

# GRIEF

There are Seven Classic Stages of Grief. There is no set pattern to the grieving process. Each of us, predicated upon our ambient environment, will pass through every one of these steps often with differing intensities, although not necessarily in the same order, or time.

Grieving, is an individualized process. Coming to terms with the loss or trauma to those we love and it is neither easy, simple nor of short duration.

However, if we are to overcome it, we must first realize what it means to grieve. Then we need to understand the general process of grieving. We have no choice but to pass through each of these steps.

Since the order of their appearance differs from individual to individual, the stages of grief as listed here are in alphabetic order.

The Seven Stages of Grief are listed and defined as follows:

1...**ACCEPTANCE**: This term is largely metaphysical in nature. It is necessary for us to get beyond this point. We must accept the reality of death and its permanence. Unfortunately the nature of death often makes it difficult to admit that a death has occurred.

2...**ANGER** and rage in these cases can be directed toward: Other family members, [for not preventing the death], the victim, [for dying]. Doctors, [for not saving the life of the victim]. Law enforcement agencies, [for a variety of reasons such as lack of resolution of a criminal case].

In natural death, anger is not normally so severe. Anger can be because others are not grieving enough or too much, or your loved one for leaving you, and much more.

3...**DENIAL**: Denial is an escape from reality. However, above all else denial is an unconscious defense mechanism, characterized by refusal to accept the reality of death.

4...**DEPRESSION**: Depression is a deep sadness at the loss often accompanied by hopelessness of the occasion. Depression results from an emptiness in your life that can't be filled. Some symptoms would be the inability to concentrate, insomnia. Depression often requires professional treatment.

5...**FEAR**: Adolf Hitler once said that "the weapon which most readily conquers reason: terror and violence" and J. A. Fruede said "Fear is the parent of cruelty."

6...**GUILT**: Many of us that work with victims classify guilt as the "What if's." What if I had taken him camping with me? What if she had not been out after midnight? Guilt wears many hoods. Very few of us escape feelings of guilt. For example, I will worry for the rest of my life whether something I did or didn't do, lead my wife's death.

7...**SHOCK**: As it relates to violent or natural death, is a psychological mechanism, a fog, which allows us to function sometimes even efficiently, at a very devastating time in our lives. Much of what happens during this time we will never remember. This fog will protect us for days, weeks and

sometimes even months. It is my belief that shock is the ally of the grief stricken. Shock is probably the only factor that prevents the onset of more serious mental problems, later during grieving.

Each of these stages of grief is completely normal, are predicated upon the nature of the death, family dynamics and the individual. Grief, when associated with violent crime, is enhanced beyond the common conception of the process. Personally, in the case of violent crime, I like to add an eighth stage of grief.

REVENGE: To the uneducated, this is shocking. That the victim or survivors could actually consider retaliation against the criminal, is an unacceptable pattern of behavior. However, like the seven steps above, this too, is both healthy and healing. What a victim does with these considerations is what counts. It is very rare that this form of revenge is ever carried out and all too frequently, these thoughts are often the only satisfaction that victims and survivors will ever experience.

**Grief is a healing process. It is an important process.  
There simply can be no healing without it.**

Traditionally, one faith recognizes the stages of grief and has established a one year guideline as follows: "...it organizes the year of mourning into three days of deep grief, seven days of mourning, thirty days of gradual readjustment and eleven months of remembrance and healing."Death, the Final Stage of Growth."

In the old Wild West days, when someone died, the widow or widower wore the black mourning cloth for one year. After this, they removed this cloth, and were expected "To get on with the rest of their lives."

In reality, these two examples reflect what many expect of the victims and survivors, even in today's modern society.

**However, just as each of us are individuals, even within the same  
family,  
each of us will grieve differently, at different times and with different  
severity.  
We do not all, grieve openly.**

Some people are not capable of showing their grief, but that doesn't mean they don't grieve. In fact many of these victims of grief will suffer more internally, than the rest of do openly.

If we are to help and support each other, then we must recognize that just because one, is experiencing the gut wrenching pangs of guilt, it doesn't mean that the other is experiencing the same feelings, or even different feelings at the same time.