

## **My Kids Don't Want Me to Remarry Now that Their Father is Dead**

**Question.** The estrangement with my 41 year old daughter, after a lifetime of close mutuality supportive relationship, came when I chose to marry one and one half years following the death of my beloved husband who was dearly loved by my daughter, her husband and our two grandchildren. At the time my daughter and SIL were disappointed that I "needed another man", chose an older man who probably would need my TLC, who would probably leave me financially secure, and "what would this say about marriage?" to the then 9 year old grandson. Our contact has been very rare, generally upbeat to an outside observer, but withholding of access. To direct disrespectful behavior I respond to by taking a deep breath and saying nothing. My husband feels that he is inadvertently the cause of this estrangement. My sadness and lack of groundedness for responding and acting in this difficult situation diminishes the wholeness of our wonderful life together in this the "home stretch" of our lives. What do you recommend?

**Answer:** Well, it's selfish of your daughter and SIL to say that they're disappointed that you need another man now that your husband is gone. Are you supposed to live for the rest of your life on memories? That's an absurd position for them to ask you to take.

Drilling down, I assume that she feels disloyal to the memory of her father to watch you love another man or for her to allow herself to be close to him. I would make it clear, if you haven't already, that your deceased husband would've wanted this for you.

I remember when a friend of my parents found out that she only had a few months to live. Her husband said, "Sylvia, how long do you want me to wait after you're gone before I start dating again?" His wife of 40 years took his hand and looked into his eyes and said, "About 15 minutes." I love that story because that's how it should be.

But, I would start by being empathic to your daughter. "Sweetheart, I guess it's really hard for you to see me with another man. I understand that. You don't have to like him if you don't want to. I think he's a wonderful man and I bet you wouldn't feel that happy if I were

alone and lonely would you? Is that what you plan to do if your husband dies first? It may seem like it now but it might not then. Anyway, please don't begrudge me this. Neither of us are being disloyal to the memory of your father."

If it's too uncomfortable to have your husband around her, you don't have to bring him on the visits. But he has nothing to feel guilty about. He didn't do anything wrong.