

Good Grief

I experienced so much loss in the time of COVID. I lost great friends from the virus. I lost friendships, money, a way of life, safety, security, and a sense of knowing.

Before Covid I was confident in how to —

live my life.

make a living.

navigate “my world.”

I descended into the space of “I don’t know”. I really didn’t know what to do — except to go with the flow of my life.

I’ve worked with the **five stages of grief** before but I’d never really had to handle so much grief and so much loss, at once. As I dealt with one painful loss after another I came to understand the five stages of grief.

I’m going to take you through each stage of grief and how I’m dealt with these stages.

The Five Stages of Grief from Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

1. Denial

The first stage of grief is denial. It is the first reaction to all forms of sudden loss. When our lives become uprooted, it is very common for us to try and initially deny the event in order to subconsciously avoid sadness or the thought of pending struggles. People in denial often withdraw from their normal social behavior and become isolated. It is considered the first stage of grief.

When I first heard the news about the death of my friend Lawrie who was my age and died in the ICU on a ventilator, my body went into shut down. I couldn't comprehend the news I was receiving. I spent weeks falling asleep randomly.

I allowed my body to be and whenever my sudden need to sleep came on, I'd curl up and snooze.

2. Anger

The second stage of grief is anger. People that are grieving often become upset with the person or situation that puts them in their grief state. After all, their life could now be in complete disarray. The path of least resistance is anger as opposed to facing the consequences of a loss head-on. In the case of death, the anger is often focused toward the deceased

for leaving that person behind and unable to cope. Other times, people become angry at themselves if they feel they could have done something more to stop the loss from happening.

I really connected with my anger when Portland came under siege by militants sent in by the government to create chaos and hurt peaceful protesters. My sister and niece were hit with tear-gas, flash bangs and concussion grenades!

I've allowed myself to feel my anger, to talk about it. I've hit pillows and supporting my sister. It has helped me to grieve all my losses and move forward with hope.

3. Bargaining

The third stage of grief is bargaining. This is when those who are grieving reach out to the universe to make the pain go away. It is actually very normal and largely considered to be a sign that they are beginning to comprehend their situation. People will often try to make a deal, or promise to do anything if the pain will be taken away.

I still go in and out of bargaining. The main theme for me is trying to stop the pain by negotiating with Source energy. It goes something like this: If I stop reacting in fear and send out more love will you please stop taking people away from me and hurting others?

My bargaining is causing me to be more appreciative of what I do have, what I do for others, and the love I have in my heart. I'm so thankful to the

people that remain strong in my life, and the new people that are flowing toward me.

4. Depression

The fourth stage of grief is depression. Depression is something that may take time to develop. We often think we are depressed when a grief event first occurs, but that's usually shock and denial. The signs of depression due to grief usually appear when a sense of finality is realized. Depression due to grief is not chronic; it is episodic, even though it may last for a long period of time.

My depression is showing up as anxiety. It woke me up at around 3:30 am for many nights. It caused me to toss and turn on waves of memories and thoughts.

I am not fighting my anxiety and because of this I found a place of peace in the middle of one of my tosses and turns, I've been sleeping better ever since.

5. Acceptance

The fifth stage of grief is acceptance. This is the point where the person experiencing grief no longer is looking backward to try and recover what they lost. They may still feel grief, but they are ready to embrace a new beginning. Acceptance is the start of the real healing process.

I'm not wrestling as much with what is leaving or has left. I actually have periods in my day where I don't think about my friends who've died, our old way of life, the loss of income, my daughter's health, or my sister's safety.

I'm looking forward to the future and the new people and possibilities entering my life.

Spinning

The grief stages are in order to some degree but I'm finding I'm spinning in them. I can slide back to denial and then flow forward to acceptance and then find myself in anger. It's been so interesting to allow this process and watch as it unfolds.