"*For life and death are one, even as the river and the sea are one*." Kahlil Gibran

Death happens. It happens to all living creatures. It will happen to you and it will happen to those near you. Some of the people you love dearly and perhaps the ones you love the most … will die before you, sometimes with little or no warning.

If you lose a spouse, a child, a sibling, a parent, or a dear friend - you will learn the true meaning of grief. The pain and sorrow from such loss cannot be expressed with words. Those who have experienced it … understand the grief without words.

The death of any loved one is … hard, but there is something about the death of a spouse that just … knocks the wind right out of you. It will snatch a large chunk of your very soul from you. It will create a hole in your heart that at times will seem like a huge vacuum sucking the very breath and life from you.

At first the shock of your new reality (life without your other half) will force you into "zombie" mode much of your day and night. You will not respond to others beyond what is necessary. Apathy will dominate. You only go through the motions of your life with an overwhelming sensation that it is all a … dream, a horrible, horrible nightmare.

You have moments where you just don't care. You do not care about anything, including if you continue to live. Living in this new world has lost the same meaning as living in the world before death.

Your very definition of yourself has changed. The self image you held before death has vanished … forever.

You still have people that love you. Some people do bring comfort, but not with their words, it is more with their kindness. They cannot truly understand. They want to help, but there is not much they can do. It's not their fault. That's just the way it is.

At times you want to be near people, but you break into uncontrollable sobs with little or no warning. You are helpless to hold back the tears. You avoid being around others more than you normally would, allowing tears to come when they will.

Being alone in your new world, especially in the early days, weeks, months, … is - hard and often painful. Your heart aches. You cry out with a deep rooted passion for the life you once had, the life you knew before it was snatched from you. In this pain and anguish, you know that your old life can only exist in your memories now.

Your memories give you a rock to lean on. The good memories bring comfort and allow you to smile even with tears streaming down your cheeks. You treasure the good memories. They nourish and sustain you.

Yet the memories are also a constant reminder of a new world. They pop up unexpectedly, triggered by small things like an object, a sound, a place, a smell, a song, … the memories bring a reminder that you - your life will never be the same again.

You learn to live with your grief. You learn, you will not get past it or push through it. The memories will always be part of your life and so will the grief. You learn to endure grief and sadness. You accept it as part of your new life.

Quiet your heart and mind and try to hear the voice of the one you love - fresh and new. Imagine what they would tell you today, this moment. You know with complete assurance part of the message would be - they want you to be happy - to live a full and rich life. Allow yourself to cling to the clear and certain knowledge that your spouse would want you to be … happy.

You learn to live with your grief. You learn to live with the unexpected moments when sadness creeps in and lingers like clouds on a gloomy overcast day. But just as you know the sun is still there even on the cloudy days, so too the joys of life can still be found even amid our sadness.

"*In the heart of To-day is the word of To-morrow.*
The Builders of Joy are the Children of Sorrow." William Sharp

"*Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them.*" George Eliot