

## The Grief Process

There are a few different ways of understanding human responses to loss. Traditionally, it has been thought to happen in stages (Kubler-Ross, 1997). See if any of the following resonate with your experiences:

**Stage 1:** Denial (“This can’t be happening to me”)

**Stage 2:** Anger (“This is so unfair”; “Why is this happening to me?”)

**Stage 3:** Bargaining (“If only I could go back to the time when I didn’t have to use insulin...”)

**Stage 4:** Low mood (“I feel really down”; “What’s the point in keeping on top of all this?”)

**Stage 5:** Acceptance (“I can do this, I can cope”; “This is something that’s part of my life now.”)



Rather than moving from one stage to the other in order, it is recognized that people often shift backwards and forwards between these different stages and feelings, lingering longer with some and less with others (or possibly missing others out altogether), perhaps visiting the stage of acceptance increasingly more over time.

A slightly different idea likens the grief process to a pinball machine (Baier & Buechsel, 2012), with the idea that we move more flexibly between different feelings when grieving, ping-ponging between different emotions or states, before eventually coming down to settle on a state of acceptance. The model suggests that, even then,

things can happen to re-trigger the pin ball being launched back into pinging between different emotions, before settling down again.

