

Grief and How to Make Sense of It

By Katherine Gallagher

Someone recently asked how I as an autistic cope and work through grief. Grief for me is one of the worst emotions. Consistency and routine are what works for me. And having something pulled out from under me as in losing a pet or another person, is as close to the complete opposite of an autistic's frame of mind. Some of us may be better than others at managing or handling grief, but for me, the most helpful thing is to become involved in my job or whatever it is I am involved with at that time that keeps me mentally busy.

For me staying busy allows me to be in the now. I also feel a huge sense of accomplishment from this. It is through my job and commitments which allows me to handle grief best. You may find that doing whatever it is you are good at gives you a sense of accomplishment and keeps your mind off of the horrible loss and sadness that comes with grief. The key is to find whatever that thing is. Whether it is a job, your family, or something else. Not knowing this can sometimes make us feel completely trapped in grief. Sometimes reminders that people give us such as "I am sorry for your loss" may be helpful to remind us they are there. But sometimes, for me, it just tragically reminds me too much and I overemphasize again what I have lost instead of the good things I have in my life now.

You can compare it in a way to covid. Many people may feel a sense of loss from things they enjoyed before covid and have lost those things now due to social distancing. But if they look at how covid has changed things more positively they may not feel so overburdened by their sense of loss. Loss and grief are very difficult. Even more difficult, is for someone whose livelihood is centred on consistency and routine.

It is also about choice. If you choose to over-focus on what you have lost instead of allowing others to lift you towards feeling better, then you are in a way choosing to stay stuck in that state. Whether or not you are aware that you do this to yourself. Thinking about how you have some choice in how you reflect upon your grief and then encouraging yourself to do more positive actions is worth it. All of these things are common-sense steps. At the same time, I remember that during those times when I felt so much grief and sadness, common sense did not always kick in until much later on.

About the Author

I created this [Website](#) to express my unique autism perceptions. I share my insights and resources here as a person with lived experience. I encourage you to read my [About Me](#) and [Portfolio](#) pages. Or the [What is Autism](#) page for a more in-depth definition.

Autism is very unique and complex. Each person experiences autism differently. My opinions and information are expressions about myself and my experiences. Perception means the ability to see things. It is the ability to become aware of something through the senses. Autism has given me a unique reality and open mind. I believe it is important for others to have their own unique perceptions as individuals on the autism spectrum.

Visit Katherine's Website at <https://spectrumexpressions.news.blog/>

