


The Five Stages of (Audit) Grief

Alan Bain

Have a Good Support System in Place

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Introduction

Alan Bain

- 37 years of IT experience – I don't feel that old
- Software Asset Management out of necessity
- Not a lawyer (but I can talk like one)
- Partial credit for nearly \$300 Million in software savings
- Fun, referenceable clients

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Hero, Husband, Father, Friend



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Agenda

- Thesis – What you may learn
- The Five Stages of Grief
- An example we can relate to
- How the model fits an audit
- How to avoid grief in an audit
- Conclusion and Next Steps

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Thesis

Grief takes many forms for people and the emotion is experienced for many reasons. Most of these reasons are rather personal in nature and include the loss of a loved one, the end of a relationship, the onset of disease or even something so inane as the loss of insurance coverage. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross documented the emotions of grief in what has become commonly referred to as the Five Stages of Grief. This presentation seeks to extend and document the Kübler-Ross model to an organization's approach to a software audit.

What you may learn...


- How our normal human emotions will play out in an audit
- Audits are unavoidable but they don't need to put us in a tailspin of grief
- **Surrounding yourself with support will improve the outcome**



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The Five Stages of Grief



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Stages Defined

- Denial – The first stage is denial. Individuals believe that a mistake has been made and cling to a preferred reality
- Anger – When denial subsides, anger takes over – “Why me?”, “This is not fair” or even “Who is to blame?”
- Bargaining – While this emotion takes on many forms, it ends up feeling like negotiation with God.
- Depression – Despair sets in with recognition of mortality. During this stage, an individual may become silent or refuse visitors.
- Acceptance – The final stage finds the individual moving forward to a better place.






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An Example COVID-19

- Denial
 - This was the predominant emotion in the first few months
 - It was easier to think this would only last a few months
 - “This virus won’t affect us”
- Anger
 - Why is this happening?
 - Why are you making me stay home?
 - You are taking away my activities!
- Bargaining
 - Only 2 weeks? OK, I can deal with that.
 - What if I wear a mask? Can I go out?
 - What if I get a shot? Can I eat in a restaurant?
- Depression
 - When will this end?
 - All my friends are getting sick
- Acceptance
 - This is happening
 - I can work from home

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The Model Fits an Audit



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Denial

- Often blurs with Anger
- A letter is received via email – “License Review”
- Recipient ignores the benign email – Denial
- Reminders make us feel guilty, leading to further Denial
- Denial ends with
 - Escalation to an executive
 - Or worse, escalation to Legal resulting in...

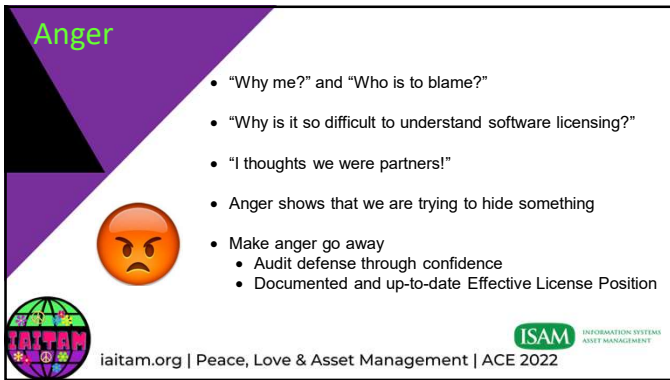


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Anger

- “Why me?” and “Who is to blame?”
- “Why is it so difficult to understand software licensing?”
- “I thought we were partners!”
- Anger shows that we are trying to hide something
- Make anger go away
 - Audit defense through confidence
 - Documented and up-to-date Effective License Position



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Bargaining

- Negotiating with God... Or Oracle
- Anger and Denial are still just below the surface
- Positive Bargaining
 - A new contract to alleviate the audit
 - Need to swallow your denial and anger
 - But it will save time
- Negative Bargaining
 - Privacy concerns
 - Non-disclosure threat
 - Anger remains

A vendor has a right to perform an audit



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Depression

- Bargaining failed... And the vendor may be right
- Rightness drives depression
 - "How much is this going to cost?"
- Understand contract and license terms
 - Unlimited isn't
 - Enterprise doesn't mean free
- Avoid depression by starting your defense early
- Know your ELP to avoid a compromising position








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Acceptance

- Acceptance begins the course of healing
- Acceptance is the start of the resolution
- Admit...
 - You have a compliance problem
 - You can work with the vendor to resolve
- Seek an equitable solution that will bring value

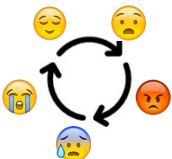






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It's A Cycle

- Notice of an audit
- Data Collection
- Draft Effective License Position
- Report to the vendor
- Audit Resolution

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How to Avoid Grief in an Audit

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Avoidance

- Replace the five stages with one stage - Avoid
- Assess and improve your Software Asset Management
- Review and update your ELPs
- Review contracts to ensure compliance
 - Reporting
 - Metrics
- Progress is made through knowledge and acceptance

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Support

- Build an Audit Response Team
 - Procurement
 - Entitlement
 - Document keeper
 - Legal
 - Contact terms and conditions
 - Final data review
 - Technical
 - Tool support
 - Deployment discovery
 - Management
 - Interface with vendor
 - Run an audit like a project
 - Competent consulting expertise


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Review

- Utilize team for regular mock audits
- Review industry data for auditing vendors
- Test ELPs for accuracy
 - Top 10 by spend
 - Include auditing vendors
- Contracts
 - Contact names, numbers and emails
 - Audit clauses for notice and frequency



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Conclusion

- Have a good support system in place
- You can speed the steps, but you can't skip them
- Build SAM processes that can alleviate compliance issues
- You aren't alone – Everyone will get audited

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For further information please contact:

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