

64 Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Grief

Whatsyourgrief.com

We think about grief a lot around here – we write about types of grief, grief theory, personal reflections, creative expression for coping with grief, practical ideas for managing grief, and on and on and on. But there are some days that all seems like a lot to take in. We think back to the basics. Not the theory stuff, not the ideas about how to cope — just the really basic things that people never tell you about grief.

So, with your help, that is what we have today — a quick and dirty list of the things we wish we had known about grief before we knew anything about grief. If it's in quotes, it is something one of our fabulous readers shared with us on Twitter or Facebook. If you finish this post and you're annoyed about all the things we forgot, leave a comment to keep the list going.

I wish someone had told me . . .

1. No matter how prepared you think you are for a death, you can never be fully prepared for the loss and the grief.
2. You can plan for death, but death does not always comply with our wishes or plans.
3. [“Stop avoiding and be present”](#).
4. “Dying is [not like you see on TV or in the movies](#). It is not peaceful or prepared. You may not have a spiritual or meaningful moment . . . It's too real”.
5. A hospital death is not always a bad death.
6. A home death/hospice death is not always a good death.
7. “There [will be pressure from others to move on](#), even minutes or hours after a death, and this can lead to regrets”.
8. “Death is not an emergency – there is always time to step back and take a moment to say goodbye”
9. Death and grief make people uncomfortable, so be prepared for awkward encounters.
10. You will plan the funeral while in a haze. If you aren't happy with the funeral you had, have another memorial service later.
11. [When people offer support, take them up on it](#).
12. People will bring you food because they don't know what else to do. Don't feel bad throwing it away.

13. [People will say stupid, hurtful things without even realizing it.](#)
14. People will tell you things that aren't true about your grief.
15. Death brings out the [best and the worst in families](#), so be prepared.
16. There is no such thing as closure.
17. There is [no timeline for grieving](#). You can't rush it. You will grieve, in some form, forever.
18. "There will always be regrets. No matter how much time you had, you'll always want more".
19. [Guilt is a normal part of grief.](#)
20. [Anger is normal part of grief.](#)
21. "The pain of a loss is a reflection of love, but you never regret loving as hard as you can".
22. Grief can make you [question your faith](#).
23. "[Grief doesn't come in 5 neat stages. Grief is messy and confusing](#)".
24. [Grief makes you feel like you are going crazy.](#)
25. Grief can make you question your life, your purpose, and your goals. And that isn't always a bad thing.
26. [We all grieve differently](#), which can create strain and confusion between family members and friends.
27. "However badly you think it is going to hurt, it is going to be a million times worse".
28. [You may find comfort in very unexpected places.](#)
29. "You should go somewhere to debrief after caregiving".
30. "The last 24 hours of their lives will replay in your mind".
31. [Trying to protect children from death and the emotions of grief isn't helpful.](#)
32. "It's sometimes necessary to seek out new ways to grieve on your own, find new guidance [if the people who are supposed to be supportive simply haven't learned how](#)".
33. "You grieve your past, present, and future with that person".

34. [Big life events and milestones will forever be bittersweet.](#)
35. Grief triggers are everywhere – you will see things that remind you of your loved one all over the place, and it may lead to [sudden outbursts of emotion](#).
36. “You lose yourself, your identity, meaning, purpose, values, your trust”.
37. [Holidays, anniversaries, and birthdays will be hard forever.](#)
38. People will tell you what you should and shouldn’t feel and how you should and shouldn’t grieve. Ignore them.
39. “The grief process is about not only mourning the loss, but getting to know yourself as a different person”.
40. There is no [normal when it comes to grieving](#).
41. [Sometimes it gets worse before it gets better.](#)
42. “It is [normal to feel numb](#) after it happens. The tears will come. They come in waves”.
43. Grief can make you feel selfish and entitled, and that’s okay (at least for a while).
44. [Meeting new people, who never knew the person who died, can be hard and sad.](#) But eventually it can be nice to “introduce” them through stories and photographs.
45. The practice of sending thank you notes after a funeral is a cruel and unusual tradition.
46. “People love to judge how you are doing. Watch out for those people”.
47. [You can’t compare grief or compare losses](#), though people will try.
48. [Any loss you grieve is a valid loss](#), though people will sometimes make you feel otherwise.
49. “Just because you feel pretty good one day it doesn’t mean you are cured of your grief”.
50. There are many days when you will [feel totally and completely alone](#), whether you are or not.
51. Grief can make you do stupid, crazy things. They may be what you need at the time, but you may regret them later. Cut yourself some slack.
52. Grief can make you a [stronger person than you were before](#).
53. Grief counseling doesn’t mean you’re crazy or weak.
54. It is okay to cry sometimes.

55. It is okay NOT to cry sometimes.

56. “Time does NOT heal all wounds”.

57. “Grief re-writes your address book”. [Sometimes the people you think will be there for you are not. People you never expect become your biggest supporters.](#)

58. “You don’t get over it, you just get used to it”.

59. It is okay to tell people when they are not being helpful.

60. [Watch your drinking– alcohol can quickly become an unhealthy friend.](#)

61. You will have to face your emotions eventually – you can avoid them for a while, but they will catch up with you in the end.

62. [Talking isn’t the only way to express and process emotions.](#)

63. You will never go back to being your “old self”. Grief changes you and you are never the same.

64. Nothing you do in the future will change your love for the person who died. Eventually, you will begin to enjoy life again, date again, have another child, seek new experiences, or whatever. None of these things will diminish your love for the person you lost.