



# When Grief Doesn't Get Better

Most people experience some of the following after a death. However, there should be forward movement and the symptoms should lessen with time. If they do not, you may want to seek help processing your grief. Processed grief can be a catalyst for growth.

Complicated grief is a chronic, heightened state of mourning. Its symptoms can include:

- Extreme focus on the loss and reminders of the loved one
- Intense and unrelenting longing or pining for the deceased that does not lessen with time
- Problems accepting the death
- Numbness or detachment
- Preoccupation with your sorrow
- Bitterness about your loss
- Inability to enjoy life
- Depression or deep sadness
- Trouble carrying out normal routines
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Feeling that life holds no meaning or purpose
- Irritability or agitation
- Lack of trust in God, others and/or the world
- May create shrines of the deceased
- Constantly look at their pictures, or talk about them but it brings more pain than joy
- May appear to be addicted to the memories of the deceased. Don't permit space in their lives for anything else but their memories of the lost loved one.
- Keep the yearning process alive through their habits
- Intense, frequent and sustained waves of painful emotion that are not lessening with time
- Preoccupation with memories of the deceased and find it difficult to recall past and future events that do not include the deceased loved one
- May appear that other memories that do not include the deceased are not recalled
- Only focus on significant past life events in which the deceased was alive
- Remember the past and imagine the future through a distressed yearning for the deceased
- Hopelessness about the future
- Thoughts about the future are centered on what life would be like if the deceased loved one was still with them

**The Big Three** to watch for the most:

- "Everything is missing" vs a "piece of me is missing"
- Lack of life focus, interests, goals, pleasure
- Life is dominated by yearning