

The Five Stages of Dying

Psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross described five emotional stages that many people experience when facing the end of life. Not everyone goes through all of them, and they don't always follow a set order. Still, these stages can help us understand the emotional journey of dying and offer compassionate support.

1. Denial

The person may think, 'This isn't happening to me.' Denial cushions the shock and gives time to adjust to the reality of dying.

2. Anger

Feelings of unfairness may be directed at loved ones, doctors, or even life itself. Underneath anger is often fear and grief.

3. Bargaining

They may try to negotiate for more time: 'If I can just live until...'. Bargaining reflects a need for control in an uncontrollable situation.

4. Depression

Profound sadness may arise as reality sinks in. The dying person may withdraw or weep. Gentle presence is more healing than forced cheer.

5. Acceptance

This is not about liking death, but about acknowledging it peacefully. The person may become calm, reflective, and focused on saying goodbye.

Important: These stages are fluid, not a straight path. People may revisit or skip stages entirely. Loved ones often move through similar emotions. Compassion, patience, and presence matter more than trying to 'fix' feelings.