

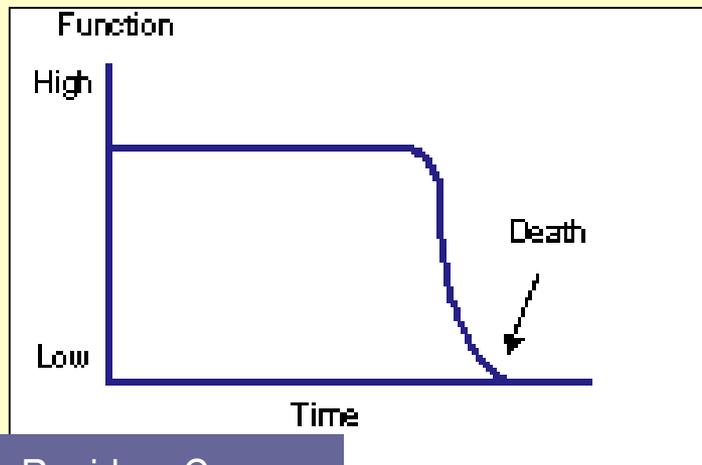
The Changing Context of Dying

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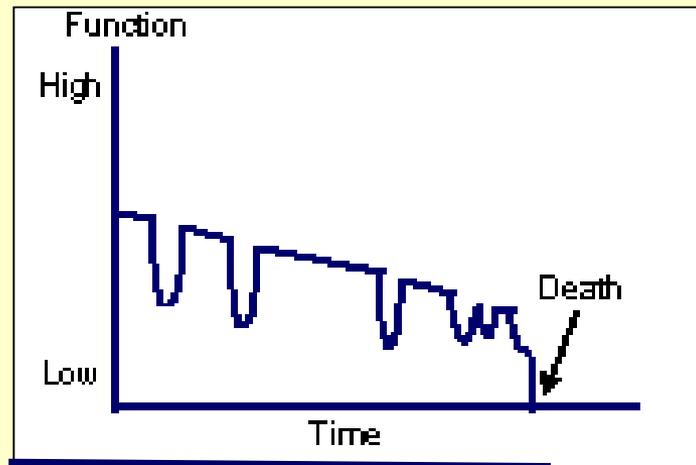
What thoughts, feelings, or images do you experience when you hear that a baby has died? What about the death of a young adult just graduating from college? An 80 year -old who is hit by a car while crossing the street?

Three ways of dying

Rapid, erratic and slow dying trajectories- After Lynn



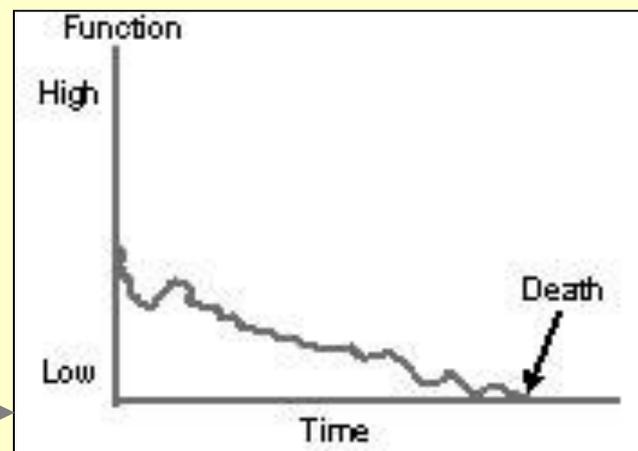
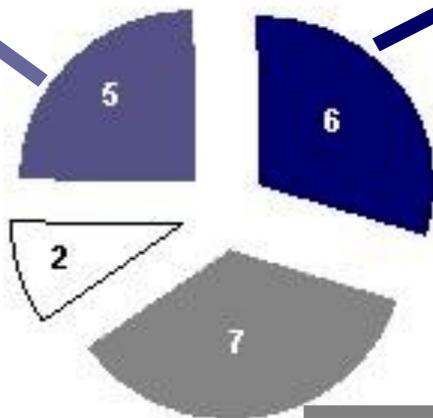
Rapid eg Cancer



Erratic eg Organ Failure

GP has about 20 deaths / year

Sudden death / Other



Slow eg Dementia, frailty

Death in Childhood

- Children have a different perspective of death.
 - They are more impulsive and may seem happy one day and morbidly sad the next.
 - They do not “get over” the death of a parent, nor do they dwell on it.
 - They may take certain explanations (e.g. Grandma is sleeping, Grandpa went on a trip) literally.

