. This pain is not a sign of weakness - it is a sign that the relationship was meaningful.

Grief comes in waves; healing is not a straight line. You may feel steady one moment and overwhelmed the next. Anniversaries, songs, scents, or unexpected reminders can bring emotions to the surface. This doesn't mean you're "going backward." It means you're human. Common reactions to grief include:

Emotional Reactions:

- Anger
- Confusion
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Yearning
- Despair
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness or "brain fog"

Physical Reactions:

- Weight and appetite change
- Weakness and fatigue
- Rapid heartbeat
- Increased blood pressure
- Decrease in activity
- Self-neglect
- Sleep disturbance
- Decreased resistance to illness

Physical Reactions:

- Behavioral Reactions:
- Blaming others
- Apathetic
- Lack of interest in activities Preoccupied
- Crying
- Seeking solitude
- Seeking forgiveness
- Withdrawn from friends
- Detached from surroundings

Recognizing common grief reactions helps you understand your feelings are normal. Coping with them, however, can be challenging. Many local public and private (including church) support groups are available. Sometimes, simply having someone to talk to can ease emotional and physical stress. Grief becomes bearable when shared. Talking with supportive friends, family, or professionals can help you feel seen and understood. You don't need to have the "right words". You only need space to express what's in your heart.

Healing doesn't mean forgetting. Over time, the pain of grief changes. It may not disappear, but it becomes more manageable. People learn to carry their loss in a new way. Healing is about adapting, remembering, and finding meaning - not "getting over" someone you love.

Healing from grief rarely announces itself with a big moment. It's usually quieter, subtle, and easy to overlook unless someone points it out. What people often discover is that healing shows up not as "being over it", but as small shifts in how the loss fits into their life. Signs of healing can include:

- ❖ You can remember without being overwhelmed every time - the memories may still bring sadness, but they're no longer accompanied by the same level of shock or emotional collapse. You can talk with your loved one with more steadiness, and sometimes even warmth.
- ❖ The waves of grief become less intense - they still come, but the intervals between the hardest moments grow longer. When a wave does hit, it may not knock you down the way it once did. You recover more quickly.
- ❖ You start re-engaging with life. This doesn't mean "moving on"; it means you can laugh without guilt; make plans again; find yourself interested in things you once enjoyed; and can imagine a future, even if it looks different now. You start to feel more like yourself, your concentration improves, energy returns, and you feel grounded more often than not. Healing doesn't erase the pain - it integrates it. You can honor the person you lost while also allowing yourself to grow, connect, and live. Just give yourself time and grace.