

# Five Years ago today (part 1)

Day 1 is almost finished. 5 years ago today, I found out that my wife had terminal cancer. We knew it was cancer before that day, but we didn't know anything about the kind of cancer. At the University of Michigan Medical Center we found out it was a very rare aggressive cancer, most likely terminal.

This day five years ago put a gray shadow on the Thanksgivings that were to follow.

I don't care what people say, time does not heal all wounds. Time makes some wounds bearable.

Well I did make it through the day. Actually had a relaxing time. Spending time with people/family who knew my wife and were not afraid to bring her into the conversation of the day helped.

We didn't have a traditional Thanksgiving meal. There was no turkey or dressing. The mashed potatoes were part of a Shepard's Pie. Breads of all kinds filled the table. There was plenty of food and even more conversation.

I had a long talk with my dear wife's parents. They do treat me well. Saw two of my four daughters. One is still many states away, the other spent the day with her future husband's family. That is the way life goes. Families grow and the young leave the nest. This really isn't a sad time for me, I'm proud to see my children grow and become adults.

So there are things to be thankful for after all

Good night folks.

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# Looking at the past

There are times I spend contemplating the past. I've done this most of my life. Quiet reflection on the things I've done, the things I've seen others do, what I could change, what I can't. Pondering the what ifs in life.

Then things happen, and I stopped doing this for a time. Contemplating the past was, to say the least, painful. Too many things happened in too short of time. The what ifs in life were overwhelming.

It took a long time to get to the point when I could look backwards without dwelling on those what ifs. But recently the what ifs have crept their way back in. As I've mentioned before, I think it has something to do with the turning of the calendar, but also with the weather this year. There were days in 2003, late October, early November when I was taking Sarah to this Doctor or that specialist that were unseasonably warm. Nobody knew what was wrong. The weather later turned cold, as Novembers will, and the bottom dropped out. A week before Thanksgiving we knew it was cancer. That date, that day is in a few short weeks. Sobering thought that. As with the early months of 2004, I now wonder what if.

Writing this help to clear my mind, as I so aptly put on my page header. The what ifs aren't so pressing. A futile wandering of a tired mind, that sorely misses its best part and partner.

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# Suffering a loss

Today touched on many memories for me. Today I went to a funeral to support someone I've known for a few years. I knew him through the theater and her through church. Our interests, outside of the community theater are different. Even our views in the theater are different, but today that makes little difference to me. Today we share a common bond. Today we are both widowers. Will that make us close friends, not likely, but I guess it could happen. Things like that happen everyday, but it isn't what I mean.

He is at the very start of his journey of widow/erhood. I've been on the journey for 4 years and almost 8 months. We became brothers in the same journey. It is very much a journey. The trouble is that, as in life, we all journey this path in our own way. Today, I offered any support I could give. I made this offer from my heart. I know as well as any man could some of the things that will occur for him in the next few days, weeks and months. But I don't know how he will approach or handle the events that will happen. I can only be around to listen. It is a lonely journey that he faces. A journey where you take help when you find it, but all the choice you make must be the right choices for yourself.

The funeral was in the church my wife and I attended for over 10 years before she died. She had many wonderful talents, and the church was her place to share them. I see her touch in many areas of this church. Things have changed, but they remain the same.

The funeral was for a lady that also touched the church in many ways. She had been there for close to 30 years. For years to come her legacy will remain with the church. Things have changed, but they remain the same.

Today I saw again a sister in the same journey. She lost her

husband a year before I lost my wife. We still have that bond. It unites and separates us. Grieving is different for all.

People dying at much too early an age. But then again, I see where I've been and I have a sense of where I am heading. Not the life I would have chosen, but the one I was given. Mine to do what I can. Things have changed, but they remain the same.

When i can I offer support to those on this journey. The best support I can offer is that I have been on the journey. There are many lights to guide you on the path. Many come before, and many follow. Drop a light every now and again to guide those who follow. Follow the lights of those that when before....

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## **A single cup of coffee..**

Yep, more on coffee. Well sort of. This is really a birthday post. Yesterday, it ended around two hours ago, would have been my wife's 45th birthday, if she had lived that long. It was the 5th I've celebrated without her. The first, I put a personal ad in the paper, I invited friends and family to show up at 'our' little coffee shop. Very few did. The second year, I don't remember what I did, our little shop closed its doors before I could celebrate that day. The 3rd year, I went to a coffee shop and sat with some friends who were their, they knew nothing of the day. The fourth year, I went to a winery with some friends. This year, I went to another coffee shop. I ordered one cup of coffee and a blueberry scone. I even had something different as my refill. They had Chocolate-Raspberry for the Decaf flavor. I'm not a big decaf fan, but I had that anyway. It was her favorite coffee flavor. It was a good morning.

