



SUPPORTING YOUR PARENTS WHILE YOU ARE GRIEVING TOO

Caring for Your Parents While Honoring Your Own Grief

When a sibling dies, you may find yourself grieving your brother or sister while also watching your parents endure the death of their child. Seeing their pain can be heartbreaking. You may feel a strong need to protect them, stay close, handle practical responsibilities, or become the person who keeps the family functioning.

THE UNIQUE GRIEF OF LOSING A SIBLING

Supporting your parents can be an expression of love, but it does not mean your own grief should disappear into theirs. You have lost someone important too. You are both a son or daughter concerned about your parents and a grieving sibling trying to understand life without your brother or sister.

WHEN YOU FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR PARENTS

- A strong longing to call, text, see, or share ordinary news with your sibling.
- It is common to become highly aware of how your parents are coping. You may check on them frequently, worry when they are alone, listen when they need to talk, help with appointments or belongings, or feel responsible for keeping them connected to everyday life.
- There is a difference between offering loving support and believing you must take away their grief. You cannot make this loss painless for your parents, just as they cannot make it painless for you. Sometimes the most meaningful support is simply being present without trying to fix what cannot be fixed.

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

When much of the family's attention is understandably focused on grieving parents, surviving siblings can quietly put their own needs aside. You may tell yourself that your parents have it worse, that you need to be strong, or that there will be time for your grief later.

WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY HELP

Grief does not need to be ranked. Your parents' relationship with your sibling was different from yours. Their grief deserves care, and so does yours. Giving yourself time to cry, talk, rest, remember, or seek support is not taking anything away from them.





A DEEPER LOOK

You are allowed to have limits. There may be days when you cannot answer every phone call, manage every responsibility, or have another difficult conversation. A gentle boundary might sound like, “I love you, and I need a little time to rest. I will call you tomorrow.”

THE SIBLING BOND

- Boundaries are not abandonment. They can help you remain connected without becoming emotionally or physically depleted. Whenever possible, share responsibilities with other family members, friends, faith communities, or trusted sources of support.
- Parents may grieve very differently from one another and differently from you. One parent may want to talk constantly while another becomes quiet. One may keep belongings exactly as they were while another needs change. Your own way of grieving may look different from both.
- Different grief responses do not necessarily mean anyone loved your sibling more or less. Try to make room for those differences without expecting everyone in the family to need the same things at the same time.

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

Remembering your sibling together can sometimes create moments of connection. You might share stories, look at photographs, cook a favorite meal, mark a birthday, or simply say their name. At other times, your parents may not want to talk, or you may not have the emotional energy to do so.

With heartfelt compassion,
Linda Findlay
Founder, Mourning Discoveries

