

Grief is such a weird thing. It's the empty halls where you once heard their footsteps. The laugh when a joke is told that is missing. It's the birthday cards full of confetti that you no longer get. It's all the firsts: the first Christmas they're gone, the holidays, the birthdays, anniversaries, the ordinary days. It's the echoes that last. It's the rainbow after the rain, the birds singing in the morning, the baby that giggles, and the quiet moments that remind you of their absence. Some days, everything reminds you, and other days, it's just a bittersweet memory.

Learning to become someone that they no longer know. While still trying to enjoy every moment you get. It's the days when you crave their presence, but you know you can't get it. It's the video you want to send, but they will never get. It's the days when you just want to text them and can't. It's the stranger's laugh that almost sounds familiar. The smell of them that passes in the grocery store. It's the small butterfly that shows up just when you're thinking of them. It's the bumper sticker in the gas station that you would totally buy if they were still here. It's the small gift they bought you that seemed insignificant then, but is now the most important gift you've ever received.

No one prepares you to lose someone who has had such an impact on your life. The advice they gave you still echoes in your head. The times they showed up when you desperately needed them to. It's the hard life lesson taught by a cookie and conversation. It's the way they used to be able to calm you down without words. It's the you that only they knew. It's the disagreements you faced that are now faded away. The things that seemed big then are now the least of your concerns. With the loss of someone close it's a heaviness on your chest that never truly goes away. The things you wished you said, they will never hear. The things you wanted to do together, you have to do without them. The things they said and did are now merely echoes.

We grieve because all that love we poured into that person now has nowhere to go. We yearn for them even when we don't notice. We see their face in the stranger. We wish for just one more day, one more conversation, and one last hug, but those never come. You can not rewind time, so instead live in the moment. Love deeply, laugh often, and spend time with those most important to you before all of your love turns into echoes.

Grief is something we all have in common at some point. Be kind to the stranger who seems to be down, the one who gets angry at the smallest inconvenience, and the one who goes out of their way to put a smile on your face. You never know what that person is going through. Kindness is free. Leave a positive imprint on someone's life. Maybe, just maybe, the echo of your love will push them forward.