You Deserve a Break Today!

I drove by the local McDonald’s and had a flashback that really sent me down a rabbit hole. Crazy the thoughts I have sometimes and where those thoughts lead me.

I remember when McDonald’s was built and opened in our small (once rural) town a few years back and Bob wanted to go there and eat. I was opposed to it. Never really gave my negative feelings much thought. I just had other places I would rather eat my meal. I love eating out and a fast-food stop doesn’t constitute eating out for me. Well, unless it’s In-N-Out Burger.

Bob was well into his decline with Dementia, and I was “in charge”. I did all the driving and made all the decisions. Bob usually was very happy just to go along for the ride and never balked at what we did. I was always a take charge person but with Bob’s decline, I was 110% in charge. At least I was if he wasn’t having a total meltdown but that’s a story for another day.

Frequently as we drove by McDonald’s he would ask to go there. And without any thought, I would just say no and tell him that we would go elsewhere, or we would go home and eat. It was never discussed more than that.

Now today, about 4-5 years later, this haunts me a bit. Why didn’t I do what my husband asked? Why did I discount his request repeatedly?

Were there other things that I didn’t give Bob any say in? Did I force feed my decisions on him? And why did I think about this many years later? Lots of questions and not a lot of clarity. But in true Susan fashion I decided that if I journaled on this matter, I might get some clarity and move on from the remorse I’m feeling.

I’m a champion for people with Alzheimer’s/Dementia. I think I can support their caregivers and give them sound advice on how to walk the minefield that is Alzheimer’s/Dementia. One of the things I’m often found to say is to not argue with your loved one. Not to be critical of your loved one’s behaviors. To remember they are still the special person they once were even if they are slipping away day by day. I emphasize treating them with the respect and admiration you once felt. You need to remember that they are not aggravating you on purpose. They don’t want to be the way they are any more than you want them to have this disease. They are unable to express themselves. They can’t explain or argue why they want to go to McDonald’s, but now I realize that if they ask for it, it is important to them.

They are counting on their loved one to take care of all their needs and looking back, I think I had room for improvement. Maybe even in all the 41 years of our marriage and not just in the Dementia years. I can see now that Bob might have thought of me as a bossy person and not just a take charge person!

So, my takeaway from my McDonald’s flashback moment (that lasted a few days) is that we all need to honor our loved ones—be they friends, siblings, neighbors, spouses. If they are healthy or ill. Whether they are young or old. If someone asks for something or wants to do something, and it just isn’t exactly what you want, be willing to compromise and bend. Say yes. Maybe you won’t enjoy the meal, but I know you’ll enjoy the moment.

Just One Picture Please

Last night was my last night of my grief support groups. 13 weeks of Grief Share. But that’s a story for another time.

Today’s story is about a favorite picture of Bob.

We were asked to bring 1 photo of our deceased loved one and share a story about them to the grief support group.

Bob and I met when I was 26 and he was 40. I’m now 70. That’s 44 years of photos to look through and pick ONE favorite one. I looked thorough photo albums (I have so many), looked at framed pictures throughout the house, looked at loose pictures in boxes, looked at pictures on my phone, and looked at pictures on Facebook. What a weeklong trip down memory lane. How was I going to pick just one photo of Bob? Would it be our wedding picture, our younger days skiing, our early grandparent days, our wonderful vacations, or celebrations at our home? I couldn’t sum up all that I wanted to share about Bob in just one photo.

I looked at photos of us both happy and healthy. I looked at photos of us struggling as we dealt with Bob’s health decline. I looked and looked. Lots of smiles and lots of tears as I hunted for the ONE best picture.

But finally, it stuck me. Why was I looking for MY favorite picture? I needed to share Bob’s favorite picture with the group. The picture Bob would want to share if he had the choice. I easily knew what that picture was. If I moved it out of the room or moved it to a different location out of Bob’s line of sight, he would quickly move it right back to where he wanted it. If someone came to visit, he would point out this picture to them. It was a picture that he treasured. So that’s the picture I shared last night.

It’s of Bob and his 4 kids standing together in our backyard.

