

BEARD

- Sorry about my unshaven appearance; stopped shaving when “vigil” started.
- Mom hated beards
- She will not be happy to see me looking scruffy today

WHO WAS TULA MYLAR?

Reading of two letters/notes Mom wrote

Mom’s qualities

- ◆ I won’t say that Mom didn’t have human shortcomings or any failings.
 - On the contrary, she had lived a hard life from the time she a youngster all the way through the Great Depression, and the emotional scars from those very tough times manifested on occasion as being cranky ... or in the form of personal needs and quirks.
 - But this said, I want to testify that all in all, by my view, she was a really good person: congenial, warm, humorous, and genuinely caring.
 - She made so many friends during her life and her travels, but most of these were in GA, AZ, and HI, and just about all her relatives were/are in CA.
 - Even of the friends and relatives she knew best, a sizable number have already “gone on” before her and to some degree she felt “left behind”.

Mom’s qualities continued:

- ◆ She was a faithful wife
- ◆ Did her best to overcome the “Mother-in-Law” syndrome
- ◆ She also did her best to be a good mother to me at all stages of my life – including as an adult.
- ◆ And due to Andrea coming into her life;
 - She learned what it means to be a loving grandmother, and
 - To be loved as a grandmother.
 - I thank God that she could be here long enough these years to know the importance of this.
- ◆ And I reiterate that she was a caring friend to so many that crossed her path as well as those who came to know her only recently in these last years that she spent in Earth Joyce, Mary, Esther ... so many wonderful people.
- ◆ And she even went out of her way to get to know total strangers.
 - This is one of the keen qualities that I think entranced my Father, I think it was one reason that my Dad loved her so.
 - And their appreciation of one another gave them a happy and outgoing marriage throughout their lives.

I state all this in order to present my next point

And that is ... NOT TO GRIEVE

It is okay to grieve because you miss her for yourself, but trust me, it is not necessary to grieve on her behalf.

- ◆ She is free at last from the frail and failing body.
 - A body that when young was the vehicle that got her spirit around and provided her the meant to communicate to others
 - But later in life, it became somewhat of a confining prison, restraining her personal free-spirited style,

- And during times of her having health problems, I have to say it was like torture for her.
- ◆ So, she was more than glad to go.

Now, I want to speak about MOM'S ATTITUDE AT THE TIME OF DYING

As surely as each of us is born, there is a time and a day that we have a date to “get on the train” to leave this world.

- ◆ I can tell you that my Mom felt that her ticket was paid for in full .. and if the conductor didn't get here soon, she was going to demand a refund.
 - She was not only not afraid of Death, she saw this “Angel” as a very welcome friend, and someone who – in her opinion – was way overdue.
 - Lucky for him he finally showed up.
 - Personally, if I had been the angel of death I wouldn't have wanted to face her wrath if he delayed any longer, and that is why I think that he finally took her in his loving embrace to let her spirit float freely from this life.
- ◆ When she had her heart attack on Friday, she still managed at the hospital to wisecrack with the doctors and nurses.
- ◆ As her condition declined she became somewhat less humorous and was getting angry that she wasn't dying quick enough. And so she fought further medications and took off her O₂ mask.
 - But alas for her, she lived on ...
 - We managed to arrange for her to come home and be with us for the dying process, but she had to have massive O₂ tanks for her to be sustained.
- ◆ During the vigil, I slept in her room by her side.
- ◆ On Friday morning, after midnight, I kept noticing that her mask was sliding off.
- ◆ So while she slept I would put it back on.
- ◆ However, it dawned on me later that it was not slipping off, she was taking it off.
- ◆ Sometime after 4am when I was trying to help her get it back on she resisted firmly, and I thought that perhaps she wanted something to drink so I asked her lovingly what she wanted, and she looked at me with rage in her eyes and with all the limited power of breath that she could muster she exclaimed between her teeth “I WANT TO DIE!”.
- ◆ Fortunately for me, she ran out of breath before she could finish the sentence with “you idiot!”
- ◆ So, I acquiesced and let her have her final wish, which was to go to sleep without any artificial assistance and to pass quietly into death.
 - I can truthfully say, that when she looked at me the message that my dear mother conveyed was that if I put the mask on her one more time that one of us was going to die right on the spot, and it wasn't going to be her.
 - Now, I've never been very good at getting hints or reading subtle signals, but I did understand that if I were to even begin to move the mask towards her face that she had in mind a place to stuff that mask that I would find most discomfoting.
 - And I am speaking of a very special place, a place where the rays of the sun are never known to shine.
 - So, I let her have her way and around 7am she stopped breathing, I got Anne-Marie to confirm that this was so, and we woke up Andrea so that each of us could lovingly kiss and hug her while her frail body was still warm.

