

7 STAGES OF GRIEF

- **SHOCK & DENIAL**

When someone first brings you that bad news, it can be difficult to believe. You want to just shake your head and say, "no way." You may start to feel numb. The shock and disbelief are actually suspending your pain, and this may last for several weeks. This doesn't mean the loss didn't impact you. It's simply the first stage in the grief process.

- **PAIN & GUILT**

Once your shock starts to fade, you'll notice the pain. This is when it first starts to hit you that your loss is real. The pain may be extremely difficult to handle, and it may feel physical as well as emotional. You may even start to feel guilty about something you could or should have done for the person (even if it's illogical).

- **ANGER & BARGAINING**

Next, many people feel angry. You may feel angry with your religion, with someone who was taking care of that person, with the person responsible, or the person themselves. It may be completely unreasonable who you feel angry with, but you seek out someone you can blame for the loss. You may even attempt to bargain to bring that person back.

- **DEPRESSION, REFLECTION & LONELINESS**

Depression, reflection, and loneliness usually come later. When many of your family or friends are starting to overcome their suffering or starting to think you should be overcoming your own suffering, you may feel depressed. It can hit even harder than the initial pain, because you're truly coming to terms with the loss.

You're not feeling the pain as much as feeling the change to your life. Maybe you've lost someone you spent a lot of time with or the person you always told secrets to. This material loss can cause depression, reflection on the way things were, and loneliness as you realize those times are gone.

- **THE TURN**

Finally, just when you think there can't possibly be anything good coming ever again, you'll start to feel a little better each day. It may be so slight that you don't even realize it at first, and you won't feel happy all at once. What you may feel is a little less pain, a little less sadness, and more of being okay.

- **RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH**

This is where you'll start to work your way through the aftermath of losing that loved one. Maybe you have to take care of some financial troubles either caused by the loss or the grief. Maybe you need to just put yourself back together. This is the stage where it all begins.

- **ACCEPTANCE**

The final stage is the one you'll be in for the rest of your life: you start to accept the loss fully and begin to move on with your life. That's not to say you ever "get over it," but that you start to feel okay. You're able to think and talk about your loss without feeling the despair or intense pain. It may make you sad to think about, but it may also make you happy, because now you can remember the good times.