It’s at Christmas time a few years ago. I’m not in the photo as I took the picture. It represents a happy time in his life. Bob and his 4 children together. Blessed times, for sure.

Bob loved his children and out of everything he did in his life, this picture would sum up what he was most proud of. His children. And of course, the overabundance of grandchildren and great grandchildren, too. I hope they know that he loved them all and cherished family time together.

Bob and his first wife Beverly were young parents. I’ve heard the stories of how the family camped, swam, and even surfed. There are tales of a hippie wagon with flowers painted on it that would carry the longboards to the beach. There was softball and little league and all the things that young families did together.

When I met Bob, those 3 “kids” were young adults starting out on their own. Before we married, we had made the difficult decision to not have any more children as Bob felt three was plenty. We quickly became grandparents in our first year of marriage and more grandchildren came along in the following years. Our lives were full and there were plenty of good family times and little ones.

After many years of our marriage, Bob suggested that we have our own child! Totally out of the blue for me as I had long ago put that idea to rest. But once I realized he was very serious, we excitedly changed our plans. Kyle was born in 1990. 9 years after we were married. Bob had his first three children by the time he was 22 and had his fourth and final child at nearly 52 years old! (You know I could go on and on about our son Kyle but that’s a topic for another day as well.)

So, our family has morphed and changed over the years. It’s grown in huge numbers. Many of our grandchildren are older that our son. Who’s who in our family takes a flow chart!

Currently there are 19 grandchildren (counting spouses, fiancés, and significant others) and 20 greatgrandchildren. Usually, a year doesn’t pass without the birth of a new family member. Yep, that’s why I need my organizational chart!

Bob loved being in 4-generation pictures and pushed our oldest great granddaughter Kelly to have a child so that he would have a 5-generation picture! Kelly is 22 now but I think he started talking to her about babies when she was about 18. Fortunately, she didn’t succumb to her great grandpa’s wishes and didn’t have a child just to please him!

So, I shared Bob’s favorite picture last night.

I shared his legacy.

I shared his loves.

I shared him.

Steve, Bob, Julie, Kyle, and Shelly

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.

CLUBBING!

So, I am a member of a few "clubs" these days. "Clubs" I really hadn't given much thought to before Bob's death. Not that I wanted to become a member of some of them. I've just been thrown in. Others that I'm happy to be a part of. Glad I am eligible for membership in a few. Some I've been in for years and I am appreciating them more and more.

The widows' "club". Now that's a "club" that I never wanted to join. It was such a foreign thought that I really didn't know if it was widow or widower. Now I know. Membership comes at a very steep cost and being in the "club" is a constant reminder of my loss. It's also a very very very big club. Before, I never paid much attention but there surely are lots of us widows. We're everywhere!

There is a benefit to hanging out with other widows. They recognize why you might be having a rough day on certain occasions, and they want to make sure you're ok. They don't have to check with their husbands to see if they are free to spend time with you. When you do get together, you can talk for hours. Usually about those husbands you both no longer have. But your fellow widows' "club" member cares and listens.

And then there's' the Grief Support Group. Oh man, I surely joined a sad "club" when I signed up for Grief Share. I'm sure I can benefit but right now it's a hard "club" to be part of. To discuss my loss and grief makes it all so real. To listen to others as they discuss their loss and grief is heartbreaking. It feels like the air has been sucked out of the room and the other "club" members look as sad as I feel. We have a common connection in this "club" and it's not a "club" that any of us wanted to join. Some are still in denial that they really are in this "club" and others would do anything to trade places with their loved one who passed away. I feel a bond with all these people although our stories are all so different. We share one huge thing. We miss someone terribly.

Our facilitator asked us to commit to a minimum of three classes of the Grief Group before we decide to quit the “club”. I’ve attended 4 times now, so I guess I’m committing to the entire 13-week program. I wonder if I’ll be sad when it come to an end. Will the “club” have cured me by then? Will my grief be over? I am sure I’ll still be somewhere plodding through the grief process, and I’ll miss the support of this “club”. Hopefully I’ll forge some new friendships with some of the other broken-hearted folks. Maybe we’ll form the after-grief support group “club”.

