



## Royal London presents Lost for Words

I'd thought about it. But, to be absolutely honest with you, because of my lifestyle, which has been not in the best in terms of too much to drink, 30 fags a day for 30 years, compared to Lynn, who did none of that, or hardly any of that, I always assumed that I'd be the first to go. We'd never had any conversations about Lynn dying, other than practical ones, her, you know, reminding me that I need to do this, or I need to learn how to do that, just in case anything happened.

And, thankfully, I'd done quite a bit of catching up on stuff that I neglected for donkey's years around the house, in particular. She used to joke, you know, he'd better learn how to use the dishwasher and learn how to use the washing machine, just in case I get run over by a bus. She wasn't run over by bus, of course, but she died of a massive stroke and she was the first to go, which surprised me, actually, to be honest with you. I wasn't prepared for it.

I'm possibly still in shock and slightly in denial about it. To be quite frank with you, I don't think anything can prepare you for that kind of event. You know, we'd been together for, well, 43 years married and six years, sort of apprenticeship before that. And, you know, it's, to put it mildly, a major change in my life.

The first two months, my son and his wife, they got permission from the doctors to live at my house with me. They were fantastic support, both sort of practically speaking and emotionally. What you don't realise is there's all these things to tie up, not just the will, but probate and contracts to change and Sky television was in Lynn's name and BT was in mine and some was in both names, you've got to go through all that stuff. And you needed to be a technical wizard to do half of it and I'm absolutely useless at all that kind of stuff. So, thank God, Nick and Lisa were there to help me.



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A friend of ours, who is a psychologist said to me, "The thing you'll miss most of all, is not having someone to do nothing with." And that is so true. You know, we lived in this big house together and we might not speak to each other for most mornings or afternoons.

She'd be in her office; I'd be doing my thing downstairs or whatever. And it's not until someone's gone that you realise the value of that mere presence.

I think we don't confront death with the optimism and the confidence that we confront other subjects, because we're just nervous of upsetting people. The fact of the matter is, we can't avoid death. It's not an option. You can't say, "Oh, death? I'll give that miss, if you don't mind." We've all got to face it. And so, we might as well embrace it, I think, really.