

A Slice of Heaven

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LazyBPress

As a mother who lost her son six years ago, each special occasion is a struggle. I miss the wholeness of my family, finding myself wishing that all my children were together and we could share in the celebration of special days. As the intensity of the journey of grief is lightening, I feel the phrase “Time Heals” is starting to become an unwelcome reality.

A week before Mother’s Day, I started to feel the return of anxiety of how I would handle another Mothers Day celebration without my son. I did not want to waste another year of not fully enjoying a day honoring my mother and husband’s mother, as well as “being in the moment” with our families. An idea popped into my head, which was a very non-traditional way of coping.

The next step was to ask my husband for the unusual request. As Paul is a very logical husband, I feared he would think I had gone over the edge, that I had finally lost my mind, but I have learned through my journey of grief to communicate your needs to others, no matter what the subject. Do not make the mistake of assuming what others are thinking or feeling. The openness of being able to relay your feelings to your loved ones is a key to finding your way out of the darkness of despair to the light of hope and joy. Not entirely confident of his response, I decided to e-mail my request to

him for Mother’s Day. I asked that when he was buying a Mothers Day card for me, to also purchase a card from Andy. Just listen to his heart and Andy would guide him on what to do. He did not reply, so I was not sure that my request would be fulfilled. Mothers Day I awoke and first thought of the fun filled day that would unfold.

A trip to my sisters to be with all my family, which included my mother and father, my daughter and son in law and two wonderful grandchildren, my sister and her family and brother and his family – 18 family members all together to enjoy the first part of the day. To complete the second part of our day, we would then travel to Paul’s parent’s house and spend special time with his mother and dad. To have our two mothers living is a special present that we realize many children never get to experience. The thought of Andy not being with us flashed thru my mind and my heart then saddened with the reality that he would not be with us. The phone rang, and my daughter in Dallas who could not be with us, phoned and wished me a Happy Mothers Day. Because of her call, my heart started to rebound to put my mind back in the present. I turned from the phone, and on our kitchen island was a beautiful vase of flowers with two cards and two presents. My husband gave me his card and present I am very lucky that after 21 years of marriage, my husband realizes how wonderful it is to

hear that he loves and appreciates me as wife, friend, and mother to our children. I then turned to the other card sitting by the flowers and slowly opened the envelope. It was a lovely card and my husband had signed it with the exact same handwriting of Andy. Tears filled my eyes, but they were happy tears, not the tears of sadness. Paul then told me to open the gift. It was a kitchen knife, with the following note:

*Mom,
I wanted to get you something that would make you think of me. So I bought you a slice of heaven. Every time you are cooking and using the knife, I will be with you cooking some delicious concoction and slicing a piece of heaven. Hopefully you will think of me and know how much I enjoy cooking and that this gift will bring you many years of joy as you have brought into my life.*

Love, Andy

Andy loved to cook and we often spent time laughing and talking with family and friends gathered in the kitchen. What a perfect gift! For that day, my family was altogether. With my husband's compassion and willingness to indulge my "odd request", I was able to enjoy Mothers Day without a heavy heart.

Paul, my Fathers Day gift to you is a heartfelt thank you. I am so blessed with your acts of compassion and thoughtfulness. I love you more each day.

Love, Jan