My Alzheimer’s/Dementia Support Group has turned into a huge part of my mental survival. Now that’s a “club” you don’t want a membership in. To have a loved one with Alzheimer’s/Dementia is a nightmare and I wouldn’t wish it on anyone. Even if the “club” has been a great means of support for me, I wish I never had needed them. I’m so glad that they are continuing to allow me and others who have lost our loved ones to still be members of the “club”. Losing this “club” membership would be awful. I know that I couldn’t have dealt with Bob’s illness and death without the support of this “club”. They get me. They really get me.

I was thrown out of another support group! It was a caregiver’s support group and once you are no longer a caregiver, they don’t want you attending. I was a bit shocked that I was being booted out of that “club”, but I guess they can’t hold my hand and coach me through life forever. Even though I had benefited from that “club”, I guess it was time to move on. One less “club” commitment since I am no longer meeting the entrance requirement.

Funny side note. One of the women I met in the caregiver’s group has reached out to me and we are going to meet up and go to a Soccer Game this month. I’ve never met her in person as this was a “club” that met on Zoom. I’m eager to meet her in person and I’m eager to attend my first professional National Women’s’ soccer match. Maybe I’ll join a new “club” of soccer enthusiasts. Go San Diego Wave!

Now let’s talk Jazzercise. Even though I am totally out of shape, the “club” of women at Jazzercise are wonderful and the crazy mix of the dancing, music, and sweating is great. What a great “club” to be in. I’m grateful for the hour of time when I can step out of my head and just dance and have fun. It’s a welcome diversion. And who knows, I may be able to do a sit-up or a plank someday.

I’ve attended Bible Study Fellowship once a week for many years and I have to say that this “club” changed my life and matured my faith. Learning the Bible with other Christian women is fantastic. Just to make sure that I get all the bible and Christian fellowship that I need during this rough patch, I’ve joined a second women’s bible study at my church. “Clubbing” with these Christian women in both of these bible study “clubs” is just what I need. Luckily there’s no entrance requirements. Come as you are!

The best “club” that I have joined recently is the “club” of baptized believers! That’s a topic for an entire blog of its own but I can share that I LOVE being in this “club” and am thrilled beyond thrilled to have been obedient to God’s word. I’m still riding a baptism high!

What other “clubs” am I in? I’m in Bronco B.A.B.E.S. group (because of my new Bronco Sport but I don’t even know what B.A.B.E.S. stands for) and a Sisterhood Travel group (travel tours for solo women) on Facebook. I’m considering joining a writer’s guild or a memoir writing group.

I’m exploring who I am without Bob. Do I have a new identity separate now from being Bob’s wife? Do I have a new purpose if it's not being Bob's caregiver? Maybe I'm still the same Susan but I'm exploring and looking at other "clubs" to join.

Hope to run into you while I'm out clubbing!

Thanks to those of you that are clubbing with me!!

Guess Who?!

First Valentine's Day with Bob

1979. Bob and I had only been dating a few months and I thought we had something pretty special going on. Bob was the patrol sergeant at the northern division (SDPD) and I thought it would be great fun to send the grizzly sergeant a bouquet of flowers. I ordered them from a local Pacific Beach florist, and they were delivered early in the morning at the lineup.

I waited with anticipation to hear from Bob. Was he surprised? Did his coworkers tease him? Was he happy to be fussed over by his new girlfriend? I didn't hear a word from him. Now granted, this was before the days of cell phones and text messages, but I did expect a phone call.

I had a dinner planned for Bob that evening at my home. I had prepared a special romantic meal and was eager to hear all about the flower delivery when he arrived at my home. He arrived. Nothing was said about the flowers. I was a bit tense. He seemed a bit tense. Had I done something wrong by sending flowers? Had I embarrassed him? Was it over the top for how early it was in our relationship? Why didn't he mention the flowers or thank me for them?

Well, the truth came out. Within a few minutes of arriving, Bob nervously blurted out "did you send me flowers? I said I had and followed up by asking him why in the world did he have to ask. Who else would they be from? Oh my! He explained that I signed the card "***Guess Who***" instead of using my name. He wasn't sure they were from me. His previous girlfriend always signed cards "***Guess Who***" and he thought the flowers might be from her. Oh my! I didn't know that there was a previous girlfriend who still might be sending flowers so there was lots of discussion about her. Not quite the first Valentine's Day Date I anticipated.

