

# Yes, There Is Life after Grief Honoring My Late Husband

By Mary Lou Falcone

“Is there life after grief?” you may ask. The simple answer is, “Yes!”

The more complex answer is that while your life continues after the death of a loved one, it can take new turns—many of which you do not see coming. Grief becomes your companion, but it does not have to be your nemesis. Grief can actually be a catalyst to reach beyond what you knew, beyond your comfort zones to explore a life you might never have imagined.

When my husband Nicky Zann, my soul mate of 47 years, died of Lewy body dementia (LBD) in 2020, grief was certainly present, but it was not all consuming. Why? Because LBD is a neurodegenerative disease that can mimic Alzheimer’s disease; but unlike Alzheimer’s, it fluctuates. This means that one day your loved one is completely lucid and 100 percent himself and the next day may not even know who you are...it’s a roller coaster ride.

As your loved one declines a bit more each day, you experience profound loss in increments over time. And then one day, the end comes. The grief, which started long before death, continues, but it now takes on different forms that you do not always see coming and that can take you completely by surprise.

What you feel at the time of passing is closure. You feel emptiness and loneliness. You also might feel relief that your loved one no longer has to suffer; the agony of watching the slow goodbye is over. While profound grief follows death, it does not necessarily shower its full impact all at once. Grief often comes in waves that can flow out with the tide, only to wash over



you again and again; there is no statute of limitations.

Almost immediately after Nicky passed, I decided to follow advice he had given me in a lucid moment a few months before he died. He said, “Mary Lou, you have to write,” and at the time I didn’t quite understand what he was telling me. Honestly, it did not resonate. Immediately following his passing, I realized what his prophetic words meant. I had always said that I would never write a book, but here I was doing just that. I needed to follow Nicky’s directive, I needed to write.

For the better part of a year, night after night and day after day, I would sit at my computer with tears streaming down my face as I remembered our life together: the love, the good times, the horror of getting the LBD diagnosis, and the aftermath of watching the disease destroy my brilliant, vibrant Nicky. Writing was cathartic; it honored Nicky and kept him close. In an odd way, he was guiding my grief, allowing me to let it out in my own way, in my own time. It was difficult, but it was also beautiful to be reliving so many years of loving and being loved.

Of course, given a choice, I would have wished to grow older with Nicky by my side. And, in special moments—the first glimpse of the sun as it comes over the ocean on a beautiful summer morning, the fresh smell of earth after a spring rain, the vibrancy of autumn colors, the quiet starkness of the first winter snow, the joyous sound of children’s laughter—I am still reminded of loss, now infused with hope and resilience.

Today, as I start anew as an advocate for LBD awareness, I am transported to a place of renewed purpose. With the book as my calling card, I am able to travel around the country sharing our love story and highlighting the all-important message—you are not alone—with caregivers, families and health care professionals alike.

Yes, there is life after grief!



Mary Lou Falcone, an internationally known classical music publicist and strategist who for five decades has helped guide the careers of many prominent artists and institutions, is the author of the memoir, *I Didn’t See It Coming: Scenes of Love, Loss and Lewy Body Dementia*. More at [www.maryloufalcone.com](http://www.maryloufalcone.com)