

INTRODUCTION TO THE KÜBLER-ROSS MODEL



The Kübler-Ross Model, created by psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969, is a well-known framework for understanding emotions around loss. It was based on her work with **terminally ill patients** and their families, where she identified five stages of grief: **denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.**

The Kübler-Ross Model was originally designed to explain how individuals facing their own death or the loss of a loved one process mortality. While it has provided useful insights, **it was not intended to address the full complexity of grief**, especially after bereavement.

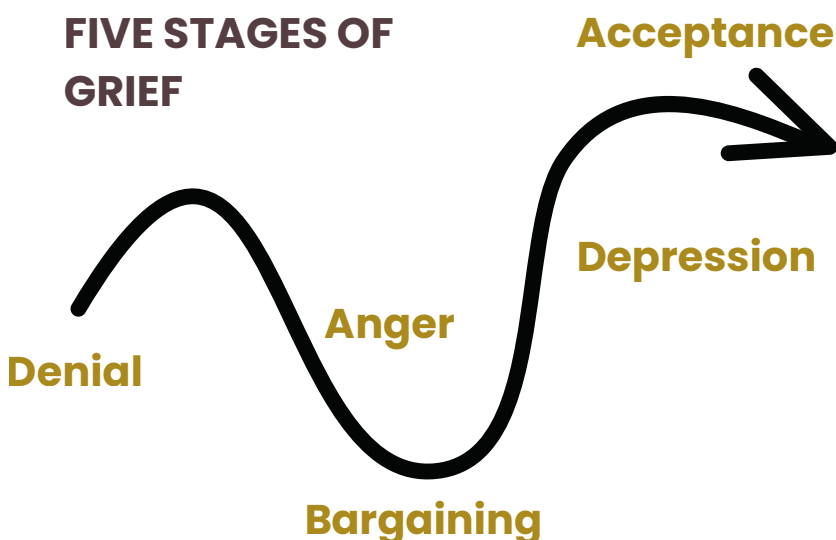


Grief is a deeply personal experience that doesn't always follow a set, predictable path, and often unfolds in **unique** and **unpredictable** ways.

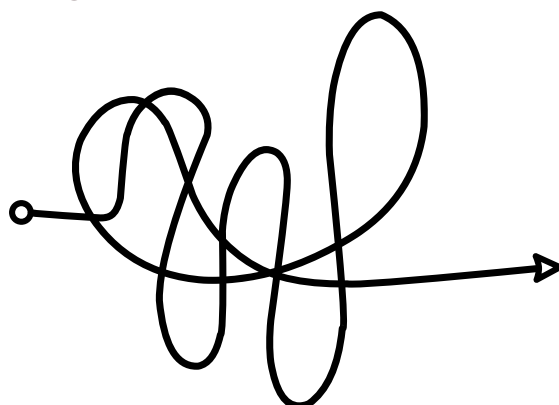
THE KÜBLER-ROSS MODEL: WHERE IT CAME FROM (+ HOW IT RELATES TO YOUR GRIEF)

While the stages model has been adapted to understand general grief, it was not initially intended for grieving the loss of a loved one. Grief is unique to each person and can be influenced by factors like the **relationship, circumstances** of the death, and individual **coping** styles. As such, the stages may not follow a linear path and can **vary from person to person.**