The funniest part was that Bob had spent the better part of his day trying to track down who had actually sent the flowers. He did an extremely hard press on the florist to see if they would tell him who had ordered the flowers, but they wouldn't. He tried a phone call and then went in person in uniform to the shop to try to convince them to "give up the source". But they stood firm and didn't give him a name. Can you imagine the frustration when the policeman couldn't solve the case?!

The craziest part of the night was that Bob admitted that he was so convinced that the flowers were NOT from me, that he thought about giving me the flowers that night. Fortunately, he had second thoughts on doing that and he lived for us to have another date.

And another.

And another.

And another.

Disneyland 1979

Tecate Ensenada Bike Ride 1979

Bob’s Younger Wife

I was 26 and Bob was 40 when we met. Being a younger woman didn’t bother me at all. Bob was young at heart and perhaps I was an old soul. I never felt the 14-year age difference made much of a difference for us. We were the perfect age for us! We married when I was 28 and Bob was 42. We had our “late in life” son when I was 38 and Bob was 52. Bob was my daily reminder that I was young. At least younger than him! I loved being Bob’s younger wife!

People would ask about our age difference, and it would only confirm that I was the younger wife. Being with an older guy was a reminder that I was younger. I was never the old person in the room. Bob was!

When our son Kyle was born, Bob had a daily prayer. He wanted to live long enough for his son to remember him. Not sure why Bob thought that might not happen, but Bob was grateful as the years passed. Once Kyle was old enough to have many memories of his dad, Bob’s prayer turned to living long enough to see Kyle graduate from High School. When High School came and went, Bob prayers became living to see Kyle graduate from college. When that happened, Bob would pray to see Kyle be happily married. That beautiful milestone was met over 6 years ago. I know Bob LOVED celebrating his 80th birthday with family in Maui and commented over and over how he never thought he’d live that long. He was thrilled he had lived longer than his dad did and would mention that frequently.

Did Bob have hopes of living to experience other milestones with Kyle? I’m not sure. Bob’s ability to project into the future or think about things to come disappeared with his dementia. Or if he had those thoughts, he couldn’t verbalize them. I think he was content with all the wonderful things that had happened in his life with Kyle and with all his other children and family. And with me. His younger wife.

What I find interesting thinking about all of this is that I never once though about my own possibility of dying. I felt young and healthy and perhaps invincible. It was Bob’s thing to worry about his death and when that might come. I was young. Or at least that’s how I felt! His younger wife.

