Swimming off Honolulu with the Clinebells, we found them an unusually "together" Charlotte does family counseling, and Howard teaches pastoral counseling In their helpful little Fortress/71 \$1.50 book CRISIS AND GROWTH: HELPING YOUR TROUBLED CHILD, they've a crisp yet solid set of guidelines for crisisfacing, individual or family or (for that matter) church [pp.45-48]:

> to him. Difficult circumstances such as prolonged illness, the birth A crisis happens within a person (or family) rather than simply of a handicapped child, a divorce, an accident, or a death are a part of nearly everyone's experience. Our response to the emergency or the difficulty determines whether or not the crisis will be a growth experience. There are several principles which we have found can be helpful in handling crises constructively: control. How an individual responds to difficult circumstances relationships; coping abilities he has developed previously; other depends on many things within him—his philosophy of life; his stresses and satisfactions; religious and emotional resources. A young mother commented, "Realizing that we could choose how we 1) Your response to a crisis-inducing situation is within your reacted to the blow of having to pull up our roots and move gave us a feeling of strength along with our pain." Feelings of loss, anger, guilt, resentment, confusion, helplessness, despair and even temporary disorientation, panic, and paralysis are often a part of the first response to a crisis-inducing situation. These feelings must be dealt with so that your coping abilities can be used creatively. Weeping, talking out painful feelings with an em-2) Face and express the big feelings that accompany every crisis. pathetic person-spouse, friend, clergyman, counselor-are ways

of working through the painful feelings. Children should be encouraged to talk out and play out their fear and hurt. Four-year-old Joel played "wreck" for several months after a family automobile accident, crashing his toy cars into each other violently as he relived and resolved painful memories. Burdensome feelings openly dealt ciently in handling the external difficulties. Stored up, they only with gradually diminish, freeing you to use your mind more efficripple your ability to act constructively. you harshly. But if you can avoid getting stuck in resentment and there are bound to be feelings of hurt and anger when life treats guilt (Why did this happen to me? or, I must have done something bad to deserve this), you will be able to take appropriate action sooner. Self-pity is an expensive luxury. The person (or family) 3) Accept the fact that crises and living go together. Of course who gets mired down in it doesn't have incentive or energy left for dealing with the crisis. ity is like a muscle—using it to improve your situation makes it off (perhaps with a counselor's help) and getting an overview of stronger and healthier. Exercising your coping abilities by standing the situation, then deciding on one option, and moving into action, usually makes you feel less helpless. Taking action does not neces-4) Decide on some positive action, however small. The personalsarily mean you can change the external situation. Losing a loved

one through death is something that cannot be changed. But you can do something that will strengthen you to cope with the tremendous loss. people experiencing a crisis are tempted to isolate themselves from others, because of loneliness, or the mistaken notion that stoic selfsufficiency is a virtue, or because they fear they will be a burden to others. But people need people and people need to be needed. A crisis occurs within us when important foods of the spirit, such as 5) Turn toward people. Don't be afraid to lean on them. Many acceptance, belonging, caring, devotion, esteem, faith, are threatened or cut off. The loss of a loving relationship, an esteem-feeding job, financial security, dreams for one's children, a house that feels like home, a healthy body, the life stage one has gotten used to,

means there probably will be a crisis within. Withdrawing from people only intensifies the loss. (It also deprives others of the chance to be needed.) Temporary sources of nourishment in helpful relationships give one strength to handle losses. Replacing lost emotional nurturance by developing new relationships is essential for long-range recovery. In the acute stages of crisis, a few sessions with a skilled counselor can be extremely helpful in recovering from the staggering blow and mobilizing your own resources.

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- 6) Remember that coping successfully with a crisis actually makes you stronger. A crisis is like a fork in the road, one moves in the right direction or the wrong—toward either weakening or strengthening his coping abilities. Each crisis, if it is handled constructively, leaves you better equipped for the next one. A family which lives through and handles painful problems together without collapsing is bound together in new strength and closeness. After his nine-year-old son's serious accident, one father said, "Terry's hospitalization forced us to pull together as a family. We found out we have guts when it counts." An unexpected fringe benefit of crisis is that a person or family discovers unused inner resources.
- 7) Let yourself lean on the Eternal—on God. Don't be afraid to ask the big questions which the crisis within you stirs. A crisis forces us to draw on all our spiritual resources. What does it all mean? How does it fit into our family's philosophy of living? Are our values workable when the going gets tough? What value changes do we need to make in response to the new awareness of how brief, fragile and precious our life together is?

A doctor in California asks his nearly recovered heart patients, "What have you learned from this experience?" This is an appropriate question once one is beginning to get on top of things again. Not to ask it is to waste the opportunity for spiritual growth. The wife of a recovering alcoholic said, "We didn't expect to get reconnected with a higher Power and to rejoin the human race as a result of Ben's alcoholism, but that's just what happened to us in AA and Al-Anon." If your religious beliefs and experiences let you know the reality of "leaning on the everlasting arms," you have an invaluable strength for crisis. This spiritual strength can be increased through the soul-searching opportunities of a crisis. Talking over the deep questions of faith and values with a theologically trained counselor (your minister, priest, or rabbi) can help to stimulate this growth in the vertical dimension of your family and personal life.