

Too Many Feelings at the Same Time

Understanding mixed and conflicting emotions in grief

Understanding what may be happening

Grief can contain sadness, anger, guilt, relief, love, resentment, fear, numbness and even moments of pleasure. These emotions can sit beside one another rather than arriving neatly one at a time.

Mixed feelings are particularly confusing when the relationship or circumstances were complicated. A person may miss someone and still feel angry with them, or feel relief that suffering has ended and then feel guilty for that relief.

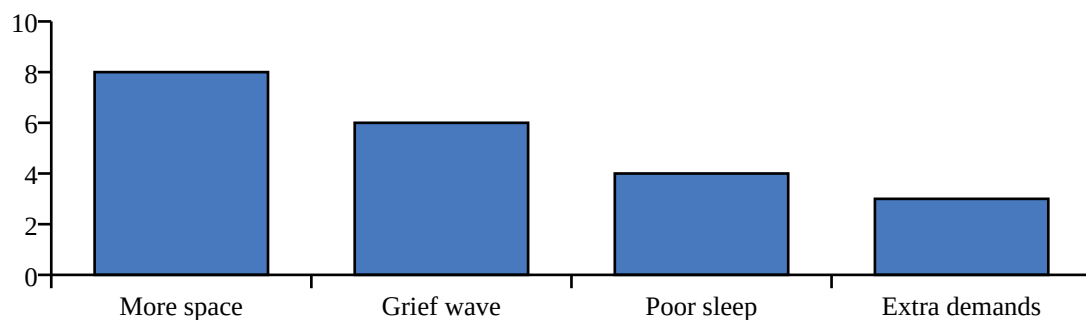
Coaching can help by separating feeling from judgement. An emotion can be noticed without being treated as a verdict on your character or your relationship.

Common experiences

- Feeling guilty for laughing
- Anger alongside love
- Relief followed by guilt
- Numbness when you expected tears
- Jealousy towards other people's lives
- Fear that a difficult emotion means something bad about you

A useful way to think about capacity

Illustrative coaching scale - not measured clinical data



This graph is an illustrative coaching tool rather than a clinical measurement. It shows how available capacity can reduce when several demands overlap. The purpose is to help you plan from the capacity you actually have, not the capacity you think you should have.

What can make this harder

Can add pressure	May be more supportive
• Ranking emotions as good or bad • Forcing yourself to feel what you think you should • Explaining every emotion immediately • Assuming feelings are permanent	• Use 'I notice...' language • Allow two feelings to be true • Write feelings without explaining them • Ask what the emotion may be pointing towards • Remember that feeling is not the same as acting • Discuss persistent guilt or distress with appropriate support

A worked coaching example

Try writing two sentences together: 'I miss them deeply, and I am angry about what happened.' The word 'and' makes room for complexity without forcing one feeling to cancel the other.

Try the STOP - SORT - SUPPORT method

STOP	SORT	SUPPORT
Pause long enough to notice what is actually happening rather than immediately pushing through.	Separate what needs action now, what can wait and what is an emotion rather than a task.	Choose one form of support: rest, a reminder, company, practical help, a professional conversation or a boundary.

Reflection & coaching questions

Use these gently. You do not need to answer them all. One useful answer is enough for a session or a difficult day.

- Which feeling is hardest to admit?
- Which emotion do I judge most?
- What changes if I use 'and' rather than 'but'?
- Is this feeling asking for action, comfort or simply acknowledgement?
- Who can hear the complicated truth without trying to correct it?

My personal check-in

What I notice	What I need	My smallest next step

A one-week experiment

Choose one adjustment from this guide and try it for seven days. Keep the experiment deliberately small. At the end of the week, ask: Did this reduce pressure? Did it make something easier to begin? Did it protect energy? If it did not help, that is useful information too - choose a different adjustment rather than treating it as failure.

Books & further resources

Books can offer language, companionship and different ways of understanding grief. You do not need to read them from beginning to end. A chapter or a few pages may be enough.

- **It's OK That You're Not OK** - Megan Devine
- **The Wild Edge of Sorrow** - Francis Weller
- **Finding Meaning** - David Kessler

Further support

Cruse Bereavement Support offers bereavement information and support. **NHS** guidance includes information on grief after bereavement and other significant losses. **Samaritans** provides confidential emotional support on 116 123, day or night.

When extra support may be useful

Consider speaking with a GP, therapist, bereavement service or another appropriate professional if grief is having a persistent or severe effect on daily life, if anxiety or low mood is becoming difficult to manage, if physical symptoms concern you, or if you feel unable to stay safe. In an immediate emergency, seek urgent help.

A final coaching thought

The aim is not to make grief small. It is to make the demands around grief more manageable, so you have a little more room to live alongside what has happened.