

## Grief After Narcissistic Abuse

Whether the narcissist who abused you was a parent, sibling, spouse or someone else, you are going to grieve. In this video, we'll assume the narcissist is your mother, since that is the experience most of my readers have.

The grief process following narcissistic abuse is much like grieving someone you love. Some people say there are 7 stages to grief, & you can experience them all after narcissistic abuse.

- It usually starts with disbelief. You first start to learn about Narcissistic Personality Disorder. It boggles your mind a person can actually be so cold, calculating & cruel, but especially to their own child. It's shocking anyone can behave this way. You don't want to accept it. And, it's incredibly hard to accept because your parent instilled the belief in you that you are the problem, not your parent.
- From disbelief, you may move into pain & guilt. This happens when you start seeing that things really were bad, & it hurts! You also may feel guilty if you moved away from your narcissistic parents & left your younger siblings behind.
- After pain & guilt often come anger. You begin to feel anger or even rage at your narcissistic mother for the awful things she did to you. You may think things like "How dare she!" when you think about the awful things done to you.
- Depression & loneliness often follow anger. You start feeling sorry for yourself because you realize you went through a lot of terrible things. You may feel robbed of many things like a normal childhood or good parents. It also can feel like no one understands your suffering & you're all alone. You feel as if your heart is breaking. This stage often takes the longest to pass through. And remember, there is nothing wrong with feeling sorry for yourself. You've been through a lot. Feeling compassion for yourself is a good thing to do! You'd feel it for someone else if they experienced what you had, so why not feel it for yourself as well?
- Eventually though, you move into the next stage which is moving on. The depression & loneliness start to lift. You begin to feel a bit better.
- You also move into a healing place. This is when you start looking for things to help you heal, such as therapy, self-help books, support groups or talking to safe friends about your experiences.
- Finally, you move into the final stage of grief—acceptance. This is the point where you can say things like "My mother abused me" or "My mother didn't love me" without shame or anger. Naturally they will make you feel some sadness, but the sadness won't be overwhelming.

Going through these stages isn't a simple process. You may bounce back & forth between a few stages or skip a stage. That's normal. Grief is complicated & everyone does it differently.

You also are probably going to have to go through grief a few times. It's rarely a one time thing. I thought I'd grieved as much as I could years ago, but then repressed memories came back or my parents did something else to me, & I found I needed to grieve as part of my healing from those things. Also being no contact with my parents at first triggered another episode of grief.

Also, grieving after narcissistic abuse is very much like grieving the death of someone you love in a way. When someone you love dies, you do the bulk of your grief immediately after. But, even years later, something may remind you of that person & you feel sad or even shed a few tears. The same thing happens with narcissistic abuse, especially if it's a parent. Losing that relationship & the hope that maybe one day your narcissistic mother will love you is extremely painful.

Grieving is a painful process, but you can get through it with God's help & that of the people who love you.