

Caring Enough to Hurt

After my daughter Tricia's death, the time of mourning began. My own personal mourning took a number of unhealthy turns due to past unresolved grief that combined with my present grief and left me in a state of severe depression. It became necessary to seek professional help and to be hospitalized.

The need to be hospitalized at the very hospital that I worked at left me embarrassed. I didn't want to be there and didn't want people to see me. The routine on admission to the hospital was to take blood samples, E.C.G. and chest Xray. I had been admitted late in the day and someone came just before bedtime to take me to X-ray.

I was put in a wheel chair and wheeled down to the X-ray department where I was left in the hallway to wait my turn. I hoped that no one that I knew would see me, but they did. After listening to a speech on trusting the Lord I was glad to be left alone. A little bit later another man was wheeled into the hall. I secretly hoped he wouldn't be put too close to me because I didn't really want to compare notes with another patient. He was not only put close to me, he was parked directly in front and facing me. You could hardly avoid a conversation that way! I gave a weak smile and tried to avoid eye contact, but he greeted me and we were soon comparing illnesses. I thought about lying, but the man appeared to be a somewhat kindly man, so I just told the truth. Actually I don't know that I could have kept from telling it. I was hurting too much. I told him I was being treated for depression due to the death of my daughter after a car accident.

My life could go on for another thousand years, but I will never forget what that man said that night. I don't know who he is. I don't know what kind of experiences he has lived through. I have no idea where his words, his wisdom and timing came from. The gentleman said the perfect thing at the perfect time. He looked me directly in the eye with a kindly and sympathetic look and said, "*At least you cared enough to hurt.*" After a brief conversation someone came and wheeled him away, but his words have stayed with me. "*At least you cared enough to hurt.*"

There are a lot of the elements of grief that I will set aside as time moves on: the denial, the blaming, the anger, and the guilt. While I expect that in time the hurt and pain will recede, I am certain there will always be times when it will return. I have often wondered if I will ever stop hurting. Now I know that there will always be times of hurting over my daughter's death. I am not certain that I would want the hurt to stop and completely disappear. I now realize that my hurt and my pain is the evidence that I loved. So, when the hurting returns I smile to myself and spend some moments thinking of her. Thankful that I loved her enough to hurt.

"At least you cared enough to hurt."

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