

Proofreading #1 — This Grief Thing F***ing Sucks

But ~~a~~As you will come understand in the rest of this section, convincing myself to publish this for others to read required a lot of thought. Originally, *This Grief Thing F***KING F***KING Sucks* was my attempt to make sense of life, death, and grief. . . . for my eyes only. Once I saw the volume of notes, poems, and stories that I'd written, I decided that it wouldn't be the worst idea to try to organize them into one place that I could revisit from time to time. However, I never thought that I would be confident enough to share ~~them~~these with others. But ~~i~~in recent years, I started talking more comfortably with people about my experiences with grief, and I realized how few the conversations we have about grief and death are. For a long time, I wanted to be able to talk about it more, to talk about how I miss Mom and Dad, and to ask my friends how grief has affected them, —but for a multitude of reasons, I've been scared to. Despite my lack of confidence and my abundance of fears, I knew that I would need to take the first step to begin these conversations, and really, this book has become that first step.

They not only illustrated the types of reactions that I have had to trauma and grief, but they illuminated how I began to process ~~Dad's~~dad's passing. For instance, when I realized that the note was filled with guilt, heartbreak, and fear, it dawned on me that these are some of the feelings I hate most. Now, by knowing that these feelings were an immediate response to hearing that ~~Dad~~dad had died, I understand why I have continued to have such adverse reactions to these feelings in other situations. I never let myself process or accept these feelings, I always felt like I had to battle guilt, heartbreak, and fear to make them go away; so anytime they came back, I would become defensive and prepare to battle. But these fights weren't helping me learn about grief or how to understand these emotions; instead, they left me exhausted and anxious about when they would return. And I still don't know what grief is exactly, but as I have begun to let my guard down and work through how I felt after ~~Dad~~dad died, I've become more accepting and empathetic ~~towards~~toward myself and these emotions.

You Are Resilient. Ooof. This statement elicits the full colour wheel of emotions. For many reasons I love this statement, and for the same and other reasons, I hate it. And as I have mentioned, until just one round of edits before publishing this book, that ~~was~~what it was called. But after some reflection, and heated internal debates, I realized that this book wasn't going to be an autopsy of resiliency, and it wasn't trying to be a self-help, confidence-boosting remedy for life. So, I instead opted for the ~~more~~rawer and more genuine *This Grief Thing F***** F***KING Sucks*. But the previous title was derived from this poem because it was one of my first, and one that I both loved and hated, as the ideas surrounding resiliency are things that I both love and hate. I love that resiliency is subjective; there is no minimum threshold to be resilient; ~~i~~in fact, everyone is resilient. And throughout life with grief, I've benefitted from being reminded that I am resilient because it gives me validation in the difficult situations that I've battled to get to where I presently am.

Commented [LB1]: This is awkwardly written. I've attempted to make it flow better, but it's still awkward. I recommend rewording it to something like:

"and I realized how rarely we speak of it."

(I recommend removing grief and death since you already referred to grief in the first clause in the sentence.)

Commented [LB2]: I've added this because I don't think you meant to say your lack of fears, though that is how it was written.

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I was reactive, highly sensitive, angry, and I didn't think it was something I could change. But I learned the hard way, after many ~~breakdowns~~~~break-downs~~, that I didn't need to be so hard on myself, I didn't need to be perfect, ~~and~~ I just needed to get in touch with my, at the time, feral emotions. It took years, and I am still working on it, but I learned to accept my grief, my trauma, the hardest parts of my life, and how they influence me ~~every day~~~~everyday~~. Slowly, I am becoming stronger, not in the way that I understood strength before, but in the way that I am more secure in myself and who I am becoming. I have no doubt that many young grieverers are in the same boat, and if you are, I know how damn hard it is to take the time and work through this trauma. ~~It's~~ it's incredible that you're on that journey.

Before Mom died, I talked to her on the phone nearly everyday, sometimes twice a day. ~~And t~~There wasn't a single genre of conversation that we would shy from. ~~But b~~Because of this, Mom was a huge source of validation and support for me. I would run all my ideas and decisions by her, whether or not I was looking for a response from her. ~~I did it~~ I did it just to hear it out loud and to see if I was being ridiculous. And even if Mom wasn't a fan of the idea, she always gave me confidence and supported the paths I chose. Surprisingly, I didn't feel like I lacked confidence or validation right after Mom died. Although I would have loved to hear what she wanted for her funeral and what advice she had for me that year, I was confident in my decisions; it was as though I could hear her saying "good idea," "good job," and "you've got it." ~~And f~~For many years, for most of my decisions, I could hear her voice. I still felt confident and supported by her until certain ~~decisions started arriving~~. These new ~~decisions~~ were about things that I had never spoken to Mom about.

And then, from these feeling and thoughts arrive the difficult question: ~~of w~~Where is home? To which I need to answer for myself—what is home? Especially having lived away from Lethbridge for many years now, I really struggle to answer this question. Truly, where I feel the most at home is in Toronto, in my condo, with my dog, and when Sam is visiting. But sometimes people ask, "~~w~~Where is home?" to know where you've grown up, or to know where your parents live, or to know where you feel the most comfortable. But when where you grew up is triggering, it's hard to call it home. And when someone wants to know where a parentless person's parents live, they are faced with a conversation that they may not want to partake in. And although it's harmless to ask about home, it can be quite hard for those who don't have one that is easily identifiable.

Now, for anyone ~~who that~~ needs to hear this, and who has the means, I will tell you—if you are grieving, and if you have suffered loss somewhere where it seems like there are reminders of the life you long for everywhere—it is time to leave.

Commented [LB3]: Awkward. Maybe:

... issues came up.

Or

... decisions needed to be made.

Commented [LB4]: They aren't really decisions. They are "issues" or "problems" or "choices" or "opportunities" that require decisions to be made. Think about maybe rewording this

Commented [LB5]: This is a fragment; it's doesn't have a subject. The question doesn't really flow into this sentence. Please review.

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I was only ~~13~~thirteen, my sister ~~11~~eleven, ~~and~~ when our dad died. ~~Nonetheless, although~~ we were both highly aware of how we were being perceived... the narratives, ~~judgement~~judgment, and whether people were genuinely supportive. To this day, I remember the people ~~who~~that invalidated how I felt, who wouldn't answer my questions, all because of my age, because I "would one day know better" or because I "couldn't yet understand." These people stood in stark contrast to those who would take time listening to how I felt and being open to any questions, no matter how "immature", or uninformed they were. The latter gave me confidence to continue asking questions and sharing with others how I felt, all while ensuring I needn't feel guilty for spending the time with them. The latter helped me to grieve, while ~~the~~ former made me feel embarrassed for it.

Luckily, my mom realized this and respected my grieving process in a way that allowed me to be independent and grieve comfortably. Mom consistently ~~assured~~ensured Sam and ~~me~~ that she would love us no matter what we did, or who we became; and this created a relationship built with trust from an early age.