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On Death & Dying: What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy & Their Own Families. 50th Anniversary Edition.

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

ON DEATH & DYING

What the Dying Have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy & Their Own Families

ELISABETH KÜBLER-ROSS, M.D.

foreword by IRA BYOCK, M.D.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. 2014. Scribner. 297p

Originally published in 1969, Kübler-Ross' book provides detailed extracts from over 500 interviews she conducted with terminally ill patients when she "asked them to share … what it is like to be dying, what kind of needs, fears, and fantasies [they had, as this] tells what kind of things we can do, by which I mean family members and members of the helping professions, to be more helpful."

She categorizes the 'five stages' of dying in terms of anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance and hope. While the modern understanding of these has evolved and become more nuanced (particularly in recognizing they are not necessarily linear), a short annex of the book, 'Guide for further discussion' provides concise practical advice drawn from On Death & Dyingas well as (written by Kübler-Ross and David Kessler) On Grief and Grievingand Life Lessons.

This calls, "try to embrace death and dying as natural parts of life, so that you are better able to face them for others and yourself when the time comes", and categorizes suggestions in terms of communication as a caregiver, handling an illness or loss as a family, grief, unfinished business, and final support.

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