



# Grief: why don't I feel anything? Sometimes, instead of experiencing a flood of emotions, people become emotionally numb



by Taylor Bennett | Sep 5, 2018 | Counseling News, Grief | 0 comments

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- In some cases, victims of loss aren't overwhelmed with difficult emotions, but feel emotionally numb instead.
- This is a normal reaction, which typically occurs when someone loses someone or something suddenly and unexpectedly.
- Still, it's important for these individuals to make sure they grieve well—of which involves understanding and processing the loss.
- If you feel emotionally numb after a major loss, you should dig deeper to discover those difficult emotions, open yourself to them, and allow yourself to mourn.
- You should also take extra good care of your health and wellbeing, seek support from loved ones, and prioritize time alone as well.

- Finally, don't shy away from consulting a grief [counselor](#) and getting some professional guidance.

## Is My Lack of Emotion Normal?

As it turns out, some people aren't flooded with emotions after [a major loss](#)—instead, they feel nothing. [Sandi Lindgren, licensed clinical social worker](#), explains this reaction to loss, which often results from a sudden or unexpected loss:

"In my experience (both professionally and personally) it IS normal to feel emotionally numb after [a major loss](#). This can happen regardless of whether or not the loss is from death, a loved one leaving you (as in divorce), or even losing your home and belongings in a fire or other natural disaster. People experience grief with the loss of their pets as well.

I believe it is a normal part of the grief process, at least initially. Emotional numbness often comes with a sudden loss, as you've not had time to think about the possibilities of the loss. It is also important to know that grief is not linear and it is very individualized, so it is important not to judge yourself harshly for the way you are feeling, which might be different from someone else."

## What Should I Do to Grieve "Well"?

While it might be normal or more common than we think to feel emotionally numb after losing someone or something, it's just as important for these individuals to dig deep; to surrender to the grief and let their true emotions take over. "Grief and loss bring on intense emotions that can be surprising," says Lindgren. "These intense emotions can show up when you least expect them... especially when you've been feeling emotionally numb. And sometimes we try to stay emotionally numb, as it is feeling our feelings that is scariest..." However, closing ourselves off to these feelings does not have a place in healing. Here's a comprehensive list of the actions you should take instead, if you've suffered a tough loss:

### 1) Discover your true emotions.

Lindgren says you should first take some time to understand how you're feeling after the loss: "It is important for individuals who are feeling emotionally numb to be kind to themselves, allow themselves to sit with their grief and emotions rather than pretending they are not there. Take some time to try to get re-acquainted with your emotions—small steps at a time."

### 2) Prioritize your wellbeing.

Also, remember to prioritize your health and wellbeing during this tough time. "Take care of yourself, continue to eat, exercise and when possible, re-engage in activities that you've always enjoyed," says Lindgren.

### 3) Acknowledge your grief and allow yourself to mourn.

At the same time, you shouldn't shy away from [grieving and mourning the loss](#). Doing so is important to healing and moving forward: "Allow yourself time to grieve and mourn, and then force yourself to accept support from loved ones, even though you may not feel like it. Journaling can also be helpful," Lindgren explains.

### 4) Don't shy away from spending a little time alone.

While it's helpful to confide in loved ones and welcome their support, it's also important that you spend time alone if you feel you need it, as explained by Lindgren: "Isolation is not conducive to support emotional healing, but you don't have to immerse yourself all day with others, if you prefer to be alone."

### 5) Consult a trusted individual when making big decisions.

Additionally, during this vulnerable time, you shouldn't make big decisions without first discussing it with a trusted individual, as they can give you some helpful insight that isn't influenced by grief: "Don't make any important decisions or rash decisions in this state, and if a big decision needs to be made, bring in trusted friends or family (or even professionals) to help you make those big decisions," says Lindgren.

**6) Talk to a grief counselor or other mental health professional.**

And finally, find a mental health professional to help you through the grieving process, especially if your mental health is suffering: "If your grief is lasting a long time, and especially if it is interfering with your daily functioning, it is time to consult with a mental health professional to be assessed for clinical depression, as well as to begin to talk through your grief and begin the healing process," Lindgren explains. "There are also many kinds of free support groups for various kinds of loss, which can also support healing and recovery," she adds.



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