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My Mother is Dying

by Judy K. Underwood, Ph.D.
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Q: My mother is dying. She's fine, but I don't know how to cope. What can I do?

A: I am sorry for what you're experiencing now. I understand you're going through a very tough time. No matter what kind of relationship you've had with her, losing your mother is difficult. Pay close attention to your feelings as you go through this experience. All of your feelings are acceptable. You may feel sadness, anger, fear and other emotions. Don't deny feelings of relief – or anger. Different feelings will come up at different times during this process. No feelings are wrong or bad.

Many people find solace by writing in a journal just for this dying time. A useful format is to write therapy letters to your mother in your journal. These are letters that you do not plan to give to anyone. Anything goes. Do not censor them. This will help you get all of your feelings out and will help you through this process.

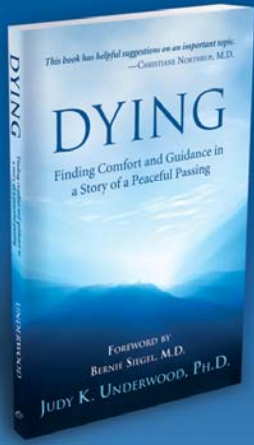
After you write a therapy letter, think about whether you want to share any part of it with your mother. Only share it with her if you expect it will make both of you feel better.

If there is something you want or need from your mother that she is incapable of giving to you, write yourself a therapy letter from her. This is not the letter she would write to you. This is the letter you want to receive from her. This is a letter from her higher self. Read it aloud to yourself imagining it is from her.

If your mother dies tomorrow, have you said everything that's important to say to her? You'll be able to cope better now and later if you know that you have said everything you want to while she's still alive. Be aware of the five parts of relationship completion: 1) I forgive you, 2) forgive me, 3) thank you, 3) I love you and 4) good bye.

Investigate the resources of a support group through your local hospice and your community senior center. An online search for "death of a parent" and "my mother is dying" will lead you to additional resources. Consider talking with a psychotherapist or grief counselor. Look at books in the death and dying section in your library, online and at bookstores. Your local hospice may have a lending library.

Be especially kind to yourself during this time. Get hugs.



"Death is a great teacher about life. It is something we must all face one day and I have learned from my experience that it is not the worst outcome. This book can guide you through the process so that you and your loved ones experience it as a healing journey and new beginning, just as a graduation is your commencement."

Bernie Siegel, M.D.

Author, *Love, Medicine & Miracles*
and *365 Prescriptions For The Soul*