

Hospice of Schenectady

PLEASE, SEE ME THROUGH MY TEARS

You asked, "How are you doing?"

As I told you, tears came to my eyes, you immediately began to talk again, your eyes looked away from me, your speech picked up, and all the attention you had given me went away.

How am I doing? I do better when people will listen to my response, even though I may shed a tear or two, for I so want their attention; but to be ignored because I have in me pain, which is indescribable to anyone who has not been there, I hurt and feel angry. So when you look away, I am again alone with it.

Really, tears are not a bad sign, you know! They're Nature's way of helping me to heal. They relieve some of the stress of sadness. I know you fear that asking how I'm doing brought this sadness to me. No, you're wrong, the memory of my death will always be with me, only a thought away. It's just that my tears make my pain more visible to you, but you did not give me the pain, it's just there.

When I cry, could it be that you feel helpless? You're not, you know. When I feel your permission to allow my tears to flow, you've helped me more than you can know.

You need not verbalize your support of my tears, your silence as I cry is my key, do not fear.

You listening with your heart to "How are you doing?" helps relieve the pain, because once I allow the tears to come and go, I feel lighter. Talking to you releases things I've been wanting to say aloud, and then there's space for a touch of joy in my life.

Honest, when I tear up and cry, that doesn't mean I'll cry forever - maybe just a minute or two - then I'll wipe the tears away, and sometimes you'll even find I'm laughing at something funny ten minutes later.

When I hold back my tears, my throat grows tight, my chest aches and my stomach begins to knot up, because I'm trying to protect you from my tears. Then we both hurt, me, because I've kept the pain inside and it's a shield against our closeness, and then you hurt because suddenly, we're distant.

Please, take my hand, and I promise not to cry forever, (it's physically impossible, you know).

When you see me through my tears, then we can be close again.