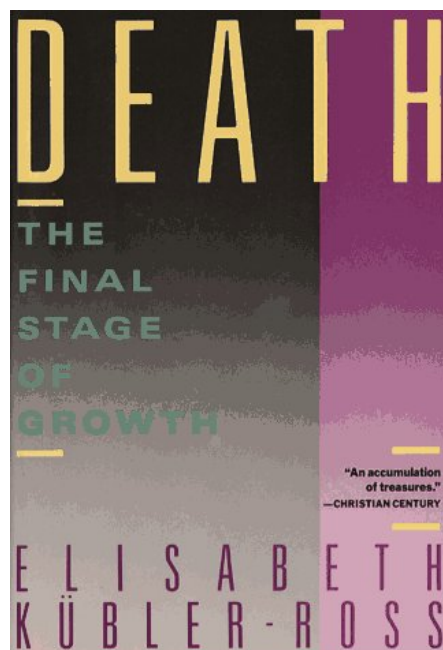




Death: The Final Stage of Growth

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

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Ours is a death-denying society. But death is inevitable, and we must face the question of how to deal with it. Coming to terms with our own finiteness helps us discover life's true meaning.

Why do we treat death as a taboo? What are the sources of our fears? How do we express our grief, and how do we accept the death of a person close to us? How can we prepare for our own death?

Drawing on our own and other cultures' views of death and dying, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross provides some illuminating answers to these and other questions. She offers a spectrum of viewpoints, including those of ministers, rabbis, doctors, nurses, and sociologists, and the personal accounts of those near death and of their survivors.

Once we come to terms with death as a part of human development, the author shows, death can provide us with a key to the meaning of human existence.

Death: The Final Stage of Growth Details

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From Reader Review Death: The Final Stage of Growth for online ebook

Crystal says

Because I hate to start something and not finish it, I chose to keep reading this to see why others gave it applause, raves and 5 stars. Well! The "author" borrowed several letters and essays written by others! So, I skipped the rest of her writing and read only what other contributors had to say on the very complicated, difficult subject of terminal illness. Most are very helpful, respectful, even encouraging. A couple are very strange...such as Dorothy Pitkin's Final Writings. How weird to include this. So, no, not a fan of this Kubler-Ross as an "author".

I don't even want to give this rude little book one star. It is outdated, written in 1975, but this does not excuse the author, a psychiatrist with an MD to her name, for being ignorant, without sympathy, assuming, opinionated and insulting.

This is cruelly and arrogantly written. Hostile to this society, culture, medical profession and faith. And, in the introduction, this woman makes a statement expressing her personal hope for one world religion. Ugh! Every once in a while I find a book I just might burn. This is one.

Dayla says

Kübler-Ross created and named the hierarchical stages before finally reaching the stage we all want to get to "acceptance." For that vocabulary alone, we should be grateful to have had Kübler-Ross show us how to articulate our pain. This book was the only thing providing some pain relief when my brother passed away. I would highly recommend this book.

Recommend: If someone you love dearly passes away, just keep reading any Kübler-Ross book over and over, just as much as you can digest (slow is good in this case).

Elizabeth Merchant says

There wasn't a lot of new information for me here, and overall I found it slightly tiresome. But others might not feel the same; I just happened to have already come across similar info in other books.

Joan says

As a young woman and nurse, this author captivated me with her ability to work with the dying without utter grief. She surprised me with her scientific way of describing reincarnation. It opened doors for me into reading many other books and refreshing my outlook on working with the dying, including myself.

Elyssa says

Not as good as On Death and Dying, but still an important work in the collection of books that Kubler-Ross wrote to bring awareness to the taboo topic of death.

Sue says

Although not taught today, I still see Kubler-Ross's stages as instructive.

Samih Mubarak says

Good selection, ranging from ideology of hospitals to the different cultural views of death and to very personal experiences. It takes you on a journey that's rather enlightening and full of insights which helps you to undress your sense of self and reveal your real identity. As she puts it a unification self. I really enjoyed it as it assert many notions I had and refutes others and helped me through unresolved grief business.

Emmanuel Vazquez says

Amazing book. My kindle book so had to see what physical books I could read. This came up and saw it had good review so decided to try it. Really good choice. Death is something we all will have to deal with at least once in our life. This book is correct in stating that the US society denies death, it seems that we don't think it exist. However the truth is that death does. As this book states many times you must learn to accept that one day it will all end, then you will start appreciating the days you have. I also likes that this book show different culture's view on death. This is a must for someone that has to deal with death, or someone that is dealing with the death of a loved one, or anyone living because our day will come. This is a must read. Amazing perspective on things and makes you think about what death and life really are.

