Dear Lonely and Depressed,

You are experiencing normal feelings of grief. Grieving for a loved one, especially a parent, takes time, energy, and caring. Life has changed irrevocably. Your family structure has changed. You may feel that you are growing up faster than you had ever anticipated. You may feel as if there is no one to take care of you, and it is difficult and painful to feel abandoned.

During this time, it is especially important that you seek out and talk with people you feel close to. Often, people are happy to help; however, they may not know how. They also may be waiting for you to seek them out. You could choose someone, and ask her/him to do something very specific: to listen to you, sit with you quietly, hug you, see a movie, or take a walk with you. Just sitting quietly or reading different books together can be comforting. Sometimes, exercise can make a difference. It is important to get your feelings out and take care of yourself more frequently than every three or four weeks. By the way, maybe you could talk with your school's grief counselor more often? at least for now.

Think about your family, friends, and neighbors. Who is already close to you? Who can you talk with? Who do you feel might understand? Your father? A sister or brother? An aunt or uncle? Cousins? A close family friend? A good friend's mother? A neighbor, or someone you feel close to or admire who lives nearby? Someone from synagogue, temple, or church could be understanding and helpful. Perhaps you can open up to a teacher.

There are also books you can read. An internet search or someone at your local bookstore will be able to steer you in the direction of books that are written for young adults about death. One suggestion is Hope Edelman's book, *Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss.* Death is a normal part of the life cycle, and something we all face sooner or later. There are also fiction books that deal with similar issues. Reading these kinds of books can help people.
experience, understand, and manage their feelings in a full and complete way.

You can also keep a grief and healing journal to compose your thoughts when you are happy, unhappy, or when you want to tell your mother something? just like you've done here. You can write her letters that express your feelings? this outlet will help you heal more quickly.

Wishing you peace and strength,

Alice!
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