

Someone once said if you are nervous about public speaking just picture your audience in their underwear... They probably weren't at a church funeral.

Sorry, in addition to many other things, I got my sense of humor from my dad.

Legendary North Carolina State basketball coach Jim Valvano said you should do three things every day. "You should laugh every day. You should think. Spend some time in thought. And you should have your emotions moved to tears. If you can laugh, think and cry that's a full day. That's a heck of a day." You might see me have a full day right here in the next few minutes. We've had a lot of full days recently. Thank you all for helping us through these full days by offering prayers, thoughts, remembrances, hugs, food and being here.

I remember my dad coming home from work one day telling us how they spent the day doing team building exercise. Divided into groups they had to work with their peers to solve various problems that became increasingly complex and stressful. After each exercise, a co-worker would provide feedback about what they liked and disliked about working with the members of their group. One woman said what she liked about working with Ron was that when things got difficult and stressful and she wanted to scream, Ron remained calm, cool, and collected. What she didn't like about working with Ron was that when things got difficult and stressful and she wanted to scream, Ron remained calm, cool and collected. The man was consistent.

Now I realize that consistent isn't one of those glowing words you typically hear in a eulogy. But for a mechanical engineer this is high praise. It's what engineers strive for. Consistent results, consistent data, consistent performance. But what made my dad special is the other words added after consistent. Consistent husband, providing other-centered love, support and laughter to my mom through an incredible marriage that lasted over 59 years. Consistent father, always putting us first and providing us with values, structure, discipline (which I was more often on the receiving end than my sister) and anything else we could have hoped or asked for from a father. Consistent teacher including lessons in simple life skills like throwing and catching, tying a tie, parallel parking and sailing. But more importantly teaching by example the importance of honesty, faith, hard work, accountability and helping others. Consistent parishioner of this church for over 50 years. He served as an elder, a deacon, a commissioner of buildings and grounds, a greeter, an usher, a

lay reader and a bell ringer. Pretty much anything that was asked of him except sing in the choir. And for that we can all give thanks. True story, he once knocked out his front tooth with a hammer while on a ladder hanging a Christmas wreath and didn't even stop until all the holiday decorations were done. It was the third time he had knocked out the same tooth, previously playing football and tennis. He was even consistent when knocking his teeth out.

For many years we took family vacations to Cape Cod. My mom in the passenger seat shuffling through a stack of 8-track tapes playing DJ as we took turns selecting music and dad drove. Kim and I would pick something modern and hip like the soundtrack to Saturday Night Fever. Mom would then choose between Johnny Mathis, Mac Davis or Anne Murray. Then we would all brace for dad's selection deep from the country archives of Roy Clark, the Oakridge Boys or Alabama. We would cringe and suffer through what we thought was awful music. Ironically, over time we have all learned to like and appreciate country music. Maybe because many of the lyrics align with my father's beliefs about God, family, love, good friends and cold beer. Which is why these lyrics from a country song by Luke Combs provide me with such comfort and strength today.

Just 'cause I'm leavin'
It don't mean that I won't be right by your side
When you need me
And you can't see me in the middle of the night
Just close your eyes and say a prayer
It's okay, I know you're scared when I'm not here
But I'll always be right there
Even though I'm leavin', I ain't goin' nowhere

I know my father will always be with me. And I hope you all keep a part of my father with you and feel the strength, love and comfort he so uniquely and humbly provided.

I'll close with a thought from Canadian Psychologist Jordan Peterson. Dr. Peterson said "you should be the strongest person at your father's funeral. That's something to aim for. While all the people around you are suffering because of their loss they have someone to turn to who can illustrate by their behavior that

the force of character is sufficient to move you beyond the catastrophe. And be the person who will say, we will get through this.”

Now I cannot stand here in the same room as my mother and my sister and claim to be the strongest person here. Mom, thank you for your strength and commitment and for all that you did to give us more time with dad. And Kim, thank you for being the one that always showed up, regardless of day or time, to provide care, love and support. Knowing that you were there, not only provided them but also me with tremendous comfort.

So, I may not be the strongest person, but I will be the one that stands here and say that with the strength he has given us and the support that all of you continue to provide, we WILL get through this.

Dad, I thank you, I love you and I will keep you with me forever.