

Grief, Mourning, and Explosive Emotions

Grief is everything you think and feel inside of you after a loss. It's all your thoughts and emotions, which change from day-to-day. Grief is normal and natural.

Mourning is when you express those thoughts and feelings outside of yourself. Talking about your loss experience is mourning. So are crying, journaling, sharing online, attending a support group, and seeing a counselor. Essentially, your behaviors related to your grief are your mourning.

The explosive emotions you feel inside you are part of your grief. But they are not all of your grief. You probably feel other emotions about the loss, as well, such as sadness and fear.

Rather than fearing explosive emotions, healing comes from learning to understand them, make room for them, and express them in restorative ways. This is mourning—and mourning is how grief begins to soften. Over time, it helps you carry your loss differently, integrating it into your life while easing the intensity of your emotional pain.

The Physiology of Explosive Emotions: Stop reading for a moment and see if you can conjure the explosive emotion that's been strongest for you lately. Search for it inside you and stir it up with your thoughts. What does it feel like in your body? Where do you feel it? What are the qualities of the feeling? If you were to describe the bodily sensation to a friend, what would you say?

Just as you will always feel grief over this loss, you may well continue to feel some anger. Anger can't be completely banished any more than grief can. After all, your anger is part of your grief. Anger is still a normal human emotion and you shouldn't suppress your feelings or deny yourself the full range of emotional responses. But through intentional mourning, your healed anger and grief can become fully integrated parts of your life story. So, the goal moving forward isn't to be anger-free but instead anger-healthy.

I encourage you to let the people closest to you know that you're struggling with anger and that you need their support. As you explore your anger and grow to better understand it, share your new insights with them. Openness and honesty will help you heal and them empathize.

Excerpted from [The Anger of Grief – How to Understand, Embrace, and Restoratively Express Explosive Emotions After A Loss](#) by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D. Reprinted with permission.

