

REGRET & GUILT

You might feel that you could have had more patience, spent more time, given more care, had more concern, done things differently, or made different decisions or different choices.

Whatever your thoughts of regret or guilt may be, know that these responses are a common part of the grief experience and, for some, are even necessary. This isn't a bad thing.

Some people will tell you not to think like that, and not to put yourself through that. Yet we need to define all the ways that we feel **guilty**.

It is healthy to define our regrets.

The process of doing this is painful. It's hard for others to witness. Some might feel you're overreacting.

When you're grieving, there is no such thing as overreacting.

Your feelings are very powerful. You need to express them. Doing so will help you examine your circumstances and come to a resolution in your own time.

One widow said, "At one point, I was so angry that I gathered an old set of dishes my mother-in-law had given me many years earlier. I went out to my firepit in the yard and broke every single dish into the pit that night." She went on to say she hadn't had a very healthy relationship with her mother-in-law, for she had caused great stress in the widow's marriage. "Breaking those dishes brought me such relief and satisfaction."

A bereaved husband said, "I wish I had taken my wife on that trip she had always talked about. I just never wanted to spend the money. I feel so awful, maybe I would feel better if I had."

A grieving son said, "After I married and moved to a nearby town, I did not spend too much time with my parents. I was so busy with my own life. When Dad died, I held up okay, staying strong for my mom. Three weeks later, Mom died suddenly. I wish I had made a better effort to spend time with both of them." He further said, "Having to take care of their final affairs and settling their estate, I have spent more time in their home since their death than I had in the previous four years."

A bereaved parent said, "My daughter had been treated for what we thought was an occasional dizzy spell. She died three months later following brain surgery to remove a cancerous tumor. I can't help but think that the doctors missed something. I constantly think about obtaining all her medical records in hopes of finding something that would justify pursuing legal action."

This parent was hurting so badly, she needed a better reason for her daughter's death. She believed there must be something more that caused her daughter to die.

Although typically not the fault of anyone or anything, her concerns about her daughter's death were perfectly legitimate. Often times there are no answers to be found, but being allowed to explore the possibility of finding one is a part of the grief journey for some.

Sometimes people feel as though their loved one had not received proper medical care. You might have questions surrounding your loved one's death that you feel may not have been addressed sufficiently or with the right person.

Communicate your concerns and share your questions with those who had been involved with your loved one's care. Even if you already asked the question, it is okay to ask it again. Communicating with your loved one's care-giver(s) is vital in order to obtain whatever information will help you resolve lingering concerns.