

HELP WITH DEALING
WITH THE LOSS OF A

Sibling

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When a sibling dies, so does a large chapter in a person's life that the sibling was a part of. Siblings share a lifetime of memories and experiences. When one sibling dies, it is the end of a chapter. The sibling may be the only person who knew them in their childhood. They may have been the only person left after their parents had died. Siblings share a bond like no other relationship. What was lost is in all the ways that they shared their lives!

Oftentimes, a sibling predeceases a parent. The remaining siblings can feel like they need to be strong for the parent(s). They may avoid talking about the lost sibling with the surviving parent(s).

It is not uncommon for grieving siblings to feel resentful toward the parent. It can feel like their grief is not as bad, or that it does not matter as much. None of this is based on fact. Each of our grief experiences is just as painful as another's grief experience. Comparing and feeling like your grief does not matter, for whatever reason, is untrue. Your grief matters. It will always matter. Thinking otherwise is emotionally not useful.

Sometimes people might say you have to be strong. Grief and grieving are not a matter of strength. It has nothing to do with your background or past experiences, status in life, professional knowledge, or individual coping skills. Grief is just that, GRIEF. It hurts, it is painful, and it is hard to deal with. People who are grieving need support and understanding. Even though it is hard for people who have not had a similar loss to truly understand, we can help others by sharing our grief and communicating what we need, even when we might not know exactly what it is that we need.

Communicating with family and friends will lessen the incidence of people assuming that you are okay. The less we say, the less others will say—which is the easy way out for others! It leads to pushing grief inwards. It can leave you feeling that your loved one is not worth talking about when all you want to do is talk about them.

It will never be all right that your sibling died. Although you are grateful for the time that you shared, whether it was many years or few, you always want more time. People say all kinds of things that are not helpful. Sometimes what they say is outright hurtful or rude. Remember this, people say things because they do not know what to say. Sometimes, they say the wrong things for the same reason. I can tell you that people do this not because they do not care, they say or do not say things because they do not understand. Second to that, it is just easier not to say anything at all.

Taking care of yourself includes allowing yourself to share your grief journey in whatever way you can. Talk to those who will listen, join a support group, or write about your thoughts and feelings. Leaning into your grief and giving it proper attention will help you in the long run.