

## "Getting on With Life" What Does It Mean?

Of all the statements and spiritual platitudes quoted at me since my son Daniel's death, the phrase that I hear most frequently makes me squirm the most. "You have got to get on with your life." Recently I quit squirming long enough to ponder the meaning behind this phrase that is usually said to the bereaved in the form of a command. Exactly what does this phrase mean? What are people implying when they say it?

I was pregnant when Daniel died, and three months later I gave birth to a baby girl. Wasn't that getting on with life? I nurtured my three children, took them to school, the park and birthday parties. Now wasn't that going on with life? I even cooked dinner at least four times a week! At first after Daniel's death, I would have liked to literally stop my life and be buried next to my son, but I existed. Like a plastic bag tossed about by the wind, I was fluttering, being carried by the events of life. Seasons came and went. In the spring, I planted marigolds and tomato vines. In the autumn, I jumped in fallen leaves with my children. I continued; I am still continuing to live.

Now I may be bereaved, but I am by no means a fool. As I ponder the meaning behind "getting on with life," I know exactly what those who say this have in mind. "Forget your dead child. Quit grieving. You make me uncomfortable!" Getting on with life means don't acknowledge August 25, Daniel's birthday, anymore. Forget how he slid down the snowy bank in the recycle bin, sang in the van and ate Gummy Bears. Forget he had cancer, suffered and died at only age four. Don't see the empty chair at the dinner table, don't cry, just live!

Some, who are more "religious" would like to believe that a bereaved parent can claim, "My child is safe and happy in heaven. Therefore, why should I yearn for him?" Perhaps I pose a threat to certain types because I have let it be known I question. I weep. I have been angry. I miss my Daniel. Maybe old friends feel if they hang around me too long I might convince them that a few of their illusions about life are just that, illusions. As my cries of anguish are heard, there are those who can only think how to make me be quiet. To stop my heartfelt yearnings, they say quite sternly. "You must get on with your life."

I am living. I do move on with life with Daniel in my mind and in my heart, although he is not physically here as I continue to live and to love. To sever his memory totally from my life would cause destruction and damage that would ruin me. To push Daniel out of my life and not be able to freely mention his name or write & speak about who he was on earth would only bring more pain to my life. I'd shrivel up. Comfort for me comes in remembering with smiles how he drew with a blue marker on his sister's wall, ran outside naked and picked green tomatoes.

For the reality is, getting on with life means continuing to cherish Daniel.

By Alice J. Wisler, Bereavement Magazine  
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### *Little Angels*

*When God calls little children  
To dwell with Him above,  
We mortals sometimes question  
The wisdom of His love.  
For no heartache compares with  
The death of one small child  
Who does so much to make our world  
Seem wonderful and mild.  
Perhaps God tires of calling  
The aged to His fold,  
So He picks a rosebud  
Before it can grow old.  
God knows how much we need them,  
And so he takes but few  
To make the land of heaven  
More beautiful to view.  
Believing this is difficult  
Still somehow we must try  
The saddest word mankind knows  
Will always be "Goodbye."  
So when a little child departs,  
We who are left behind  
Must realize God loves children,  
Angels are hard to find.*



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