

## GRIEF CYCLE (WHERE ARE YOU STUCK?)

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DEFINITION: THE NATURAL EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE LOSS OF A CHERISHED IDEA, PERSON, OR THING.

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1. DENIAL (Isolation)
  - A. Powerlessness
  - B. Psychological Buffer (defense)—protects knowledge or awareness of thoughts or feelings that you are not ready to deal with mentally, emotionally, or spirituality
  - C. Denial of Reality
    1. The more you have depended on the last object, the stronger your denial
2. ANGER (Self-Disappointment, Self-Hatred)
  - A. Anger over loss and not being able to find it
    1. Regrets
  - B. Can become destructive if not expressed in healthy ways
    1. Out of control anger = rage, violence
    2. Held in, stuffed anger = out of control physical illness
      - a. anger turned inward toward self = Depression
      - b. Despair, suicide
3. BARGAINING (Postponing the inevitable. Attempt to control the uncontrollable)
  - A. "What If's" and "If Only"
  - B. Desperate attempt to regain control
  - C. Keeps you from facing reality
  - D. Destructive if one gets stuck here
4. DEPRESSION (Sorrow, Despair)
  - A. Anger channeled back into self, turned inward against self
  - B. Response typically associated with grief but actually only one part of the whole process
    1. Tears, funerals, wakes allow you to be sad
    2. Trapped (stuck) sorrow = self-pity leads to destructive behavior
    3. Can be immobilizing = total helplessness
    4. Crying is a good way to express sorrow. It washes away sadness. Heals. Is a sign of strength when used as part of the grieving process, but if stuck crying can become a chronic behavior which does not effectively promote grieving
5. ACCEPTANCE
  - A. Final goal with achieving resolution of grief
  - B. Belief that it is possible to heal and recover
  - C. Surrender to reality
  - D. Recognition of responsibility = ACTION