Stacey says

Week 9

I would never have guessed that a book about death could really be so inspiring about life. This collection of pieces, gathered by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, was a wonderfully crafted journey along the path we must walk when dealing with the inevitable in our lives; from different cultural understandings of death to how we can interact with terminally ill loved ones, ways we can work to accept our own mortality to steps that may help us grow in that process. And at the very end, discussing how our perception of death changes our lives. A key factor to relationship with death is in fact our western death-denying attitude. This unwillingness to accept the full path of life causes great psychological harm when we are dealing with the death of loved ones or faced with it in ourselves. It also inhibits our ability to fully live. As I moved through the last chapters of the book I began to underline more phrases and concepts which resonated with me.

Mwalimu Imara's pieces was superb. It provided a framework for understanding that gaining peace through any transition (with death being the largest and final one) comes when we "live lives of awareness, mutual self-communication, and direction" (159). This means accepting yourself for who you truly are, committing to communicating that self to others and actively listening to the significant others who are communicating with you, and living out that commitment with everything you do. And yet, it "is the denial of death that is partially responsible for people living empty, purposeless lives; for when you live as if you'll live forever, it becomes too easy to postpone the things you know that you must do" (164). And so, this book about death in fact opened up a whole lot more insight into life than I would ever have imagined when I picked it up from Goodwill.

Christian Engler says

Death: The Final Stage of Growth is an especially enlightening work not simply because of the varied and knowledgeable contributed views to this particular volume, but because it approaches death and dying not from a scientific or psychological standpoint, but rather, from a cultural, sociological and mixed religious context. The essays that focus on the Eskimo, Jewish, Hindu and Buddhist approach to death and dying are deeply taken into account, as are their rituals, their cultural approaches and their belief systems. But though all the faith approaches differ in one way or another, the unifying human elements are—for the most part—a consistent grief, fear, faith of a higher authority and the oncoming trials and tribulations that dying can and will entail, all of which unites us. Dignity should begin at the conception of life, and it does not cease until the last breath is taken and arrangements for what follows are respectfully set up. But in many cases, as illustrated in the section entitled: "The Organizational Context of Dying" by Hans O. Mauksch, once a person is diagnosed as having a terminal illness and thus becomes a full-time patient, (s)he, after stripping and handing over their possessions, is banded like a piece of property. They then are quickly yet efficiently—like in the military or in religious life—slowly deloused of their sense of autonomy; they are gradually assimilated to the institution. And their physical and mental definitions are not fully acknowledged. It is not done out of spiteful cruelty, just ignorant insensitivity. But through psychological studies—as done by Kubler-Ross as well as others in the field—and radical restructuring in palliative care, hospitals are really no longer deemed as the menacing sick houses of olden times. Rather, the patient as a whole is acknowledged, not merely the physical self. The soul, the intelligence, the humor and wisdom. The "all" of the person is taken into account, and as that is so, the hospital environment in its own right changes for the better. But it stems from communication and compassion and facing what for almost all of us is the ultimate and insurmountable phobia. All in all, Death: The Final Stage of Growth is another excellent and necessary Kubler-Ross offering.

Bookreaderljh says

This would not be an easy book to read when actually dying but it might be a very good one to read anyways. But that being said - this book should be read long before the time that you know you are dying as it has excellent points for living. The first part of the book looks at how our culture deals with the dying and especially the starkness of the hospital system. It then goes on to look at a number of different cultures and religions that face death and dying in very different and positive ways. It also has a number of studies proving the efficacy of the hospice system and finding health professionals that are honest and caring when dealing with terminal patients and their families. Keep in mind this book was written back in the 70's and thankfully I think a lot of this knowledge has slowly made it into the healthcare system. The book also has many wonderful stories from the dying and how knowing they were dying led them to growth. There is a reminder of the 5 stages of dying for oneself or a loved one (denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally

acceptance) but the better point I came out of reading this was the 3 goals of living - finding out who you are, committing to what matters and finding direction to meet that commitment. As you grow and radiate that outwards to others - that is how your life can matter and live on after death (the ripple in the water effect). Loved the idea that denying death can lead to a meaningless life as if you believe you will live forever you may postpone the things you know you must/should do. Death is the final stage of growth (obviously) but if we try to grow/better ourselves/strive for our goals each day as if it were our last - how much farther we might go and be happier about our lives rather than fearing our death. Dying is easy - living is hard!!! Surprisingly good book (despite the subject) to support my New Year's resolution - "This is my life. This second. PAY ATTENTION."

