

When One Door Closes Another Opens Up

Rev. Edie Weinstein-Moser

Interfaith minister, Feather the Clown, and Organ Donor Volunteer

The seeds for the life I am living now were planted in 1992. My husband Michael was diagnosed with Hepatitis C when we volunteered to become bone marrow donors for a child in our community. Our shared odyssey took us into corners dark and illuminated into which we never anticipated venturing. Using both mainstream and alternative treatments, we were ultimately faced with the reality that Michael would either receive a liver transplant or die waiting for one.

I celebrated my 40th birthday in Michael's hospital room. It was the last we would share; less than a month later, he was in a hepatic coma, and 5 1/2 weeks after that, on December 21, 1998, he left his wounded body behind. He also left a legacy of love, resilience, and strength that I carry to this day.

A year before he died, Michael was enrolled in a seminary, studying to become an interfaith minister. I worked with him for the first year since he was too weak to attend the class in person. I played class tapes, typed his papers and read to him when he was unable to concentrate. When he died, I committed to 3 things: to do all that I could to help our 11-year-old son grow to be a good man, to speak passionately about organ and tissue donation, and to complete seminary program for Michael and become ordained with the class.

Later I discovered that the commitments I made to Michael led me to my own path. Not only was it a soul journey, but a new direction for my life's work. In addition to being a nursing home social worker and a clown/humor therapist, I am now an active volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia and an ordained interfaith minister.

In just 5 months, I completed 2 year's worth of seminary work...with some Divine and husbandly intervention. On June 13, 1999, in a ceremony in the awe-inspiring St. John the Divine cathedral in Manhattan, I was ordained. During the magnificent ceremony, Michael's spirit was 'ordained' as well. Since then, I have officiated at one wedding and one memorial service, with 6 more weddings scheduled for this year. My ministry also takes the form of writing. One of my short stories, "Dancing With Angels," was just published in Meant To Be, a book of miraculous love stories edited by Barry & Joyce Vissell (published by Conari Press). I'm also working on a book that Michael and I had begun, entitled 'liveinjoy'. I write articles on organ donor education as well.

In this last year since Michael's passing, I have come to recognize the gifts inherent in the pain I have experienced. We were so blessed to have had that time together and although he was not able to speak, I was able to share my deepest fears and most profound truths with him. I joke that many other wives would love to have that opportunity; to say whatever they want when their husbands can't answer. Gallows humor was a powerful healing tool that enabled me to live through those horrific and simultaneously uplifting days.

This past October, I turned 41 and have entered into a new life with head held high, heart wide open, mending the broken parts with both tears and laughter. Michael's soul is free to soar and I am learning that mine is as well. For 10 years we were business partners, publishing Visions Magazine from 1988-1998. Now we are partners in a much fuller manner. He is my strength from Heaven and I am his voice (as well as my own), here on Earth.

You may visit the author www.liveinjoy.com, via email at katejoy@liveinjoy.com or by telephone at 215-249-9190.