

Dear W.C.,

I am writing you in hopes you can help my mother and I. We are about to be evicted and our gas is disconnected. My brother died four months ago. He was only 19 and had been going to school out of state. He was drinking and fell at a party. He broke his neck and died almost instantly. It was such a stupid thing for him to do. I never even knew him to drink or party but he did that one fateful night. It has been incredibly hard on my Mom and I. We were always so close. Now my mother cannot even seem to get out of bed most days. She lost her job and does not seem to care about anything. She is so depressed and I don't know what to do to help her. I got a part-time job just so I could buy food. I am 15 years old and do not know how to keep us from becoming homeless.

Dear Readers,

I see many of our fellow creations in the throes of deep depression. The loss of a child is the most traumatic thing people will have to endure in their life. Everyone needs to have the time and space to grieve in their own way, unless it is endangering others. In this instance it was endangering the well-being of a 15 year old girl that was looking for help with responsibilities and decisions that should be handled by an adult. I was willing to help this daughter pull her mother out of her depression and back into the role of parent. This young lady had been playing the role of caregiver when she should have been given the chance to grieve the loss of her beloved brother as well.

I arrived at the apartment and met the daughter, along with a woman volunteer that has some experience in counseling grief stricken people. After our introductions we all sat to talk in the small apartment. The mother had no idea we were coming and showed no interest in talking to us. She sat vacantly staring out the window. I saw the hollows under her eyes and noted her thin, frail appearance. I tried to talk to her but she just looked away saying, "I do not want to talk about this." The daughter said to the mother, "Mom can you talk to Sal? We need his help right now. I need your help right now." The mother just shook her head, not even speaking.

The woman volunteer offered to speak with her alone while I went over the financial problems with the daughter. We moved over to the kitchen table to talk, allowing the women a chance to speak privately. The daughter and I spoke about the accident and she tearfully shared the painful loss of her brother with me. It was such a loss of a wonderful young man that made a terrible choice to drink to excess, with tragic results. She felt it was due to peer group pressure because her brother had never been a drinker. The daughter showed me pictures of her brother over the years. Her tears were flowing yet she seemed very composed. I asked how she was doing and she said, "No one has asked me that as everyone has just been worried about my Mom. Thank you for realizing I lost my best friend, my brother. I refuse to let myself fall to the depths of despair my Mom has fallen to. I have to focus on getting her better and trying to learn how to live life without my brother in it."

After some more tearful conversation I could see she was handling this painful time better than some people twice her age. She had taken over the responsibility of trying to keep them housed and fed. I could hear the mother and volunteer speaking in the other room and heard painful sobs. At least the mother was talking and hopefully making some progress. The daughter noticed this too and said, "Thank God. She was not even crying or talking to me anymore. All she does is sit in that chair and stare out the window."

We went over the very organized budget the daughter had put together. She had not applied for any assistance and her mother had not applied for unemployment. I advised her on what she needed to do going forward. Their rent was very reasonable where they were renting and I knew the landlord was an understanding person, or they would have already been evicted. I told her we would pay their overdue rent and one month in the future to allow them additional time to get on their feet. I asked the daughter about the mother's previous employment. The mother had actually had a good job with an excellent employer. She just had been too grief stricken to return to work in the allowed time frame. The daughter shared with me how her mother used to love her job and how she had tried to convince her mother that returning to work might be good for her. That obviously had not worked to persuade the mother to go back.

Just then the woman volunteer appeared and asked if we could all talk together again. The mother was still sitting in the chair with tears pouring down her cheeks, but now she was looking at us and she reached out for her daughter's hand. The daughter rushed to her side, taking her outstretched hand. The mother touched the daughter's cheek as she said, "I am so sorry I have not been a mother to you these past few months. I have only been thinking of myself and my own loss, not even considering your pain over losing your brother. This wonderful woman here has shared with me her own painful loss and I see now that I will have to learn how to live without my son, your brother. I am ready to try to live again. Will you share some of your strength with me?" After that we all were crying, feeling the immense pain and grief these women shared.