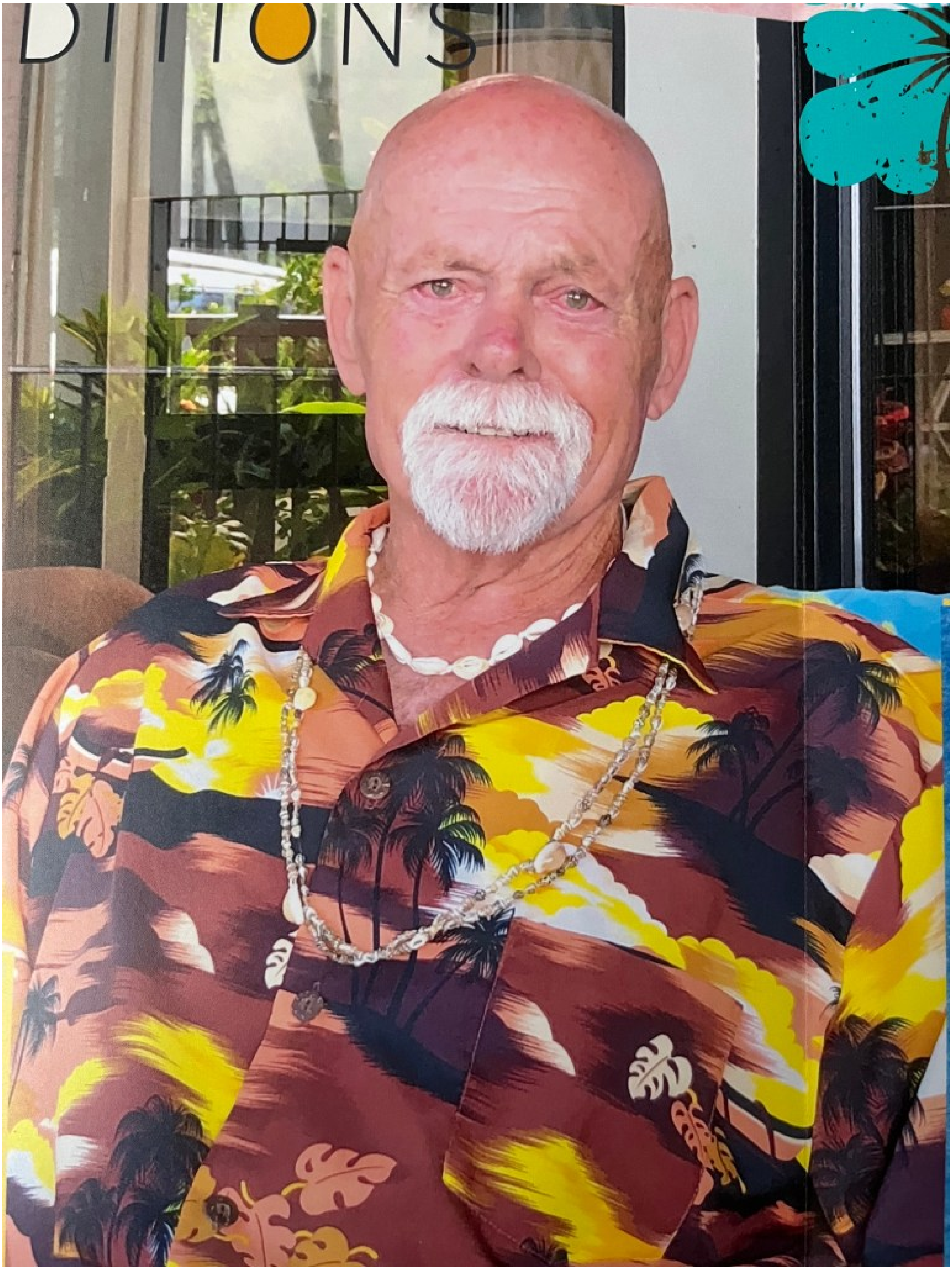
I thought Bob’s initial memory loss or confusion was just a sign of his aging. I attributed it to him being older than I was. It never occurred to me that he had a cognitive issue until he started really mixing up words and mumbling. I thought he had a stroke and off to the neurologist we went. Mild Cognitive Disorder was the diagnosis at that time. What a shocker! My older husband wasn’t just older, he was having cognitive issues that would only worsen with time. I think I began to age in reverse. I felt younger as Bob declined. Or maybe it was that Bob just seemed older and older as the disease progressed, and I felt the same. I thanked God repeatedly for His wisdom and plan in bringing Bob and me together all those years ago. God’s provision allowed for Bob to have a wife that could and would be able to take care of him. Had I been Bob’s age, perhaps I would have needed care myself or not been able to handle the rigors of taking care of him. So, Bob aged, and I stayed the same. His younger wife.

When Bob died, I was 69 and he was 83.

Now here I am. A nearly 70-year-old widow who feels very old for the first time ever in her life. I don’t have that older husband to make me feel younger and healthier by comparison. I don’t have a daily reminder that I’m not all that old. Now I just feel old, and I am thinking about my life in a totally different light. I’m the one praying to have more time with my son and my family. I’m the one praying to make more milestone memories. I’m the old person in my household of 1.

Dang. What wouldn’t I give to still be Bob’s younger wife?

I miss you in so very many ways Bob. This is just one.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LOOKING GOOD
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EIGHTY
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Bob turning 80 in Maui and turning 82 in Alpine. Milestone Memories!

Nothing To Laugh About!

