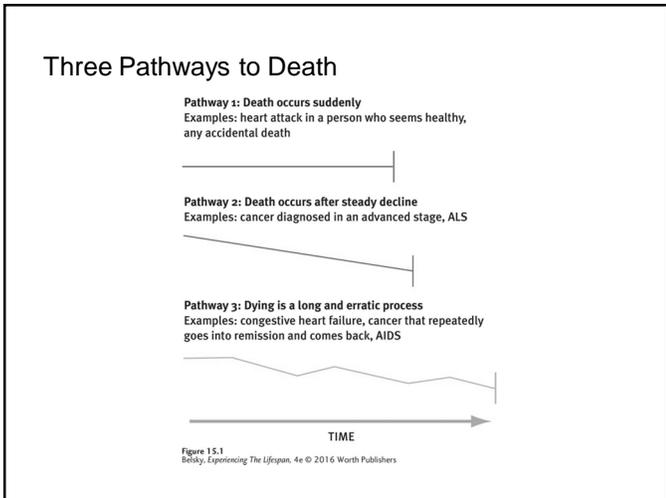


- ### In This Chapter
- Setting the Context
  - A Short History of Death
  - The Dying Person
  - The Health-Care System
  - The Dying Person: Taking Control of How We Die



### A Short History of Dying

<p>Death as a natural part of life (eighteenth and nineteenth century)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No medicine People died quickly of infectious diseases.</li><li>• Dying was familiar It was routine event at <i>every stage of life</i> and a typical part of the community.</li><li>• Later, due to fears of disease, death became more removed from the community.</li></ul>	<p>Death is vigorously addressed by doctors (early twentieth century)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modern medicine conquers infectious diseases, moving death to the end of the lifespan.</li><li>• Dying moved to hospitals, far from view.</li><li>• Result was that dying is a strange, frightening "health-care-managed" event.</li></ul>	<p>Death awareness movement (late 1960s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talking about death becomes acceptable.</li><li>• Thanatology (study of death and dying) classes became the rage on university campuses.</li><li>• Doctors were more willing to talk about cancer.</li></ul>
---	--	---

## Cultural Variations on a Theme

- The Hmong – Asian population that migrated to North America after Vietnam War
  - Believed dying could “unlock the gate of evil spirits”
  - When death becomes imminent, family gathers around loved one
  - After death, the deceased is prepared to be viewed
  - If death occurs in a hospital, family is allowed the opportunity to mourn person

## Kübler-Ross's Stages of Dying

- **Elizabeth Kübler-Ross published *On Death and Dying* in 1969 and delineated stage theory of dying**
- Kübler-Ross found
  - Open communication is important. Those who are diagnosed with a terminal illness should discuss their condition.
  - Dying people pass through five emotional stages.

## Kübler-Ross's Five Emotions Regarding Death and Dying

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance



*Can you characterize each stage?*

## Problems with Kübler-Ross's Theory

- **Problems with theory**
  - Not all terminally ill patients want to discuss their situation
  - Not every culture feels it is appropriate to openly discuss death
  - Not every person passes through distinctive stages adjusting to death

The More Realistic View: Many Differing Emotions;  
Wanting Life to Go On

- Dying people differentially experience many emotions in unpredictable stages
- The elderly typically report no fear of death
- Off-time deaths, such as in youth, are particularly painful for the person and survivors

In Search of a