

## Grief

How is it possible that a simple and incomplex word has one of the biggest meanings that could ever exist? My name is Noor and I'm currently 18 years old, and I'm here to talk about myself, a person who has suffered from a lot of dreadful stuff, and above all; grief. For the blessed people who never got to experience it, I'm going to try to explain it with the big five stages. My homeland is Afghanistan, the place where I was supposed to have my childhood, but it ended up being a playground for evil people, among them the Taliban, individuals that destroyed millions of innocent lives. By the time that war began, I'd already lost my father from a massive slaughter that took place in a pacific protest march, leaving me and my mother alone because he was the rock of the family, the optimistic one, he was a man bathed in sunlight. I was devastated, how was it possible that the night before, we were planning my after-graduation party and the next day he was just, gone. I was in deep denial, no one was ever going to love me the way my dad did, he didn't get to see me graduate, he never got the chance to visit New York, he never had the opportunity to wear that tie that my mom got him, I never dared to tell him how much I loved him, what if he deeply thought that I didn't enjoy to be with him?

Anger. I felt angry. People getting murdered every day, and I couldn't do anything about it but watch and wait for my turn, or my mother's. After my dad passed away, my mom stopped talking, eating, basically living. I knew that sometimes it was selfish to be angry with my mom, but as the little kid that I was at the time, it was exhausting the fact that I was the last hope in the family, and I had to bear with every single thing; the consequences of a black-hearted world. At the moment I'm living with my adoptive family, the people who helped me go through all the pain that I had lived in that hell, they helped me with my fight. When I first came to New Jersey it wasn't the fact that I was in an unknown country that scared me, it was dealing with the traumas that I obtained in my past. I remember being at the 4th of July parade. That day was incredibly happy to me; no one had the need to show violence towards others and everyone was joyous, jumping and screaming like little kids. But then fireworks hit the sky and a cold shiver went down my whole body, I froze and I couldn't lift a finger. It had been a long time since I felt that fright, but do you want to know the worst part? I kind of missed it. Now you probably think that I'm going nuts but after all those years trapped in my own country, my young mind started to mess up real bad, and

even if I cannot comprehend it, in a weird way I felt comfort by being sad and devastated because I learned to be used to it, so it was completely normal for me. Bargaining, another of the five stages in order to heal, or so they say. Two years after my dad left, me and my mother remained hidden in a little cave up in the hills and I had to sometimes go to get water from a water well that was more or less one mile away. It was a Thursday, the day that the Taliban liked to hunt some people, and I knew it but I had to get some water, so I did. When I was on my way I had the worst luck ever because there were like four Taliban men in my path and they came straight to take me with them. At fear you either fight or flight, and I wanted to fight so badly but I started running like hell to my cave, leading them unintentionally to where my mom was. I don't feel like giving details but I'm just going to say that it was the last time that I saw my mother. If only I stayed home that day, I knew something like that was going to happen, I'm guilty and her death is on me. Guilt, guilt, guilt. Empty, I just had an empty feeling inside me, that if I had something. I felt helpless and I discovered that you could be homesick for people too, but I had to carry on, leaving aside my depression because I was not living, I was surviving. Months passed and days were bleeding into nights, but I was rescued from the Kabul airport and ended up being adopted by my second opportunity, a new family. They treated me keeping in mind that I was a very sensitive human being and I can say that they did a wonderful job, and so I believe my biological parents would've thought so. Grieving is normal and I believe it never really stops. However, with time you learn how to cope with it and how to properly use that love that you have no one to give to, and you'll accept it sooner or later because there is no normal way to grief, you do you. If you feel related and you often seek sadness because you feel comfortable with it, you have to know that is normal because being sad is a self-reminder that you feel something at all, and eventually it becomes a part of yourself. When we are sad, we might not notice but we start to pay attention to ourselves so it's like a cleansing process; the healing process. I will forever miss my beloved ones, in my heart you hold a place that no one could possibly ever fill. See you on the other side.

