

# 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.

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# Take me home from the ballgame..

Not a post about Major League Sports, but of girls fast pitch softball and a coach I knew.

We started helping out because our girls were on teams. For my last few years of coaching girls softball I was his assistant. We tried to instill some knowledge of the game, but our biggest task was to get young teen and pre-teen girls to have some fun playing ball.

We had many good players, but sometimes their interests headed away from the ball field. We took this in stride and hoped that the girls had some fun. Funny I can't seem to remember how many years I coached with this man, but I think it was 3. They were good summers.

Through the following years, we failed to keep in touch, even though my youngest was friends with one of his step-daughters. When we did see each other, it did bring back some of the those good memories. For years he walked in the "Walk for Life" to remember my dear wife. He will no longer walk that walk, he lost his own battle to the very opponent he walked against. I will miss the occasional meetings at Wally World or Taco Bell. I will miss a friend. Children will miss a father. A wife will miss her husband. And Cancer takes one more...

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## A special place in 'MY'

# acting hall of fame

One line in a response pushed me to write this post. I don't think I've written about it before, but I remember telling a friend or two, so if you've heard it before, just be patient with me.

Way back in 1997, somebody asked me for suggestions on shows for the play house to do. I was a rank newbie to the theater, but I gave a suggestion or two. The play at the top of my list was "Harvey". It seems that the playhouse did this show before, and they were not ready to do it again. Year after year, I suggested that show. Finally, after a lot of persuasion, and maybe just to shut me up, the show was scheduled for some time in 2006. I tried out for the show and was given the lead role of Elwood Dowd. A dream come true for me. I would have done anything on that show just to be able to watch it, but I was able to be in it. I was thrilled.

One thing did put a damper on that. My lovely wife died in 2003 and would not be by my side during the rehearsals and production of this show. This was a bit of a stress for me during the early rehearsals of the show. Finally something changed. I needed some props for the show. One was the cards that Elwood was so fond of passing out, another a notebook of his favorite watering holes. And the third an billfold with some cash and other peoples calling cards. The little notebook, and many of the 'calling' cards belonged to my late wife. From that time on, I had a little bit of her on stage with me.

Then came my largest discovery. I was able to think of Harvey as my lovely wife standing on the footstool in the kitchen. This would have put her at the exact height needed for Harvey. So from the time of that thought, until the end of the run, every time I looked at Harvey on stage, I was peering into the eyes of my wife.

Many times she said she never wanted to be on stage. She never wanted any recognition for anything she did for the theater. She wanted to remain anonymous. Well except for in my eyes, she was never on the stage. Her name was not listed in the bios, but she was on stage with me for every performance. I gave my all to that show. I pushed myself farther than I ever thought I could. And every night I looked into the eyes of my wife, shared a drink or two and was finally able to say "Where have you been, I've been looking all over for you."

No matter what comes after that show, all things pale when in that light.

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## What was I thinking?

I'm in another play. Tryouts were just before Christmas. Rehearsals started the week of Christmas (I think). I'm trying to memorize my lines and get the character down.

I shouldn't have tried out. I shouldn't have taken the part. I knew better, but I did it anyway. It was the only show of the season that I even wanted to be a part of.

It wasn't that I just finished one show and rushed into a second. That is no problem at all. I usually like rehearsals and getting the part down. No, it was the timing of the show. It is the time of year and the days that surround it. I'm only doing half the work I need to do to get the character down. I'm actually doing less than that to get the lines memorized. My mind is unable to focus once I get home.

Maybe it will get better in the coming week or two (it better, the show is only 2 weeks away). I really hope so.

I have a handle on the why and the when. I am making a promise to myself to really limit my selection of shows to do in the early part of the year. Too many other things on my mind.

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I remember the last thing we watched together. I remember our last meal together. I remember that damn oxygen machine. I remember sitting and holding your hand while you were going in and out of a fitful slumber. I remember walking you down the hall, you holding me for support. I remember the last time I tucked you in. I remember your last words. I remember my last words to you. I remember that first New Years Eve without you. I remember the memorial service and the people there. I remember that first anniversary without you.

Those are the thoughts that fill my head at this time of year. The inconsequential needs of a play find very little room in my head. Even after six years, the thoughts of you are one with me and I with them. I remember love.

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## Cold Winter Nights

A warm fire, hot drink and I guess I'm comfortable, but something is missing.

That second cup of tea is no longer needed or made. The choice of movies no longer discussed. My 6th Christmas without you. That is truly a cold winter night.

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# Just strange ads

Something weird is going on with the ads I see on many sites. I've been getting bombarded with ads for 'bidets'. Now I would understand this if I had been making comments about toiletpaper, toilet humor, bathrooms, plungers or the like. Or even if I was doing a search to replace various plumbing fixtures. The only site I know of that had something to do with bathrooms, was the [repair blog over at taylhis's site](#).

Seeing the things I'm interested in, or places I frequent, I would expect ads about widows/widowers, maybe dating, single parents, college information, comic books, geek stuff, movies, books and a few other things. Bidets were at the bottom of my list of things I thought I would be interested in.

The other strange ad I've seen is for Ugg boots. While a fascinating site and the boots are quite comfortable (I had a pair of Ugg slippers once), I'm not currently in the market. But then again, I did write about finding boots for my college daughter.

