



Have you ever felt as though some people brush off your grief as being "done" or "all better" when you have a good day? When they don't visibly see pain, hurt, and sadness or hear about how difficult things feel, it's as if it has all passed and everything can get back to the way it was before our person died. The interesting flipside is that when we are "showing" our grief, many focus on trying to cheer us up. Our society has made it difficult for people who are grieving to just show up however they need to that day and be authentic in the journey to live alongside of grief.

I like to think of grief as an iceberg. There are some parts of our grief that others can see, feel, and hear. In research, this has been talked about as the act of mourning. Mourning is defined as the outward expression of our grief. I tend to think that mourning is what others try to check in on. They gauge our grief by what they can see or hear.

Here's the issue - the tip of the iceberg is exactly that, only the tip of it all. As we have learned from events such as the Titanic, the main mass of the iceberg - or our grief, in this case - is under the surface and cannot be easily seen. This is the "grief stuff" that sometimes only we see. Grief, by research standards is explained to be the inward thoughts, feelings, experiences we live with after someone dies. If we are lucky, we will have a supportive person/animal in our lives that will sit with us in this deep part of grief without trying to fix it - they will just be with us.

Please remember that even when we don't feel heard or seen in our grief, that doesn't mean our experience is not important or real. We need to honor whatever we may be feeling, knowing that our iceberg is completely unique to us.

Today, I would like you to take some time to flip this page over and write down what your grief iceberg looks like:

Think about the different ways you mourn that others may see (*the top of the iceberg*) and then what are different ways your grieve that may be more hidden (*the bottom of the iceberg*). Here are some examples to get you started:

Mourning

- Showing emotion
- Talking about your person
- Memorializing
- Putting pictures out

Grieving

- Loneliness
- Missing your relationship
- Anxiety
- Lethargy

This practice may seem simple, but it helps us see the courage it takes to show up with a grief iceberg everyday and build compassion towards all that we are experiencing. Along with compassion for self, we can grow our compassion for others as we see become more aware that their actions are based only on what they see. This is a practice in honoring the complexity of grief and life, as we work on finding our way through it all.

