



How to Bounce Back from Tragic Situations

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Unfortunately, tragedy touches us all at some point in our lives. In the moment, it may feel like nothing can lift your spirits and pick you up, but as time goes on, ***there are certain coping mechanisms you can adopt to move forward.***

Moving on is a critical step because if you don't accept what has happened, you may be holding onto the grief forever.

The Stages of Grief

It doesn't matter what tragedy has happened in your life, grief tends to follow a certain sequence of stages. While you may not experience all stages, you'll likely experience a few of them.

When you allow these stages to run their course, you'll be able to go on with your life:

- 1. Denial.** In the initial shock of a tragedy, ***your first reaction might be to deny that it even happened.*** At the time it may be the best way for your body to avoid the pain. Depending on what happened, this stage can last from moments to weeks. However, staying at this stage is detrimental since you're never really facing or accepting what has happened.
- 2. Guilt.** Guilt is usually a part of grief whether or not you even have a reason to feel guilty. When you look to a situation after it occurred, it's easy to point out the things you "should have done." ***Take the time to feel the pain if you have to,*** but make sure you strive beyond this stage as well.

3. **Anger.** It probably won't be long before anger sets in. You've realized that you have no control and there is nothing you can do to repair the tragic situation. ***It's important to feel your anger, but at the same time you mustn't allow yourself to be controlled by it.*** You don't want to cause lasting damage to yourself or someone else.
4. **Depression.** This stage will often last a long time. While you might not feel like talking with friends, it's an important thing to do when you're feeling depressed. You may discover a lot of things about yourself during this self-reflective time, which is why it's an important part of the grieving process, although you mustn't dwell in your own worries or anxieties.
5. **When Things Get Better.** You'll soon notice that your life and outlook gradually improves. You may not be back to yourself quite yet, but you're starting to feel better. It's important to keep your lines of communication open and remember that your loved ones want you to have a long, happy, and healthy life.
6. **Acceptance.** This is the last stage. This is where you have truly accepted what has passed and you now feel hope for the future. Although things may have changed, your life is feeling back to normal otherwise.

When You Feel Stuck

It's common to feel stuck in a certain stage of grief. This is especially true when it comes to depression. The best thing you can do is to keep trying.

If you feel like things are taking longer than they should, you always have the option of seeking professional help. Grief counselors are able to help you with your unique situation and may have some simple strategies to help you move forward.