

Making Space for Grief



Reflections on Grief By Tameka of the Collective ACT

Understanding Complicated Grief Through the Lens of a Daughter

Grief has a way of magnifying everything: joy, connection, memories, and loss. In moments when life invites reflection or when we find ourselves surrounded by meaning and transition, grief can feel especially present. While the world continues moving forward, grief quietly resurfaces, often uninvited, asking to be acknowledged.

There are times when I find myself reflecting on life and where I am today. I wonder if I've done enough, if I am enough. I wish I could talk to my mom, even for a moment. I catch myself hoping, even now, that the reality of her absence isn't real; yet it is. Years have passed, but grief does not follow a timeline. It shows up when it chooses, often in moments when love and memory intersect.

One of the hardest parts of grief is comparison, watching others celebrate with loved ones. While ours are no longer here for us. It brings questions that don't have easy answers: Why them? Why not me? Why is my story different? My mom was the kind of person you aspire to be, the kind of parent you hope to become. Her absence leaves a space that cannot be filled, only carried.

Grief can also challenge our sense of identity. Am I showing up the way I should? As a parent, partner, friend, or family member? Some days I feel strong and grounded; other days I feel disconnected and overwhelmed. This emotional fluctuation is not a failure, it is grief. Caring deeply one moment and feeling numb the next is part of surviving loss.

I recognize that as I continue to grow into my roles as a mom, a wife, a friend, and a therapist, my grief evolves alongside me. I am sometimes lost and sometimes found. Both can be true. Grief does not mean I am broken; it means I loved.

I write this as an African American woman, a person of resilience, and a person shaped by love and loss. I carry many identities, and grief touches each one. What I have learned is this: allowing space for vulnerability is not weakness, it is freedom.

If grief feels heavy for you, know that you are not alone. Allow yourself to feel what comes up without judgment. Write your story. Speak their name. Miss them openly. Love loudly. Grief is not something to overcome; it is something to honor.

Give yourself permission to be exactly where you are. Your grief is valid. Your love continues. And those we've lost remain with us through our memories, their influence, and the lives we continue to live.

Take This With You

Grief doesn't follow rules or timelines, it moves in its own rhythm, and so can you. As you leave this space, take a moment to check in with yourself and notice what this stirred within you. What feelings are asking for your attention?

If something surfaced, give it somewhere to go: write it down, sit with it, or share it with someone you trust. You don't have to carry it all at once or alone. Some days may feel heavy, others more manageable. Both are real. Both are part of your process.