

Grief changes us. In many ways, we become a better version of ourselves. It doesn't mean the loss we experienced was "good," but it can be a really good teacher. How do we learn from our grief when it's also one of the most painful experiences in life?

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If I have learned anything from single parenthood and living with chronic pain and fatigue, it's that I have to delegate. There have been many days when I just can't make dinner and we are out of easy meals, so I let DoorDash do the cooking. We have a few favorite places to order from and we always order a little extra so we have leftovers. With DoorDash you can also get groceries and save on fees when you join DashPass. Pro tip: if you use Honey for online coupons, you can get door dash gift cards instead of cash as your pay out! Get \$10 off your first 3 orders when you sign up through BeckyLMcCoy.com/DoorDash

Several weeks ago I was talking with a friend about what I learned from grief. I'm not sure what people expect to hear when the topic comes up, but it's never going to be a platitude. I'm never going to say something that might appear on a Hallmark card 1) because I don't believe in things like "God gives his hardest battles to his strongest soldiers" and 2) those phrases aren't really helpful to me. Stopping and smelling the roses reminds me I have allergies and silver linings often are an opportunity to ignore the very real pain I'm experiencing.

Grief has been a regular teacher in my life and the lessons I've learned have changed the way I live. Quick phrases that are pleasing to the ear have their place - they can be a mantra for tough days and seasons - but they're simply tools for perseverance and comfort. The lessons we take from grief are born from the pain of change and confronting truths we wish didn't exist.

Here are four of the lessons learned I've been thinking about lately:

1. Death is part of life. This seems obvious, but I had never really thought about what it means until I had experienced quite a bit of loss. Everyone you and I know will die at some point. Some before us, some after, but everyone will die

eventually. I always knew it, but every time someone I love died, it felt like I rediscovered the reality of death all over again. Don't misunderstand me: when someone we love dies, it's sad. Loss can be devastating. But I am no longer surprised by the idea of it.

2. Grief and joy coexist. For one reason or another, a lot of people struggle to allow grief and joy to be companions. When a loss occurs and sadness feels all consuming, it's easy to feel like you'll never be happy or joyful again. Or that because you've become so well-acquainted with sadness that there's no room left for joy. But that's just not how life works. We can feel both grief and joy in the course of one day: in one hour, one minute, or one moment! You are not ignoring your sadness by being happy and you aren't ruining anyone's joy by being sad. All emotions are part of what make us human.

3. Grief, stress, and trauma challenges your ideas about yourself. For me, it's taken work to learn to live in the moment. I thought some people were naturally inclined to be present and not so focused on always doing the next thing. I didn't come by it naturally so I figured I never would. I've always been a do-er and then when grief hit, the brain fog, shock, and sadness kept me from being able to keep up with the pace of life I'd had before, I felt so much shame and guilt that I couldn't be who I was "supposed to" be. I had to learn to just be. Just live in the moment. Just do what I can with the energy I had in the moment and be grateful for whatever that is.

4. Does my life serve me? It's a question I've learned to ask regularly. Is each thing I'm giving my time and attention to worthy of my time and attention? Chores and boring things like that exist to help me function. My choices about food and rest are what determine the amount of energy I have and contribute to how well my body functions. What kind of value and joy do I want to add to my life? Practically, this means I have to delegate some of the house work and find rhythms for my own work that mean I don't allow "work time" to bleed into all the other hours of the day. I'm trying to find rhythms that exist to help me build the life I want. Grief and loss have taught me that I want to make the most of this life I have: as I've learned from KC Davis, my home (and work, etc) exist to serve me, so I continue to ask myself how all those things are helping me function or if I've slipped back into spending my days serving my home (and work, etc.).

If you're in the middle of a heavy season of grief, I encourage you to forget everything I just said. The lessons don't matter. Don't try and find them. Don't look for silver linings. The time for that will come and forcing their arrival won't make your grief pass any faster. Let grief be a companion for now, it'll become your teacher when you're ready.

There are so many more grief lessons, but these four are ones I'm thinking about a lot lately. Have other lessons you'd add to this list or have questions about? Send me an email: podcast@BeckyLMcCoy.com.

Check out KC Davis' book [How To Keep House While Drowning](#) for more thoughts on point four and for a few books to help you feel less alone in your grief, check out [BeckyLMcCoy.com/GriefLibrary](#)

You'll find any links mentioned, along with a full transcript of this episode at [BeckyLMcCoy.com/podcast/90](#)

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If you found this episode encouraging or helpful, share it with a friend and remember: grief can be a beautiful teacher, but only once we are ready. You're doing great.