

“YOU DON’T LOOK LIKE A WIDOW”

A widow’s journey

Diane’s 31-year-old husband Pat was murdered in 1995

BY DIANE MCMINN, adapted from the book, *Grief Diaries: Through the Eyes of a Widow*
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“You’ll find someone else”

I have several friends who have stood by me, and are still by my side today. Many of my friends were busy with their husbands and children and, although I tried to still fit in, I just didn’t anymore. I could tell some of them felt awkward, too, and wanted to be anywhere else. So, in order to avoid making things worse, I slowly faded out.

People mean well, I know in my heart that they truly do, but most people just really don’t know the right thing to say.

When you’re a young widow, nothing is right.

Older people would say things like, “You’re young, and you’ll find someone else.” Then there’s the dreaded, “You don’t look like a widow.” Well, of course I don’t, and I shouldn’t be one.

Then came the apology for saying what they thought was the wrong thing to say. To avoid that, I stayed away. Again, for the ones who haven’t stayed, I don’t blame them. I am the one who drifted away.

When the children were still in elementary school, I lived and breathed for them. I stayed active and took them to birthday parties, playdates, amusement parks, and friends’ houses. Likewise, their friends were always over at our house playing. They were almost always in the company of friends and family. If they weren’t with friends, they were with me spending quality time.

Once they were in middle and high school, they were with friends even more, and less with me. I, on the other hand, stayed more and more to myself.

I didn’t go anywhere or do anything outside of my home if I could help it.

This was the complete opposite of how things were before Pat’s death. I can’t blame my loner status or my choices on any of my friends. Try as they might, I resisted their efforts. To those who have remained and to new friends who I have met along this journey, I could call on any one of them to this day and know they would be there, no questions asked. Most of time, I just don’t call.