

GOD'S SCRIPT

On the night of the accident, I sat next to my daughter's body at the scene of the two-car collision. As I sought to find her hand under the white sheet, God handed me a new script. I handed it back.

I wanted my old life, not a new one.

I wanted my daughter to open her eyes and say "Hi, Mom."

Surveying the car's damage, instinctively I knew that wasn't going to happen. Yet shock, and the horror of seeing my daughter's bare toes peeking out from under the stark white sheet protected my mind from reality.

God again handed me the new script. I tore it up and handed it back.

"I don't want your new script!" I yelled.

I had a wonderful life as a mother of one college graduate, one college student, and two teenagers. My hubby and I were even blessed with our first grandchild. Life was wonderful! There was no need for God to go changing it.

But I didn't win. God did. I had no choice but to take the new script. I ignored it for three years.

And then tragedy struck again.

My dear hubby's grief consumed him, and he suffered a life-threatening stroke that left him disabled. He was just 46 years old.

I gave in and waved the white flag. There was nothing left of me. I was done. Exhausted. Here I was facing a new kind of grief, and I had hardly begun to process the first.



God's script laid there for months and months. My heart broken in so many places, I had no energy to read it. The lines blurred together, the words indistinguishable.

And then one day out of anger, I picked it up.

The first line said, "When you help others, you help your own heart to heal."

Seriously, God? I felt like a regressed teenager challenging a parent. I could hardly put one foot in front of the other, how was I supposed to help someone else?

But God didn't include instructions. I wasn't amused.

Yet I needed God. Desperately.

I gave in and waved the white flag. I was standing squarely in the belly of hell; I had nothing more to lose.

I wasn't entirely sure how to go about this new script, but herein lies the answer: I didn't have to figure it out all on my own.

One door opened, then two doors, then four. And so on and so forth.

It's now been seven years since the loss of our daughter and four years since my husband's life-changing stroke. I haven't figured it all out yet, but God's script gave me a life purpose far better than I could ever have imagined.

Where am I now? Today, I help others. Because this helps my own heart to heal.

There. I said it. Script accepted. God was right.

Helping others has come in many forms. One of my most joyous endeavors was creating the series *Grief Diaries*, an anthology of stories about surviving loss.

When I set out to compile these stories, some questioned whether I had lost my final marble. Who would want to read tales of life's most challenging moments? Yet, God had laid this on my heart. And I trusted him.

I knew, without a shadow of a doubt, that the collection was going to change lives around the world.

I trusted God's script, and strangers I've never met handed me the most precious of gift of all: their own loss experiences.

They entrusted me to handle each with kid gloves, package them oh-so-carefully, and present them to the world for the sole purpose of helping others not feel so alone. Each stranger became my friend who enriched my world beyond measure.

So, I no longer questioned the script. I just followed it, never once forgetting that every story I now held in the palm of my hand is sacred. Not just to the writer, but to the world.

And to God.

Suddenly, this crazy book series about sharing true stories about loss has given a platform to more than 700 writers around the world.

It feels good to share our experiences with others. Why? Because it helps both readers and writers feel less alone.

So, it's true. When we help others, we help our own heart to heal.

Baring and sharing to comfort others like ourselves. Healing hearts by sharing journeys.

Script accepted.

Thank you, God.

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