

My Grief Plan (at least for now)

I've had lots of mixed emotions since Bob's passing. I've felt so conflicted with my emotions. I've felt guilty when I was happy but I'm just not the person that is going to sink into depression and sulk my life away. That's just not me. But if I'm enjoying life and finding happiness in the things I am doing, am I dishonoring my newly deceased husband? What's the right way to grieve?

Well, I have sorted it out. I've attended Grief Share, read several books on grieving, read scriptures, talked with others who have lost loved ones, prayed, and more. What I have found is that everyone handles grief differently. I am firm in my decision that there is not a right way or just one way to grieve. For me, there is going to be joy in every day.

Being happy doesn't mean that I am not grieving. I miss my husband terribly. I would prefer that everything I am doing, Bob would be doing with me. But since that isn't going to happen, I am NOT going to put my life on the back burner for some unknown period of time to "properly grieve". I am going to wake up each day looking forward to the day ahead and when I put my head on my pillow at night, I am going to say a prayer of gratitude for the happy moments of the day. Yes, I will still be missing Bob. I will still be grieving my loss. But my outlook will be positive and joyful. Enjoying all the blessings that God has heaped on me. Grateful for the family and friends who make me smile. Thankful for the opportunities God places in my life.

Great granddaughter Aubri recently asked me if I was living by myself now. When I told her that I was, she seemed so sad for me. I explained that even though I missed her great grandpa very much, I was fine living alone. I have personal freedom

like I've never had before. I told her that I'm not afraid to be on my own and that I love the newfound independence. I've discovered that I don't like the TV on all day, and I like to sleep on the other side of the bed. I'm sure that an 11-year-old thinks I'm nuts but I'm content on my own. It's the first time that I've lived alone for 42+ years and surprisingly I like it. Never would have imagined that. Never did I want this. But it's my new reality and I'm going to make the very best of it. Who doesn't like more closet space?

People often suggest that I get a dog or cat and tell me that I need a heartbeat in the house. I know they mean well but I don't want a pet to care for. My caregiving days were difficult and stressful so I'm happy to only be responsible for myself. My own heartbeat is enough. I'm glad that I can say that and mean it.

I recently traveled to Kansas and Texas to visit family and some friends for two weeks and had a BLAST! It was my first post-covid and post-Bob trip. I had a grand time and there was much laughter and happiness being with loved ones. But of course, there were sad moments and tears. Not because of any feelings of guilt that I shouldn't have gone on this trip. Or guilt over having fun without my husband. Just moments when I just missed Bob so very much and wished he were with me. I realized two things—I still can have fun and I can travel on my own. Two big lessons learned.

So, if I were going to write a book on how to grieve, I wouldn't. I'd just say, do it your own way.

I have a cute sign that says, ***“what I love most about our home is who I share it with”***. I kept the sign and put it by a big picture of Bob as a reminder of how much we shared and loved in our home. Maybe I should get a new sign that says, ***“what I love most about my HEART is who I share it with”***.

My life with Bob was not perfect but we were perfect for each

other. Missing him is not ever going to stop. Bob has a home in my heart and he's not going anywhere. But by the grace of God, I can smile, laugh, and enjoy my life.

That's my grief plan.

