



# What No One Tells You About Grieving While You're Still a Caregiver

There's a kind of grief that happens in the quiet moments between medication reminders and doctor appointments. It's the grief you feel when your person looks right through you, or when they ask for their mother who died twenty years ago, or when you realize they can no longer remember your name. This grief doesn't have a name in everyday conversation, but it's real, it's heavy, and it's happening to you right now.

You're not just caring for someone you love—you're mourning them while they're still here. And somehow, no one prepared you for this part.

## What No One Tells You

### You're allowed to grieve someone who's still alive.

This isn't giving up or being dramatic. When dementia takes pieces of your person away—their personality, their memories, their ability to connect with you—those losses deserve to be mourned. Your grief is valid, even if your person is sitting right there.

### Guilt will try to crash the party, but it's not invited.

You'll feel guilty for missing who they used to be, for wanting a break, for being frustrated, for having moments of joy. Here's the truth: feeling all of these things doesn't make you selfish or ungrateful. It makes you human.

### You can love and grieve at the same time.

These feelings aren't opposites—they can exist in the same moment, in the same heart. You can treasure the person they still are while mourning the person they used to be. You can find joy in small connections while also feeling sad about everything that's changed.

### You'll grieve in layers, not all at once.

Some days you'll cry over the way they used to laugh at your jokes. Other days it'll hit you that they can't remember your wedding day. Each loss comes with its own wave of grief, and there's no timeline for working through them all.

### Your grief might look different than you expect.

Maybe you don't cry much, but you feel exhausted all the time. Maybe you find yourself snapping at people, or you've lost interest in things you used to enjoy. Grief doesn't follow a neat path, and yours doesn't have to look like anyone else's.

### People won't always understand, and that's okay.

Friends might say things like "at least they're still with you" or "you should be grateful for the time you have." They mean well, but they don't get it. Your grief is about the relationship you've lost, the conversations you can't have, the future you planned together that's disappearing.

## You're Not Broken

If you're reading this and thinking, "Finally, someone gets it," you're not alone. Thousands of caregivers are walking this same difficult path, feeling these same complicated emotions. There's nothing wrong with you for grieving while you're still giving everything you have to care for someone.

This is hard work—maybe the hardest thing you'll ever do. And it's okay to ask for help. Whether that's joining a support group, talking to a counselor, or just calling a friend who listens without trying to fix everything, you deserve support too.

Give yourself permission to feel whatever comes up. Permission to take breaks. Permission to be angry sometimes, or sad, or overwhelmed. Permission to grieve the person you're losing, even while you're still caring for the person who remains.

## A Light in the Dark

Right now, you're living in a space between what was and what will be. It's an uncomfortable, painful place to exist. But you're not stuck there forever, and you're not walking through it alone.

Every day you show up for your person, you're doing something extraordinary. Every moment of patience, every gentle word, every small act of love—it all matters. The grief you're carrying is proof of how deeply you've loved, and that love doesn't disappear just because everything else is changing.

You're stronger than you know, more resilient than you feel, and more loved than you realize. And when the hardest days come, remember this: you're not just surviving something impossible. You're loving through it. And that's the most human, most beautiful thing you can do.

*Take it one day at a time. Take it one moment at a time. You can do hard things.*