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# Because it's Logical

Those who know me may have different views of me based on where they see me most often. In the theater, I tend to show my more creative (silly, strange??) side. At work, I tend to the serious, more logical side. Some others will see me as a possible combination of the two. Which is the real me? Well, both are me. If you meet me, I tend to show the real me. I don't believe in putting up fronts for anyone. But I do have many sides. The theater brings out some of the light hearted me. Computers will bring out my logical side. Friends can have get either, depending on the situation. Some may say I have a sinister side too. In a certain mood, I will talk in many different voices (I do a pretty good Stitch and Bullwinkle). Other times I tend to imitate Mr. Spock from Star Trek, not the voice, but the purely logical side.

Today, I'm leaning toward the Spock side of me. Somethings I read made me think about recent events in a logical light. I have read in many places where people who lose a loved one (especially widow/ers) have or receive 'signs' from their loved one. I don't believe in that. I'm a logical skeptic in this. Not to hurt anyone's feelings, but most of the things I read about can be classified as coincidence or wishful thinking. After you lose someone you really care about, little things can bring a lot of comfort.

The one thing I heard about most often are pennies or dimes found. My first question was why these coins? Why not nickels, quarters, or Dollar coins? Why not some foreign coin I would never find around my house. I found coins of all sorts before any close loved one died, I found them afterwards too. People, including those who live in my house, drop small coins all the time without noticing them. I just happen to keep my nose to

the floor looking for them. Coins really don't seem to be a good sign.

Any other sort of natural occurrence fall in the same category for me. I have seen butterflies all my life and even had them land on me, having this occur after a death is just the same thing that happened before. Seeing birds, clouds, rainbows ect, all have happened throughout my life, happening again is just that for me.

Then we have the electrical malfunctions. Radios going on without warning, clocks that haven't worked starting to work again. Well, I can't say this ever happened to me before or after a loved ones death. For the time being proof/disproof of this sign is not available. If it happens to you, take it anyway you like.

Feelings of a person being in the room is one I have the easiest time explaining. I've had that feeling about many people in my life, some of the time they had died, other times they were just gone for a period of time. People are creatures of habit, we tend to expect people and things to be in a certain place at a certain time. Seeing them there when they aren't there could just be replaying old memories. As I said, I've experienced this, but it never felt like a sign. Especially when I see my younger sister playing drums in my basement. This was my brother's house before mine, and my sister would play the drums quite often. There are times when playing Beatles' music, I will see her pounding away on the drums. In the same way I see other people (living and dead) where I expect them to be, even if they aren't there at the moment. I guess it is sort of a deja-vu thing your brain/eyes do together. But instead of feeling something happened to you before, you re-live things that have happened to you.

The last one I've heard about are orbs or glowing sections in photographs. I can't say I've seen things in pictures that I couldn't explain or in the digital age remove by taking a new

shot. Lighting, dirty lenses, reflections off all sorts of objects can cause the effects I've seen people claim as signs. Some people pushing an agenda could make these things happen on purpose.

It was said that Houdini wanted to get a sign from his mother after she died. He spent a great deal of time going to mediums and other mystics in hope of the signs. Everyone he went to, he proved to be a fraud. It is said that he had a sign specifically for his wife, if he should die first. There was a log of controversy as to if this happened at all.

In any event, my lovely wife knew of my logical frame of mind, and that the above 'signs' would never pass my skeptical frame of mind. If she can give a sign, she hasn't given one that she knows will get through. I have a couple of small things in mind that would definitely prove to be a sign. My wife did know of them. In the four 1/2 years since her death, these things have not occurred. And in my mind it's logical...

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## Widowers in the Movies

\*\*\*\*\* Movie Spoiler Alert \*\*\*\*\*

I took my girls to see "Nim's Island" last week. Good movie overall, but I can't help to think of how they portray widowers and their families. (something personal here). This is the second recent movie that I've seen that has a widower as one of the main characters, the other was "Enchanted". By the end of both movies the widower dads were attached/married. Hmm, if only real life was that easy.

In "Nim's Island", the father hooked up with his daughter's favorite author. A dad and daughter out in the middle of the

ocean, and an agoraphobic author from San Francisco meet. Wow, that was easy. This was computer dating at its very best (worst?). The daughter seems to set them up too. (Come on girls get your acts in gear... ☐ )

Now all I have to do is set up some sort of research on a south sea island (doesn't sound too bad), and I will be able to find a future Mrs. Somehow I don't think things are ever that easy.

And on to "Enchanted". I enjoyed this movie, and all the ins to other "Disney" shows. Cartoon characters come to life in New York. Of course the beautiful princess meets up with the widower, thanks to his daughter (again, girls, you aren't working things right!!!). Singing and Dancing ensue. At the end through many trials and of course defeating the "Evil Stepmother", the widower and princess are together. One happy little family.

Then of course there is another widower meets girl picture. Can anyone say "Sleepless in Seattle"? This time the son of the widower calls up a radio talk show to get dad a wife. Cross country trips occur, and they walk off to what is assumed another happy family, Hollywood style.

