

# Stages of Grief

Elisabeth Kubler Ross wrote the book, *On Grief and Grieving*, defining five stages of grief that everyone goes through. It is helpful in that it points out that there are some strange things that you are going to go through. The trouble is, they don't happen in sequence, or in chronological order, neither are they all of the same duration and intensity. In fact, you can go through all of them in one day only to go through it all again the next day, and the day after that, and so on, for years. Then there is the inevitable fact that you can stall on any one of these steps and get stuck, unable to move forward. In such cases of extreme prolonged stress we look for ways of escape, anything that will get us out of this never-ending pain and give us some normalcy in life.

Ross's book on grief identified five stages of grief,

- 1) Denial,
- 2) Anger,
- 3) Depression,
- 4) Bargaining,
- 5) Acceptance.

I would include a few more just to give grieving people a heads-up on what is yet to come. My own grief included,

**That would give you 12 stages**, none of them come in any exact order, all of them, like waves of an angry sea, keep bowling you over again and again at unexpected times and seasons.<sup>1</sup>

## In Chronological Order

- 1) Shock
- 2) Paralysis
- 3) Isolation
- 4) Denial
- 5) Questioning
- 6) Guilt
- 7) Blaming
- 8) Anger
- 9) Depression
- 10) Death Wish
- 11) Bargaining
- 12) Acceptance

**Never underestimate the power of grief to tear down the strongest among us. Grief is no respecter of persons. It hit all of us with the force of a tidal wave against which we are powerless. Each stage comes on suddenly and stays sometimes for months, sometimes hours or days, only to return with a vengeance upon the unsuspecting sufferer. Do not judge them. Console them with kind words and loving deeds for as long as they need comfort.**