

HELPFUL COMMENTS FROM ADULT children to their widowed mothers

DR. BOB BAUGHER

In the research for my doctoral dissertation *Perceptions of the Widow' Bereavement Process by Their Adult Children*, I asked 59 widowed women:

Are there any helpful things that your children have said to you since the death of your husband? List three of the most helpful statements from any of your children.

I've placed their responses into categories. Below is what they said.

ADVICE:

- ◆ You're strong and you can handle this.
- ◆ You must learn to stand on your own two feet and make your own happiness.
- ◆ Remember and cherish all the happy times you had with dad, but now is time to start a life without him.
- ◆ Mother, keep busy.
- ◆ You must make a new life for yourself.
- ◆ Said to take it step by step.
- ◆ You will need to seek companionship from your friends, they want to help you.

DAD WOULD WANT:

- ◆ Daddy wouldn't want you sitting home all the time, go out.
- ◆ He loved you so much and would not want you to be sick with grief over him, that he is at rest.
- ◆ Dad would want us to be happy.

FATHER:

- ◆ Dad would be proud of how strong you've been.
- ◆ Daddy had completed the mission he was put here for.
- ◆ He had accomplished much in his life.
- ◆ My daddy is in heaven and I know he isn't suffering.
- ◆ Dad would want us to have a good life and not grieve for him.
- ◆ You have done what I think dad would have wanted you to do.
- ◆ He was a good father.
- ◆ I loved him so much.
- ◆ This song is for daddy, Mamma.
- ◆ He was quite a man, mother.
- ◆ I knew daddy loved me. I loved him.
- ◆ He forgot all the bad times, so we can too.
- ◆ We have to do what has to and to be done. He (my husband) would be mighty proud.
- ◆ Daddy liked to be doing things- so God is probably letting him help build the golden streets.
- ◆ Dad's at peace.
- ◆ Mother, daddy is better off. If he couldn't get well, you did all you could for him.
- ◆ Acknowledgements from all 3 that they miss him, too.
- ◆ You are only feeling sorry for yourself. Daddy is okay.
- ◆ Dad was chauvinistic to you and would have been to me.
- ◆ He was happy, he died with a smile on his face.
- ◆ He couldn't have stood this (suffering and dying of son-in-law) as if dying was easier than watching.
- ◆ I am glad I told him I loved him as much as my dad.
- ◆ Daddy was so easy on us. I can't imagine what would've happened if you hadn't been a disciplinarian.
- ◆ He isn't suffering and we must let him rest in peace and be ready to meet him in heaven.
- ◆ We can let this get all of us down or we can go with it and maybe things as good as we can as daddy would want, expect.
- ◆ We know that dad is at rest and with the Lord although he will be greatly missed.

FREEDOM:

- ◆ Think things through. Anything you decide is fine with me.
- ◆ Anything you want to do is fine. I trust you, mama.
- ◆ It doesn't have to be done today.
- ◆ What is the worst that could happen if you did or didn't do that?
- ◆ Do whatever you want to do.

HURT:

- ◆ Never want to see me hurt again, had been hurt enough.
- ◆ You will miss him.
- ◆ Go ahead and cry. It is okay. Let's get on with our lives.

LOVE:

- ◆ I love you.
- ◆ Mom, you are the greatest possession I have.
- ◆ She is always telling me mother you have us kids we love you.
- ◆ Mom, thanks, I love you.
- ◆ I love you, Mom.
- ◆ You know we are here and love you.
- ◆ God loves you.
- ◆ I love you.
- ◆ We can make it together.
- ◆ Mom, we all love you.
- ◆ I loved daddy and miss him but I feel closer to you now than I used to.

MOTHER:

- ◆ You have been such a help to me.
- ◆ You did a good job being my mother.
- ◆ Had done splendid job at role of both mother and father.
- ◆ All but one has said that I have made them caring, loving people with a sense of commitment to each other. The one exception is a son with psychotic problems. He has said that I am probably the only one in the world he can depend on (a mixed blessing).

MOTHER/FATHER ROLE:

- ◆ Everything I am I owe to you and dad because of your love and strength.
- ◆ I'm grateful for all the things you and dad made me do no matter how I resisted.

RELATIONSHIP:

- ◆ I wish you would meet someone and remarry.
- ◆ You are a good person and if God intends for you to remarry the right man will come along.
- ◆ before going to funeral home to view body, Mom you can get married again. The Bible says if your husband dies you can remarry.
- ◆ Said she hoped to find someone to love her as much as daddy loved me.
- ◆ You may not want to now but in future you have my permission to marry.
- ◆ Do you mind if I send this gentleman to see you?

SUPPORT:

- ◆ I was worried about you at first but now I know you're going to make it.
- ◆ We'll survive mom.
- ◆ I'll always be here to help you, mom, in any way.
- ◆ I'm trying to help you sell some of dad's things.
- ◆ I'll always be with you. I'll never let you live anywhere else, but with me.
- ◆ I love you and what can I do to make it easier for you?
- ◆ We have each other. I will look after you.
- ◆ You are a pretty and smart lady, Mom. You'll do fine in whatever you try.
- ◆ I know I should help you more with little things, but I never feel like you need help.
- ◆ I don't worry about you; I know you'll do fine.
- ◆ You have adjusted well to living alone.
- ◆ You are capable to handle your business.
- ◆ I love you.
- ◆ I will never let you down.
- ◆ Wish I lived closer.
- ◆ I will be on my own, if I need help (financial help) I'll ask.
- ◆ All 5: I love you.
- ◆ I will help you.
- ◆ We'll see daddy in heaven someday.
- ◆ I lost a daddy (not step daddy)
- ◆ You are my best friend.
- ◆ Said we would make it together.
- ◆ Has offered to help me do things around the house.
- ◆ Dad concern was for me while dying, I promised him I would take care of you.
- ◆ My sons felt as though they knew and understood how I was feeling.
- ◆ You are well organized and be such a bean brain.
- ◆ You are doing a good job settling estate, picking up pieces of my life. I'm proud of you.
- ◆ Mother you are doing great, you look very pretty today.
- ◆ You can make your own decisions. I'm trying to keep you from becoming dependent on me.
- ◆ We're going to help you.
- ◆ We are going to see to your needs as much as possible.
- ◆ We're doing the best we can.
- ◆ Possible job lay off. Don't worry, we'll move in and pay bills.
- ◆ Call me for help anytime.
- ◆ I'll always have time for my momma.

WIFE:

- ◆ Mom you should not have any regrets. You did everything you could for dad.
- ◆ You did all you could for dad.
- ◆ That I was a good wife.
- ◆ You made my father happy.