

## **My New Life**

By Carolyn K. Taylor

March 25, 1995 was the first anniversary of my new role as a widow at the age of forty-six. During my lifetime (mostly from the time I was a little girl), I dreamed of marriage, children, growing old together as a couple and even traveling and enjoying the possibility of having grandchildren. When death came, unexpectedly, the scenario of “happily ever after” snapped me awake! It seemed as if a prank had been played on me.

The so-called “perfect life” in the order described can be devastating to a woman like myself who had to take on the new role of a widow before I was prepared.

My new role became effective the very second my husband died. The very first and most difficult realization was to know that after the funeral, all my friends, acquaintances and relatives went home leaving me with the shock and all the paperwork. I was someone I didn't know: a widow, and I didn't know the requirements for this important job.

Since I believe in a higher power, one of the things that help me most is my spirituality. I have many new responsibilities: head of the house and the only person left for maintaining its upkeep, paying the bills, buying the groceries, taking care of the car, being alone, having to do everything from cleaning to taking out the trash, and keeping my faith and sanity with mixed feelings.

The most important role that I have come to know is to realize that I am a new and different person. I must go on in life, trying to enjoy it to the fullest and realizing that I have to make the decisions, whether they are right or wrong. Finding my way out of that corner as a little lost child and doing something – even if I didn't have the motivation or willpower to do so – was the hardest for me.

Now, I realize that I can't let my brain and body die just because my husband is gone. I have to pick up the pieces and try something new and different, or continue some of the things I had stopped doing. I have to learn to smile again. There are many things that are still unresolved at this time, but I realize I have to take one step at a time, or even one day or one hour at a time as long as it takes to make it through to the other side.

Though I have met many new people and friends of different backgrounds and lifestyles, I know that we still have the same things in common. Getting through the grief

and pain by supporting one another is comforting. In know that there are some things that others have said that have inspired me and I have hope that something I have said or done had been an inspiration to someone else. It is good to know that there are others who understand and are willing to help.

I need to strive to become a new and better ME! With hard work, love, support and my faith, I can and will survive. I have to allow myself to open my heart and soul and feel the pain of grieving no matter how difficult it is. It is not easy to explain to others how I feel or what I am going through, because we are all different. But I have found that it is necessary for me to talk about his death, cry and listen to others for help. I must allow myself to feel the pain so that I can go on living and make a new life for myself, because I am alone now. I may have to move one day, but I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.

One night I was listening to some music that my husband had, and I heard a particular song on the compact disk that I had not noticed before. I was trying to put the hurt and pain out of my mind when Patti La Belle sang Love Never Dies. What an inspiration! Though I know that I have Willie with me and in my heart, sometimes it feels like a thorn in my heart. I know that it is okay to take him out and talk to him, but there is also a time when I must put him back inside and not die with him. Though all the times may not have been good, the good times outweigh the bad and I can remember them all.

One day at a time, I am being made and molded into a new me as I am being "Granted the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. My goal is to take one day at a time, resolve one thing at a time and TO LIVE!