Death in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

- Teenagers have little fear of death (they take risks, place a high value on appearance, and seek thrills).
- Adolescents often predict that they will die at an early age and their developmental tendency toward risk taking can be deadly (e.g., suicides, homicides, car accidents).
- Romanticizing death makes young people vulnerable to cluster suicides, foolish dares, fatal gang fights, and drunk driving.

Death in Adulthood

- When adults become responsible for work and family death is to be avoided or at least postponed.
- Many adults quit taking addictive drugs, start wearing seat belts, and adopt other precautions.
- Death anxiety usually increases from one's teens to one's 20s and then gradually decreases.
- Ages 25 to 60: Terminally ill adults worry about leaving something undone or leaving family members – especially children – alone.

Death in Late Adulthood

- ▣ Death anxiety decreases and hope rises.
- ▣ One sign of mental health among older adults is acceptance of their own mortality and altruistic concern about those who will live on after them.
- ▣ Many older adults accept death (e.g. they write their wills, designate health care proxies, reconcile with estranged family members, plan their funeral).
- ▣ **The acceptance of death does not mean that the elderly give up on living!**

What does a good death look like?

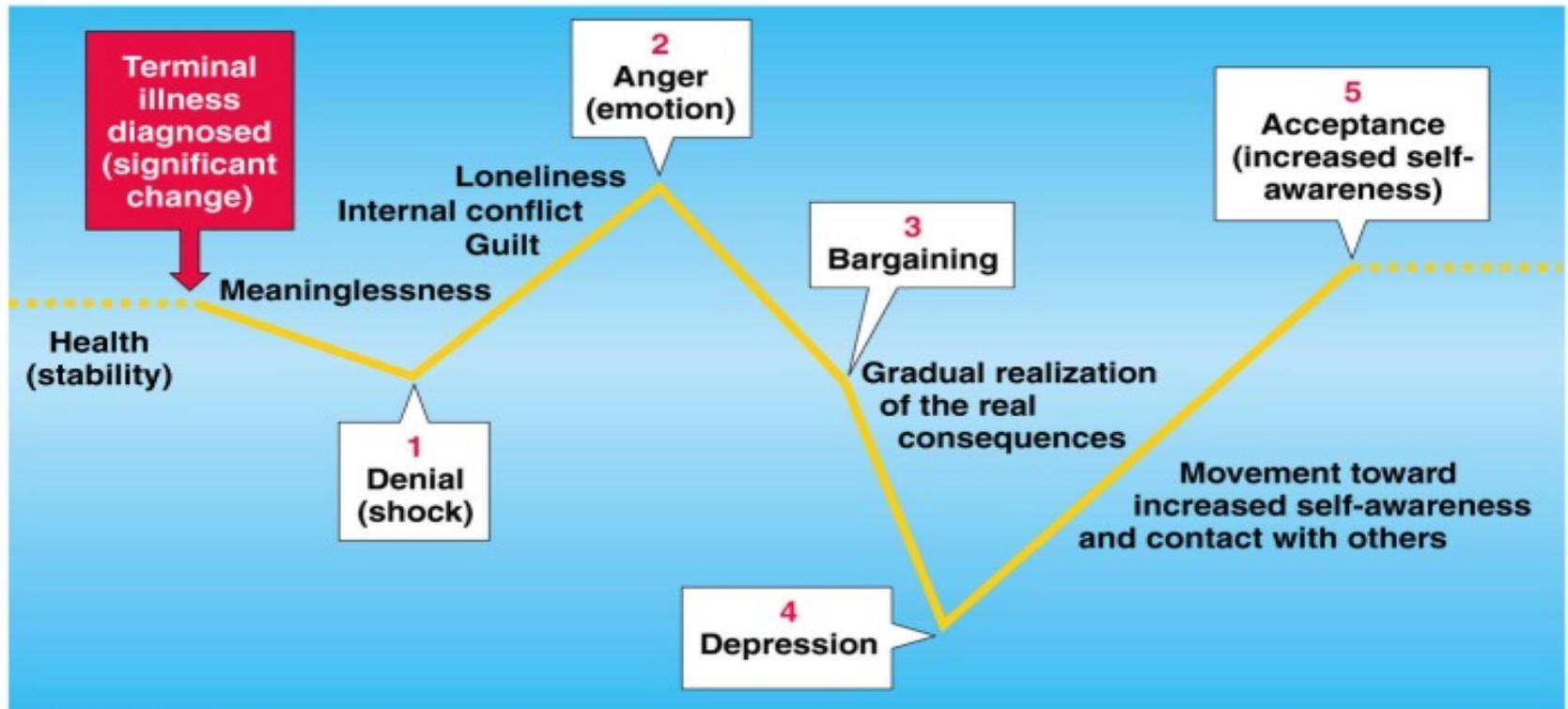
- **Good death**

- A death that is peaceful, quick, and painless and that occurs after a long life, in the company of family and friends, and in familiar surroundings.
- Good death
- *Calm, controlled, sudden but timely*
- People in all religious and cultural contexts hope for a good death.

- **Bad death**

- Lacks these six characteristics and is dreaded, particularly by the elderly

Kübler-Ross's Stages of Dying



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Stages of Dying

Kübler-Ross

Emotions experienced by dying people, which she divided into a sequence of **five stages**:

- *Denial* (“I am not really dying.”)
- *Anger* (“I blame my doctors, or my family, or God for my death.”)
- *Bargaining* (“I will be good from now on if I can live.”)
- *Depression* (“I don’ t care about anything; nothing matters anymore.”)
- *Acceptance* (“I accept my death as part of life.”)

Stage Model based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

- *Physiological needs* (freedom from pain)
