

Prayer After the Loss of a Relationship

By Henri Nouwen

While you may feel physically and mentally strong, you still experience a forceful undercurrent of anguish. You sleep well, you work well, but there are few waking moments when you do not feel that throbbing pain in your heart that makes everything seem up in the air. You know that you are progressing, but you can't understand why this anguish keeps pervading everything you think, say, or do. There is still a deep, unresolved pain, but you cannot take it away yourself. It exists far deeper than you can reach.

Be patient and trust.

You have to move gradually deeper into your heart. There is a place far down that is like a turbulent river, and that place frightens you. But do not fear. One day it will be quiet and peaceful.

You have to keep moving, as you are doing. Live a faithful, disciplined life, a life that gives you a sense of inner strength, a life in which you can receive more and more of the love that

comes to you. Wherever there is real love for you, take it and be strengthened by it. As your body, heart, and mind come to know that you are loved, your weakest part will be attracted to that love. What has remained separated and unreachable will let itself be drawn into the love you have been able to receive. One day you will discover that your anguish is gone. It will leave you because your weakest self let itself be embraced by your love.

You are not there yet, but you are moving fast.

There will be a bit more pain and struggle. You have to dare and live through it. Keep walking straight. Acknowledge your anguish, but do not let it pull you out of yourself. Hold on to your chosen direction, your discipline, your prayer, your work, your guides, and trust that one day love will have conquered enough of you that even the most fearful part will allow love to cast out all fear.

