

"How do we move on with our life when our whole life has been wrapped around our child?"

Q. I was divorced when my son was 14 and he had a lot of anger towards his father for walking out on us. His father has remarried after 12 years and has other children. My son and I have been estranged since I went into a psychiatric hospital to deal with major depression over losing my husband and mother within 10 wks of each other. He yelled at me over a nurse telling him I had planned a suicide which was not true. I have not heard from him since that phone call. This is the second time he has cut off communication with me. He married into a family who wants him to spend all the holidays with them and not me. Do you have any advice for me?

A. I suspect the estrangement has to do with his worry about you. This is a not uncommon reason for estrangement. This isn't to say that it's your fault, but it was probably very scary for him that you went into a psych hospital and then he was told that you tried suicide, even if he was told that incorrectly. The fact that he yelled at you about it shows how intolerable and unbearable those feelings are to him.

I know I've said this in other webinars but it bears repeating that sometimes in single parent homes, the child doesn't learn to develop enough of psychological immunity to the parent; They're more vulnerable to feeling all of the feelings of the parent -- if he was the only child in the home, even more so.

Therefore, he's more vulnerable to feeling your sadness, worry, about your own life or your anger or criticism about his. He will likely come back and when he does I would show him that you're resilient and enjoying your life.