THE EXPECTATION: FIVE STAGES OF GRIEF



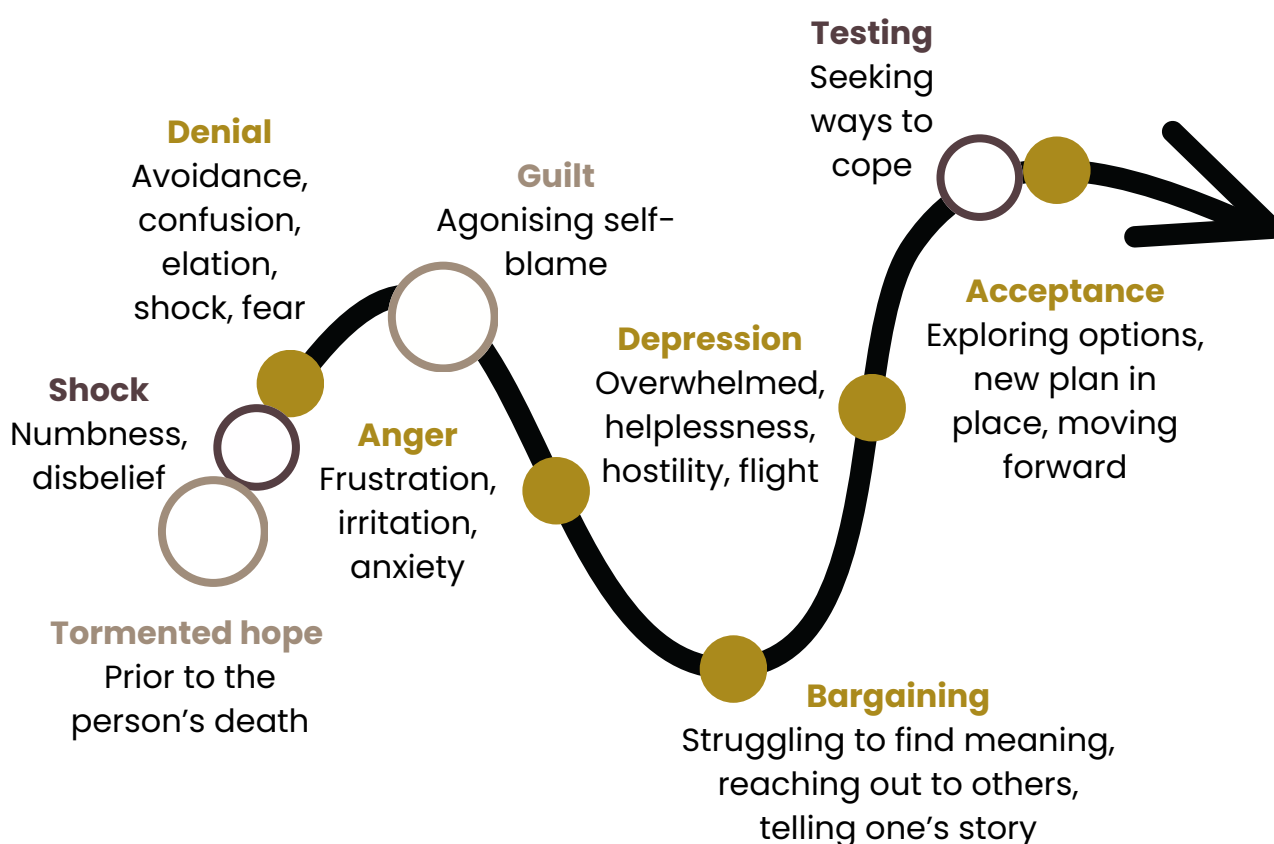
THE REALITY: GRIEF IS OFTEN MESSY AND NON-LINEAR



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Let's compare the Kübler-Ross five-stage model of grief with the concepts of acute and integrated grief. While the Kübler-Ross model has been widely recognised for its five stages some adaptations have introduced additional stages, including **shock** and **testing** (sometimes referred to as the 'seven stages of grief'), while another adds a further two, including **tormented hope** and **guilt**, forming nine stages of grief. These variations highlight **how grief can be understood in diverse ways**.



WHICH STAGES FEEL MOST FAMILIAR TO YOU RIGHT NOW?

- Circle or highlight the stages that resonate with your current emotions or experiences.
- Reflect on how these stages have shown up in your grief journey – are there any that feel more prominent or surprising?

