

I am 41 years old and just 3 months ago; I lost my husband after a long battle with illness. Although I knew death was a possibility and had been preparing myself, nothing could prepare me for what lay ahead for me. In these 3 months, I have been working very hard to resume life as normal. I went back to work 2 weeks after my husband's death; began to take care of my finances as well as my home. Some may say that I am doing very well considering what has just occurred. I loved my husband with my whole heart and soul, and at times I cannot believe that he is actually gone. When I am faced with the reality that I will never see him face-to-face again, I find that I busy myself so I don't have to feel the gut wrenching pain. If I do not busy myself, I find myself hyperventilating and have made myself sick from all of the tears. It's easier to be busy than feel the utter and total loss I feel when I think about my husband never walking through our doors again.

Louise reminds me to let my grief surface. She tells me how important it is to stay present and give my sadness a voice so it may leave my body. She tells me this is important so I can make room for positive thoughts and feelings. I find this very hard to do. I am afraid that if I let a little bit of grief to surface, then I will never be able to close the door on it again. So, Louise and I started small. We did what I felt was manageable. Every day, I set the timer on my phone for 5 minutes and I write a note to my husband. I tell him whatever is happening with me that day and how I feel about it. I end this letter with telling him how much I miss him and can't wait to see him again in heaven. I am not going to lie to you; this was very hard at the beginning. I did not want to talk to anyone after writing to my husband. I wanted to be alone in my thoughts. I even told Louise how much writing was causing me pain, but she reminded me that the pain has always been there under the surface, I have just given in it an opening to leave my body. This makes sense to me. Each day I do this, I feel a tiny bit better and I hope one day it will not hurt so much.

I still shelter myself in the busyness of my life but I feel good that I am letting some of grief out, that I am giving it a voice. I look at Louise and I ask her how she's able to move on and seem so happy after losing her husband not that long ago. She always tells me it's because she walked right into her grief and not around it. She went in and held its hand and says to it, "teach me what you need to and let's get to the other side of this". This is what I want for my life, this is what my goal is; this is what Louise is helping me to do. Although she reminds me that no one will experience grief the exact same way, she is always there to walk through it with me and for that I am thankful that I do not have to do this alone.

-Marlena