

TRUTH BE TOLD – Summer 2009

By
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Truth be told, I chose to be with my daughter the night my husband, Michael, died. It was her birthday, and I did not want to take any of the specialness of it away, now and in the years to come. I will never know if I made the right choice and it has plagued me for years. When someone suggested I see a psychic, I did. Through her, I learned that Michael felt I did the right thing. I choose to believe.

May 25, 1988

Comatose for hours, Michael's life is now dependent on the air pumped into his lungs through the the oxygen. I knew he was in his final hours by 10 PM. I called my girlfriend and admitted the truth to her and myself – he would be dead by morning. Even as we talked, I couldn't believe he was really going to leave me. I will have to face a life without him, a possibility I never wanted to consider or believe.

I left his bedside to return to the hotel and tucked my sixteen year old daughter into bed. By midnight, I was back at his side to say goodbye. I spoke to the private duty nurse, and asked her to step outside. In the hall, I ask her to stay with Michael and call me in the morning to let me know when he passes. Back in the room, Michael and I are alone.

May 26, 12:15 AM, 1988

I sit next to my beloved, my champion, my energy, my light for the last time. I caress his hair, sweeping it to one side, as I've done so many times before over the past twenty-three years. Lifting his lifeless hand, I cover it with mine, remembering how he held me with strength, compassion and love. I squeezed it gently to see if he would respond. Nothing.

I lean close to his ear and whisper, knowing he was probably past hearing. I tell him yet again, how much I love him, how much his three children adore him and how much his family cares about him. His breath is rhythmic, in, out, in, out. I don't think I can bear to see him silent forever, as if dead to my eyes would mean dead in my heart.

If truth be told, as my heart was breaking, I now tell the biggest lie of my life to release him from his. I tell him it is time for him to find peace. I would be all right. I would take care of the children, diligently maintain the checkbook (he never trusted me) and clean the kitchen sink (never good enough for him) every night. Everything would be as we planned. His work on earth was done and I would see him in the next life. I tuck him in and kiss him. I know I will never see or touch him again.

May 26, 8 AM, 1988

The phone rings. "Mrs. Bluestein, we offer our condolences. Your husband died peacefully and comfortably at 2:30 this morning."

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I am NOT okay.