



## *Natural Grief*



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### RECLAIMING GRIEF IN A SOCIETY OF DIAGNOSING + FIXING

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"EVERYONE SEEMS SO QUICK TO TRY AND  
DIAGNOIS MY GRIEF, BUT WHAT IF IT JUST IS MY  
LOVE TRYING TO LEARN WHERE TO GO?"

- A GREIVING HEART

Our society is filled with ideas and products that offer quick fixes or a diagnosis for what we are experiencing.

There is a psychological trick called, name it to tame it. It follows the idea that when our brains don't know what is going on or why something is happening to us, we are not able to help ourselves move through it. But if we are able to name what is happening, we can start to make sense of our experience and even create a plan to help ourselves through it. While naming something that is stressing our minds and/or bodies can be helpful, there is a fine line between naming something so we can cope with it and naming it as a way of pathologizing an

Experience we are in the midst of.

Pathologizing insinuates that something is wrong, unhealthy, or abnormal.

Let's pause for a moment and simply acknowledge that grief can come with waves of emotion, feelings of foggy grief brain, and even the somatic (physical) manifestations of that may arise - and after all of that (and more at times) there truly are times when grief can feel abnormal.

It's quite often that we hear worries such as, "Am I doing this right?" or "Can you help me figure out what's wrong with me?" When so much of the time, it is simply grief.

The difficult thing is that our society has set up such unrealistic expectations for those in the midst of grief.

If you are working - you may have around 3-5 days of bereavement leave. For many people, we are still feeling quite shocked and numb during those initial days, and find that our grief shows up more as a bit more time passes.

If we are showing waves of emotion that can accompany our grief after 6 months, we may hear friends and family, or even a medical professional ask if we need to start medication to get these waves "under control".

There is also that "magical" one year mark where many grieving individuals hear that they should be feeling better.

These and many more aspects of society are set up in a way that makes us feel like our grief is wrong, unhealthy, abnormal, and unnatural. If you've been feeling that way and couldn't exactly put your finger on it, you are not alone in this - and you are not imagining it.

The hard truth is: Grief is a universal experience. If you have cared about another being in your life, you will probably experience grief at some point. And while this is a universal experience, the difficult thing is that we all experience this journey of grief completely uniquely, so it can make it difficult for others to understand your experience or even support you in all of the ways you need.

None the less, We're here to tell you that grief is a natural part of the human experience. It's natural to feel exhausted, mentally foggy, emotionally raw, heavy-hearted, lost, and so much more. It's also natural to feel joy, happiness, gratitude, contentment, and peace.

It's a wide range, we know - and it may feel like emotional whiplash throughout your journey, but the important message is that **it is natural**.

There is no timeline for your grief. There are no five nice neat stages for you to follow (that's old news)!

There is only you, who truly can speak to your perfectly imperfect human experience of grief.

Some will ask about medication to help with their grief. We must say that taking prescribed medication is a completely personal choice between you and your physician. For some, medication can be a nice support in this journey. For others, they believe it will not aid them in the way they need.

The important note here is not to take the medication in hopes that grief will go away or be taken care of. We still need to do all of the good work, with or without the support of medication.

There are many diagnoses that can overlap with the feelings that grief may bring with it, such as depression and anxiety. There are also some diagnoses for grief such as, Complicated Grief or Prolonged Grief Disorder.

While there are many different views and opinions about these diagnoses, we ask you to check in with yourself and ask, "Is it helpful for me to name it (to tame it) or does it feel as though I am pathologizing my grief?"

Other things may be happening in our lives that can affect our grief journey, and that can be good to keep in mind, but grief - just grief - is a natural experience.

