

## The Mother's Day Card Aisle

I walked past the card aisle last week and reality struck as it does this time of year. I have no one to buy a Mother's Day card for. My mother and mother-in-law are both gone.

It's been seven years since my Mother passed away. In some ways, I cannot believe it has been that long. It seems she was just here, speaking softly about her next household project and smiling as she listens to stories about our hectic lives. I still think of something I want to tell her and then remember quickly that I can tell her but she isn't there to respond.

My grief has changed in the past seven years. Perhaps the best known theory on grief comes from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' book, "On Death and Dying." She writes that people who are dying, as well as their family and friends go through five stages of grief.

- **Denial:** This isn't happening to me!
- **Anger:** Why is this happening to me?
- **Bargaining:** I promise I'll be a better person if...
- **Depression:** I don't care anymore.
- **Acceptance:** I am ready to move forward.

I am in the acceptance stage, moving forward, just as she taught me to do. However, I stumbled through the first four stages and, I still find myself slipping back into the depression stage from time to time.

I have triggers of grief like the Mother's Day card aisle or the singing of hymn at church that was sung at my Mother's funeral. Though the triggers often produce tears, good memories are also present in the tears; Memories of a warm smile, a kind word and a soft shoulder. I learned a lot from my Mother, as most of us do. I miss her and hold her dear.

I had a great Mother's Day surrounded by family, eating good food and opening presents. We tried to carry out my Mother's favorite Mother's Day tradition of planting flowers in the big black pot I inherited from her. But, the rain and cold weather hindered our efforts. We'll try again when the sun shines.