



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.

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 in-

creased 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.