

# KUBLER-ROSS GRIEF CYCLE



ELIZABETH  
KUBLER-ROSS 1969

# Understanding the grief cycle



Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' 5 stages of grief serve as a well-known framework for understanding the emotional process of coping with loss. First introduced in her book "On Death and Dying," these stages encompass denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. While not everyone will go through each stage or follow a specific order, this model can offer reassurance and validation to individuals navigating grief. Many find comfort in identifying their emotions within this framework, recognizing that their feelings are a natural part of the grieving journey. It's essential to acknowledge that grief is a personal experience, and there is no correct way to mourn. The 5 stages act as a tool to comprehend the intricate emotions that accompany loss.

Denial typically marks the onset of grief, succeeded by anger. This phase involves sentiments of frustration and helplessness, often questioning the reasons behind events and feeling a sense of unfairness. Anger may be directed inward, outward, or towards a higher authority. It is crucial to acknowledge and process these emotions in a healthy manner, whether through writing, discussing with a confidant or counsellor, or engaging in physical activities to release built-up tension.

## **Navigating Grief Stages: Embracing Individual Paths**

As you move through the stages of grief, it's crucial to acknowledge that each person's journey is unique. While the model depicts grief as a cycle, it doesn't always follow a linear progression. You might shift between stages, skip some, backtrack, or change direction unexpectedly – grief is unpredictable. It's vital to understand that grief is a messy and prolonged process. Although we may yearn for closure, it's important to accept the messy nature of grief. There's no right or wrong way to grieve, and seeking support is highly recommended. Surrounding yourself with compassionate and understanding individuals can significantly influence your healing process. Remember, healing takes time, so be patient with yourself as you grieve and eventually find peace.

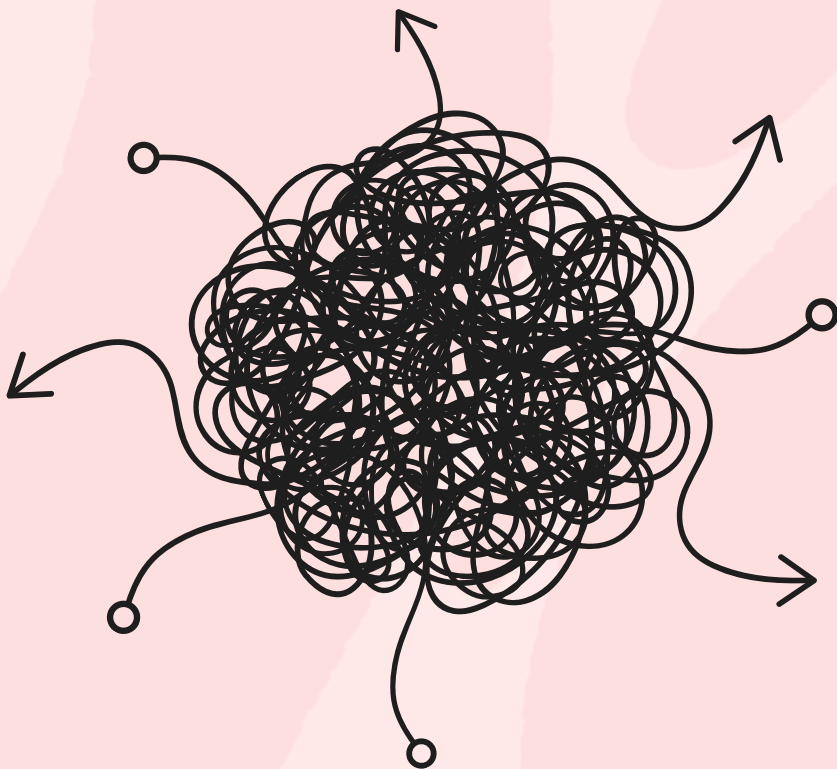
# KUBLER-ROSS GRIEF CYCLE

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When Kubler-Ross created this model back in 1969 to describe the stages of those experiencing grief. This model has been in common use but later she noted that the stages are not linear or predictable and regretted writing them in a way that was misunderstood

## REALITY



The reality is that grief is messy, there is no prescriptive pattern or guarantee that all stages will be covered. There is no time limit and often you can bounce (or what feels like crash) from one to another and may repeat areas many times.

**“THE REALITY IS THAT GRIEF IS MESSY”**



# Denial



Denial serves as the mind's protective mechanism to shield us from the overwhelming emotions tied to loss. It doesn't signify literal denial of the loss, but rather an inability to accept its reality. When in denial, we may initially feel paralyzed by shock or numbness, indicating that the situation is too much to process at the moment.

