

Grief: A Stone You Grow Stronger to Carry
*A podcast with Jay Shetty discussing the poem
"The Stone"*

A friend told me something beautiful about grief that I don't think I'll ever forget. They said that grief is like a stone and you carry it in your pocket. You'll always notice it, you'll always feel it. You know it's there. However, as time goes on, you get stronger.

So as you get stronger, it's not that the stone goes away, it's just that it gets lighter, and so it's lighter to carry. It doesn't mean it's going away. You didn't move on, you didn't have to get over it, it doesn't disappear or it doesn't get smaller...it stays the same. You just get stronger so the stone gets lighter.

I really appreciated that idea about grief. That it didn't have to go away, I didn't have to let go of it, I didn't have to forget about it. That it would always be there...but just as I grow and I strengthen, and as I become more resilient, it becomes lighter and doesn't weigh on me in the same way as the heavy feeling of grief can in the beginning.



What Grief Feels Like

Grief is like carrying a stone in your pocket.

When you walk, the stone brushes against your skin. You feel it. You always feel it. But depending on the way you stand or the way your body moves, the smooth edges might barely graze your body.

Sometimes you lean the wrong way or you turn too quickly and a sharp edge pokes you. Your eyes water and you rub your wound but you have to keep going because not everyone knows about your stone or if they do, they don't realize it can still bring this much pain.

There are days you are simply happy now, smiling comes easy and you laugh without thinking. You slap your leg during that laughter and you feel your stone and aren't sure whether you should be laughing still. The stone still hurts.

Once in awhile you can't take your hand off that stone. You run it over your fingers and roll it in your palm and are so preoccupied by it's weight, you forget things like your car keys and home address. You try to leave it alone but you just can't. You want to take a nap but it's been so many years since you've called in "sad" you're not sure anyone would understand anymore or if they ever did.

But most days you can take your hand in and out of your pocket, feel your stone and even smile at its unwavering presence. You've accepted this stone as your own, crossing your hands over it, saying "mine" as children do.

You rest more peacefully than you once did, you've learned to move forward the best you can. Some days you want to show the world what a beautiful memory you're holding, but most days you twirl it through your fingers, smile and look to the sky. You squeeze your hands together and hope you are living in a way that honors the missing piece you carry, until your arms are full again.

The Stone - by Jessica Watson