



# The Five Ways We Grieve: Finding Your Personal Path to Healing after the Loss of a Loved One

*Susan A. Berger*

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In this new approach to understanding the impact of grief, Susan A. Berger goes beyond the commonly held theories of stages of grief with a new typology for self-awareness and personal growth. She offers practical advice for healing from a major loss in this presentation of five basic ways, or types, of grieving. These five types describe how different people respond to a major loss. The types are:

- *Nomads*, who have not yet resolved their grief and don't often understand how their loss has affected their lives
- *Memorialists*, who are committed to preserving the memory of their loved ones by creating concrete memorials and rituals to honor them
- *Normalizers*, who are committed to re-creating a sense of family and community
- *Activists*, who focus on helping other people who are dealing with the same disease or issues that caused their loved one's death
- *Seekers*, who adopt religious, philosophical, or spiritual beliefs to create meaning in their lives

Drawing on research results and anecdotes from working with the bereaved over the past ten years, Berger examines how a person's worldview is affected after a major loss. According to her findings, people experience significant changes in their sense of mortality, their values and priorities, their perception of and orientation toward time, and the manner in which they "fit" in society. The five types of grieving, she finds, reflect the choices people make in their efforts to adapt to dramatic life changes.

By identifying with one of the types, readers who have suffered a recent loss—or whose lives have been shaped by an early loss—find ways of understanding the impact of the loss and of living more fully.

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