



# ***Inspirational Activities***

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## **T.I.P. #77**

### **FIVE STAGES OF GRIEVING**

**THEORY:** The “five stages of grieving” by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross has long been the standard model for how people deal with loss. Even though originally these stages were conceptualized for facing the death of a loved one or facing one’s own mortality, the model can be very powerful for understanding the loss of a relationship, marriage, job, dream, or even just the illusion that you thought a person was someone he/she isn’t. I use this handout often when dealing with clients who are depressed and/or suffering from the demise of a relationship, including marital breakup.

#### **T.I.P. #77 Handout: Five Stages of Grieving**

**IMPLEMENTATION:** This sheet has proved helpful for those struggling with many types of loss. Have a client identify what stages he/she has gone through and where he/she is stuck in grieving the loss. The loss can be a psychological loss as well as a “real-life” loss—such as the facing of one’s aging and mortality. It might be breaking through denial and facing the reality that your spouse is not who you “hoped” he/she would be. Those going through a painful separation or divorce find this model extremely helpful in learning to grow into acceptance.

**PROCESSING:** It is unavoidable—we all go through stages of grieving when overcoming hurt and loss. That is a necessary part of life, as Judith Viorst explains in her book *Necessary Losses*. Only by leaving and being left, letting go and moving on, can we grow from inevitable loss and replace the loss with personal growth. If we do not choose growth, we will be immobilized from the loss and become “stuck.” How painful it has been for so many people who have carried to their graves the incomplete mourning of losses in their lives, those who have never grown through to the final stage of acceptance.

## FIVE STAGES OF GRIEVING

(based on the teachings of Elisabeth Kubler-Ross)

Five Stages	Of Death and Dying	Of Healing a Memory
<b>DENIAL</b>	<p>I avoid facing the likelihood of my death. I cannot face mortality.</p> <p>I feel and act as though I am invincible.</p>	<p>I don't admit I either am or ever was hurt. I don't face the reality of my unrealized dreams and illusions.</p> <p>I see things like I want to see them, and not as they are.</p>
<b>ANGER</b>	<p>I blame others for letting death hurt and destroy me. I am filled with resentment and can't forgive.</p>	<p>I blame others for hurting and destroying me. Others are responsible for my pain, and I can't forgive. Anger and "shoulds" consume me.</p>
<b>BARGAINING</b>	<p>I set up conditions to be fulfilled before I'm ready to die. If I do, then I can avoid reality and make things as I want them to be.</p>	<p>I set up conditions to be fulfilled before I'm ready to forgive others and myself. If I act in a certain way, perhaps I can get others to change their minds or behaviors.</p>
<b>DEPRESSION</b>	<p>I blame myself for letting death take over. I failed in my life—I didn't accomplish what I had hoped—I have much regret.</p>	<p>I blame myself for letting hurt destroy me. I failed and am powerless, ashamed, and helpless. Hopelessness, regret, and despair consume me.</p>
<b>ACCEPTANCE</b>	<p>I'm ready to die. I've made peace with others and myself. I have come to terms with my mortality.</p>	<p>I look forward to growth from hurt and change. I can accept and forgive myself and others. I can let go of impossible dreams, illusions, "shoulds," and expectations without a veil of delusion.</p>



## **T.I.P.s #82–#84**

### **THE POWER OF SONG**

**THEORY:** Songs have the potential to cut right to the core. Songs are often central in our client's lives, and too often neglected in therapy. Both in individual and group therapy songs can become tools for self exploration and strength. Often the power of song is untapped in terms of its potential.

#### **T.I.P. #82 Soul Tunes**

#### **T.I.P. #83 Make Your Own Lyrics**

#### **T.I.P. #84 Change Those Dysfunctional Lyrics!**

**T.I.P. #82 IMPLEMENTATION:** Bring in a song to play that demonstrates a concept you want to discuss in group that day. You may have group members close their eyes to experience better the meaning of the message. Have the group describe how they felt listening to the song. Popular and self-affirming songs that may be excellent choices for therapeutic groups include: "I Hope You Dance," by Leeann Womack, "Hero," by Mariah Carey; and "The Greatest Love of All," by Whitney Houston. Alternatives to these popular songs are songs from Jana Stanfield (<http://www.janastanfield.com/>), whose CDs are full of songs reflecting therapeutic messages. Albert Ellis, Father of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, has a CD called "A Garland of Rational Songs" (<http://www.rebt.org/>), which are humorous songs sung by Albert Ellis himself to promote concepts of cognitive therapy. I often use these in presenting to groups, and they are very humorous, entertaining, and powerful. You also can request that participants bring songs to group that they would like to share to express something about themselves.

**T.I.P. #83 IMPLEMENTATION:** A variation on T.I.P. #82 is to choose a song that everyone knows and have the group make their own words based on the self-help principles the group wants to include. Have the group brainstorm on what therapeutic messages they want to include, such as "forgive yourself" or "forgive others," and transform these ideas into lyrics to reflect these messages.

**T.I.P. #84 IMPLEMENTATION:** When we think of the "whiny women victim songs" of the 60s and 70s and many other songs throughout our lifetimes (e.g., "I love him, I love him, and where he goes I'll follow!"), we can recognize codependent themes in many of them. Maybe our new revised rational lyrics would not make a gold record, but we can undo some of the effects of the dysfunctional messages that

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bombard us in popular culture. Have group members brainstorm on songs with dysfunctional messages and rewrite the titles into more rational alternatives. Here are some examples:

### **Song**

“I Can’t Stop Loving You” —Ray Charles

“You Make Me Feel Like a Natural Woman  
—Aretha Franklin (Note: The downside is,  
you can make me feel artificial!)

“There Goes My Reason for Living, There Goes  
My Everything” —Englebert Humperdinck

“You Make Me So Very Happy!”  
—Blood, Sweat and Tears

### **More Rational Message**

“It’s Hard to Stop Loving You”

“I Feel ‘Real’ When I Am with You”

“There Goes Someone I Care a Lot About,  
but I Am Not Worthless Without Her!”

“I Am Happy When I Am with You!”

**PROCESSING:** Sometimes songs can touch us in ways that spoken words cannot. These activities offer possibilities for interaction and lightheartedness in dealing with serious messages. The power of song should not be underestimated. This tool can unleash feelings and can provide guidance for positive self-affirmation. Rewriting lyrics or titles can be music to group members’ ears!

