



DAY 16

You Are Not Alone

Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit"

This story begins in 1986, two years after I had been diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia. Our family had enjoyed a wonderful Christmas together, and my parents were leaving for their winter hiatus on Marco Island, Florida. My mother, especially, loved to walk along the beach collecting shells. She was in "heaven" on the beach!

While they were gone, life at home was carrying on as usual . . . until it wasn't. I received a call from my dad in early February, saying that mom was in the hospital from a heart attack, and she would be getting a stent put in the next day. My brother, Scott, and I immediately flew down and went with dad to the hospital to see mom. I remember thinking she looked so tiny in that hospital bed, but I felt assured that all would be well once they put the stent in to keep her artery clear.

Her procedure was successful, and after a couple of days she convinced the doctor that she would get better rest at the condo, so she was released. Scott and I flew back home and thought all would be well, until it wasn't. Not even a week later, she had another heart attack (the stent didn't hold) and this time, it took her life. I was in NO way ready for that outcome. Between my own health issues, and then the death of my mom, to put it mildly, I was having a break-down. I simply couldn't cope.

I cried harder and longer during that time than ever before in my life, or ever since. Despite my constant prayers, I felt like God had abandoned me, that he was not listening to my cries for help. Then, with the encouragement of my husband and my doctor, I sought the help of a counselor, who literally helped put the pieces of my life back together one bit at a time. Was that divine intervention? As Psalm 34:18 states, "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit". I now know, His presence is not distant – He is right beside us especially in our pain.

Gracious and Loving God,

We know you are beside us when times are good, and it is easy to be grateful for your abundance. May we ever be reminded that in the most crushing of times you are also right by our side. Help each of us to embrace our feelings and invite your healing presence into our hearts. Amen.

– Sandi Kossick