

Toby

I always liked to tell people when they asked me "what's your father like?" that my father was (among other things) *a* Jewish Mother. He didn't make chicken soup and he didn't make chopped liver, but in all other aspects he fully fit the job description.

Never did he miss a birthday, anniversary, or the slightest excuse, the weakest excuse, to be in touch and let you know he was thinking of you...or worried about you...or missing you.

If you were on Dad's list, you were the beneficiary of a constant barrage of gifts ranging from grapefruits to magazine subscriptions, nuts and chocolate, puzzles and books, letters and news clippings.

Everyone knows how much he loved newspapers, information services, radio and television news - had he been born a few years later, I have no doubt he would have been the complete computer geek, scanning the web, finding creative new ways to order STUFF to send us. With just a point and a

click, he would have been an even more formidable shopping addict and news junky.

He loved his grandchildren and they totally adored him. He wrote to them at home, at camp, at college as they got older...and called them and was enthusiastically interested in their lives and their adventures.

What I value most in my many faceted friendship and relationship with my father is that although he grew and changed and continued learning through the years, he ALSO remained constant and true to his own character. He was unpretentious and had a tendency towards self-deprecating humor. He was grateful for what he had, his long life, his many friends, his close family, his artistic and spirited wife. Dad could also be critical and HE was the first to point out that he was not perfect - ever suspicious of flattery or puffery - he liked to tell you where and when he was wrong and how he had learned from his mistakes.

In the last few days of his life, as he lay in his hospital bed, he would answer questions sometimes with amazing precision, sometimes with a cosmic shrug which said - I don't have the answer and I doubt anyone else does either... who knows what it all means. I love you all and I had a good life - this is not fun and stop asking me so many question!

Our lives are enriched when we can remember the dead in the full complexity of their lives. I am thankful for Dad's forceful and honest presence into his final hours. I will miss observing and being part of his unique engagement with all the world.

MIKE

When the high wire artist falls, the crowd suddenly hushes. Before it can cry out in alarm, the Master of the circus issues a command:

"Send in the Clowns."

Well, Dad, here we are.

My father loved the Sondheim song because it can be understood on many levels: a love affair gone off the rails, a performance interrupted, a life that comes to an end.

Nobody stays on the high wire forever; nobody lives forever, as my father said to us again and again. The Ringmaster sends in the clowns; life goes on. It's a bittersweet message, ironic, realistic, beautiful. Just the qualities my father liked.

Before Dad died, there was a golden 48 hours in the hospital. He was alert, funny, wise, caring. He was on that high wire as never before. I doubt there is anyone who works in cardiac intensive care to whom he did not teach the three stages of life: youth, middle age, and "You're looking good."

We talked of the news of the day, the trip ^{to UKRAINE} I had taken, friends and family. When Mom, Toby, Reed and I were gathered around his bed, he was as happy and relaxed as any man could be, tethered though he was to all the machines of modern medicine.

I saw with intense clarity then my father the editor, teacher, critic, student; my father the good businessman and tough skeptic; my father the dedicated husband; my father who cared about everything, but cared most for his family.

In Jewish literature, there is a work called Pirke Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers. Dad liked one of the sayings, from Hillel. I like these words from Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah:

When a person's wisdom exceeds his good deeds, to what may he be compared? To a tree with many branches but few roots. A wind blows, uproots it and topples it over...

However, when a person's good deeds exceed his wisdom, to what may he be compared? To a tree with few branches but with many roots. All the winds of the world may blow against it, yet they cannot move it from its place.

My father's roots were deep and strong. He stood upright in the wind, and taught all his children to do the same.

When Dad had his eightieth birthday, I made a video for him and Mom, set not to "Send in the Clowns" but to another popular song, "Thanks for the Memories." The song ends with a line that I want to say again, today.

"I thank you, so much."

REED

Memories of my father will always be intertwined with the sweet smell of the air in the Indiana countryside. Visits home to see him and mom always had, between the airport and Marion, that stretch of highway 37 with its fields, silos, barns, open horizons.

Dad was a man of open horizons. Though rooted in family and community, his interests took him around the world, physically and metaphorically. Dad took a caring interest in the lives, goals, and struggles of his children and grandchildren; to the roots of our family in Russia; to Eretz Israel; and the world.

