

The 7 Things Nobody Tells You About Grief

From Wayne & Jamie Simms

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Live and Grieve™ is grounded in six peer-reviewed frameworks. Three theoretical frameworks structure the program arc. Three applied practice frameworks shape every session.

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01

Grief is not a set of stages you move through.

The five stages — denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance — were never designed to describe bereavement. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross developed them to describe the experience of people facing their own terminal illness. When applied to grief, they created a false map: that loss moves in a sequence, that acceptance is the destination, and that anything else is failure.

Contemporary grief research tells a different story. The Dual Process Model (Stroebe & Schut) shows that grief oscillates — between confronting the loss and attending to life. That oscillation is not avoidance. It is grief working correctly. There is no correct sequence. There is no finish line. There is only the ongoing work of carrying what you carry.

You are not doing it wrong.

02

There is no timeline — and anyone who gives you one is wrong.

"You should be over this by now." "It's been six months." "At some point you have to move on."

These sentences cause harm. Grief does not follow a schedule. It is not a problem with a solution. It is the natural response to love — and love does not stop mattering on a calendar.

Research on grief consistently shows that the intensity and duration of grief vary enormously from person to person, and that pressure to grieve faster often makes things harder, not easier. The question is never "when will this be over." The question is "how do I carry this as I keep living."

There is no wrong pace.

03

Your relationship with the person you lost does not have to end.

For decades, grief theory suggested that healthy grieving meant "letting go" — detaching from the person who died and redirecting that energy toward new relationships. Grief researchers eventually pushed back on this.

Continuing Bonds Theory (Klass, Silverman & Nickman) documented something that many bereaved people already knew: maintaining an ongoing relationship with someone who has died — through memory, ritual, conversation, and meaning — is not pathology. It is a normal, healthy part of love that outlasts life.

You do not have to stop talking to them. You do not have to put the photos away. You do not have to pretend the relationship is over. The goal is not to let go. The goal is to carry them differently.

04

Grief and life happen at the same time — not one after the other.

One of the most disorienting things about grief is that life keeps going. Work. Meals. Laughter. Plans. People sometimes feel guilty for having a good day, as if living is a betrayal of loving.

The Dual Process Model explains this clearly: grieving people naturally move back and forth between loss-oriented coping — sitting with the pain — and restoration-oriented coping — attending to the demands and even the pleasures of daily life. Both are necessary. Neither is a sign that you are grieving incorrectly.

Having a good day is not moving on. It is how grief works. You carry it. You also live. Those two things happen together.

05

Isolation makes grief harder — community makes it survivable.

Grief is one of the most universal human experiences, and one of the most isolating. People often withdraw — from friends, from family, from places that carry memory — because being around others requires energy they do not have, or because others do not know what to say, or because they feel that no one truly understands.

But research is consistent: structured community support improves grief outcomes. Not because others can take the pain away, but because being witnessed — by people who are carrying something similar, in a structured setting where grief is allowed to exist — changes what it feels like to carry it.

You were not designed to grieve alone. Finding your people does not mean finding people who are not grieving. It means finding people who understand what you are carrying.

06

What you do in grief matters more than how long it has been.

Worden's Tasks of Mourning reframed grief as active work — not something that happens to you, but something you do. Accepting the reality of the loss. Processing the pain. Adjusting to a changed world. Finding ways to maintain a connection while also building a new life.

These are not stages that arrive in sequence. They are tasks — and you return to them, in different forms, across years. What matters is not how long it has been since you lost someone. What matters is whether you have space to do the work.

Structured grief support creates that space. It does not speed up grief. It creates the conditions for grief to do what it needs to do.

07

You don't need a therapist to find support — you need the right structure.

Grief is not a mental illness. It is a human experience. And while therapy can be valuable — especially when grief becomes complicated or intersects with other mental health needs — most people navigating loss do not need a clinical diagnosis or a co-pay to access meaningful support.

What they need is structure. A facilitator who knows how to hold space. A community of people carrying similar things. A program built on what research actually says about how grief moves.

Live and Grieve™ is built on six peer-reviewed frameworks. Three theoretical frameworks structure the program arc. Three applied practice frameworks shape every session. It is facilitated by trained lay people — no clinical license required to deliver. Because grief belongs to everyone, and support should too.

No group near you?

The Solo Companion brings the full Live and Grieve™ Book 1 experience to your phone. The same six-framework foundation. The same 13-week structure. No group required.

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