

The Stages of Acceptance by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Stage	Phrases	Interpretation
1	Denial	<p>Not me!</p> <p>This isn't happening to me!</p> <p>Denial is a conscious or unconscious refusal to accept facts, information, reality, etc., relating to the situation concerned. It's a defense mechanism and perfectly natural. Some people can become locked in this stage when dealing with a traumatic change that can be ignored. Death (or disability) of course is not particularly easy to avoid or evade indefinitely.</p>
2	Anger	<p>Why me?</p> <p>Why is this happening to me?</p> <p>Anger can manifest in different ways. People dealing with emotional upset can be angry with themselves, and/or with others, especially those close to them. Knowing this helps keep detached and non-judgmental when experiencing the anger of someone who is very upset.</p>
3	Bargaining	<p>But what if I...</p> <p>I promise I'll be a better person if only...</p> <p>Traditionally the bargaining stage for people facing death (or disability) can involve attempting to bargain with whatever God the person believes in. People facing less serious trauma can bargain or seek to negotiate a compromise. Bargaining rarely provides a sustainable solution, especially if it's a matter of life or death (or life-altering disability).</p>
4	Depression	<p>Me.</p> <p>I don't care anymore</p> <p>Also referred to as grieving. It's a sort of acceptance with emotional attachment. It's natural to feel sadness and regret, fear, uncertainty, etc. It shows that the person has at least begun to accept the reality.</p>
5	Acceptance	<p>OK, me; what's next?</p> <p>I'm ready for whatever comes</p> <p>This stage definitely varies according to the person's situation. People dying (or learning to live with their disability) can enter this stage a long time before the people around them, who must necessarily pass through their own individual stages of dealing with the grief.</p>

Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (1926-2004), On Death & Dying, 1969. Interpretation by Alan Chapman 2008. For more information: www.ekrfoundation.org and www.elisabethkublerross.com