



## ***Introduction***

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Publishing *Find the Love of Your Life* at this time is a bittersweet thing for me. This book, like many others, was years in the making. Dave and I first dreamed up the idea in 1993, and with many fits and starts, I wrote for five years, squeezing time from other projects that paid the bills. I finally delivered the manuscript to our editor at the end of November, 1998. A month later – December 29, 1998 - Dave, the love of my life, died suddenly.

I can tell you quite honestly that I'm very proud of this book. Being an author has been one of my life-long dreams. And this book is particularly special to me. It has taught me, among other things, that I have other books inside me. But regardless of how many other books I might write in my life, this one will always be the truest expression of my heart. It is oh so sweet to see this book of my heart in print.

However, I can tell you just as honestly that I'd gladly trade this book – something I see as a fine accomplishment - for just one more day with Dave. As you get to know him in these pages, you'll see why. Our love was rich and deep, playful and joyous, solid and sustaining. I'd trade a lot to feel Dave's arms around me one more time.

But the time we had to love was limited to seven and a half short years. His death was sudden, and not preceded by illness, but it also was not entirely unexpected. We always knew we didn't have forever, and because we faced that knowledge, we used it as a gift. We lived and loved fully in the time we had, cramming our love into every corner of every day. I have taken a lot of comfort in that, looking back at our life together with very few regrets.

Except this one. How I wish I could hand him the first copy of *Find the Love of Your Life* – the book that his love inspired. How I wish he could enjoy the fruits of this long labor. How I wish I'd pattered less and written more so that the book might have been published while he was still alive. How he would have loved seeing this dream of ours take its own real shape!

For a while after Dave died, I couldn't imagine going ahead with the book – even if there was a finished manuscript. But then I couldn't imagine *not* going ahead with it. Naturally I had vivid memories of all the months and years of work that had gone into writing the book. But more than that, I kept remembering the total faith that Dave had in me and in our relationship. I kept remembering the compelling force that urged us to tell our story – the conviction that it could help other people. This conviction still compels me – as I know it would Dave. This book began as a tribute to love. Now it is also a tribute to Dave.

What I have not done, as I have gone forward with this book, is to change present tense to past. I'm learning how difficult it is to begin thinking of me instead of us, mine instead of ours, was instead of is, would have been instead of will be. I count on you to understand that the transitions of grief must come gently and gradually. I found the notion of rewriting the entire manuscript to reflect that Dave is no longer with me far too daunting for my bruised spirit.

Besides, it wouldn't be true. Dave is very much with me – and I expect and hope he always will be. Once in our first few years together, someone asked me how we intended to stay as in love – say for the next twenty years - as we so obviously were then. Dave sat next to me, holding my hand, while I explained the hard truth that neither of us expected that we'd have twenty years together.

“It would be great,” I said, squeezing Dave’s hand, “but Dave’s diabetes has caused lots of medical complications that don’t make twenty years together seem likely. We wish it weren’t so, but we think it’s smart to face reality.” I went on to say that we were learning to treat each day as a gift, and then felt inspired to add, “Dave is the love of my life,” I said, “But Dave is not the *only* love I’m going to have for the rest of my life. I’ve learned too much about loving and living from him not to use what I’ve learned again. When the time comes and I lose Dave, I’ll heal – and I’ll love again. And that way, I won’t ever lose Dave.”

I hadn’t planned to say that. And though Dave and I had talked a lot about his death and my life after him, somehow we’d never spoken of my next love. Yet, as I heard the words coming out of my mouth, I knew they were truer than any words I’d ever spoken. I glanced at Dave, wondering what he was thinking. I’ll never forget the look on his face. He squeezed my hand tight – and *beamed* with love and pride.

I don’t know that we ever talked about it again. We didn’t need to. I knew all through our relationship – and I know it now – that Dave will always sustain me. His spirit lives in my heart, in the pages of this book, in the love that *you* will find for your life. And in time, when I’ve healed from the greatest loss I’ve ever encountered, Dave’s spirit will surely live in the love I will find again in my life.

It’s the conviction that our love had purpose, the gratitude for the time we had together, however brief, and the hope his spirit gives me, that carries me forward. My fondest wish is that you may also feel Dave’s spirit guiding you in your quest. May you find a love that blesses you as both Dave and I were blessed. And then Dave’s legacy of love will live forever.

April 27, 1999