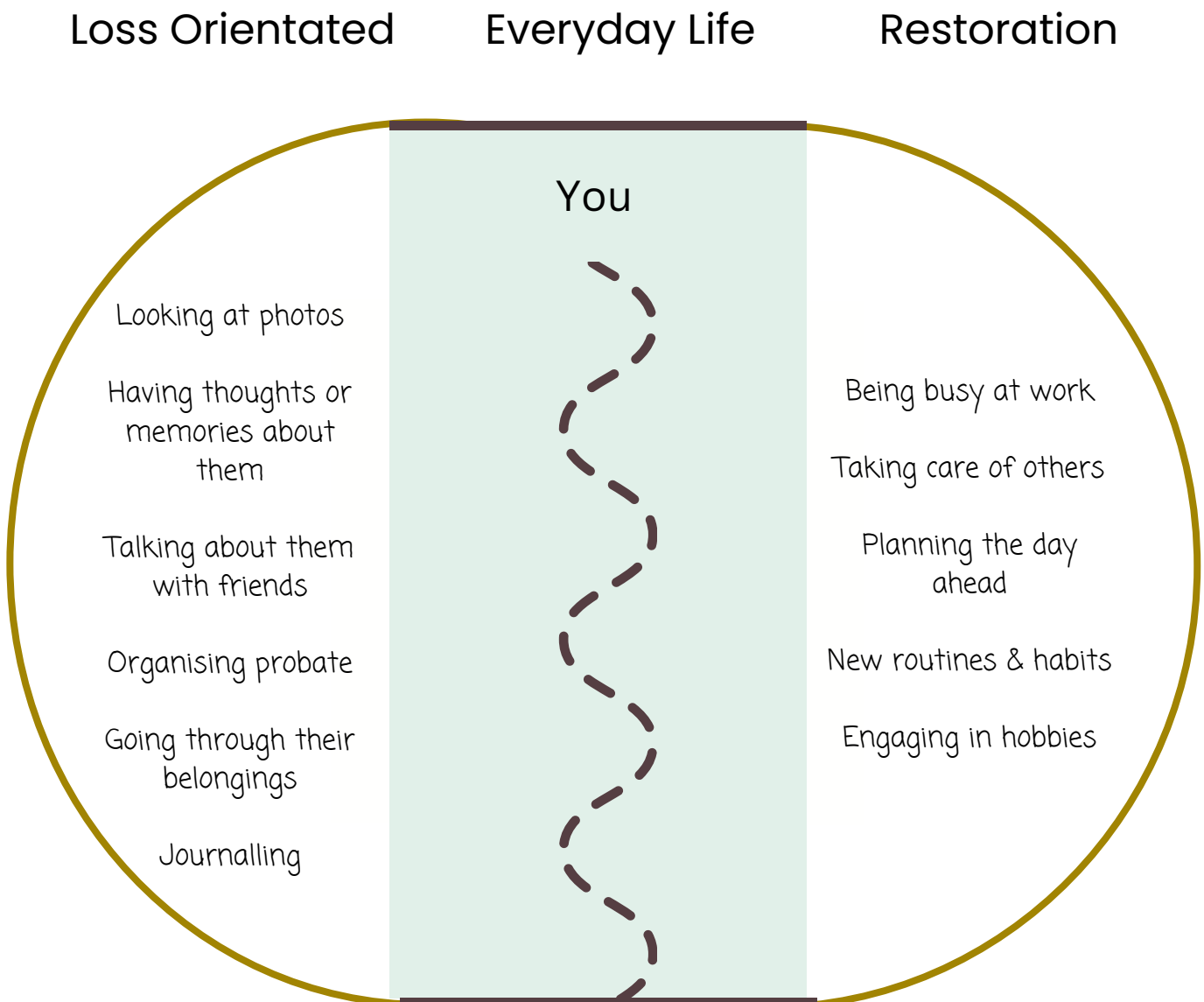
Remember, **your grief is unique**, and it's okay to move between or revisit different stages.

THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL OF GRIEF



(Stroebe & Schrut, 1999)

The dual process model offers insight into the grieving process, suggesting that we move between two coping strategies: **loss-oriented** (dealing with the grief itself) and **restoration-oriented** (engaging in things that distract us from grief or contribute to rebuilding our lives).



Grieving involves oscillating between these two different modes of being. **This is why it is called the dual process model**, because two different processes are happening.



