

## **"WHEN WILL I GET BETTER"**

The question, "when will I get better" is asked from many bereaved persons. Unknowingly, you have just displayed progress in the healing process. Remember that there is no "timetable" on how long it will take when you actually do feel better. I think one of the important factors here to bear in mind is that you are NO longer the same person you were before your loved one died.

It sometimes feels that you are born all over again, only this time with a broken heart. Well meaning families and friends at times expect too much of us, only because they have never experienced the agony of losing someone through death. Bear in mind that for every step we take forward, we take two steps backward: but when we take that one step forward, it is a major accomplishment.

I guess one of the first signs I knew I was getting better is when I read back through some of my feelings that I wrote down well over a year and a half ago. When I read some of the notes, I was shocked and surprised at how I felt; each page was filled with pain, each page with, "When will I get better?"

No earth shattering answers will come to any of us during the grief process. Somehow we develop a strength on our own of learning to cope and deal with it. You cannot go around it, under it, or over it, as I tried so many times-YOU must go through to survive.

Ironically, we have no choice when our loved one dies, it is out of our control, but we do have a choice in healing ourselves. It's the hardest task we will ever have to perform.

Getting better came to me by being active in our Bereaved Parents Group. In the early stages of my healing process. I could only attend the meetings and sit and listen. I was too overwhelmed with pain, anger and guilt to say anything. By becoming involved and listening to others, I have a sense of feeling that "I was getting better". Just being around others reduced the intensity of my pain: I began to see a light at the end of my tunnel of nightmares.

Don't be afraid to keep a private diary all to yourself. Write down your thoughts and feelings and in time to come, you too will be amazed when you look back. It is difficult to remember each week how you feel, but when you have it in writing, believe me, you will find that you are getting better.

Adapted from Mickey Vorobel, Bereaved Parent & Survivors Support Group Member, Syracuse, N.Y.