

# One Curve to Rule Them All

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<https://github.com/dirkengel/>

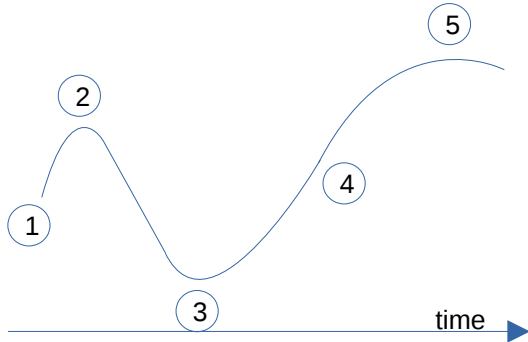


Fig. 1: The curve

experiencing loss in general. So no problem, if you are shocked when the new organization is announced, wait a while and everything should be fine again. Regarding the states refer to table 1.

There is one curve (Fig. 1) that appears again and again. At least as a SW engineer have come across this graph several times, interestingly in different diagrams and context.

## Incarnation I

If your company has planned a reorganization in the past that impacted your department, you may have been confronted with this curve as part of a diagram that illustrates the [Kübler-Ross](#) grief cycle. Although originally created with death in mind, the model is often used to explain the emotions (y-axis) one goes through when

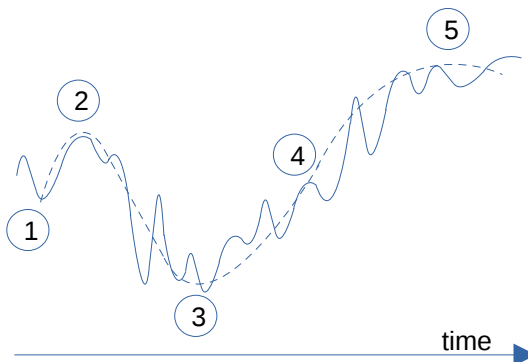


Fig. 2: My curve

## Incarnation II

The same curve is also used to describe the [Dunning-Kruger](#) effect, which explains the relation of persons with less expertise and their tendency to overestimate their ability. However, it seems that the curve was not part of the original publication but associated later. Anyway, I can observe similar state transitions in myself when I am learning something new. Though for me, the grade of self-assessment on the y-axis looks more like Fig. 2. There are many more rapidly changing (daily) ups and downs. The names of the striking points can be found in table 1.

## Incarnation III

The third incarnation of the same graph is the [Gartner](#) hype cycle, which visualizes the relation of a given technology's visibility (y-axis) over time. Since there a lot of hypes these days, you can see references to this cycle quite often, most recently in relation to ChatGPT.

Table 1: The five states of the three models.

	I Kübler-Ross	II Dunning-Kruger	III Gartner
1	Shock		Technology Trigger
2	Denial	Peak of "Mount Stupid"	Peak of Inflated Expectations
3	Anger & Depression	Valley of Despair	Through of Disillusionment
4	Bargaining	Slope of Enlightenment	Slope of Enlightenment
5	Acceptance	Plateau of Sustainability	Plateau of Productivity

## Commonalities

What makes this curve so versatile that it can be used to explain three (and maybe even more) effects? Fig. 2 reminds me of a Fourier series, could that be the reason? Well, no. The three aforementioned phenomena are not so different, all three deal with change. Change through a stroke of *fate*. Change through learning. Change due to an emerging new technology. In all these cases, the curve illustrates the impact of the caused change over time, the impulse response of an elastic system (criticism [Gartner](#)).

## My takeaway message

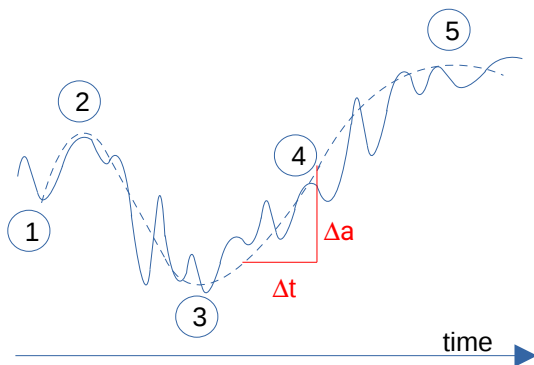


Fig. 3: The change of change

hype around that new technology, looks like some have a keen interest in keeping the hype alive or it really is a game changer and I should finally get into it.

A chart that shows the change in response to a change doesn't contain too much information, does it?

Personally, I try to have an eye on the curve progression to avoid getting trapped by the “It will get worse before it gets better” fallacy ([Dobelli](#)). Whenever there is no positive progress over a longer period of time, it is worth asking: The reorganization shows no real improvement, maybe someone missed something important in the planning phase? I still feel lost about the new thing I am trying to learn, maybe I should consult another book, tutorial or someone? There is still

## References

- Kübler-Ross [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five\\_stages\\_of\\_grief](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_stages_of_grief), last access 2023-03-05.
- Dunning-Kruger [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunning%E2%80%93Kruger\\_effect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunning%E2%80%93Kruger_effect), last access 2023-03-05.
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