

Stricken: The 5,000 Stages of Grief

Spike Gillespie and Katherine Tanney

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Reviewed by Carol Hoyer, PhD, for Reader Views (7/09)

Let's face it- loss is going to be a part of our life- there is no getting around it. However, we all deal with loss in a different way and there is no timeframe to "get on with our lives." Loss doesn't just include the death of a loved one or a friend. It encompasses loss of job, friends, divorce, children leaving home and many other sad departures.

There are many books out there that tell us there are several stages of grief a person must go through to become "healed." However, what they don't tell you is that it looks so simple on paper, but someone forgot to tell your heart and soul.

The authors, along with several contributors have written their own stories about loss and the impact it had on them. Their words are compassionate and sincere. They tell you of their own struggles and how they got through their grief. These stories aren't to make one sad, they are inspiring and encouraging and they accept the readers as individuals. An interesting part of the book that hit home was when someone dies; we have the hard task of removing their personal belongings from the house. It means we or someone else must go through everything piece by piece. In the end, even if we remove those items from the home, it doesn't mean we remove our memories. Sometimes people believe that if they get rid of everything all will return to normal.

After each story, there is a small bio of the author of the story, which adds more to the vision of who is writing the story. At the end, there is a wonderful section on 'Helping Others in Grief.' The contributor provides some helpful tips on what to say, what to write, what to bring and making plans. I found this very helpful as I often want to do or say something but I don't know what or how.

"Stricken: The 5,000 Stages of Grief" by Spike Gillespie and Katherine Tanney is an excellent book that can and should be kept on our bookshelves and read frequently. As a professor of Psychology, this is a book I have put on my students "must have list."