

## Getting Past Stage One - Denial

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Denial is stage one of the grief process when you are dealing with any type of loss. Getting past denial is necessary, in order to move into anger, bargaining, depression/sadness and then finally into acceptance. Denial serves an important purpose: it cushions your response to painful events. Just as your body goes into shock when it is injured, preventing you from feeling the pain, you go into emotional shock when you experience things that are too painful to deal with.

Denial is necessary and good for awhile. You will know you are in the denial/shock stage by the following:

You keep replaying the event/problem in your mind and the response is: "It can't be."

You wake up in the morning or during the night and the event/problem is the first thing that pops into your mind.

You can't stop thinking about it.

You are having difficulty functioning.

Denial could also be a way of coping with ongoing problems you don't want to deal with such as addictions, dysfunction, and abuse. By denying the problem exists, you don't have to do anything about it. You can recognize this type of denial by the following:

You don't want to think about it.

You ignore facts and circumstances.

You make excuses.

You stuff your emotions and refuse to feel or recognize them.

People are telling you things you don't want to hear.

Denial is necessary as a shock absorber when problems first happen. Denial is unhealthy when it is used as a way of not dealing with the truth. Jesus promised you that the truth will set you free. Dealing with the denial is the only way you can live in truth.

You can get past your denial by doing the following:

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Give yourself the right to be in denial when it is allowing you to deal with the initial shock.

When you tell yourself, "It can't be," answer with truth by saying, "But, it is."

When you find yourself thinking about it, tell yourself you are going to handle this in a healthy way by working through it, whatever it takes.

Talk about what is going on with people you can trust so you can begin to accept that it is what it is.

Ask God to lead you into all truth and reveal to you what you need to know when you need to know it.

It isn't always easy to get past the denial, because it means you have to deal with painful things, but it is worth it.

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