During the initial stages of grieving, which aid in surviving the loss, the world may appear meaningless and life overwhelming, leading to a state of shock and denial. This numbness helps us cope and navigate through each day, gradually allowing us to come to terms with the grief.

Recounting the story of loss repeatedly is a common way for the mind to handle trauma, a method of acknowledging the reality while trying to avoid the pain. As denial fades, the harsh reality of the loss becomes more apparent. Questions arise, seeking to understand the circumstances and potential prevention of the loss.

As the acceptance of the loss sets in, the healing process commences, and inner strength begins to grow. The denial slowly dissipates, and suppressed emotions start to resurface as part of the healing journey.

During this phase, it's crucial to practice self-compassion and seek support from loved ones or professionals if needed. Grief is a personal journey, and each individual navigates it in their unique way. Remember, it's okay to feel a range of emotions and take the time you need to heal.

As you move through the stages of grief, remember that healing is not about forgetting but about finding a way to integrate the loss into your life story. It's a testament to the love and connection you shared with what or who you have lost. Allow yourself to grieve, to remember, and to ultimately find solace in the healing process.

# Understanding Anger



Anger is a complex emotion that is often misunderstood. Feeling angry when something seems wrong can be beneficial if we view it as a signal that change is necessary. Anger can be categorized as either constructive or destructive, stemming from the "flight" response within our "fight, flight, or freeze" instinct. At its core, anger serves as an alert that something isn't right and prompts us to seek a resolution. It may provoke a desire to retaliate or address an injustice.

Personally, I see anger as a motivator that urges me to instigate change. Whether directed towards others, a decision, a situation, or myself, anger signals the need for self-improvement. Recognizing when anger transforms into rage is crucial, as uncontrolled rage can have negative emotional and physical consequences.

When we feel empowered, we can acknowledge and learn from our anger, take appropriate action, and let it go. However, becoming trapped in anger can enslave us. Failure to channel anger positively and release it can lead to its dominance over us, hindering our ability to find peace and resolutions. Despite understanding this intellectually, releasing anger can still be challenging at times.

Understanding the intricate nature of anger is essential in navigating its effects on our lives. As we delve deeper into the depths of this emotion, we uncover its dual nature - a force that can either fuel positive change or spiral into destructive behaviors. When we harness our anger as a catalyst for growth and transformation, we unlock its potential to propel us towards constructive solutions.

In my own experience, I've found that anger can be a powerful force for self-reflection and personal evolution. It serves as a guiding light, illuminating areas in our lives that require attention and transformation. By recognizing the fine line between anger and rage, we equip ourselves with the awareness needed to navigate its intensity and prevent it from consuming us.

Empowerment lies in our ability to acknowledge, process, and release our anger in a healthy manner. By embracing this emotional journey with courage and introspection, we pave the way for healing and growth. As we cultivate the resilience to confront our anger and transform it into positive action, we embark on a path towards inner peace and emotional liberation. Remember, the journey to mastering anger is a continuous process of self-discovery and empowerment.

# Anger

## WARNING SIGNS

Sometimes anger can affect what you say or do before you even recognize how you're feeling. You may become so used to the feeling of anger that you don't notice it, sort of like how you can hear the sound of an air conditioner, or the humming of a refrigerator, but block it from your mind.

Even if you aren't aware of your anger, it influences how you behave. The first step to managing anger is learning to recognize your personal warning signs that will tip you off about how you're feeling. How do you react when you feel angry? Some of these warning signs might start when you are only a little irritated, and others might start when you are very angry. Circle the warning signs that apply to you.

Mind goes blank

Face turns red

Body or hands shake

Insult the other person

Throw things

Heavy or fast breathing

Start sweating

Scowl or make an angry face

Scream, raise voice, or yell

Stare at the other person aggressively

Feel sick to the stomach

Punch walls

Clench fists

Become aggressive

Become argumentative

Feel hot

Crying

Pace around the room

Go quiet and "shut down"

Can't stop thinking about the problem

Headaches

# The Anger

## CYCLE

### Triggering Event

A triggering event can be anything that results in negative thoughts and emotional reactions. E.g. getting stuck in traffic, being criticised or contradicted, being made to wait or something not working properly.

### Behavioural Response

In response to your negative automatic thoughts, emotions and physical symptoms, an angry reaction can result in shouting, arguing, criticising, verbally and physically attacking another person and throwing.

