

Feeling Abandoned

My mom and dad got divorced when I was little and I'm 15 now. My dad hasn't talked to me or seen me since I was 10. He called me a few months ago and said he would take me to a concert I wanted to see. I was so excited to see him again, but the concert came and went and he never showed up or even called me. I've tried calling and he won't call me back. I'm so angry and hurt that I just want to write him a nasty letter and tell him to never talk to me again. I don't know what to do.

When I read something like this the anger wells up inside of me. OUCH! Oh, how your heart must hurt! I am so sorry that your Dad has not cherished you. There are no easy answers for how to heal from this kind of pain. It is excellent that you are seeking help! I recently saw the movie, *Grid Iron*, and it shows how much damage is done by parents that don't love their children well. The very most important thing for you to realize right now is that you have a choice. You can get bitter and let this pain taint every relationship that you have, or you can let it make you better.

You may have feelings that it was your fault or may place blame on yourself where it does not belong. You may have found yourself saying things like, "If I were more loveable or if I were a better person, then they wouldn't have left. I guess I'm a failure." When trying to sort through your feelings of abandonment, realize that your feelings of disappointment should be directed towards the one that left, not the one left behind. You are never to blame for someone else's actions, sins or failings. Your dad is responsible for his own actions. In turn, however, blaming him doesn't solve anything either and it certainly doesn't ease your feelings of pain and loss.

Finding forgiveness in your heart is crucial in dealing with your pain, so as far as writing that nasty letter, we suggest holding off on that. Yes, it's good to let your father know how his actions have hurt you, but you need to understand it more yourself first. Despite how he has hurt you, you have a choice to respond by speaking the truth in love, or you can continue the cycle of pain and hurtful actions by name calling, blaming and piercing words. It's hard to comprehend how to forgive someone who has hurt you so much, but we encourage you to look to the ultimate Forgiver as your example. We suggest reading through the book of Romans in the bible to begin your journey of healing.

It's important to be cautious of how this can affect your life and how we can sometimes believe lies that can hurt us and anyone who comes near. It's not unusual for people suffering from the fear of abandonment to become addicted to food, work, cutting, alcohol, shopping, material things, drugs or sex - anything that might fill the emptiness. This often just leads to more self-contempt.

It's interesting to me that two hero's of mine in the Bible are Moses and Esther. Moses was raised by foster parents and Esther was an orphan. They were both people who saved a nation! Psalm 67:5 says He is a father to the fatherless. This is a promise from the only one who always tells the truth and is always faithful! And because of the huge hole in your heart, you can know God in a deeper way, deeper than others who might think they don't need Him as much as you do. But each one of us, no matter our circumstance, needs God. We can allow bad circumstances to draw us away from His love and the love of others, or we can choose to run from those who truly care.

Our pain can be our pathway to great beauty. The Bible tells us that God can make beauty from ashes. What are ashes? It's what's left after fire has destroyed something. This rejection and disregard from your earthly father is like that fire. Its searing pain can feel like it's destroying your heart... killing your ability to trust or believe that love is real, that men can be trusted... but GOD can take that pain and heal your heart. He can give you beauty that lasts and a hope in Him alone that can carry you through. You can be the one that He will shine His hope through to others. You have the potential to be a powerful good in this hurting world, not in spite of your trials, but because of them.

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