Hmm, does Vet Tech talk suddenly bring up ads for Bidets and Ugg boots? I wonder. For now, I guess I will just be followed by these strange ads. (Check the tags, I'm in for it now)

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# Those Beautiful Fall Days

If you were in NW Ohio, NE Indiana or Southern Michigan today, you probably had beautiful fall weather. Warm without being too hot, nice breeze and wispy clouds. And I noticed that some of the leaves have started to change color. We are still a few weeks off from most trees turning red, gold and brown, but it

is starting. Some of the early changers have started too lose their leaves. Just a beautiful time...

Except, I still remember the good days from 6 years ago. The days before the intense shoulder pain slowed my wife's days to a crawl. The good days that soon turned ugly.

I remember that it was about now that I should be holding my new grandson. But the days turned ugly.

I remember the last few days of my Mom's life from many years ago now. She didn't know what was coming her way in the waning days of October 2000. And my father, one year later, going through things that I didn't understand then, but I really do understand them now. While his health wasn't very good when mom died, he could have lived many years with a bit of luck. My feeling is that his heart broke at the one year mark, and nothing would fix that. After my stress related illnesses of my first few years of being a widower, I can tell you that that takes a toll.

All this happened in those beautiful days of fall. For the past 5 years, I didn't see much of the beauty. I realized it was there, but other thoughts would push the beauty of the season out of my thoughts. The older thoughts don't weigh as heavily on my mind now, and for a moment I saw the beauty of the day. Then I noticed my arms were empty... My daughter and son-in-law have empty arms too. And I wonder when will I see fall again, without its ever present shadow?

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## **Grief, a state of mind**

In early March of 2004, I was introduced to the terminology 'grief monster'. This was a term used by other widows and

widowers to indicate their feelings after loss. Using the words grief monster seemed to indicate a battle needed to be fought with grief. I didn't think that was the case then and I don't think it is the case now.

With a new loss, feelings of grief are again merging with my life. I think that the feelings of grief are there for a reason. Grief is a coping mechanism. While grief isn't a comfortable feeling, it should be welcomed. We need time to deal with sadness and loss.

The intensity and duration of our feelings of grief indicate where we are in our grief journey. Since people are different, the length and duration of our journeys are also different. The only way we know how far we've come is to look at how we feel grief.

In these difficult times of loss, I've seen grief as a friend. Not always a friend I want around, but as a needed friend. Tears, anger, frustration are all tools to handle our loss. To fight these feelings, as if fighting a monster, would be counterproductive to help they can bring.

Grief can and will come at unexpected times. These times may be inconvenient or embarrassing, but they need to be accepted. As an adult male, I have been taught to harness my feelings. I found that after my wife's death, I no longer do this. If tears are needed, tears will be shed. I no longer shy away from my emotions. It has helped with my healing.

There has been new loss in my life. Another grief journey has begun. The road is the same, but different. It is a journey not taken alone, but with the help of others.

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A journey begins with one step; a good journey begins with one step reaching for another's hand.



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# Hello. How are you? It's been a while.

I haven't really been in a mood to write anything recently.

I've been reading the comics again, and once again [Funky Winkerbean](#) has me thinking.

The current story line has a character return after being presumed dead. His 'widow' in the story has remarried and lived with the thought of him being gone forever.

I'm not sure how the story will sort out, but the concept of it bothers me a little bit. As I've said before, the author of this comic does not shy away from touchy subjects, and this is no exception. What would this do to family, friends and others when a person they know to be dead, comes back to life?

On a material note... Do you have to pay back any insurance, Soc. Sec. benefits, and other things only received on one's death?

On an emotional note... What happens to the new people in the lives of loved ones? People grow and change over time and generally change together when their lives are shared. People who are apart change in different ways. Rough go.

And on others... There is another family that lost a loved one in this strip. Are they overcome with envy when they see someone else come back from the dead, and not their lost love?

And this is only a daily comic in the newspapers. Deep thoughts for the funny pages.

As a widower, there were many (are many?) times that I wish my

dear wife could come back, but I know that this is only a wish. As in the song "One More Day" by Diamond Rio, we keep wishing for that one extra day, but what happens if we actually get it?

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## Life in the Comic Section

Sometime back the comic strip [Funky Winkerbean](#) had run a series on the death of one of the main characters. It hit me hard at the time, because the character was a wife and mother who died of cancer. The comic strip jumped 10 years into the future and we now see the lives of the characters after this death and the death of another character (presumably in the war). I've seen bits and pieces of things I feel written in the comics.

Currently they are dealing with the widower of the first character who died. He is trying to raise his teenage daughter (been there, doing that) and even started on the road to dating (not yet, not quite or maybe, I'm confused). I find it interesting to read the comic and it almost feels like the author has done his research in one way or another. Usually it is very close to some of the things I feel and think.

It is hard to explain what I feel to a person who hasn't dealt with the same situation. In most cases, I don't even know where to begin. This comic explains and shows things in a way I never could. But then, I found someone else who reads that comic and they didn't see the same things. Maybe I just see it because I have been in the same boat. I guess I need to think and ponder that. My life in a comic, who would have guessed.