

# Finishing Well – When Everyone Goes Home

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing;  
heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled.  
My soul also is greatly troubled.  
But you, O Lord—how long?

*Psalm 6:2-3*

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**THE SIX STAGES OF GRIEF:** \*Shelley Klammer@ShelleyKlammer.com

## **1. NUMBNESS AND DENIAL**

To initially cope with loss it common to go in a state of shock and denial. Denial helps you to pace your feelings of grief but it also makes you feel numb, hard and frozen. As you proceed through the grieving process, all the feelings you have been denying about your loss will eventually need to surface.

## **2. ANXIETY AND PANIC \***

When you feel anxiety, deeper feelings about your loss will be piercing through your denial. Anxiety and panic will chip away at your emotional numbness, hardness or frozenness to indicate that you need to go into the deeper stages of grief so that it can be resolved.

## **3. BARGAINING AND CONTROL**

The normal reaction to feelings of helplessness and vulnerability is to try to regain control through a series of “If only” statements. This is an attempt to bargain. Guilt often accompanies bargaining. You might believe there was something you could have done differently to avoid your loss. You might become lost in a maze of “If only...” or “What if...” statements.

## **4. FRUSTRATION AND ANGER**

Intense emotion deflected from your vulnerable core most often gets redirected and expressed as anger. After bargaining and your attempts to control do not work, you will likely get frustrated and you will have to face your loss at a deeper level.

You might resent a person for causing you pain or for leaving you. Your anger and frustration might be aimed at inanimate objects, complete strangers, friends or family. Anger, most especially, might be directed toward the person you have lost.

## **5. DEPRESSION AND DESPAIR**

After bargaining and attempts to control, grief enters into a much deeper level. You might want to withdraw from life for a time to truly process what you have lost. You might feel intense heartbreak and sadness. You might wonder despairingly if there is any point in going on. When a loss fully settles into your being there will be a deep realization that your life will not continue on as it as before.

## **6. ACCEPTANCE AND PEACE**

Eventually, you will learn to live with your loss. You must now live in a world where your loved one is missing. You might need to give up your hope that your emotional needs from the past will be met. Or you might need to accept that your cherished dreams for your future will not come to fruition.

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The 3 “N’s of Grief:

- Normal
- Natural
- Necessary

**Give yourself permission to grieve!**

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Emotions Experienced in Grief:

- Shock
- Question of sanity – Am I going crazy?
- Pressure to be strong
- Your own grief – Your loss is different from anyone else's and you will grieve in the manner in which you need to do so.

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He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.

*Psalm 147:3*

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## Take Care of Yourself:

- **Emotional Needs** – don't deflect or deny in favor of other responsibilities
- **Physical Needs** – Pay attention to your body
- **Acknowledge the Possibility of the “Fog” of Grief** – a sort of “going through the motions existence”
- Do not dwell on shortcomings, **You Did the Best You Could.**

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## Myths About Grief:

- People with strong faith don't grieve
- A strong person should be able to cope during a loss without showing emotion
- You should be back to normal after two or three months
- Expressing strong feelings is losing control of yourself
- Crying is a sign of weakness, men don't cry
- Grief gets easier as you grow older
- Getting angry at God or asking God difficult questions means you have a weak faith
- Loved for lost can be measured by the depth of grief
- Losing an infant doesn't hurt because parents didn't have time to know the child
- Resolving grief means dismissing loved ones from your mind and moving on with your life
- A strong person should be able to deal with grief alone

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## Myths About Grief:

- Christians shouldn't grieve if they know their loved one is in heaven. They should feel joy.
- It's better to deal with grief on an intellectual manner than emotionally
- Only immediate family members will experience significant grief
- Continuing to talk about the person who died only makes the pain last longer
- Grief proceeds through very predictable and orderly stages
- After a loved one has died you can never be happy again

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Find Coping Methods That Work for You

- Music
- Artwork
- Meditation, prayer and Scripture
- Write letters
- Exercise
- Scream
- Read
- Talk

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If God Seems Far Away

- Be yourself with God
- Be honest with God
- Don't mistake **feeling** abandoned by God for being abandoned by God
- God is there grieving and suffering with you

*What God does is not always immediately evident to human eyes.*

Rev. John Claypool, "Tracks of a Fellow Struggler"

source: Haugk, 38-41

# Finishing Well

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.*

2 Timothy 4:7