- *Safety* (no abandonment)
- *Love and acceptance* (from close family and friends)
- *Respect* (from caregivers)
- *Self-actualization* (spiritual transcendence)

It is hard to talk but you need to start

These are all opportunities to begin a conversation.

- Family gatherings – holidays, funerals
- Death of friend or colleague
- Newspaper & Magazine articles
- Movies & Books
- TV talk shows
- Financial planning
- Medical checkups
- **Please know that conversations about end of life should be ongoing and not a one time event!**

How To Communicate

- Step 1: Introduce the conversation
- Step 2: Explore personal beliefs and choices
- Step 3: Define end-of-life wishes
- Step 4: Document wishes

Define End-of-Life Wishes

- *Beliefs*
 - *How do you want to prepare for death?*
 - *What would help you cope?*
- *Choices*
 - *Where do you want to spend your last days?*
 - *Who do you want near you?*
 - *What kind of medical care do you want?*

Document Wishes

- *Complete your Advance Directives*
- *Living Will*
- *Health Care Power of Attorney*
- *Inform others*
- *Health care professionals, physician*
- *Family members, friends, self*

At the End of the Journey

- “I forgive you”
- “Please forgive me”
- “Thank you”
- “I love you”
- “Goodbye”

Making Final Arrangements

- Hospice care
- Funeral arrangements

Bereavement

- Grief
 - The powerful sorrow that an individual feels at the death of another
 - Highly personal emotion, an anguish that overtakes daily life.
- Mourning
 - The ceremonies and behaviors that a religion or culture prescribes for people to employ in expressing their bereavement after a death

Bereavement

Placing blame

Common impulse after death for the survivors (e.g., for medical measures not taken, laws not enforced, unhealthy habits not changed)

- The bereaved sometimes blame the dead person, sometimes themselves, and sometimes distant others
- Nations may blame one another for public tragedies
- Blame is not necessarily rational

Bereavement

Seeking Meaning

- Often starts with preserving memories (e.g., displaying photographs,)
- Close family members may start a charity

▣ **Disenfranchised Grief**

- A situation in which certain people, although they are bereaved, are prevented from mourning publicly by cultural customs or social restrictions.
- Former wives or husbands

Most bereaved people recover
within a year

A feeling of having an ongoing
bond with the deceased is no
longer thought to be pathological.