### Physical Symptoms

Your body reacts to your emotions, usually outside of your awareness. Examples include shaking, tensing, heavy breathing, clenched fists, flushing, racing heart, seeing red.

### Emotional Response

A negative emotional reaction follows negative automatic thoughts. Examples include frustration, anger and rage.

### Negative Thoughts

Negative automatic thoughts usually link the trigger to the reaction. Examples include "that idiot pushed in, I hate my job, how dare they talk to me that way, they are treating me like I am stupid."

# STOPP

## Stop and step back

Don't act immediately. Pause



## Take a Breath

Notice your breath as you breath in and out Pause.

## Observe

What am I thinking and feeling?

Is this fact or an opinion?

Accurate or Inaccurate?

What am I thinking and feeling



## Pull Back: Put in some Perspective

See the situation as an outsider observer

Zoom out and look at the situation from high above.

What 'advice' would I give to a good friend?

How important will this be in 6 months time.



## Practice what works

Whats the best thing to do for me right now.

What is best for others or this situation?

Remember to Breath.





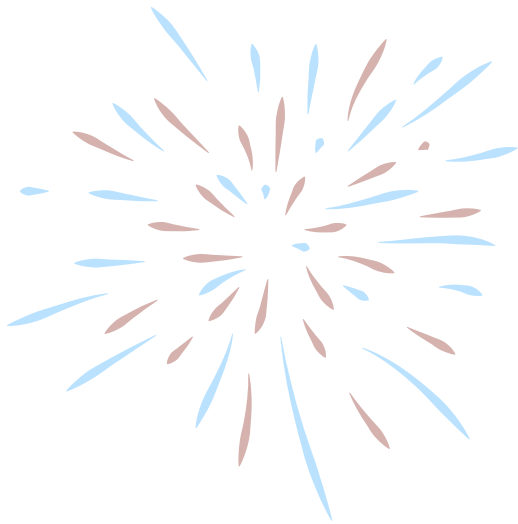
# ANGER TO EMPOWERMENT: FINDING STRENGTH WITHIN



- ◆ **Embrace anger as a catalyst for change:** Recognize anger's potential to fuel positive transformation in your life.
- ◆ **Understand the root causes of your anger :** Explore the underlying triggers and reasons behind your anger.
- ◆ **Practice mindfulness to control reactions:** Use mindfulness techniques to respond to anger in a balanced way.
- ◆ **Surround yourself with supportive people:** Seek a supportive network to help manage and understand your anger.
- ◆ **Empower others to manage their anger too:** Share strategies and support those around you in their anger journey.

# What lights

## MY FUSE



### The fireworks

How do I react when I am angry

### The Match

What lights my anger



### The fuse

What are the physical changes



### The water bucket

Things I can Do to help cool off

# My 'Healthy' Anger Plan



Below create your version of an Anger plan, this can be added to as time goes by, it's a reminder in those moments about what is in your control and what is not - your plan is in your control.



# Bargaining

Bargaining is a natural aspect of grief, often beginning before a loss with simple pleas like “If I can prevent this, I'll never make a mistake again.” We find ourselves entangled in a web of "if only..." or "What if..." scenarios, yearning for life to revert to its previous state, wishing to turn back time to a time before... if only, if only, if only.

Guilt frequently accompanies bargaining. The "if only" scenarios lead us to blame ourselves and ponder what we might have done differently. We may even try to negotiate with the pain, doing anything to avoid feeling the loss. We linger in the past, attempting to bargain our way out of the anguish.

Bargaining can offer a temporary respite from the sorrow that overwhelms one's grief. It's not that you necessarily believe in the bargaining, but rather that you find solace in that moment. It provides the opportunity to adapt and creates a space amidst the strong emotions that typically dominate. These small instances of relief help in regaining a sense of order amid the chaos that has engulfed your life.



# Depression

Following bargaining, our focus shifts to the present moment, where feelings of emptiness arise, and grief infiltrates our lives at a deeper level than anticipated. This state of sadness may seem unending, leading us to question the purpose of moving forward. It's important to understand that this depression is a natural response to a significant loss, rather than a sign of mental illness.

