

GRIEF FATIGUE HOBBLED ME

A widow's journey

Mary Lee's 63-year-old husband Pat
Died from a stroke in 2013

BY MARY LEE ROBINSON, adapted from the book,
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Losing half the household labor force left a very big void

With regards to home upkeep, at age sixty-one, there were a great many things I could do, but I couldn't get them all done, and some require a second set of hands. There's also great value in having the motivation of someone working shoulder to shoulder.

Along the way, I've found some helpers. We already had lawn maintenance and housekeeping help in place. I can sometimes find a college kid to



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work for a few hours. I've found contractors, electricians and appliance repairmen I like. Those relationships are vital. I tend to pay generously, as I need those folks to run to help me when there's a problem.

It's better now, but in the first few years my energy was extremely low. Grief fatigue hobbled me a lot. Now, I'm not grief fatigued, but the years keep coming, and I'm slowing down because of my age.

Our home is absolutely perfect for caring for my mother, so I'll stay here as long as she's with me. I guess God knew what he was doing when it wouldn't sell. I designed it with accessible bathrooms, one of which adjoins Mom's room. She can wheel her walker right into the threshold-free shower and bathe herself. I'm not sure I could manage if that were not so.

After Mom's gone? I guess I'll see what's next when next actually arrives.