

~ A Daughter Remembers ~

Penned in 1996

As far back as I can remember I had strong feelings about my Dad. There was a time that I felt uncomfortable with him, because he was not a person who talked much about things. He did have a way of joking in a playful kind of way, but it was sometimes hard to carry on a good conversation with him. He listened, so it was not that. It was more of a kind of 'far off' quality that kept us from really relating closely.

Dad had been an only child and had been raised primarily by his mother, and perhaps he never had a good role model for a father. And yet, to this day, when I think of father, there exists but one image in my head, my Dad.

This, then, must be a love story, for there could be no other way to describe that one, who gave me so much.

Little did I know that deep within the heart of him, there existed the very blueprint for fatherhood. And little did I know that this blueprint was the pattern he so closely followed all those years. My dad was given the gift of love by his Maker, and he let it flow from within, unceasingly.

A daughter remembers differently than a son, I suppose, or a wife, or a mother. So my remembering comes through the eyes of a daughter, and must be viewed through that lens.

I was not the prettiest of the four whom he had, but I was the oldest, which gave me some distinction. There were two sons also, the oldest and the youngest.

Let it be known that within this tale of love for a father there exists something more for everyone. There exists the sharing of the blueprint that dwelt within his heart, which you can read and study and follow and allow to be the plan for your life, too.

Our story begins in a quiet way, and if you are quiet enough, you can hear him walk down the hallway of those churches he served, you can hear him whistling to himself, and you can hear him as he gently greets his wife and children. Jacob was a greeter, ever ready with a warm "Hello" and a hearty handshake. Dad could say "Goodbye," making you long for the time you would be together again.

'Togetherness' played a big part in Dad's life. He understood the word well and understood that his life was forever together with his Maker.

As a little girl I longed to have Dad think well of me. But 'accomplishing' didn't seem to make much difference with Dad. The love poured out whether I was good or bad. In fact, often when I had done something wrong, I felt more love, and forgiveness. I always left Dad thinking, 'all is well.' Never in the fifty years that I knew him—he died five days after my fiftieth birthday—did I ever feel embarrassed or ashamed of him. He had an elegance and grace like that of an oak tree, a mountain, a flower. That's how I experienced him. Whenever I was with him I experienced a sense of safety and peace. I suppose it was from him that I first knew that love dwelt within the heart.

For within Dad's heart there was a relationship of such magnificence that the light of it shone like the sun. This relationship permeated everything

about Dad. Dad loved Jesus. The matrix or the blueprint for all that he expressed came forth from this joining and we all knew it.

Nowhere was this love more evident than in his love for Laura, my mother. Such a wonderful interdependence do children rarely get to experience. Laura and Jake 'sang' together and their life was a duet of beauty and harmony, punctuated by the clatter and clang of little footsteps tumbling into the world one after the other. So I lived in a house of harmony, and mirth and merriment set the tone much of the time.

Laura's heart was filled with the love of Jesus too, so we knew well that the Master was charting the course for our lives.

Peering more closely at the blueprint, we see that Dad often turned within and in the internal communion with Jesus, he drew forth the strength and the joy that suffused him.

Light reaches even into the dark corners, and Dad's light touched even the dark corners of my life. These dark corners existed. I'm not pretending that they didn't. I didn't know the meaning of relationship at first, for I thought I needed to be the determiner of what I was. That included a script of striving, striving, striving to overcome all that I perceived to be inadequacy. The moment I felt I could chalk one up on the 'well done' category, that nipper at the heels, that forever tiger of tyranny, my ego would appear, pointing out mercilessly that all aspects of my life needed more work, and that I hadn't even begun to accomplish what needed to be done. Peace and contentment seemed an impossible goal and weren't even worth considering the tiger would point out, and 'were too boring' anyway.

Dad exemplified peace and contentment. He left a lot of the details of life up to Mother, and she was good at this, so it worked out well. At first I didn't realize that peace and contentment, joy and love were what divine relationship was all about. I thought it was about overcoming inadequacy. I thought that God 'pitched in' and helped me get things done.

It took a major life catastrophe to 'undo' this thinking and to let the tiger extinct itself. During the whole ten year process, Dad wrote letters of support and encouragement, always pointing to the Father and to Jesus as the way to heal the heart. I felt his prayers.

I realized that 'yielding' into the love and the relationship that was always there was the point, that I didn't have to do anything, and that 'doing' pulled the tiger in again. I had to let go of the false sense of self, the separate sense of self, my ego had created.

I never really thought of Dad as a key player in my life all those years, and yet he was. His presence was like that oak tree, spreading arms of peace and quiet, shelter and strength, and like the mountain, his love was immovable. And like the flower, his words were gentle and soft. I experienced no judgement from him.

Always, he followed the blueprint, putting Jesus first. Dad knew well what 'yielding' was about. He knew that potter could make the vessel and he was the clay.

There is a song that goes "As deep as the ocean, as wide as the sea, that's how much love you gave to me." Dad gave me his love and he taught me the meaning of relationship—that authentic relationship that dwells within each

of us if we but 'yield' to it. He taught me about Jesus, and I am walking hand in hand with Him this day.

(I have written this, as guided by Jesus, as a love letter to my father, Jacob, who passed away in 1994.)