

The Long Slog of Working Toward Reconciliation

One of the hardest part of going through an estrangement is dealing with the uncertainty. Some of the most common questions are:

- 1) How long is this going to take to resolve?
- 2) Will it ever resolve?
- 3) Are my emails, letters or not reaching out having a positive effect? Negative effect? No effect?
- 4) Does my child even miss me?
- 5) Do they have any idea how much I'm suffering?
- 6) Do they want me to suffer?
- 7) I've said I was sorry and am willing to do family therapy. What else do they want??

In general, uncertainty is a recipe for anxiety and hoping for a reconciliation is a very uncertain place to be. Given that, here are some thoughts:

It's highly unlikely your child actually wants you to suffer. As cruel as they can be, either by their words or neglect, their desire is typically not to inflict pain but rather, to communicate something powerfully, either to you or themselves.

Some adult children aren't ready for a reconciliation because:

- Their anger provides a boundary that they need in order to feel separate or strong
- Their spouse or your ex doesn't want them to reconcile and they're not strong enough to push back
- They, rightly or wrongly, don't believe that you'll be able to address what they want you to change in yourself
- Their mental illness means that they become too dysregulated when they have contact with you, even if you're willing to be receptive or responsive to their requests for change.

So, it may take quite a long time. Don't white knuckle it. Focus on your friends, interests, and health. Stay off of social media, get

outside, and remind yourself that you're a good person who deserves love and appreciation.