



Lessons We Learn From Living

The Long And Winding Road

Who said life was easy? There may be many aspects to life that become easier to handle as one becomes wiser, however, the journey of life often throws us curves and roadblocks. Perhaps the bumps we experience are intended to make sure we stay alert! The truth is, it's our ability to rise to the challenges and work through them that shapes our lives. Personal growth, achievement, and future accomplishments often result when we face our problems and handle them as they occur. Sometimes it might seem like the challenges we are facing are beyond the strength we have to handle them. We are so caught up in the emotion of the moment, it's difficult to step back to examine the situation objectively. Emotion clouds our thinking and we are left feeling helpless. When you are determined to tackle any situation, regardless of how long it might take, your belief will ultimately pave the way to your success.

When I became divorced I faced a long and winding road. For 24 years I had depended on another person for almost everything. He managed the household finances, took care of our investments, made most of the major decisions, took responsibility for our cars, yard work, insurance issues, and was our family's primary income source. When I was no longer a couple and "suddenly single" I was forced to "grow up" and take responsibility for everything I had taken for granted. I didn't know the first thing about "running a household" beyond household chores ~ cooking, cleaning, etc. I had never purchased an insurance policy, met with an investor, arranged to have my car serviced, paid the monthly bills, or refinanced a mortgage. All of those tasks had been handled by my CPA husband. What a shock to be in charge!

You know what? The most amazing things began to happen! I actually learned how to take care of what needed to be taken care of! I asked for help. I received advice. I gave myself permission to be patient. I became informed on matters that affected me and my future. While it took some months, some mistakes, and some confidence building, I soon felt my self assuredness and self esteem strengthen. I developed a routine around bill paying, car servicing, etc. I secured appropriate agents for insurance issues. I landed a wonderful financial planner willing to review my assets, offer education where needed, and make suggestions. I felt supported without feeling dependent. What a relief!

continued on page 2

When, years later, as a newly married woman I moved to Atlanta from a community in suburban Maryland where I had lived for nearly 30 years, I faced many challenges! I had to familiarize myself with a new environment, establish new relationships, adjust to married life, and change many of the service providers with whom I had become familiar and on whom I had relied. I frequently got lost on unfamiliar roadways. It took a few bad haircuts to land a wonderful stylist. Eventually I made friends.

Compared to what followed later that year these adjustments were easy to handle. After only 8 months as the CEO of a large, privately held company, my husband lost the job that was the catalyst for our move in the first place. What followed was stressful, uncertain and trying. Eventually, and with a lot of hard work and perseverance, the long and winding road of Phil's career led to a wonderfully rewarding change and we got our lives back together! I believe the setbacks I experienced as part of my solo journey provided the foundation I relied on to help my husband in his challenges and kept me positive.

Winding roads continue to appear now and then. While it's not always smooth sailing, I've learned to trust my judgment in making decisions, secure advice when I'm uncertain, and believe that detours and setbacks are distractions and not life threatening. They are simply roadblocks! There are always answers when life gets messy. It's up to each one of us to uncover the lessons and apply them. Long and winding roads will always be part of every journey. They have a way of keeping us alert and certainly make the journey more interesting!

Personally Speaking
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