

“I took a deep breath and looked at all of the blues and greens as far as the eye could see and felt like I’d been holding an empty bucket while also holding my breath. In this moment my bucket had been filled and I could breathe again. I felt close to God and to Grayson in heaven, just above me. I lifted my hand and yelled, “Hi Grayson!” as I sat down on a nearby rock to thank God for bringing me there and keeping me safe. To this day, that was the closest I’ve ever felt to God’s actual presence, as I looked at the nearby mountains, sea and trees.

I felt great, while also so alone as a fresh widow who was forced to reboot my life like a computer that wasn’t working. My life literally depended on my ability to adapt and accept things as they were to move forward. This healing journey was giving me the respite in ways that I still cannot quite articulate. When you have seen what I have, and had to do the unthinkable things I have done, and then are able to experience what I was seeing right then, there are no words.

While still on top of the mountains, I made quick calls to my parents and siblings, telling them where I was and thanking them for always supporting me. According to my parents, some close family members had a hard time understanding how I could go on such a big trip after friends had had a fundraiser for me. My parents said they told them that they had no idea what my life had been like and this was something I needed to do for myself to heal. My experience was one I wouldn’t wish on my worst enemy. I was proud that by the grace of God I had been able to do everything I had done for my husband.”

Excerpt from the book *Wife, Widow, Now what?* By Rachel Engstrom

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