

The Harbor

More than ten years ago, I pulled into the harbor, in search of a safe, quiet place where no one could see my tears, grief, and pain. I didn't have a plan I just stopped there. All I knew was that I was alone, didn't have my husband, my partner anymore to help me navigate our future, and I didn't know how to start out alone on the next part of my journey. Being alone wasn't where I wanted to be.

Harbors are 'safe' places for boats, keeping them from being torn apart in a storm, a safe shelter for whatever weather is ahead. I needed that shelter; it seemed like the best choice as no one really understood the pain of my grief and the loneliness that I faced each day. I could hide when I needed to and only venture out when I felt safe, not going too far out into the waters, only far enough where I knew I could quickly turn around and find my safe place again. I've talked to other widows who feel as I do, when you are somewhere in a group or even alone, all of a sudden something inside you tells you, that it's time to leave, you just need to go home, be alone and find your safe harbor again.

Who always drove the boat at the cabin? He drove the boat, drove the car on our vacations, he navigated with me not just our car trips, the boat rides, but on our life together. He was my safety, my partner, my strength, and the one who loved getting out of the harbor and he helped me navigate thru each storm and the unknown winds we were able to face together. I knew how much I needed him to help navigate each day of being a family, raising our daughters, and we'd ride the waves together, holding on tightly to each other. We had God, we had each other, we moved through life together, side by side.

Today is August 19, 2023, it was just over 50 years ago we said, "I DO", just months before our 40th wedding anniversary could be celebrated, he left for heaven. I sat at the cemetery today, cried, and cherished the memories of our lives together, ones I have tucked deep into my heart. Some are silent memories I share with no one else; they are in my safe harbor. Here is a place I sit and reflect on our past and today I know that I can and I am able to look ahead, I am moving forward, as grief is not my forever home.

I'm still anchored in that harbor but gradually, and now more frequently, I am untying the ropes and going out farther and farther, even into the deep waters, feeling safe and strong. Staying safe in the harbor meant I was missing sunrises and sunsets, laughter and friends, special old friends, and gathering new friends. I've found that I'm stronger than I thought and that God has given me a purpose, a reason to keep on living, that He is the source of my strength and trust. I need not fear my future or the waves around me. I'm enjoying the wind, the sun, the stars, the water, even when the waves are rolling. I now can be watching an eagle soaring above me, and enjoy the moonlight that's shining across the dark water. I'm no longer tied tightly in my safe harbor, I'm finding my way, going forward into my future, and smiling more as *God navigates my way and walks beside me providing my peace, strength, joy, and direction. I'm finding myself again.*

"You are my place of safety and protection; you are my God and I trust you."

Psalms 91:2

The wind and the water obey Him, Jesus the Man who calms the storms.

Luke 8:22-24

"When I am down and oh my soul so weary, you raise me up so I can stand on mountains, you raise me up to walk on stormy seas, I am strong when I am on your shoulders, You raise me up to more than I can be." Josh Groban - You Raise Me Up Lyrics

..... renée 2023 The Winds Came, Rain Came, but God is my Anchor