The picture window in the room where he used to write his letters is tiled with photos of those dear to him, blocking out much of the light[^]. The walls of his study bear even more family photos, plaques, certificates from democratic notables, poems, memorabilia of all kind.

but those photos brightened his life

Dad's life was enriched by his family, and he in turn enriched us, with his smiles and laughter; his generosity; many phone calls and letters; and, of course, his warmth and humor.

I was privileged to be with him during his final hours, and witnessed his strength of character undiminished by a weakening condition. As he lay in that hospital bed, he still managed to joke with the nurses and staff, inquire about their personal lives and beliefs, and teach them all about the "3 stages of life: Youth, Middle Age, and 'You're looking good'." I know, like all of us, they will never forget him.

In an image from the pages of memory, I'm a young boy running down the hall of our house to greet him as he returned from work, to be swept up into his large, encompassing arms. Dad, I will miss your embrace, but you will remain a presence in my life, an inspiration of

strength and forbearance when facing “the vicissitudes of life,” to which you so often referred.

I will always feel your love for me as a kind of shield as I make my way through a world that's less warm and caring because you're no longer in it.

I would like to say “thank you” to my mother for being such a wonderful caregiver to my father. Your devoted care made such a huge contribution to the quality of Dad's life these past few years.

DAVID

June 22, 1996

Grandpa's life was about giving and taking, though I think he gave more than he received. As one of Milt's grandsons, coming to Marion -- or even the thought of Milt -- conjured up a world replete with candy, peeps, food, and the mystique of the family house.

But as wonderful as all that *stuff* was, it was really the great love Milt had for his grandchildren which made my sister, my cousins and I eager to come to Marion every year.

Like we all know, Milt was generous. I'll never forget or take for granted the continual support my immediate family received from both Milt and Irma. He wasn't greedy. He had, but he didn't flaunt. He worked hard, side by side with others, for what he had. Milt used material things to express love, and he showed me that materialism is not a bad thing so long as we use our resources to better people's lives.

Milt was like a father to me -- sometimes I even slipped and called him Dad. I don't think he really minded. After all, he used to call me Reed all the time.

I'm happy I got to tell Grandpa how much I love him and how much I am thankful for everything he's done for me:
for being a role model, a nurturer, an educator. Grandpa, just through his example, got me interested in politics, the news, Judaism. He always encouraged me to go to Israel. And when I do get there, I will thank my Grandfather for making the journey happen, and I will think of him while I'm there.

But whether or not I ever make it to Israel, I will carry Milt's spirit with me and try to emulate his best and strongest qualities -- intelligence, love, generosity.... Political saavy, and, of course, a wonderful and quirky sense of humor.

Milt: I love you and I'll miss your presence. Thank you for all you've given me and I pray that I may fully appreciate the blessings I've recieved from you.

Amen

Eulogies to Milt Maidenberg by the three sons of Mike

Dan

We the sons of Mike Maidenberg want to paint a picture of Grandpa in three parts.

I am Dan, the youngest, and for a young kid, a trip to Grandpa's meant not only a stomach full of chocolate (we used to call it "Willy Wonka Land") but, more importantly playtime with MY GRANDPA.

Somehow he was able never to ignore you, or brush you off, or even seem tired or uninterested. Of course, it didn't hurt that we were all so cute and charming. But looking back, I realize that his capacity for giving and taking love was truly astounding.

Ted

I'm Ted, the middle child. Coming to Marion as a teenager was a little awkward. I never knew whether to try to do kid stuff or act like a grown-up. Thankfully, I never had to worry when talking with Grandpa.

However, more importantly, he really shaped my transition from teenager into young adult. He instilled in me the same ambitions and values about life that he must have given to his children.

It is this well-founded advice that I still rely on every day.

Joe

I am Joe, the oldest son.

Once, when I was in college, the UPS man woke me up at 9 a.m. He came bearing a whole bushel of oranges., and I knew who to call to say, "Thank you."

Grandpa Milt administered sound advice always, and Grandpa Milt knew that starving college kids need to be treated to the occasional Cubs game or lunch at the Standard Club. I was always a great relief to know that the doors here in Marion were always open to me.

And...I want you to know, Grandpa, that some day my grandkids will be in college, about to open another can of SpaghettiO's, when they find the Omaha Steaks in their mailbox.