After the mother and daughter talked some more we turned the conversation to their present financial crisis. The mother looked at the budget the daughter had put together and said, "I think it is time I get out of this chair and go back to work." The daughter, still holding her mother's hands said, "Are you sure Mom? Are you ready?" The mother answered, "You have taken care of us long enough. It is definitely time for me to take care of us again." I asked the mother if she would like me to call her previous employer and explain the situation. The mother agreed and shared with me how much she had liked where she had worked. She said she could not go back any sooner and answer all the painful questions from her fellow employees and friends, even if they did mean well. She said she could answer those questions now, if they were asked.

I called the employer and they were willing to give the mother another chance. Her employer shared how they knew she was depressed and grief stricken and had not been ready to return to work in the three weeks they had allowed. They said they had not been able to successfully hire someone that handled her job as efficiently as she had. They were happy to

have her return to their employment, starting whenever she was ready. The mother said she could start the beginning of the next week, allowing her a little time to eat properly and regain her strength. I finally saw the daughter smile for the first time during this conversation. The great weight of financial responsibility had at least been removed from her young shoulders. Now she too would have the time to heal and learn how to live without her brother.

I visited the mother and daughter several times over the next month. I could see they were coping together through a loss that would never be forgotten. They now understood how much their son/brother would have wanted them to take care of each other and live again. The mother and daughter resumed their life as best they could. The mother was back at work and enjoyed her job, but much more so enjoyed nurturing and caring for her daughter. The mother and daughter shared a special bond and friendship once more. The daughter saying she was happy to have her "Mom" back, guiding her and providing for them both.

Once again we have come together with our compassionate caring. We have helped our fellow creations with rent/shelter assistance, utility assistance and our time to help. God Bless all of "You" for helping those in desperate need.

*Health & Happiness, God Bless Everyone, W.C./Sal*

**Please Help:** There are many coming to us in desperation. Our good fellow creations need our compassion. Together we make a big difference. Make checks payable to: The Time Is Now to Help, P.O. Box 1, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. The Time Is Now to Help is a federally recognized 501(c)3 charitable organization licensed in the states of Wisconsin and Illinois. You will receive a tax deductible, itemized thank you receipt showing how your donation provided assistance for the poverty stricken.

**A Very Special Thank You:** Clarence & Marilyn Schawk, Fox Charities, Martin Group, John Stensland & Family, Carolyn J. Gable Expect A Miracle Foundation, Dick & Jean Honeyager, ITW Foundation, Sirdome, Deanna Morgan, Therese Kuban, Joyce Stickney, James Fegen, Roberty Ribordy, Sid & Patty Johnson, Michael Glass, John Dwyer, Jr., John Poiron, Marvin & Audrey Hersko, Mary Ames & Thomas Wigton, Roberta Collamore, William & Dorothy Tookey, Randall & Margaret Smith, George & Laurreta Clettenberg, Jacob & Janice Friesema, Frank & Mary Hodel, William & Jean Isaacson, W.C. Family Resource Center/Food Pantry volunteers, and all the God loving volunteers of all our caring pantries, ALL of you who support The Time Is Now to Help donation boxes, and the businesses that allow our donation boxes. Anyone who would like a Time Is Now donation box in your business, please call (262) 249-7000.

**Memorials:** Thomas & Barbara Searles in memory of Harry Bublitz. Joan Palmbach in memory of Florent Van Dyck.

The following donations were given in memory of Clifford "Kip" Snudden: Walworth County Senior 4-H Leaders, Thomas Morrissy, Paul & Melinda Peterson, Roberta Pankonin, Linn Presbyterian Bridge Group, Barbara Braden, Helen McMasters, Susan Leonard, Todd & Jacqueline Rankins, Jackie Leedle, Mike & Elizabeth Palmer, William & Diane

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