When I first started wring my blog about Bob with 1 o, it was a way to share our experiences with this disease and also share some of the humor, love, and joy we have in our lives. In the past few days, I've wanted to write and update all of you, but I can't find any humor in the situation. So here goes anyway. I hope you feel the love and the joy.

Bob's disease has progressed to a point where he is sleeping 18-20 hours a day. He is either in his bed or in his recliner. The only walking he does is when I assist him and get him from one place to another. Occasionally, he doesn't even walk that short distance and I roll him on his walker.

Dementia really has taken a toll on him. But then something new came along to make matters worse, his kidney function greatly declined. He became dehydrated and that threw his one functioning kidney into severe chronic kidney disease. That threw him into even more fatigue and confusion. So, after a couple of days in the ER getting tested in all ways, they determined there was no infection and no other issue with the kidney. Bob was dehydrated and nutritionally anemic. So, he they hydrated him and then he was released with orders to drink more fluids and eat better. That's a tall order for someone with dementia who has no appetite or ability to understand that he NEEDS to eat and drink.

They also did swallow tests on Bob and put him on a soft food diet. They are concerned he could aspirate food into his lungs. They also had to sedate him and have a "sitter" in the room with him as he was extremely confused and agitated during his hospital stay. A few medications were changed, and he was taken off his Pradaxa (blood thinner) as he is a fall risk.

The doctor in the ER talked with me candidly about Palliative Care and Hospice Care. More difficult matters to ponder.

I have had Bob on a waiting list at a Memory Care Facility in Alpine since August. It’s a small popular highly recognized facility and there aren’t openings often. But on November 1st, prayers were answered. There is a room available, and BOB IS MOVING IN THERE TODAY. He’s sleeping right now as we’re awaiting the medical transport van to arrive. I’m writing instead of pacing…

On top of that blessing, the Hospice process was started. They jumped through hoops to get Bob evaluated, approved, and signed up. So, Bob will not only be getting great care from the staff of the Alpine View Lodge, but he will also have the extra layer of care from the Hospice nurse, health aide, social worker, and chaplain. Blessings upon blessings are coming our way.

Had Bob not had the decline in his overall health and the ER experience, I might have felt that I could take care of him at home with some intermittent help. But God, in all His wisdom, wanted to clearly show me that Bob needs more care than I can provide. I’m convinced now that Bob needs to live in the care facility and I’m confident in that decision. That doesn’t make it any easier. I’m still going to have that little voice in my ear questioning my choice, but the voice will be softer and easier to ignore!!

And to all our family and friends that have lent a listening ear and a caring heart—GOD BLESS YOU!!

And to myself, it’s ok to be sad after making the right decision.

PS: Bob slept the day away in his new room while I moved in his clothes, personal items, TV, and a few pictures. It was hard to walk out of his room and go home tonight but I know that he will get the care he needs there 24/7. And I’m looking forward to a great night’s sleep. Tomorrow I will meet his hospice nurse and the hospice chaplain. And I get to be a wife visiting my husband and I don’t have to be his caregiver. Now that’s LOVE AND JOY!

- 

Helicopter Wife!

I did move Bob back home after 9 days. I think the memory care facility was inattentive, understaffed, and uncommunicative. They probably think I was a worrisome helicopter wife—hovering over my guy!!

I don’t know if my expectations for his care were too high, but I felt the assurances given about the level of care Bob would receive were not met and that I could take better care of him at home. I could give lots of examples on their lack of care but trust me, Bob wasn’t getting top notch attention by any means.

I packed up his little bedroom into laundry baskets and black plastic bags and home he came. The first few days at home were some of the worst days we’ve ever had. Change is hard for folks with dementia and the bouncing to the facility and back again must have thrown him into a bit of a chaos. I questioned my decision to bring Bob home repeatedly. Questioning my decisions seems to be a common occurrence.

But now that Bob’s been home for nearly 2 weeks, I realize that it was the right decision. It’s hard to be responsible for him 24/7 but I think it’s easier than worrying 24/7! Now if I could just get him to sleep at night instead of the day.

Even though I still feel that he’ll need the care provided by an assisted living/memory care facility, it will need to be “the right place”. So, Bob continues to be on the waiting list for that place and I will do my best to take care of him in our home until there’s a room available for him. Waiting on God’s perfect timing. Patiently.

