

7 Years Ago

7 years ago my best friend, the love of my life and mother of my children left this world. Cancer claimed yet another victim.

This year, I will spend the day with two of my Florida family. I'm not sure what we will be doing, but throughout the day I will be thinking of her.

After 7 years, the pain in my heart is dulled. Time has done that. Memories, mostly pleasant, have filled the have filled the places where pain once stayed. Life continued even when I didn't want it to.

I've tried to remember what the pain I had experienced. Others have lost loved ones this past year, I had hoped my experience could help, but I know nothing will relieve the pain. It must be lived through. It must be experienced. It must be faced for healing to occur.

I know for a fact that time will not heal all wounds. Some stay with you the rest of your life. Those wounds, both physical and mental, are part of your life. You live with them. They become part of your fiber. They become a part of who you are.

On this 30th of December, I will pause to wish all a Happy New Year. May it bring joy to you and yours. If not joy, may it bring just a bit of hope and peace.

In thinking of life.

I'm never sure that I have any answers to life's questions. I've lived a more than a few years now, and I keep finding things I have no answers for. A part of life, i guess, to be constantly looking for answers.

I hope to find them, I hope they can be found.

Growing up, I thought my father had all of the answers. To my young eyes, he appeared to be the best of everything. As I grew older, I realized my father had a lot of things that he could teach me, but there were things he didn't know. His life experiences were not the same as mine, so he had no knowledge in same areas. I had to learn those things on my own.

As a father, I would assume my children thought at one point in time, I knew more than I actually did. As the grew, I'm sure that they found my life experiences not quite fitting the lives they followed. They needed to find their own answers.

I hope to give one more piece of advice. Unasked for? Maybe. Not needed? Perhaps. Good advice, ahh, that is up to you. It is advice for anyone who needs it. And actually it came from my Dad.

"When you are in a situation where you will be making a choice, it is best to stop and think before making the choice." Maybe my Dad did know everything after all.

Just when I thought I

expanded my vocabulary,

I found out that I did not know what the letters "NO" mean when put together. I really thought I could put those letters to good use. I really thought I was able to grasp the meaning. I thought I would be able to find some time for this or that. I'm afraid I haven't. Available time? poof! Not showing up at a theater 3 or more nights a week. Sure!. What were those letters again? I need to look them up in my Funk and Wagnalls. Of course I will help out a friend or two...

But on to the good news. I'm only in the light booth. Only 3 or so short weeks. No lines to memorize. And I have my youngest daughter there to help me out. Not a bad deal. On top of that, I get to see every show for free and that is in some of the best seats in the house. Ok, maybe not the best seats, but they will always be there. Cute show, so I shouldn't get tired of it too quickly. On top of that, it really changes every night.

But I'm not sure of all these Christmas Carols before Thanksgiving...

love stories

It was the spring of 1983 when I first met my future wife. At this time, we were not aware that we would be together in a few short months. What I did realize was easier to identify. I found her to be very attractive, with a strong personality, an infectious smile and a bit reserved in the setting. Most people would have said she was shy, but I noticed something else was holding her back, shyness had nothing to do with this. At that time, I wasn't sure what it was. I observed,

that she was watching the group intently. I was intrigued and captivated, too bad she came with her boyfriend. ☐

About a week later, I met her for the second time. I realized at that point why she was reserved and observant. She had a hearing loss, and this helped her compensate for that loss. The second time we met, we both knew we would be good friends. Two weeks and two meetings and we felt some connection. Nothing yet to indicate that a different relationship was in our future.

A couple of weeks later, this wonderful lady brought another charming lady with her at the weekly gathering of our little group. She was not quite two years old. I'm not sure what this little girl was told before she got to my apartment, but I got the biggest leg hug ever. She sat with me most of the night, and I was smitten. (So yes, little draclet, I loved you before I fell in love with your mother.) She became a common addition to our weekly game night group. I knew at that point I would do almost anything for that little bundle of energy and spunk.

Weeks went by, and as my love for the daughter grew, the relationship with the mother grew too. I was there when a tearful lady needed someone to talk to after a break up. I was there when her first trial at seeing others went askew. At the end of May, I finally asked my future wife out. Somewhere in the many walks and long talks after that date, I fell in love a second time. Whirlwind romance occurred and marriage followed the following January. In less than 1 year's time, I went from a single man, to a husband and father. The father part came first. My love of the daughter won me the heart of the mother. Without that initial caring, the second relationship may not have happened as quickly.

