

Story 6

“For richer, for poorer. In sickness and in health.”

I am fortunate to have a very supportive wife. Her help, guidance and support during the last year was invaluable and helped me immensely during the difficult moments. However, despite being blessed with this, as I mentioned in my last blog, I still felt that my self-worth took a significant knock. For the past 12 years, I had been in the routine of going to work every day and “earning my keep” in the house. So when that role was removed, and I was faced with the prospect of no longer contributing financially to the household, my self-worth took a real bashing.

And it is very lonely. Suddenly I was on the school run and after dropping the kids off, my first thought was to scurry off home as quickly as I could to avoid having to speak to anyone about what was going on. Although it was probably not the case, it felt like I was the talk of the playground and naturally, people were surprised to see me at the school on a regular basis. Don't get me wrong, people were incredibly supportive and it was amazing to see how helpful and kind everyone was. Passing on contacts, telling me about jobs.....even just telling me to keep my head up and that they were thinking of me. And the prayers from my Church family also meant a huge amount to me. All of these things were massively appreciated. However, as I traipsed back up the road home, my thoughts returned to my job search and how I was going to start contributing financially again to the house.

Having been accustomed to spending my days at work, engaging with colleagues, it took some time to get used to the loneliness at home. With an empty house and no-one to speak to, I would spend hours at my PC searching for jobs, completing applications and preparing for interviews. For those in a similar situation, they will appreciate how depressing the job search can be. You go from flurries of excitement as you apply for a job, only to be met with a quick rejection or not hear anything back at all (which was depressingly common). And the dearth of jobs, particularly if you have been working in a niche area, can also be incredibly depressing. I also had feelings of guilt. If I went out for a walk or did some DIY around the house, I would feel guilty that I was away from my PC and not focusing on my job search. But the reality is you do need to find time to relax and exercise to take your mind away from it.

Any change in a family dynamic can take time to adjust to. The combination of the new circumstances, with spouses both at home on a daily basis, or being away from each other (when that has not been the norm before) can really take a strain on relationships. But **You're Not Alone.**

- Counselling Services – such as AVENUE(<http://www.avenue-info.com/>), Relationship Counselling Aberdeen (<http://www.relationshipcounsellingaberdeen.co.uk/>) , The Spark (<http://www.thespark.org.uk/relationship-support-for-couples-individuals/relationship-counselling/>) amongst others.
- Mens Shed – wherever you live, you are welcome to attend Dyce and District Men's Shed at Dyce Community Centre on Monday's and Wednesday's from 10.00am – 1.00pm. It is open to all men who want to get more out of life, make friends, enjoy working on projects and hobbies, or help others. Please contact Davie Walker on 01224 725124 for more information.

- Volunteering – there is a huge range of volunteering opportunities across Aberdeen at present which can help to provide a focus for you. Feel free to visit www.volunteeraberdeen.org.uk to see how you could put your valued skills to good use in a voluntary capacity.

As part of the **You're Not Alone** project, an event has been organised for 16th May from 5.30pm – 7.00pm at the Central Library. This will provide an opportunity for anyone looking for some assistance to come together and find out more about the range of support that is available. Please get in touch if you are interested in finding out more.