Psalm 27:14 “Wait for the Lord; be str**ong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!”**

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OFFICE
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Inside
CHARGERS

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Bob with his son Steve at the care facility~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~Bob with his daughters Shelly & Julie at our home

“Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?”

It’s been a rocky road. Did I expect differently? Everything about this disease is horrible. It not only has affected Bob, it’s also been life changing for me, Bob’s family, my family, and our friends. There’s no normal anymore and everyday can be a challenge. My mantra has become “Dementia Sucks!”.

I had written before about putting Bob on a waiting list at my preferred Memory Care Facility. I was hopeful that something would open up soon and he would be getting placed. That’s not happening and Bob’s need for professional care 24/7 is increasing. And my insanity is increasing.

So, I shifted gears and made lots of phone calls and did some tours of other facilities. I chose a small warm welcoming Senior Living Facility in La Mesa. Not as close to Alpine as I would like but everything else about it was great. They were willing to do a respite/trail period so that I can keep him on the wait list at the Alpine facility. This move doesn’t have to be permanent if it does not work out. That was reassuring to me.

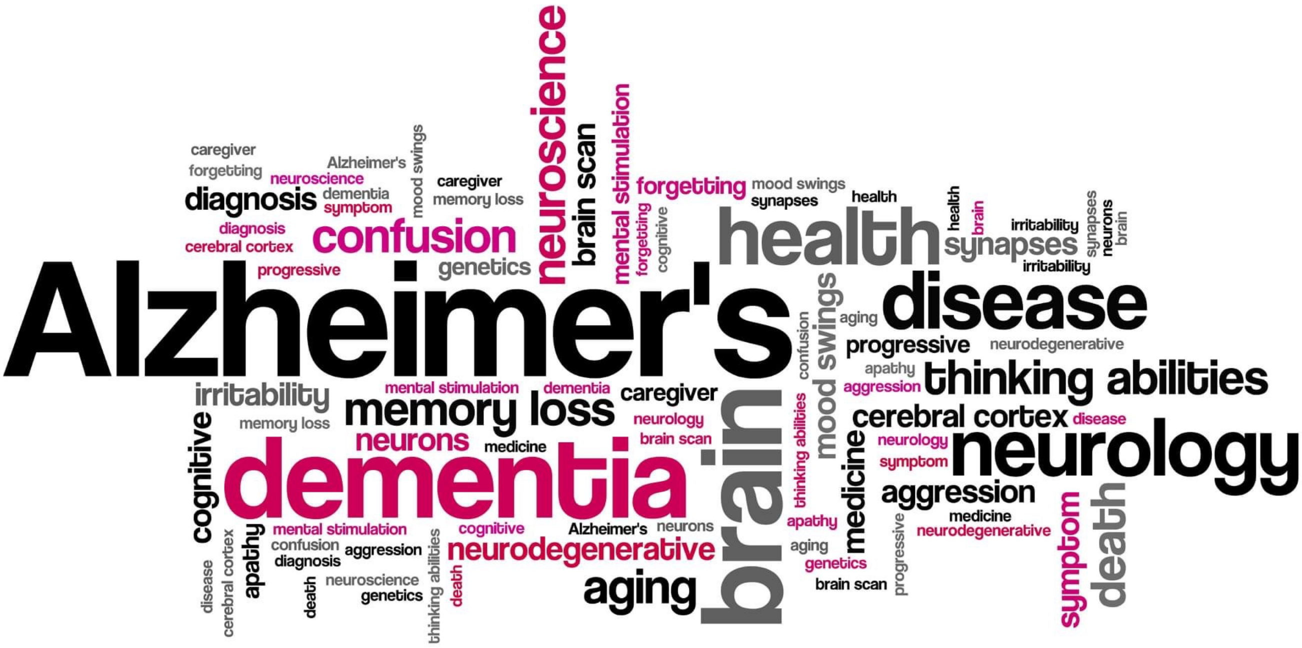
The ton of paperwork, assessments, doctor’s appointments, and general preparation that ensued was enough to make me go nuts. But I got through it and Bob is moving into his new home today. **Yes, today.** Hard to believe that the car is packed and ready to go and that I’m calm enough to be writing this blog. He’s still in his PJ’s, sound asleep in front of the TV in his recliner. He knows nothing of the move later today.

