

# WHY GRIEF ROBS OUR MEMORY

## It's a normal response to emotional trauma

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**Self care articles  
for the bereaved**

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Memory is something I used to take for granted, at least up until my 15-year-old daughter Aly died. Nobody told me I would lose my memory after losing a child. It was so bad I often worried about early onset Alzheimer's.

You too?

The good news is that we're not alone.

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**The better news is that  
there's an explanation,  
and it's not because  
we're going crazy.**

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It turns out that during trauma and fear, our brain is flooded with stress hormones—cortisol, adrenaline, norepinephrine—which anesthetizes other parts of the brain.

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**Memory is impacted,  
time gets distorted, and  
events come back like a  
strobe light rather  
than a story.**

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It also impacts critical thinking and problem-solving.

So, if nobody told you that memory loss, tunnel vision and time distortion are normal responses to emotional trauma, rest assured it's common.

I promise.

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**Symptoms are especially  
pronounced after a  
traumatic loss.**

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Yes, I know—they're still embarrassing. Especially to our kids.

Next time your kids give you the stink eye for asking the same question you did 10 minutes ago, bore them with the above explanation. With luck, they'll never question your sanity again.

At least not out loud.