



Samantha Warwick

After him...

AFTER SIX MONTHS WORKING AS A CHALET MAID, SAM FINDS HERSELF DOING A COURSE OF hardcore THERAPY TO HELP HER MOVE ON FROM THE LOSS OF HER HUSBAND ROB. WHILE DOING SO, SHE DISCOVERS SOME UNCOMFORTABLE TRUTHS AND GLIMPSES A FUTURE WHERE SHE IS NO LONGER ALONE.

I'd read about the Hoffman Institute in various magazines. It was the therapy of the moment. A hardcore programme that attracted celebrities, media types and other high-flyers. Well, the two-and-a-half grand price tag understandably put most people off. I didn't care how fashionable it was, or expensive. All I wanted was a short and snappy lifeline out of my depression. A week-long residential course that, 'Yes,' the woman told me over the phone, 'could help with the grieving process'. A process. Losing and living without the love of my life was a 'process'. A permanent lifestyle more like. A 'process' assumes that by week 32, day four you'll be fixed. Here's your certificate – hurrah! Wrong. I did believe, however, that there could be a better way of living without him and that the Hoffman Process might show me how. So I went. I'd love to tell you what it entails but I can't. Firstly, you wouldn't believe me if I tried and, secondly, it would spoil it for anyone else needing help. Weirdly, I didn't have to talk about losing Rob all the time (although at one point I became hysterical and screamed: 'I won't EVER be happy again because my husband is DEAD!' That was a bit of show-stopper.) The Hoffman instead addresses issues from your childhood and patterns of behaviour you slip

into when threatened, sad, angry, lost and confused. Retreat and isolation, I learned, among a million and one other things, was a prime pattern of mine, and cutting myself off from everyone wasn't helping to lift the sadness. Seems obvious, right, but I hadn't seen it. I also learned to meditate (oh how my friends will laugh at that!). During one exercise I was asked to visualise my future. While many of the group (who actually were just lovely, ordinary but troubled people just like me) had quite elaborate visualisations with success and babies and Habitat kitchens, mine was very simple. I was in a small flat filled with light, windows looking out on to the mountains. And there was someone there. I couldn't see them, but I felt them. Not Rob but someone else who loved me. There it was. A future. At the end of my week I felt mellow and, while not fixed, shaky but more sorted. I jumped in the car and drove 300 miles to Devon just to give my sister a hug. I never hug anyone, not even my sister whom I love with all my heart. Then I hugged my mum, sorry that I'd shut her out too. The Hoffman made me realise what I still had and what I could have was as good as what I had lost. Rob would always be part of me, but I still had me left to look after. And that was priceless.



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