

Forever Changed

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Can you see the change in me? It may not be so obvious to you.

I participate in family activities. I attend family reunions. I help plan

holiday meals. You tell me you're glad to see that I don't cry any more. But I do cry. When everyone has gone—when it is safe—the tears fall. I

cry in privacy so my family won't worry. I cry until I am exhausted and can

finally fall asleep. I'm active in my church. I sing hymns. I listen to the sermon. You tell me

you admire my strength and my positive attitude. But I'm not strong. I feel that I have lost control, and I panic when I think

about tomorrow…next week…next month…next year. I go about the routines of my job. I complete my assigned tasks. I drink

coffee and smile. You tell me you're glad to see I'm "over" the death of my

loved one. But I'm not "over it." If I get over it, I will be the same as before my loved

one died. I will never be the same. At times I think I am beginning to heal,

but the pain of losing someone I loved so much has left a permanent scar on

my heart. I visit my neighbors. You tell me you're glad to see I'm holding up so well. But I'm not holding up so well. Sometimes I want to lock my door and hide

from the world. I spend time with friends. I appear calm and collected. I smile when

appropriate. You may tell me it's good to see me back to my "old self." But I will never be back to my "old self." Death and grief have touched my

life, and I am forever changed. Reprinted with permission of Bereavement Publishing, Inc. 1-888-604-HOPE (4673)