

Being Honest about Lying!!

I learned so many new things as a caregiver for someone with dementia. Things I never had given much thought to before. Things that I never hoped I would need to learn. Behaviors and skills that seemed almost to go against who I was.

One was a biggie called “therapeutic fibbing”. When I first heard this term, I was more than confused. Basically, it means telling little white lies or partial truths to your loved one who has Alzheimer’s/Dementia. That was totally against my belief system, and it seemed to go against my principles. But I began to do it. A lot.

When Bob would ask me if he could go to my house for lunch (when we were in our house), I would tell him that I was out of food, and it would be best that we stay at his house (which was our house) and have lunch. It was much easier than trying to convince him that I didn’t live elsewhere. He was satisfied. A lie? In a way.

Once Bob didn’t drive and had actually had his license taken away, he would ask where his car or his car keys were. Instead of rehashing that he didn’t have a car or license anymore, I would tell him that the car was getting a repair taken care of or getting detailed or a friend had borrowed it. I just made up a new story each time he asked. He was satisfied. A lie? In a way.

Bob told the story about all the baseball hats he had. He claimed his parents threw a party for him when he played football for the Chargers (I must have missed that era!). Bob claimed that everyone brought him a hat and that’s where his baseball hat collection came from. I agreed and said it was a grand party indeed. He was satisfied. A lie? In a way.

Sometimes Bob would think that an old boss or work associate

was joining us for a meeting, and we needed to get to the meeting place. Often it was a story about it being the police chief or a higher up who needed his help on a big case. Instead of explaining that none of this was happening, I would agree and load Bob up in the car and head somewhere for lunch. Sometimes he would forget about the meeting he was supposedly having by the time we got to the restaurant. If he was still going on and on about the meeting with the police officer, I would secretly talk to the waitress and ask her to come tell Bob that he had just gotten a phone call and the police officer wasn't able to come and he would be in touch for another meeting. He was satisfied. A lie? In a way.

Another lesson learned was that there is no blame or guilt once someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's/Dementia. You can't be so hard on yourself for your behaviors and actions. You just have to give yourself grace. I can't compare being a caregiver to someone with dementia to any other types of caregiving, but I am sure there is no easy caregiving job. I just know in our situation that there were many times that I didn't handle Bob's caregiving with tender loving care. I am sure there were times that I did not look at him with love in my eyes. I'm sure there were times that my voice as harsh and my words were mean. I am sure there were times when my prayers were more for me than for him. Do I regret these things? Do I blame myself or have guilt? No, I don't.

Now that's the biggest lie yet. Of course, I do



Me and Bob's 4 children wearing Bob's most favorite hats!

5 of the Great-Grands wearing Grandpa Bob's hats!

New Year/New Word 2024

A few years back I started choosing a word instead of making a New Year's Resolution. Or maybe those words chose me. But either way, I kept focused on that word through the entire year. I found it more helpful to have a word to guide me than a list of resolutions that I quickly forgot.

In 2021 my word was GENTLE followed by JOY in 2022, by KINDNESS in 2023.

My new word for 2024 is **STRONG**.

What I want for myself is a **strong body**—a healthy active body. Many of you know that this year I have lost 65 pounds. Caregiving, Covid, and Bob's passing did not help my already lousy eating habits any! But now I am feeling healthy and energetic. I want to continue exercising, walking, eating right and taking good care of my body. Becoming a widow, you quickly learn that you are on your own. I am solely responsible for taking care of myself. I want to feel capable and strong and able to live on my own for many many years!

What I want for myself is a **strong mind**—a mind without judgment, without bias, without gossip, without negativity, without moodiness, without hatred, without unwanted thoughts, and without stress and anxiety. Maybe I should say MIND AND HEART as I think they are connected. What you're feeling in your heart is affected by what you put in your mind. What is in your mind shows your real heart. I want both to be in perfect alignment. I think a good summation of what I want for my mind and heart are the Fruits of the Spirit. *(But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23)*

I know that's a huge ask but that is why my word is strong. I need to focus every day on being strong and having the strength needed for all my wants!

What I want for myself is a **strong spirit**—a faith that doesn't waiver. A faith that is strong enough to get me through rough periods. A faith that I feel so strongly about that I live it out every day and share it with friends and family. A strong unshakable cornerstone faith.

So, where I am going to go to get this strength—the strength I need to be strong in body, mind, and spirit?

Here's a few favorite scriptures which will tell you that answer—

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" Proverbs 3:5-6

"in their hearts, humans plan their course, but the LORD determines their steps" Proverbs 16:9

"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength" Philippians 4:13

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" Isaiah 41:10

So, I'm heading into 2024 on a high note and clear path.
Thanks for being with me on my journey!

PS: Last year I started 2023 being very sad and weepy about moving into yet another new year without Bob. This year, I have come to realize that Bob is right beside me and I can even hear him cheering me on.

