

There's a common trope in movies and tv of the absent father or deadbeat dad. I grew up seeing many depictions of this and always thought "how unrealistic is that - dads aren't like that" it wasn't until I was a little older that I started to realize it's not unrealistic it's just not anything close to my reality or my relationship with my dad and how truly blessed I am for that.

My dad taught me to be kind and inclusive of others, embrace my creativity, how to make the best chicken soup and how important political involvement is at all levels. My dad left his corner of the world a better place than when he entered it through local politics, volunteer work, fighting for fair elections and environmental policies.

He displayed the same values of fairness and diplomacy at home everyday in raising Dory and me. Several memories comes to mind like

When I was in middle school, I was having a meltdown that I wasn't allowed to watch MTV like all my classmates. Instead of rolling his eyes and dismissing me like many reasonable parents would have done, he sat down and genuinely listened to my point of view, asked sincere and curious questions about the programming and agreed to let me watch some of the shows. I went on to have many profound conversations with the other 7th graders about *The Real Word: Paris*.

Speaking of tv, like many 90s kids we watched Rugrats when we were younger but my dad would follow many episodes with questions for us to make sure we were taking away the messages about friendship and inclusion from the show and not just the mischief and pranks.

When I became a vegetarian most of my family poked fun at me and would joke about their meat filled dinner plates. But my dad went out of his way to learn new cooking methods and try different ingredients so we could still enjoy shared meals and cooking together

After I graduated college and was offered a design internship in New York that only offered to compensate me in "experience", I nervously called to tell him about it - knowing the arrangement wasn't ideal - but without missing a beat he told me "we'll find a way to make it work I'm so proud of you". Thus launching the career I have now.

I could go on for hours with more examples and any one of these things on their own may seem pretty inconsequential, but having a father who offers so much support, open mindedness, humility and understanding in every single mundane interaction is one of the most incredible gifts I've ever received

He lived an incredible and meaningful life, filled with great experiences and many many people who loved him, but it was cut short by a cruel twist of fate. It wasn't always easy but it was an honor to be with him and help take care of him this past year, alongside my mom, sister and the incredible Connie. My ask of all of you is to live by the same values that my dad did and keep him alive in your memories and stories.