I will admit that "Sleepless in Seattle" did a admirable job of actually portraying what a widower goes through, at least if you have enough money to pull up roots, and have the luck and or skill to get another high paying job in another city. Yes, there were many a night that I didn't sleep, even less than my normal sleepless patterns. Yes, I've daydreamed about talking with my late wife. Yes, I had to get up every morning and remind myself to breath. I don't normally need to remind myself of that anymore, but it was there. There were many things I have gone through that were in that movie. This in itself gets my vote for a good movie. Most movies I've seen with widower or widows don't even touch the problems with losing a spouse. It is for good reason that losing a spouse is



on the top of most lists of traumatic life events.

My last question. Why are a lot of movies about hooking up widowers? Doesn't that fly in the face of all the "Evil Stepmothers" of fairy tale fame?

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## Thoughts on family

As a father, I've had many thoughts on my family and my responsibility to them. To me that thought is mind numbing. For the first 20 years of my being a parent, I had help. My girls had, in my opinion, the best mother on the planet. She gave everything to those girls. The last four years it has been just me. The youngest was 13, and the oldest 23 when their mother died. The oldest had been out of the house since she graduated High School. There was really no more parenting that needed to be done there. She was on her own. The next was a senior in High school and I had a sophomore and a 7th grader. These three still needed their mother, and I could not be her.

I struggle through with their help. Their mother did a good job at raising them, I just had to keep things flowing. Lucky me. The first year I had trouble keeping me flowing. The four of us at home kind of flowed with the stream for a while. Not our best moments by any standards, but we got through.

There were 2 high school graduations, 2 weddings, multiple boy friends in the past 4 years. I probably wasn't the best at handling all that. But again we made it through. I should emphasize that WE made it through.

Video tapes of my daughters in plays were put into a safe place. Birth Certificates were put in a safe place. Those safe

places were lost. I found tv remotes in the freezer. Bought more cabbage when I couldn't find the head I just bought. Found the first head months (weeks maybe) later. By then it was a wonderful science experiment. There were a number of those experiments. But as a family WE made it through.

We all got together last January. My daughters, the extended families, grandkids and all went to the Zoo, went shopping, and just hung out. We made it through.

In the future, no matter how far apart we are, I know I can rely on my girls. We will make it through.

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## late night

When everyone is asleep, I feel the need to be awake. I really need to get more sleep, I do have to get to work early tomorrow. This has been my method of living for years and years. I tend to stay awake when I should be sleeping.

For the past four years, I've been blaming it on the fact that I am a widower. While I admit, that sleeping alone after 20 years of sleeping with someone takes getting used to, (not sure I'm used to it yet), I've had this problem most of my adult life. In fact, I would read well into the early morning with my dear wife sleeping next to me. I sure am glad she could sleep with my reading light on. Now I just live with this normal insomnia. I imagine I could get some sleep aids from my doctor, but I really don't like taking medication. I've read where not sleeping can cause all sorts of health problems, so maybe I should look into it.

For me the night is the time my mind is in full motion, I need to read, write and just think of things. The silence of the

house seems to push my thoughts faster and faster. I may have to use this time to do something other than read fiction, and type out blogs. It would be nice to get more benefit than just getting a few more trivial pieces of information.

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## Under the weather

Not too hard to do on a day like today. It seems to be just wonderful out. I only know this by looking out the window, and seeing the sky for most of the day. The frogs are still in chorus so it can't be that cold. Me, I'm laid up with a headache, sore throat and slight fever. Mostly lost my voice this morning, but since I've had nobody to talk to today, I really don't know if it is back. I don't feel tempted to try it either. Since I was feeling OK yesterday, I am wondering how soon this stuff can pop up.

I've been feeling a bit sorry for myself today, because I have to take care of myself during illnesses. It has been that way for many a year now, but I miss the attention I used to get. Even when S. had a job, if I was sick she would always leave me a thermos of hot tea by the bed. I used to do little things like that for her when she let me know she wasn't feeling well (she hid it better than I did, I admit I'm a bit of a whiner when it comes to being sick) The children are good at leaving me alone when I don't feel up to my regular self. Not to say they won't get me things if I ask, but this is all about not having to ask.

I wonder how many married or coupled people see the little things that are part of their lives together. I will be the first to admit that I didn't see all of them when my wife was alive. I only started seeing them in the things that were

missing after she was gone. Four years later, I still see the missing little things. Things that she did for me, and things I did for her. Things done just because of who we were alone and together. Making a cup of tea when sleep was hard to come by. Picking up a single rose for no reason. Letting her sleep in while I took care of the girls, or the other way around. That thermos of tea when I wasn't feeling well. That little hug (or big one) when I came home from work. The hand on my shoulder when I was making dinner. Little things in life that can be very important to our lives.

In the future, and in the recent past, I've been noticing the little things in all my dealings with other people. Those little things put together make the big things in life happen.

Have a good day looking and giving the little things.