My lovely wife always told me I had 3 strong characteristics that pushed her toward me. I was dependable, stable and loving. For many years I thought it was how I treated my wife, but later I found out it was how I treated the daughter. Yes,

my unconditional love of another woman gave me almost 20 years of love from a wonderful wife. Through the years, she loved her daughters more than she loved me. I can't say the same thing, but I loved them almost as much. And one of them I loved longer....

She taught me what love was, after I showed the ability to love.

It has been a while.

I haven't updated my blog in quite some time. I wonder if anyone missed me? ☐

I've seen a couple of the other bloggers on a regular basis, about 3 times a week. And when I wasn't with them, I was at work or studying lines. Ok not really studying lines all that much, but it did consume a portion of my time away from rehearsals ☐

I have also spent a fair portion of my time in a contemplative mood. Some thoughts are forming in this head I carry on my shoulders, and I'm not sure what direction they will go. I can't really say much more than that, since the currents are in a general state of flux.

Anyway what brought me here tonight was something I read in a different social forum. I started thinking about love at first sight. Interesting because to me it seemed most people didn't think it could happen. I believe that it does happen, and very frequently.

Now, I will state, for the record, that I did not fall in love with my future wife at first sight. That took at least 4 or 5

meetings, and at least 2 dates. Yes, we fell in love quickly. The wonderful thing about our relationship was that we kept falling in love for 20 years. It wasn't always easy, but it was always worth it. We had a wonderful life journey that ended much too soon. My journey continues, and it holds and reflects the memory of her life journey.

But on to the love at first sight. I had that happen to me four times. Each time very special, and each time resulted in a very long term relationship. I fell and fell hard the first time I met each daughter. At first, that love was very one sided, but it did grow. As they grew and matured, I loved them enough to let them go on their own journeys. I love them still and more each day. The one thing I've learned over my life, is that you can never say "I love you" enough, there is always room for saying it one more time.

A weekend with two sides

I had a longer weekend than most since I took Friday off. The day was filled with some time of quiet reflection for me. I was in need of some time and space to think. That evening and well into Saturday morning was filled with friends and companionship.

Since I was up so late, Saturday was one to recuperate until the evening. Then on to my oldest daughter's house for our regular Saturday gathering. It started late, and went long. The end of the day was filled with a strong sense of family. We were there to support each other when it was needed.

There was laughter and fun this weekend. We shared food and good times. We shared in common interests. We shared fun in the life of others. In that, life continues.

One year ago on the 13th of August, future laughter was never heard. Sadness filled many hearts. Other loss was averted, but the anxiety was left behind.

It has been one year, but the loss is still there. The loss remains and will remain.

It has been one year, but the love is still there. That love seems to grow daily.

It has been one year, you are gone, but not forgotten. Memories remain, however short they were.

It has been one year, and that is not a magic number. Time heals, but scars remain. Pain fades, but the hurt is still real.

Friends, family and love continue. In those things there can be strength. It is not weakness to shed tears, it is strength and love.

We miss all of those we lose, but on some days a special one is remembered.

Thinking of raw fish and family

I got to sit down and enjoy some sushi with my oldest daughter and her husband last weekend. It was part of a great weekend. But this is about the raw fish.

Many years ago, when my oldest was the only child, our little family would go to a Japanese restaurant at least 1 time per month. It was there I first tried Sushi with my wife. As we

grew to know the owners, they would let our little girl play with their daughter if the restaurant wasn't that busy. I'm not sure what they fed her, but she was fed, and it never turned up on our bill. I'm wondering if she didn't have sushi way back then. Unfortunately, that little Japanese restaurant closed, and there was not another place to get Sushi in the area for many years. We moved to the country and our choice were cut back even further. I went without sushi for a long time. While Japanese food was one of my wife's favorites, the raw fish wasn't on her top ten. I never pushed the matter, since there is other excellent food that we both enjoyed.

Fast forward a few years, and we are celebrating my oldest's birthday. As was our custom, the birthday celebrant got to choose the restaurant. The younger sisters were not thrilled with the choice of restaurants, but the father was. I got to experience Sushi again. It seemed so much better than the last time I had it. Had my tastes changed, or was the preparation better? Or had time just dulled my memory? I'm not sure, but since that day, I've held Sushi as a special treat when having a meal.

