

Last Chapter or Just a Plot Twist?

This might be my last blog entry. My sweet hubby Bob passed away on November 11th and so ends our journey of living with Dementia. Boy, what a journey it was. If you had told me at the beginning that it would get as hard as it did, I wouldn't have believed you. But it got harder than I ever imagined as I watched my husband slowly fade away over the years and then finally pass away. Dementia is a cruel, nasty, mean disease.

Bob only spent 9 days at the care facility. 9 days where he was looked after and cared for so much better than I could ever have done at our home. The care was top-notch and so loving. He was treated kindly and with the upmost respect. He spent his last days sleeping nearly 24 hours a day. He woke and opened his eyes occasionally but then quickly fell back asleep. He didn't speak or respond. He only ate a few bites of food (he was on a pureed food diet) every now and then. It was clear that it was never enough to sustain him. It was so hard knowing that he was moving closer each day to his final day.

Hospice added an additional level of care. We were visited by the hospice caregiver, several hospice nurses, the hospice social worker, and the hospice chaplain. All of them made the death process much easier. The hospice caregiver would give Bob a "bed bath" with such gentleness. The nurses made sure he wasn't agitated and was kept comfortable. The social worker and chaplain wanted to make sure I had all the support I needed. We couldn't have asked for a better care team during this tough period.

Bob's final couple of days are all a blur—family coming by to say their goodbyes, a visit from our pastor, hospice visits, and owner and staff from the care facility making sure I was ok—visiting with me and bringing me snacks and meals.

I was able to be with be with Bob as he passed. Quietly without any fanfare. Just breathing one moment and not breathing the next. And just like that his life on earth was over. And just like that, I imagined him with a new glorified body and mind. Oh, I can't wait to be with him again. The promises of our faith are what sustain me.

But in the meantime, my revised life goes on. Not quite sure what it looks like at this point. But I know it is not a life without Bob. No matter what, that goofy guy won't be out of my heart ever. No not ever.

My prayer is for the difficult times and sad memories to fade away and leave me with a cache of good memories. Boy, we had so many. Right now, my mind can't quite move off the past few weeks but every day I find more minutes of the day when I'm not sorrowful.

I've been told that there are 5 stages of grief, and everyone experiences them in a different order.

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

I feel that over the past 4 years I went through stages 1-4 even though Bob was alive. I've already experienced denial, anger, bargaining, and depression. All of those in abundance. I've done my share of crying and feeling so helpless. I've been so mad that Bob had to have such a horrible disease. I've had times I just curled up and cried and cried. Times I screamed in anger. There were times I was on my knees begging God to take this all away. I was so lonely and sad even while Bob was alive. I was missing Bob terribly already and he wasn't even gone. I mourned the loss of the life that I thought we would have, and I grieved over the loss of the

person Bob had been.

Am I at "Acceptance"? Maybe. Maybe not. How can I know only 10 days since Bob's passing? When people tell me I am doing well, I tell them it's because I have been doing horribly for a long time. I've been mourning and grieving for a prolonged period. I've moved through all those stages of grief and here I am.

So, Bob with 10, what's the plan? Let's continue our journey and see where my life goes while I carry you in my heart. Let's go!

Blessed
IS THE ONE WHO
TRUSTS
in the
Lord
JEREMIAH 17:7