

How to Deal With the 5 Stages of Grief

Dealing with grief is never easy. I know it may not seem like it but the ability to identify and deal with grief is a crucial survival skill. In a survival situation the limits of your emotions will be tried and tested and if you don't know how to keep your wits about you, it could just break you.

There are 5 key stages to grief and each requires a different skillset to deal with. These stages do not necessarily happen chronologically, in fact, most people move between stages before they make peace with the situation they're in. Aside from guns and gear, you need to be mentally equipped to deal with loss in a crisis... make sure this skill set is not lost on you.

The 5 Stages of Grief | Surviving Loss

We all grieve in different ways. Some people are very emotional and cry their hearts out to alleviate the pain, while others grieve discreetly and may not even cry at all. There's no concrete formula for grieving and we should not be hasty in judging how others cope as well. To help you through the grieving process, let's talk about the 5 stages of grief so you can better understand where you stand.

1. Denial

Usually, upon learning the tragic news of the death of a loved one or being terminally ill, the initial reaction is denying the reality of the unfortunate circumstance. You'll probably tell yourself repeatedly "this isn't happening." This is natural and normal, especially if you're faced with overwhelming emotions. Denial is a self-defense mechanism and a temporary response to help us cope with the excruciating situation.

2. Anger

This stage of grief comes in many forms. You may be angry at yourself for not saying something you wish you had to a deceased loved one or the person you broke up with. You may also direct your anger to the loved one who passed away for leaving you and for the pain you're going through.

Anger may also be aimed at your friends or family, or even at inanimate objects. You have the tendency to lash out at anyone or anything at any given time. Additionally, being angry can sometimes make you feel guilty. Due to the heightened emotions, you may start doubting your religious beliefs and get angry with the supreme being.

With all these many forms of anger, it all boils down to one thing: you find someone or something to blame just to ease the pain. While this is understandable and normal, try to find some answers to your questions and help yourself understand the situation. Take your time. Know that you'll be able to pick up the pieces when you're ready.

3. Bargaining

Sometimes, in your grieving period, you may find yourself begging for things to go back to what it was and in return, you'll offer to do something good. For instance, you may say "I promise to be a better person if you bring my deceased loved one back." In an attempt to distract yourself from the pain you're feeling, bargaining becomes your escape goat.

4. Depression

Due to the unfortunate event you've been through, you may undergo reactive depression. Life suddenly lost its meaning and you're headed in an unknown direction. There will be times when you wouldn't want to get out of bed or leave the house. You'll find it hard to do your usual daily routine and opt to just sulk in depression. This heavy feeling may come and go and there will be good and bad days.

Also, depression is connected with the production of serotonin in your brain. If the serotonin level is low, you're more likely to feel sad. There are various ways to increase your serotonin like exercising, eating less sugary foods, having fun under the sun, or get a relaxing massage. No pressure though, find an activity you're comfortable with...baby steps!

Depression can turn into a very serious condition and it's not to be taken lightly. If you are feeling hopelessness, please talk to someone whether it's a close friend, relative, or even a stranger who is willing to listen. Engage in an activity or hobby that can keep your mind busy. At this grieving stage, you'll need all the support you can get.

5. Acceptance

Acceptance is coming to terms with the reality of the situation. Recognizing and not just knowing that this is the life you'll be living from now on will help you cope better and deal with the painful moments accordingly. You'll make adjustments and reorganize things here and there, but the beauty of acceptance is— now, you're willingly doing it to get yourself back on track.

As you accept the way things are, you'll be able to invest in new meaningful relationships and new connections. You'll understand that every emotion you felt and feel is valid, thus, you'll be able to recognize and deal with your needs better too.