

LITTLE PIECES OF GRIEF

Mary's mother died in 2010,
Mary's 60-year-old husband David died in 2012,
and Mary's 8-year-old grandson died in 2013.

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Self care articles for the bereaved

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*Journal Entries in the first days following my
husband David's death on March 27, 2012*

3-29-2012:

I ask for understanding and some things are starting to make sense: The opening of so many doors in my life since my mother's death; the writing, workshops, and other opportunities, preparing me to be alone.

What made me feel a sharp stab of fear on the way home from a photoshoot for the newspaper? Talking to my husband David in the car about all the workshops, speeches and newspaper column, I turned and said "Sometimes I'm scared about everything happening so fast. Doors opening up so fast, they've slammed against the wall. You don't think God is preparing me to be alone, do you?"

"I'm not going anywhere," David had replied, taking hold of my hand.

David, you went somewhere.

How often recently David had been telling me how proud he was of me, how much he believed in me, how it was my time to fly, and I was soaring.

That morning, three weeks before he died, he kept looking at me with pure, unadulterated love,

telling me I was beautiful although I was dressed in ratty pajamas. I felt truly loved.

Then Emily, feeling the urge to hug her dad repeatedly throughout the day, so often that David worried about her. Her getting involved with a wonderful youth group just months before her dad's death, and telling me about a Christian radio station.

Beginning to listen to the local Christian radio station just two months before his death. It is that music that brings me comfort now.

How David's life insurance policy was reinstated just twenty-six days before his death, a policy he had to fight for in the previous eighteen months without coverage.

David reading so many religious books, watching Joyce Meyer on television nearly every morning in recent months.

My husband's awe and amazement at being blessed every day in the hospital. Who is this man who loves being blessed daily? I wondered at the time. David was on his own faith journey!

David wanting the book *Getting to Heaven*, by Cecil Murphey in the hospital, when he hadn't wanted any other reading material.

The day of his death, a check from Cecil Murphey for an angel story I'd sent to one of his anthologies. The night of David's wake—an email informing me I'd won a Cecil Murphy scholarship to a writing conference that ended on what would have been our 34th anniversary.

3-30-2012:

The morning of my husband's funeral.

"Dear Lord, thank you for the time I had with David. Thank you for the last 5 ½ years with him as my true partner in every sense of the word, how you meant a marriage to be. Thank you for the support of my family and friends and the friends I have discovered in just the last year and a half. Thank you for my children. Please help us hold each other up."

4-1-2012:

Many at the funeral were mourning the young David. We were mourning the man he had become—the gentle, quiet, loving Christian man.

David would've laughed at almost ending up in the priest's garage over the weekend because no one had dug the hole at the gravesite! The man claimed it was too late to do it.

"Don't worry, Mom," my daughter Elizabeth said. "Dad will haunt them tonight."

Sure enough, they got up early and dug the hole.

How about me ordering roast beef for a Catholic funeral luncheon on a Friday in Lent? Is it Friday? I wondered when someone mentioned it. Is it Lent?

4-2-2012:

Some say that God doesn't give us more than we can handle.

My friend Beth says, "There is no Bible verse that says that. That is a manmade saying. How else does God get us to fall to our knees in front of him?"

4-4-2012

A memory of leaning over the hospital bed the night he had the heart attack. I couldn't reach to hug him, so I kissed his hand and arm.

"I love you," I told him, and he very seriously replied, "Thank you."

As if my love was a great gift! And yet, it was he who was the gift—to me.