



WHY SIBLING GRIEF IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED

Understanding the Often-Unseen Loss of a Brother or Sister

The death of a sibling can be a profound loss, yet sibling grief is sometimes given less attention than the grief of a spouse, parent, or child. Friends and extended family may focus first on surviving parents, a spouse, or children of the person who died. In that concern, the brother or sister who is grieving can unintentionally become the person expected to help everyone else.

THE UNIQUE GRIEF OF LOSING A SIBLING

This can leave a surviving sibling feeling as though the depth of the loss is not fully seen. A sibling may have shared childhood, family traditions, private jokes, difficult seasons, milestones, and decades of memories. Losing that person can mean losing someone who carried a unique part of your history.

WHEN ATTENTION TURNS TO OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

- A strong longing to call, text, see, or share ordinary news with your sibling.
- After a sibling dies, people may ask, “How are your parents doing?” or “How is their spouse?” Those are caring questions, but they can also reinforce the feeling that your own grief is secondary. You may find yourself comforting others, handling family responsibilities, or trying to remain strong while privately carrying your own pain.
- Your grief does not become less important because other people are grieving too. More than one person can experience a significant loss within the same family, and each relationship deserves to be acknowledged on its own terms.

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

Siblings often know versions of one another that no one else does. You may share memories of the home you grew up in, family celebrations, parents when they were younger, childhood adventures, disagreements, secrets, and ordinary moments that became part of your shared story.





WHEN MORE SUPPORT MAY HELP

When a sibling dies, some of those memories may suddenly feel as though they belong to you alone. There may be no one else who remembers an event exactly as you do. This can create a particular kind of loneliness that is difficult to explain to people outside the sibling relationship.

A DEEPER LOOK

It can help to name what you have lost rather than minimizing it. Talk with someone who can listen without comparing your grief to another family member's. Write about your sibling, say their name, revisit photographs when it feels right, or record stories you do not want to lose.

THE SIBLING BOND

- You are allowed to need support even when your family needs you. Making space for your own grief is not taking attention away from anyone else. It is recognizing that you, too, had an important relationship with the person who died.
- Not every sibling relationship was close or easy. Estrangement, rivalry, old hurts, periods of distance, or unresolved conversations can make grief especially confusing. You may grieve the person who died while also grieving what you wished the relationship could have been.
- Mixed feelings do not make the loss less meaningful. Grief can hold love, anger, regret, relief, tenderness, disappointment, and longing at the same time. You do not have to rewrite the relationship in order to mourn it.

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

A sibling's death can also change how you see yourself within your family. You may suddenly be the oldest child, the youngest, the only surviving sibling, or the person others now depend on differently. Family traditions and gatherings may feel unfamiliar because someone who helped define your place in the family is missing.

With heartfelt compassion,
Linda Findlay
Founder, Mourning Discoveries

