

EXPLORING BEYOND DIVORCE

Coaching Guide • Journey 06 of 12

Understanding the Grieving Process of Divorce

Grief is not a problem to be solved. It is a journey to be walked.

About This Journey

Grief after divorce can leave you feeling numb, overwhelmed, or disconnected from daily life. This Journey explores what grief can feel like, five common responses to loss, and ways to care for yourself with awareness and compassion.

What Is Grieving?

Grief is the natural reaction to loss. It is both a universal and a deeply personal experience. No two people grieve in exactly the same way, and the same person may grieve different losses differently.

An Important Reality

Grief can bring intense emotions, numbness, and difficulty managing everyday tasks. These experiences deserve care and support. If you are struggling to cope, consider reaching out to someone you trust or a licensed mental health professional.

You may not be able to choose when grief appears, but you can choose how to care for yourself and where to seek support.

Five Common Responses to Grief

You may recognize some of these responses, but you do not have to experience all five. They can overlap, return, or appear in any order. These descriptions are a way to understand some experiences of grief, not a checklist or timetable for healing.

Denial and Disbelief

- You may feel shocked, numb, or find it difficult to believe the relationship has ended
- Disbelief can give you time to absorb a painful change
- The reality of the loss may feel clear at some times and distant at others
- You may need time, information, and support as you take in what has changed
- Feeling this way does not mean you are weak or grieving incorrectly

Anger

- Anger may arise alongside sadness, disbelief, or other feelings about what has changed
- Anger may reflect hurt, frustration, helplessness, or a sense of unfairness
- You may notice anger toward your former partner, others, yourself, or the situation
- Noticing anger can help you choose how to express it without harming yourself or others
- You can acknowledge anger without judging yourself for having the feeling

Bargaining

- A need to regain control in the face of helplessness
- "If only I had sought counseling sooner..."
- "If only I had tried harder to be a better partner..."
- May involve private bargaining with God or a higher power
- These thoughts can reflect a wish to change what happened or regain a sense of control

Sadness and Low Mood

- Grief can include sadness, low energy, and difficulty concentrating
- You may miss the relationship while also worrying about practical changes in daily life
- Rest, practical help, and a supportive person to talk with may be useful
- Depression can also occur alongside grief
- If these feelings persist, intensify, or make daily life difficult, consider speaking with a licensed mental health professional

Acceptance

- Acceptance can mean gradually acknowledging what has changed and finding ways to live with that reality
- It does not mean approving of what happened or feeling happy about it
- Acceptance can coexist with sadness, anger, or longing
- You may begin making choices that reflect your present needs and circumstances
- You can take steps toward your future while still grieving what you have lost

Making Room for Your Own Experience

Remember This

You do not need to identify with every response described here. Your feelings may change from day to day or return unexpectedly. Notice what you are experiencing and what you need, without measuring your progress against someone else's experience.

Reflection Questions

These questions invite honest self-reflection about your own grieving journey.

1. Which responses to grief feel familiar right now, and what support would help you?

2. When do you notice your grief most strongly? Are there moments when it feels less intense?

3. Are there feelings that seem to return often? What helps you care for yourself when they do?

4. What has been most difficult about grieving this relationship, and what kind of support might help?

5. What might acknowledging the changes in your life look like for you, without expecting yourself to stop grieving?

A Closing Thought

Give yourself permission to grieve at a manageable pace. You can make room for difficult feelings while also taking breaks, caring for everyday needs, and accepting support.

"Coping with loss is ultimately a deeply personal and singular experience. But others can be there for you — and help comfort you through this process."