

## Loss, Change & Grief Sadness vs. Depression



Journey of Hearts  
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### Sadness vs. the "Blues" vs. Depression Am I depressed, sad, or just "blue"?

#### Sadness

***Sadness*** is a state of being that enhances the connection to others. It increases self-esteem, by allowing for an awareness of, or insight into the meaning and importance of the loss, the grief or significant change, or disappointment.

Jean Baker Miller and Irene Stiver

Under the traditional counseling definition for "Sadness":

- Sadness is actually a positive state of being, rather than a negative one.
- Sadness pulls people to you, enhancing your connections (in contrast depression often pushes people away).
- Feeling sad is a part of a healthy adjustment to a loss or disappointment. It is part of the healing process, allowing for increased awareness and processing of the loss, grief, change or disappointment.

Children and Teenagers will often use the term "sad" when they really mean depressed, so this is something to be aware of and alerted to.

Everyone will feel sad from time to time depending on life events, just as everyone grieves. The concern is when this "sadness" becomes depression and the depression becomes dysfunctional.

#### The Blues

- Feelings of "The Blues" may be intense and unsettling, especially when part of the "Holiday Blues" and if those around are full of holiday cheer.
- Short-lived - The Blues only last a few days to a few weeks around the holiday season (prior to or just after).
- Emotions usually subside after the holiday season and a daily routine is resumed.

The concern is when the feelings of the blues linger on for more than two weeks. In this case, it may be a Depression. Left untreated, depression can become a serious and

life-threatening disorder.

## Depression

Several factors are different with depression:

1. **Duration** - the symptoms are present nearly every day and persist for most of the day for at least 2 weeks.
2. **Pattern** - the symptoms occur together during the same time frame.
3. **Impairment** - the symptoms cause a level of distress or impairment that interferes with important parts of daily functioning including:
  - Work
  - Self care
  - Social activities.

In more mild cases, the level of functioning may appear to be normal, but it requires markedly increased effort to just maintain the normal level of activity.

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## Seeing Loss as a Chance to Grow

It is difficult in the midst of a loss, a change, or disappointment to be able to see these experiences as learning experiences or a chance to grow (Sometime in experiencing a loss, I feel that I have learned enough...thank you very much). Often the sooner this can be realized, the sooner the event reframed, the sooner the sadness will change into a healing.

To quote Nena O'Neil on how to view crisis:

Out of every crisis comes the chance to be reborn, to reconceive ourselves as individuals, to choose the kind of change that will help us grow and to fulfill our lives more completely.

Nena O'Neil



If you are feeling like harming yourself or someone else, or are feeling depressed, helpless or hopeless, Call 911, your local suicide hot-line, or Crisis