

For kids, divorce has its lingering effect

I DID NOT recognize her. And I should have.

I might never have envisioned her as a waitress, and could have been surprised in meeting her in a restaurant, but this was more than a surprise. I simply did not recognize her.

She had been an active member of the parish I serve. She attended worship regularly with her parents and brother, and she was active in the activities of the youth group.

I remember clearly, the insightful questions and articulate expressions of concern over matters of faith and practice. I remember wishing I had had her overall sense of purpose and grasp of reality at that age of life.

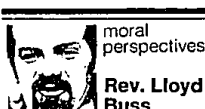
THEN CAME the day when her parents announced their intention to divorce. It was a jolt from the blue.

It was something I had simply not associated with them. Their marriage had not been without its stresses, but it appeared and purposeful. Whatever their moments of strains, they were committed and determined in their life together.

The marriage covenant that had bound her parents together for over a decade and a half was ended. They sought conversations of counsel and concern, but the decision for divorce had been made long before.

They had grown apart. They needed space to find their own lives.

I ASKED about their children. Shortly after, both parents moved out of town. Their son and daughter lived with each parent for different lengths of time.



Rev. Lloyd Buss
moral perspectives

I would think about them every once in a while and remember the anguish I felt for that experience in their lives.

A goodly number of years have

passed since then. Time itself molds changes in our lives that alter how we appear to one another. But it was more than the passage of time that had worked in the life of the young woman who had to tell me who she was.

We didn't have much time to talk. It was a busy lunch hour. She was back in school. She was living in a nearby community. Her brother had gone to a university for a semester, and was planning to re-enroll next fall. Her parents were in good health.

HOW COULD I have walked by her without recognizing her? I remembered only the years of her delight and passion for life lived in the confidence of security and support.

I remembered her probing of proprieties and her challenges of the conventional. I remembered her exciting explorations of thought and practice. I remembered the unlimited opportunities opening before this person of potential and gift.

Divorce has been regarded increasingly as harmless. The effects of divorce are considered resolvable.

It is insisted that life's fulfillment should not be denied to anyone. It is maintained that our skills of life and counsel can make that happen.

Life's fulfillment should not be denied to anyone. That is why I did not finish my lunch the day I did not recognize the young woman in front of me. I grieved for all the years she had lost, and all the years we had lost together in the unfolding of that fulfillment.

Parents can agree to amicable divorces, but their children can never

bring back the days of lost opportunities.

The Rev. Lloyd Buss is pastor at Abiding Presence Lutheran Church in Rochester.



gerontology

A. Jolayne Farrell

Two good films for your group of seniors

Dear Jo:
Are there any new films out on aging? I am setting up some educational sessions for the seniors' group at our church.

Mrs. D.B.,
Peterboro,

Dear Mrs. B.:
Two excellent, current films on healthy aging are "Staying Active: Wellness After Sixty" and "The Sixth Sense."

"Staying Active: Wellness After Sixty" presents material that is vital to maintaining optimal health in the later years. Professional advice is given on maintaining a proper diet, coping with stress, starting an exercise program and developing a positive outlook on life.

"The Sixth Sense," narrated by Arlene Francis and presented by the National Council on Aging, takes a new and creative look at the changes that go along with growing older. The result, healthy adaptation, is what they call the "sixth sense."

Both films can be rented from your local film rental agency.

Dear Jo:
In a previous column, you advised one of your readers to purchase a book called "Success Over Sixty" by Albert Myers.

Could you please let me know where I can get this book?

J.A. Mc.,
"Over Seventy"

Dear Mr. Mc.:
This book is not on the shelf in most books stores so you will have to special order it. The bookseller will have to know the name of the book, the author and the publisher.

"Success Over Sixty" is published by Summit Books, New York. The order will probably take about six weeks to arrive.

Dear Jo:
I am in my 50s and feel old. All my social contacts are my age or older. I would like to associate with younger people but rarely have the occasion to be with them. Can you help me?

Mrs. W.S.

Dear Mrs. S.:
You can help yourself by looking for opportunities in your community to be with people younger than you. Go where young people are — schools, clubs, political meetings, university courses, etc.

"Don't ignore your own family. Do you have nieces and nephews that you could invite over for dinner?"
I am surprised that a person in her 50s feels old — you've got a lot of good living ahead of you. Good luck!

Readers can write to Jolayne Farrell at 11 Cynthia Crescent, Richmond Hill, Ont. L4E 1J3.

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