

A-D-A-P-T!

The word that popped in my head on a walk recently was ADAPT. As I took a leisurely walk, I had this word pop into my mind and instead of waiting to write down my thoughts once I was home, I started recording on my phone. I “talked texted” this blog to myself. I’ve never done this before, and really like that it seems to follow the theme of this blog. Adapt—do things differently.

I think widowhood and grieving is not a process of healing or getting over your grief or completely mending. I think it’s a process of adapting to the changes that happen as you navigate life alone. I think adapting to the changes is the answer. Not surviving, not getting over it, not putting it behind you, not moving on from it but adapting to it. So, I’ve been exploring what that means to me and maybe as a widow or widower or someone grieving the loss of a deep love, you’ll look at it this way as well.

My life is going on without Bob and I feel God has a purpose for me at this stage of my life. I’m paying very close attention to the God “nudges”. I am being obedient to His word, and I try to go where He sends me even if He just sends me across the street to visit a friend who needs a helping hand or He sends me to a hospital to visit a friend who is anxious. I’m saying yes to those “nudges” more than I ever have at any other time in my life and in that way, I feel like I’m adapting.

There are some changes I do NOT ever plan on making. I cannot imagine not missing and feeling deep love for Bob. I don’t want that to change. I don’t imagine ever not grieving his illness and his death. I can’t imagine feeling like I survived this 100% and came out on the other side. I just don’t see those things happening. And I’m good with that. That grief is part of my story with Bob. That won’t change.

What I do see happening is coping, adjusting, and accepting my new lot in life. One time I thought that grieving and widowhood was like survival of the fittest. Like if I was tough enough, strong enough, smart enough I could get through it. But now (or at least for today) I don't feel like I want to get through it or over it or beyond it. I want to adapt. Adapt. Adapt. Adapt. I keep saying that word over and over and over. I'm trying to think about what adapting would look like, what adapting would feel like.

I'm going to look up the definition of that word and ponder it and see if it's really the right word. I'm not sure why I feel so inclined to label everything and give an exact meaning to everything. Is it a coping mechanism? Is it a survival method? I am not sure why I feel like I must be so analytical about this. So, here's the definition— to make something suitable for a new purpose or a new use. Also to modify. I think that's a nice description of what I'm doing with my life right now at this stage. So, my new take on widowhood, loss and grief is to adapt!

I'm praying God will direct me in the right path in his perfect way. This favorite scripture says it all! "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, do not lean on your own understanding, in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight" Proverbs 3:5,6

So, adapt, modify, go in a different direction, change, transform, — all of those seem obtainable. They seem doable. They don't seem traumatic, and they don't seem drastic. Can I handle adapting? I'm not going over huge obstacles, not making drastic changes, not trying to put something behind me, and not trying to get over something that's insurmountable. I'm just making minor changes. I'm adapting. I'm just moving ahead even if that means I must modify my former plan. Like reacting to a plot twist!

So, what I would suggest for you if you're grieving a loss is

to just go ahead and grieve. If you're missing your loved one, don't try to change that. If you're a bit concerned about your future, so be it. Just start making minor changes, taking a few baby steps and moving in a little bit different direction than you thought you were going to go. Adapt.

As I get very close to the three-year mark of my husband's death (Bob passed on 11/11/21), I get a little melancholier and even a little bit down in the dumps. There are a few more teary days and gloomy moments. The lump in my throat is a bit bigger. It's these times when I think even more about what we might have done these last few years and what we might have done in the years ahead. I miss him. I miss our life. I miss seeing him in my future. Life has changed but I'm ever so grateful that I had Bob and had his love and that will never change.

Adapting has a soft sound to it. Making small changes is necessary. Nothing major nor drastic. I think that's important for you to remember if you're going off on a new path that you need to do it with care. You don't want to just start out on some crazy rocky steep uneven terrain. You want to start out with a somewhat smooth level path, wouldn't you think? You need to acclimate to the new surroundings and conditions. Take a little venture out of your comfort zone. Dip your toes in, test the water, try some new foods, make some new friends, connect with old friends, go where you haven't gone before, learn a new dance, try a new lipstick, read a different style of book, take a class, explore your faith, love on your family, pamper yourself, exercise more, and travel. Just try to adapt to doing these things without your loved one.

You can do it. I am.

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It is not the strongest of the
species that survives, nor the
most intelligent. It is the one
that is most adaptable to
change.

CHARLES DARWIN

Even Darwin agrees with me!!