The day that I made the decision and placed the deposit was the worst. Even with prayer, family support, and the head knowledge that I was doing the right thing, I still had a heavy heavy heart. What is so strange, is that Bob told me that he loves me about 20 times that day. So out of the norm for him to repeat “I love you” over and over throughout the day. It made me think that he was trying to give me a message that he didn’t want to move (even though he doesn’t know about the move) or that he really needed to be with me. His verbal outpouring of love really touched me that day and I started to question my decision even more. If that’s even possible.

I told Bob’s sisters about this and they both had such great insight. Pam said that it was Bob’s way of reassuring me that he loved me no matter what and that he would always love me. Even if we lived apart. Colleen said it was God speaking through Bob to give me His love and support. Of course, I cried as I soaked in their thoughts. Their take on Bob’s uncommon outpouring of love, was very reassuring.

So today is move in day.

The question is **“Will Bob still love me tomorrow?”**




Bless our h
HOME SWEET COUNTRY HOME

Welcome September!

I made a lot of decisions in August.

I started with a private caregiver coming to our home a couple of mornings a week so that I could go to a Jazzercise class. BOTH are working out GREAT. I’m a klutz on the jazzercise floor but it’s great to get a good workout and clear my head. But most importantly, Bob and caregiver Nicole do well together. She just sits with him while he dozes off and on in his recliner. She fixes him his breakfast. Occasionally she can get Bob outside to walk with his walker but not often. He’d rather sleep. It’s sweet to see how he’s taken a liking to her, and he is always pleased to see her and has no concern about me leaving. What a blessing. Thanks Nicole!

Then I met with the administrator of a local residential memory care facility. Big step. I had a long list of questions for her, and all were answered. I’m a planner and I like to be able to know what lies ahead if Bob needs to live in a care facility. It was such a helpful meeting for an organizer like me. My sister Christie went along with Bob and me so that I had someone else to listen to the answers and ask about things I forgot. And give me support. Thanks Christie!

My biggest takeaway was something that was said at that meeting—***I will question and have guilt over every decision I make from here on out***. There’re no more easy decisions ahead. To have doubt that I’m doing the right thing for Bob and me is the new norm. I just must learn to quiet that voice that constantly chirps in my ear questioning my every thought and move.

At the administrator’s suggestion, Bob has spent some time there throughout August without me. A little respite care for me and a little time for them to evaluate his behavior and assess his needs. Bob’s disease has progressed to the point where he doesn’t seem to miss me or be concerned about me being gone. As sad as that is, I’m glad that he wasn’t there worrying about where I was or wondering when I would be back. The staff tells says he’s cooperative there and he’s welcome for daycare anytime. What a huge relief to know there’s a haven for Bob when I have appointments or a place to be where I can’t take him. My blood pressure and stress are already better!

Then I put Bob on their waiting list for a room. What?! **Yes, I put Bob on their waiting list for a room**. Am I really ready for that? Is Bob at the stage that he’s ready for that? I always had a benchmark in mind as to when I might consider placing him in a memory care home and he’s not at that benchmark yet. But where Bob is right now is crazy hard. I just am not sure that I’m able to care for Bob at home and I’m vacillating on just what to do. I never realized how hard caregiving for a person with dementia would be. I know that sounds ridiculous, but I seriously thought I would be able to deal with anything and everything that would be part of caring for my hubby. NOT!!! This is quite the wild ride and I’m not sure I can stay on it!

I have always said that I won’t make any big decisions while I’m tired, anxious, stressed, angry—but guess what? I’m tired, anxious, stressed, and angry every day.

There is no available room for Bob at this time and I have no idea when a room might open. That’s probably good as I’m not sure if we’re ready to take this step. I do know that God has a plan for Bob and for me. A room will open at just the perfect time. I’m trusting in God’s perfect timing.

So, let’s see what September brings!!

Proverbs 6:19
In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.

Summer Picnic 2021 Bob with 1 o!