As with the first time, and all other times I've had Sushi, the meal is more than just a time to eat food. Sushi seems to be a shared experience more than most meals. You try some of this, and a little of that. You find things you really enjoy and then some thing you may not care for as much. As time goes by, you learn what you like, and skip things you don't. But it seems there is always room for something you don't remember having before.

Different places serve different things. Sushi, like most dishes, varies from place to place. More than that it seems to vary from visit to visit more than most foods. Is it the freshness of the fish? The time of year it was caught? The way it was cut? I'm not sure what influences all of the variance but it seems real to me.

And finally it is sharing with family. Most of my daughters will still make a face or two if we invite them for sushi. They either don't like fish at all, or would prefer it warm. ☐ But with my eldest and her husband, the experience is one I enjoy. Good natured fighting over that last bit of eel. Who took the most ginger? Trying to get my daughter to try the spicy roll. And, for some reason, always wanting just one more piece.

Family, friends, food and sharing these things make life a joy.

A day was remembered

and celebrated in my heart.

A 7th birthday came and went without you being here to celebrate it with us. We have spread apart a bit this little family of ours. 3 not much more than an hour away, one more than 18 hours away (at least by car). And I know you were missed.

On your birthday, I had to take your dog to the vet. He needed some care, and would be in observation for two days. I had taken him in for a checkup the week before, making sure all of his shots were up to date. He was scheduled for a couple of days in a puppy vacation. I had scheduled time with some friends and he would have been in good hands. But then I got the news he needed some medical care. I was at a in a bit of a quandary. Should I go on my trip while he was at the vets, or take that time to be around for him.

Unless the unfortunate happened, I would not be seeing the little guy for two days. Unlike hospitals, there are no

visiting hours at the vets office. My being around would not help him at all, so I decided (with a bit of a heavy heart) to go on my trip. I'm glad I did.

On your birthday, I went to the Cincinnati Zoo with some friends. Unfortunately, you never knew them, and they never knew you. I think you would have liked them. It was a good day.

As I wandered around the zoo, I did wonder about the changes that were made. Some of the exhibits were exactly like I remembered them. Others seemed very new to me. Since this was not a zoo we visited often, I imagine most things were new. It has been a few years since my last trip there. We were still pushing a stroller or two around the last time. I'm sure the manatees were not there on our last visit. I seem to remember more elephants, but I could be thinking of another zoo. I think you would have remembered that. A couple of red pandas (one of your favorite animals) were doing what they do best, sleeping in trees. Just like almost every other time we saw them.

We did spend a full day at the zoo, but like all of our trips, we never seemed to have time for the entire zoo. Extra time spent at this animal, or another seemed to slow down the pace. But then again, what sort of pace should there be at a zoo. If we can't take the time to learn, observe and wonder about animals we share this planet with, why would we care if the places they live are there in the future. That was the lesson we tried to teach our children, so that they could teach theirs.

Again, it was a day well spent, but I wish you could have been there. Miss you still.

Moving Day...

I rented a BIG truck today. I then went to the Froggy's house and help load up things into a van, a couple of pick-ups and The BIG truck. With this thing and that thing happening, the move didn't start as early as we would have liked. It got hot, very hot. The vehicles were loaded up and we left B-town at around 1:45.

BIG truck liked to BOUNCE. I'm not sure if I would have been sore with just moving stuff, but I was sore after driving that BIG truck. It actually handled well, but it bounce me up and down in the seat for the entire trip to T-town.

At 2:45 we were emptying the vans and pick-ups. We had more help on the unloading end, so it went much faster. We took most of the stuff for storage. That was another adventure that I may write about when I have a bit more energy.

I'm still wondering why today reminded me of George Carlin... The link is not really kid friendly, it is George Carlin on stage...

<https://youtube.com/embed/MvgN5gCuLac>

Happy Birthday Dad!

Not that my Father would have every seen this, even while alive he did not access the internet. If my math is correct, he would have been 86 today. He died in 2001 at the tender age of 77.

Dad's birthday was very close to Fathers Day, and being at the start of Summer it was always a time to celebrate. Of course

Dad liked his desserts so there would have been at least 1 maybe two if Fathers Day and his birthday were celebrated on the same day.

So with Fathers Day coming up this Sunday and my Dad's birthday today, I'm going to celebrate and remember by having his helping of dessert. Sunday, I will even eat the dessert first...