

# How Do I Know I'm Getting Better?

## Criteria for Reconciliation

from *Understanding Grief* by Alan Wolfelt

As you embrace your grief and do the work of mourning, you can and will be able to demonstrate the majority of the following:

- A recognition of the reality and finality of the death of the person who has died.
- A return to stable eating and sleeping patterns that were present prior to the death.
- A renewed sense of release or relief from the person who has died- you will have thoughts about the person, but you will not be preoccupied with these thoughts.
- The capacity to enjoy experiences in life that are normally enjoyable.
- The establishment of new and healthy relationships.
- The capacity to live a full life without feelings of guilt or lack of self-respect.
- The capacity to organize and plan one's life toward the future.
- The capacity to become comfortable with the way things are rather than attempting to make things as they were.
- The capacity to welcome more change in your life.
- The awareness that you have allowed yourself to fully grieve and that you have survived.
- The awareness that you do not "get over your grief," that instead, you have a new reality, meaning, and purpose in your life.
- The capacity to acknowledge new parts of yourself that you have discovered in your grief journey.
- The capacity to adjust to the new role changes that have resulted from the loss of the relationship.
- The capacity to be compassionate with yourself when normal resurgences of intense grief occur (holidays, anniversaries, special occasions).
- The capacity to acknowledge that the pain of loss is an inherent part of life resulting from the ability to give and receive love.