



KUBLER-ROSS' STAGES AND SPIRITUAL STRUGGLE

We can look at Kubler Ross' stages of grief reactions as another way to try to understand some dimensions of spiritual struggle and growth. These stages are:

1. *Denial*: The individual refuses to believe that the loss is happening.
Serves as a buffer in helping the client mobilize defenses to cope with the situation.
2. *Anger*: The individual resists the loss.
Anger is often directed at family and health care providers.
3. *Bargaining*: The individual attempts to postpone the reality of the loss.
Serves as a plea for an extension of life or the chance to "make everything right"
4. *Depression*: The individual realizes the full impact of the loss.
Serves as the preparation for the impending loss by working through the struggle of separation
5. *Acceptance*: The individual comes to terms with the loss.
Serves as a form of detachment exemplified by a void of emotion or interest in worldly activities.

*The preceding was taken from: Shelley Yeager, "Lecture Notes on Loss, Grief, Death and Dying:
See <http://www4.allencol.edu/~sey0/loss1a.html> on the Internet*

Not everyone experiences all these stages. People experience the different stages in their own way and order, often jumping from one "stage" to another and back and forth rather than a smooth forward journey from "one" to "five"

When people are working through these reactions to loss, there is often a great deal of spiritual suffering. It is important that we don't try and take the suffering away by trying to impose our own spiritual solutions onto their spiritual struggles.

Each person needs to come to terms with their losses in their own way. We're there to walk with them in that journey, not to tell them what to think, feel or believe.