

## Five Stages of Grief

Grief is a somewhat complicated and misunderstood emotion. Yet, grief is something that, unfortunately, we must all experience at some time or other. We will all inevitably experience loss. Whether it is a loss through death, divorce or some other loss, the stages of grief must be worked through..

There are five stages of grief. If we get stuck in one stage or the other, the process of grieving is not complete. Thus there will be no healing. A person **MUST** go through the stages to be well again. Not everyone goes through the stages at the same time. It is different for each person. You cannot force a person through the stages, they have to go at their own pace. You may go one step forward then take two steps backward, but this is all part of the process, and individual to each person. As stressed, **ALL** stages must be completed for healing to occur.

The five stages of grief are:

1-Denial - "This can't be happening to me", looking for the former spouse in familiar places, or if it is death, setting the table for the person or acting as if they are still living there. No crying. Not accepting or even acknowledging the loss.

2-Anger - "Why me?", feelings of wanting to fight back or get even with spouse of divorce, for death, anger at the deceased, blaming them for leaving.

3-Bargaining - Bargaining often takes place before the loss. Attempting to make deals with the spouse who is leaving, or attempting to make deals with God to stop or change the loss. Begging, wishing, praying for them to come back.

4-Depression - Overwhelming feelings of hopelessness, frustration, bitterness, self pity, mourning the loss of the person as well as the hopes, dreams and plans for the future. Feeling lack of control, feeling numb, or perhaps feeling suicidal.

5-Acceptance - There is a difference between resignation and acceptance. You have to accept the loss, not just try to bear it quietly. Realization that it takes two to make or break a marriage. Realization that the person is gone, (in death) that it is not their fault; they didn't leave you on purpose. Even in cases of suicide, often the deceased person, was not in their right frame of mind. Finding the good that can come out of the pain of loss, finding comfort and healing. Our goals turn toward personal growth. Stay with fond memories of the person.

You will survive. You will heal; even if you cannot believe that now, just know that it is true. To feel pain after loss is normal. It proves that we are alive, human. But we can't stop living. We have to become stronger, while not shutting off our feelings for the hope of one day being healed and finding love and/or happiness again. Helping others through something we have experienced is a wonderful way to facilitate our healing and bring good out of something tragic.