



LOSS OF A SIBLING

*Understanding the Grief of Losing a Brother
or Sister*

The death of a brother or sister can change a life in ways that are difficult to put into words. A sibling may share your earliest memories, family history, traditions, and the story of who you were growing up. Whether your relationship was close, complicated, distant, or changed over time, the loss can leave a deeply personal absence.

THE UNIQUE GRIEF OF LOSING A SIBLING

Sibling grief is sometimes overlooked as attention turns toward parents, a spouse, or children. Yet a sibling is grieving too. You may mourn the person who died, your shared past, their place in the family, and future moments you expected to share. Your grief does not have to look like anyone else's to matter.

WHAT YOU MAY NOTICE

- A strong longing to call, text, see, or share ordinary news with your sibling.
- Feeling responsible for supporting your parents or family while your own grief receives less attention.
- Memories, family gatherings, birthdays, holidays, songs, photographs, or childhood places bringing grief close again.

GENTLE REMINDER

Your sibling was part of your story. Their death does not make that relationship less important, and there is no timetable for learning to live with their absence.

GENTLE WAYS TO CARE FOR YOURSELF

Give yourself permission to acknowledge your own loss. Speak your sibling's name and share stories with people who can listen without trying to fix your grief. You might keep photographs nearby, write down memories, continue a tradition, visit a meaningful place, or create a personal way to honor your sibling. On difficult days, simple care - rest, food, fresh air, quiet, and supportive company - can be enough.

WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY HELP

Additional support may help when grief feels persistently overwhelming, isolating, or makes everyday responsibilities difficult to manage. A grief support group, counselor, trusted faith leader, physician, or other supportive professional can offer another place for your grief to be heard. If you are in immediate danger or having thoughts of harming yourself, seek emergency help right away; in the United States, call or text 988.





A DEEPER LOOK

There is no single sibling relationship. Some brothers and sisters are lifelong best friends; others love one another through distance, conflict, estrangement, competition, or years of change. Death can bring tenderness and gratitude alongside anger, regret, guilt, relief, or unfinished questions. Mixed feelings do not erase the relationship. They are part of grieving the relationship as it truly was.

THE SIBLING BOND

- Shared history can make sibling loss feel like losing a witness to your own life - someone who remembers the family stories, people, places, and experiences that helped shape you.
- Family roles may shift after the death. You may become the only surviving sibling, feel more responsible for a parent, or notice that family gatherings and traditions feel very different.
- As life continues, your relationship with your sibling can remain meaningful through memories, stories, values, traditions, photographs, acts of remembrance, and the ways their life continues to influence yours.

A THOUGHT TO CARRY WITH YOU

Your sibling will always be part of your story - held in your memories, carried in your heart, and remembered in the life you continue to live.

A MOMENT FOR REFLECTION

What memory, quality, story, or part of your relationship with your sibling would you like to hold close today?

CARRYING THE BOND FORWARD

Moving forward does not require leaving your sibling behind. Over time, you may discover your own ways of carrying the relationship with you - through the stories you tell, the qualities you admired, the traditions you preserve, or simply the private place your sibling continues to hold in your heart. Grief may change, but the significance of the relationship remains part of your story.

With heartfelt compassion,
Linda Findlay
Founder, Mourning Discoveries

