



## Understanding the Spiral of Grief

By Sheila Munaf-Kanoza

Our minds are very unique; they are used to everything happening in order. If something happens that's not in order, it can leave us dazed, confused and numb. When a death of a loved one happens, it is as though a wedge of our mind is taken out. It leaves our minds disconnected and scrambling to find a way to reconnect. It is important for us to recognize the impact. In today's society everyone is on a fast track wanting everything to be done ASAP. We need to allow ourselves to slow down and let God help us to find hope and strength through grief.

The Grief Wheel has been used for years to describe how a death of a loved one impacts our lives.

Instead of using the model of the grief wheel, I often use the slinky to show a person the spiral of grief.

There will be many moments in your grief where you will find yourself moving forward and backwards, where you find yourself revisiting your grief and rebuilding your life. You might feel like you are bottoming out but like the slinky, you will at some point feel yourself springing back into life. You have the point of impact where death has entered into your life. The death itself can feel as though someone has reached into your chest and pulled your heart out, often leaving you to feel as though a part of you has died.

As we enter the spiral of grief, Shock/Numbness usually sets in and can last from hours to days. Our personality traits cause each of us to react differently. I think God blesses us with this shock to help us get through the first hurdle of grief.

Protest/Denial comes after the shock begins to wear off. I remember after my husband's death thinking to myself this is just a bad dream and I know I am going to wake up and everything is going to be all right.

The Disorganization Stage comes as you begin to move through your grief. It is not uncommon at this stage to feel confused. As healing takes place, the reality of what has happened begins to set in. It is important during this time to allow others to help you. I tell people this is the "ADD" time of grief.

During this time you might find the simplest of tasks to be difficult. What helped me during this time was creating a to-do list so that I could write down things that I wanted to do. As I completed each task I felt a sense of accomplishment.

Reorganization comes when you search for new meaning in your life. I remember looking into a mirror and asking myself, "Who am I? What do I want to be when I grow up?" I realized that I had a choice: I wanted to live, I wanted to laugh, and I wanted to enjoy life to the fullest. The choice is yours; life is too precious to let it pass you by.

Just remember it takes time and that no two people grieve the same.