Roslyn says

What a wonderful gem of a book.

"Hospitals are institutions committed to the healing process, and dying patents are a threat to that defined role... The human being who is dying is inexorably perceived to be a failure to the health professions."

"For the Turkeese, life ends when you are forty; death begins when you are forty."

"The religion of Shintoism is for the living and Buddhism is for the dead."

"All too often families and pastors and even medical staff assume that all a dying person wants is to be comfortable. Once the death sentence is passed, we tend to fluff up the pillows and hope, for his or her sake, that death will come soon. We are terribly anxious about pain and seek the latest medications, most of which deaden the mind as well as the body. I am not prepared to say that this is all wrong. But I do believe we have our priorities confused. Someone's life is about to end. Surely, there are important things for that person to say and do before he dies."

"He who tries to ignore death... robs himself of the purposeful life which can come only to him who unflinchingly accepts death as an integral part of life."

"Dying takes no skill... What is hard is living--living until you die."

"In the first months he struggled with a question that he would have to deal with over and over. 'If I'm not going to live very long, why shouldn't I do anything at all that I want to do?' It hooked itself into specifics at different times: 'Why should I work?' 'Why shouldn't I buy anything I want?' 'Why shouldn't I stay high on drugs if I want?' Louie had to discover for himself neither escape nor indulgence give life meaning."

"Health is not equivalent to happiness, surfeit, or success. It is foremost a matter of being wholly one with whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. Even our death is a healthy event if we fully embrace the fact of our dying... The issues are awareness, of living in the present. Whatever our present existence consists of, if we are at one with it, we are healthy."

Kiwi says

This was one of those life-changing books. I tend to think that's what books involving death are. I got many strange looks and surprised comments about my reading such a book. I could merely quirk a brow and attempt inadequately to explain. How can one talk about life without the shadow or death to give it depth and dimension? How can one talk about death without the path leading up to it? They're very connected. Life wouldn't mean much without death, and death wouldn't mean anything without life. Seems silly to me to talk endlessly of one and leave the other a taboo.

I support this book being passed around and read. Sometimes it's hard, sometimes it's emotional, but (for me) it was always worth reading through to the next page. After all, we know in the end it's going to end well:

we're still living. We can take the messages about death and use them in life, the way the terminally ill in the book could not. They learned, yes, and it's so beautiful that they did--but they learned right before they were gone. Acceptance, it is a wonder. But accepting death (not seeking it, not agonizing over it, not denying it) before being faced with it so intimately is also a wonder. A lasting wonder, that could last decades.

I imagine those lucky enough to have grown up knowing about death, viewing it as the not so amiable but still vitally important neighbor who visits from time to time and respecting it as such. I imagine those lucky enough to see that and accept it as part of life, not as something that must not be talked about (at all costs, no goodness no, even one's refuse may be talked about over this subject matter!) and not ignored. I imagine those lucky enough to take part in their own living through acknowledgment of their own deaths and those of their loved ones.

It was a great book. That's essentially the gist.

Helga Cohen says

This was a very interesting book by the renowned author on the subject of dying. In this book she discussed topics ranging from the stark ideology of hospitals to the different cultural views from Eskimo, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist which deal with it in different and positive ways. There were also some very personal stories from the dying and how knowing it lead them to growth and not fear. She goes into the 5 stages- denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance.

From reading this book we learn that there are 3 goals of living-finding out who we are, committing our lives to what matters, and finding the right direction in life to commit life to what matters. Denying death can lead to a meaningless life because postponing things will elude important things.

Through psychological studies done by Kubler Ross and others, restructuring in palliative care, hospitals are no longer as menacing. Patients are seen as a whole, the soul, mind, and body in all stages are taken into account. Communication and compassion are shared so the phobia is lessened or eliminated.

This was a really good read with an amazing perspective and recommended as are all of her books when someone you love has passed away (my father and pet in the last year).

Maggie says

Okay this book is old, so some of the information, I hope, is outdated. But in this book edited by Kubler-Ross has some interesting facts about different religion's view on death. It also showed how hospitals & doctors can make this whole process so much harder by their view that people should not die. Thanks for the book, Sharon.
