



## Sadly, It Truly Isn't Just a River in Egypt

Posted by [Prof. Goose](#) on June 20, 2005 - 6:17am

When you teach people about how to learn about/research complex problems, they are usually instructed to follow some version of this process:

- (1) identify the process through which social problems are constructed,
- (2) identify existence of the social problem,
- (3) identify core causes of the social problem,
- (4) identify structural solutions to the social problem, and
- (5) identify individual actions that contribute to structural solutions.

I guess that's what we here at TOD (and the [rest of the PO blogosphere](#) for that matter) are trying to do.

The catch is that this social problem hits really close to home. One of the "core causes of this problem," at least as I see it, is a lack of public awareness or even perhaps mass denial of the coming peak oil phenomenon.

Americans are at various stages of awareness and acceptance of our addiction to oil. [Viewed from afar, the range of public attitudes seems remarkably similar to the five stages of grief famously described by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, or acceptance.](#) (the Kubler-Ross ideas were initially recorded [here by Bob Burnett](#))

For many of you who have been following this topic prior to or even during the existence of this blog, you're likely past the point of the initial denial. However, many people are not likely to want to discuss peak oil, or *cannot*, once they actually hear the peak oil evidence.

Also, [as I have discussed before](#), many people may not want to think about the problem, or may not have the capacity to think about peak oil, because it's just too big. (Believe me, there are some days where it's tough to think about this.)

My first exposure to "peak oil" was on a long overnight drive, flipping through the stations, I stumbled across Matt Savinar on Art Bell's Coast to Coast AM show. Some topics on Art's show are at least interesting enough to keep me awake, so I listened.

I'll never forget my reaction. "Hooey!" I said. "It can't be that bad."

About a week later, I remembered the show and went over to Savinar's site while bored and read some more.

"Hooey!" "It really can't be THAT bad." "If this were true, someone would do something about it."

Then, interestingly, I didn't hear about or think about a darned thing related to the topic for a while afterwards.

One day, about a month later after reading Savinar, my subconscious must have digested it all. I started thinking about it again. I got angry. I started writing about it on my blog, and I was pissed off.

The process is, of course, different for everyone.

Now it's a few months later. I'm still not sure whether I am in the bargaining phase or the acceptance phase to be honest. Perhaps I am depressed! But at least I am trying to inform and discuss here at TOD and in my real life.

(This is but part one of a series of posts I am going to be doing on the psychology of threatening situations as it applies to peak oil. I think it's important to understand how the human animal deals with tough information. It's very instructive and important to understand, especially when you're trying to talk to people you care about.)

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