



It's Still Okay to Cry

Along the way, we may discover that we are living with a sense of grief for which we have not made space. This may stem from having a child struggling with substances or from other life experiences. Sometimes, we shut down our emotions in order to hold our lives together. This avoidance doesn't work forever. Strong emotions will eventually come through. Even if we don't express our feelings, our bodies will – through high blood pressure, stomach aches, chronic pain and headaches to name a few. You may have noticed some of these physical symptoms in yourself and may also have noticed yourself avoiding difficult emotions.

In each case, the truth remains the same: avoiding our grief means we continue to suffer, while damaging our bodies and relationships over time. Grief is meant to slow us down. It asks us to take time to look after ourselves, and for those we love to do the same. If we don't tune into it, we miss out on an opportunity to show our loved ones that we need support and care. We may want to shut out our pain to take care of others – but ironically, if we all ignore our grief, it ends up keeping us apart.

If you are someone who has pushed grief away, think about finding ways to feel it. Remember the things you thought were certain, which may have been taken away. Sit with the changes you have had to make, and the changes that you had no control over.

As you do this, you may notice yourself shifting towards anger or looking for someone to blame. There is space for these feelings as well. But for now, try to bring yourself back to the sadness. How can you use it to connect with the people around you?

Really slow down and listen, if you can. Notice your response to another human's suffering. If you feel judgement, or a desire to 'fix the problem,' try to set these reactions aside. Explore what it is like to simply be present and share another person's pain. That moment of connection may help them move through another day and help you remain united with those around you.

None of us knows what the future holds. It's okay to acknowledge our pain and welcome our tears.

Material adapted from: <https://cmcffc.org/article/its-still-okay-to-cry>

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