

## Tears are Proof of Life

*“How long will the pain last?” a broken-hearted mourner asked me.*

*“All the rest of your life, I had to answer truthfully.”*

We never quite forget. No matter how many years pass, we remember. The loss of a loved one is like a major operation. Part of us is removed, and we have a scar for the rest of our lives.

This does not mean that the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while, at first, when we hardly believe it. It is rather like when we have cut our hand. We see the blood flowing, but the pain is not there yet. So, when we are bereaved, there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its effect. Grief is shattering.

Then the wound begins to heal. It is life going through a dark tunnel. Occasionally we glimpse a bit of light ahead, then lose sight of it for a while, then see it again, and one day we merge into the light. The stitches are taken out, and we are whole again.

But not quite. The scar is still there, and the scar tissue too. As the years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, tasks that call for full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks familiar, hear a voice that has echoes, see a photograph in someone’s album, see a landscape where once we were together, and it is as though the knife were in the wound again.

But not so painfully. And mixed with you too, because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow. It brings back happiness with it.

As a matter of fact, we even seek such moments of bittersweet remembrance. We have our religious memorial services and our memorial days. And though these bring back the pain, they bring back memories of joy as well.

How long will the pain last?

All the rest of your life. But the thing to remember is, the pain of grief is the price we pay for love.