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THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL OF GRIEF



(Stroebe & Schrut, 1999)

Things that make you think about your loved one and their death are called **loss-oriented factors.** These are thoughts, feelings, actions and events that make you focus on your grief and pain, such as looking at photos, recalling a particular memory, sorting probate, etc. Loss-oriented stressors can bring up lots of powerful emotions, such as sadness, loneliness and anger.

Restoration-oriented factors are things that let you get on with daily life and distract you from your grief for a while. Even for a few minutes, these thoughts and activities will allow you a small break from focusing on your pain.

It's important to recognise that being restoration oriented does not mean you are avoidant – it is **a perfectly healthy way to cope.** Both sides are. If we spent all our time in loss-oriented mode we would never be able to move or get anything done. Equally, if we spent all our time in restoration mode we would not be creating any outlets for our emotions and we would burn out.

It's important to remember that **everybody oscillates differently, even if grieving the same loss within a family.** And it may be that your everyday life impacts where you land – if you have to go back to work you may not find you're getting enough time to be in loss-oriented mode. Equally, if all you have is time to think it will feel very difficult to engage in restoration.

Naturally we often fall into loss-oriented mode when a loved one dies (but not always), however, it is **really important for us to experience both modes over time**.



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THE **JAR MODEL** FOR UNDERSTANDING GRIEF



A model for understanding how we can grow our world around grief.

You may believe that your grief should **shrink** with the **passing of time...**



But what can happen, is that we **grow our world around grief.**



Maybe you expected your grief to **get smaller** and smaller with time. But in reality, our grief **remains the same size**. Our grief remains as **meaningful** over time but that doesn't mean it remains as **painful**. What you might find is that you learn to **grow your world** around grief.

THE TASKS OF MOURNING



Grief is a **process**, and **adjusting** to loss takes time. **Psychologist J. William Worden** identified **four tasks of mourning** that can help people navigate their grief in a healthy way. Use this worksheet to reflect on **each task** and **your personal journey**.

Task 1: Accepting the Reality of the Loss

Accepting the reality of loss can be incredibly difficult, and it may take time. It's okay to feel unsure and to move through this process at your own pace. It is not uncommon following a loss to experience shock or disbelief, stopping you from being able to fully process what has happened.

One way of accepting the loss would include going through rituals such as a **funeral**, or speaking about the person in the **past tense**. On a more complex level, there is an acceptance of the **reality** of the **significance of the loss**, which takes time. **Acceptance does not have to mean approval.**

In what ways has your daily life felt different since your loss?

Are there particular moments or memories that make the loss feel more real to you?

If it feels right, take a moment to write a note to yourself. Acknowledge the changes you're experiencing, and offer yourself kindness and understanding as you navigate this journey. What would you say to yourself in this moment?

ATTACHMENT THEORY + GRIEF



Our connections with loved ones play a significant role in how we experience grief. Many grief theories are rooted in John Bowlby's attachment theory, which explains that when a bond – such as between a child and caregiver – is disrupted, it leads to emotional distress, including **fear, anger, frustration, or grief**. This response can also extend to objects, routines, or life circumstances. Grief naturally arises when a significant attachment is lost, underscoring the deep link between attachment and mourning.

Developed by psychologist John Bowlby in the 1950s, **Attachment Theory** helps us understand how the relationships we form shape our responses to loss. Each person has a **unique attachment style**, which can influence how they process grief. This worksheet will guide you through gentle reflections on how your own bonds may be affecting your grieving process.

Understanding Your Attachment Style

SECURE ATTACHMENT

Characteristics: Individuals with secure attachment feel safe in relationships and trust that support is available when needed.

Grief Response

- Openly express emotions and seek support from others.
- Able to process grief in a healthy way, integrating loss into their life over time.
- Maintain a strong connection to the person through memories while continuing to engage in life.

ANXIOUS (PREOCCUPIED) ATTACHMENT

Characteristics: These individuals fear abandonment and often seek constant reassurance in relationships.

Grief Response

- Intense fear of being alone or abandoned after a loss.
- May ruminate over the loss, struggling to accept reality.
- Seek excessive reassurance from others, fearing future losses.
- Difficulty finding closure, sometimes idealising the person who died.