

A DEATH IN THE FAMILY

It is something that touches every family on earth but that does not make it any easier to bear; particularly if you have been very close to that family member. It can never be a pleasant experience. It is doubly difficult if he or she has been taken early in life by an accident or disease.

The death of a parent is a particularly difficult experience and it can affect you as the child, whether young or adult, in a number of ways, but one thing is the same; a void has been created in your world which you feel can never be filled and it can shatter you. You may feel that your life is spinning out of control with no way of coming to a stop in the near future. Your grief will entail heartache, pain and sorrow, often in immeasurable amounts and all these feelings have to be dealt with as time progresses. Grief can be compounded when there are siblings and other family members who are also expressing their loss in various ways. It can actually help you if you can help them through their grieving period. Helping others can be quite therapeutic.

It is very important to grieve for that person but it is also important that you do not stay in that state continually. It may be the most difficult season for you in your time of grief, but it will pass and when it does, if you keep the right attitude, you will come out on the other side stronger than before.

Often, the grieving process can contain phases which include very deep anger, denial, bargaining, loneliness and depression. You know you are coming out the other side of that process when there is acceptance and eventually peace about what has happened.

We know there is a grieving process that we must all go through in varying degrees but it is how far one allows the grieving process to take over their life that decides whether they spiral down into depression or whether they take a deep breath and get on with living. It is sad just how many people allow the death of a loved one take over their life, withdraw within themselves and refuse to embrace life fully again. Queen Victoria was one of those people who did just that. She lost her beloved husband, Prince Albert, after only 21 years together and mourned his passing for the rest of her life.

Grieve for a loved one lost, yes, but do not withdraw from life. You may feel stress during this time which is normal; knowing how to manage it, however, can help you move forward. Distress is caused by a pessimistic attitude and becomes a negative response by the body when stress continues without relief. It can cause illness by upsetting the internal balance of the body which show in many ways such as blood pressure problems, headaches, insomnia, panic attacks and anxiety.

Instead, make an effort to think and do uplifting things to help you move on with your life. This can be done by interacting with others, especially those who have lived through and survived a similar experience. Also do things with people who nurture, comfort and recharge you. It can be helpful to plant a tree or flowers in memory of the person you have lost and make time to relax and think of the good times you had with them without

allowing those memories to overwhelm you. Instead, perhaps you could fill a scrapbook with letters, notes and poems or put together a photo album of their life with all the good memories; such things can keep your thoughts balanced and positive.

Give yourself permission to feel sad and allow tears to come; if you feel angry, allow yourself to vent steam in private; it may help to get it out of your system. Don't be afraid to ask for help and let people know your needs. Don't ever think of yourself as being a burden to others; most people get immense satisfaction from being able to help someone in need whether that need is practical or emotional. Give yourself plenty of exercise; just walking can help to relieve the stress and tensions you feel and it can help to improve the way you think. Also sleep and eat properly and remember to laugh. All these things help you draw on your strengths and give you a positive attitude.

As hard as it is for you now, you will survive. There are others who are close to you who depend on you to take the right attitude and to be prepared to help them along the road that is life. Take the attitude of "So what! I can go on and I will live life to the full." You will never forget your loved one, but if you fill your thoughts with happy memories you will be able to enjoy life and move on to bigger and better moments.