We may withdraw from daily life, consumed by intense sorrow and contemplating the future. Even with the arrival of each morning, the motivation to rise from bed diminishes, leaving us feeling purposeless. Daily tasks lose their meaning, why eat? or why stop eating? Our lack of energy is noticeable to those around us, who may urge us to shake off this state, as society often views post-loss depression as a problem to be swiftly solved. However, it's crucial to evaluate the validity of these emotions in the context of the loss. Ask yourself the question “Is this a depressing situation?” Depression is the natural response to the passing of a loved one, to not experience depression after a loved one dies can be unusual.

While society might perceive this depression as a condition necessitating treatment, it is a vital part of the healing process, not an ailment that needs immediate resolution. By allowing and acknowledging these feelings of sadness it helps us navigate through the stages of grief, recognising their significance in our journey toward recovery and resilience. Although these emotions may resurface intermittently, fully experiencing and accepting depression helps in the healing journey.

While external support may be required in certain instances, allowing the natural process of grief-related depression to unfold is crucial. In contrast, clinical depression warrants professional diagnosis and intervention, potentially involving antidepressants under medical supervision. Balancing the acknowledgment of sorrow as a component of grief while preventing prolonged, unmanaged depression is essential. The use of antidepressants can be a delicate subject, particularly in the context of loss; however, they may complement other forms of support and therapy.

Enduring depression following a loss can be daunting, yet it presents opportunities for self-reflection, reconstruction, and personal development. For me time slowed down and by doing so it allowed me to delve into deeper emotions and navigate the profound impact of loss.

When supporting individuals experiencing grief-related depression, offering companionship and empathy without rushing their healing process is crucial. Allowing them to navigate their emotions at their own pace is vital for their journey toward recovery.

# List How YOU Can show Yourself Kindness





# Understanding Acceptance

## Discussing the Concept of Acceptance and Its Challenges

Facing tough situations can be daunting, but it's crucial to address them to move forward. Acceptance isn't about being 'happy' or 'okay' with a situation, nor is it a sign of weakness or surrender. It's about viewing a situation without judgment, avoiding negative self-talk, and not adding unnecessary layers to it. It's common to perceive not only the original situation but also the additional unjust layers, which can lead to repetitive thoughts like a stuck record. Acknowledge your feelings in the moment, experience them, but don't cling to them to prevent further distress.

Remember, help is available, and you don't have to face challenges alone. Sometimes an external perspective can provide valuable insight to help you cope and move forward positively.

Acceptance is a complex yet essential practice when navigating life's highs and lows. When circumstances seem overwhelming, embracing acceptance can bring peace and clarity. By recognizing the reality without judgment, we can progress with resilience and understanding, accepting that change is inevitable.

During difficult times, treating ourselves with kindness and compassion is crucial. Rather than resisting life's challenges, accepting them allows for growth, healing, and transformation. Acceptance is not resignation but a courageous acknowledgment of our reality, empowering us to face challenges with wisdom and strength.

Embracing acceptance is a powerful tool for self-awareness and resilience, enabling us to navigate life's trials gracefully. Remember, acceptance is not about giving up but about confronting reality with courage and fortitude, fostering inner strength and wisdom to overcome adversities.

5 4 3 2 1

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

5

Things that you can SEE



4

Things that you can  
FEEL (or Touch)



3

Things that you can HEAR



2

Things that you can SMELL



1

Things that you can TASTE





# SELF-CARE bingo!

<p>TOOK A SHOWER</p>	<p>GOT DRESSED</p>	<p>CAUGHT UP WITH FRIENDS</p> 	<p>PROCESSED MY FEELINGS</p>	<p>COMPLIMENTED MYSELF</p> 
<p>MEDITATED</p> 	<p>HAD FUN</p>	<p>LISTENED TO MY BODY</p>	<p>ATE GOOD FOOD</p> 	<p>ASKED FOR HELP</p>
<p>TOOK A MUCH-NEEDED BREAK</p>	<p>DRANK WATER</p> 	<p>Free</p>	<p>TAKE A SOCIAL MEDIA BREAK</p>	<p>TREATED MYSELF</p> 
<p>COMPLIMENTED SOMEONE</p>	<p>GOT 8 HOURS OF SLEEP</p> 	<p>TOOK STEPS TO TAME NEGATIVE THOUGHTS</p>	<p>EXERCISE</p> 	<p>DROPPED A HABIT THAT IS NOT FOR ME</p>
<p>TOOK A MENTAL HEALTH DAY</p>	<p>SPENDING TIME WITH NATURE</p>	<p>DECLUTTERED MY SPACE</p>	<p>WROTE DOWN IN MY JOURNAL</p> 	<p>PRACTICED SELF-COMPASSION</p>