- ◆ Life, not death, is what can be so trying and so very hard at times, and so it was very important to me that Andrea see that death is the natural and right conclusion to life, and that our dying from this plane of existence is a gift of liberation.

LIFE AFTER DEATH

If there is a place where we all go when we die, a place where friends and loving family members who have passed on themselves await us, then I can say that she is in good hands indeed.

- ◆ I guarantee that she will be celebrating, not grieving, and I attest this not by my own authority but by the essence of the divine principles, the three great mandates handed down to us by one Jesus of Nazareth as revealed in the New Testament.
- ◆ And what are these mandates?
 - First, to love God with all your heart soul, and being,
 - Second, to love thy neighbor as thyself, and
 - Thirdly, to love one another, even as he loved us.
- ◆ For some, these are the “three great curses” because loving others can be so very difficult to do. After all, what is more dreadful or difficult than in being willing to extend our heart from within our ego shells -- like a turtle his head in a dangerous world -- in order to reach out to others in this life?
- ◆ Sometimes it can be very hard just to love ourselves and those around us, much less those in the world with whom we think we have no connection, but we are connected.
- ◆ We are all brothers and sisters in the eyes of God, and we are responsible for one another.
 - Although life seems so long at times, because it is so full of uncertainties, then we find some comfort in the chasing of material goods, of personal pleasures, and in exploring this world of distractions that constantly bombards us.
 - But it is because of this that it is very easy to lose sight that the most important thing is to learn how to love, unselfishly, and unconditionally.
 - It was this gift of finding and meeting fellow travelers in life that seemed to come so naturally from within my mother, and it was this quality that endeared her to so many to whom she made the effort to get to know ... and to share.
 - It was her special gift to make even total strangers feel at ease with her and to laugh at life themselves and the illusory problems of life.
- ◆ Her vibrant sense of humor was often off-color, and if I was with her when she told a joke to a perfect stranger it would put a blush into my cheeks.
- ◆ But her manner disarmed the gruffest looking people and won them over in a heartbeat.
- ◆ It was this ability to bring a sparkle of joy into peoples lives that helped others along the roads of life to continue on with a smile.
- ◆ Her gift was like that of the last and brightest star at the break of dawn that by which wayward mariners could navigate their way around the shoals and jagged rocks.
- ◆ By getting people to smile and to laugh, she helped fellow travelers in life to find their way past the barrier reefs and out into the open seas of living their lives without worrying about tomorrow or the problems of today – to enjoy fully the moment we are in.
- ◆ The whimsical twinkle in her eyes could captivate and pull just about anyone out of the abyss of endlessly chasing that which is of no real importance, and this expression of her caring for anyone and everyone was a reminder of the mandate to “love one another”, the directive “from above” for which we seem to never have the time, energy, or focus.
- ◆ But this is what ultimately really counts, and this is where she excelled in her own very special way.

WHO WILL GRIEVE?

So who will be doing the grieving at her departure from this world?

- ◆ I confess, that I will.
 - I will miss her terribly and so will my family.
 - She was so central to anything and everything that we did that frankly it hurts so deep in my chest to not have her here with us anymore.
 - But I have my little family, and we have her memory in our hearts for as long as we live and perhaps even longer, and I am so happy that she can now be free from the suffering of this life.

CONCLUSION

I want to thank everyone who could make it here today for coming to pay your respects, but I ask that these not be your final respects.

- What I mean by this is that I ask in her name that you take something with you today, that you take a precious piece of her, of that which she represented, and dwell on the words of “I ask that you love one another as I have loved you” ...
- These are the words that came from a stranger who lived 2,000 years ago, someone we will not meet in person in this life, but who cared for us even before we were born.
- It is this love that each of us is capable of achieving, and it is this that is what is really, really important.
- There is no greater lesson to learn than to embody this love and to let it flow through you and out into this world.

My Mother’s humble gift to all of us was merely a reminder of who we are, and what we are capable of becoming, even in spite of all our travails and all that may come against us.

- If we have genuine love in our hearts, as I know so many of you here today do, then there is nothing to fear, certainly not death, not even life, nothing.
- There can be only peace in our hearts.

I want to close now with this poem that my Mom asked me some months ago to read at her funeral service, it is a poem written by John Merrifield entitled “Sea Fever” and it sums up my mother’s essence as a person, and her attitude about life.

POEM