



Teresa John

January 24, 1947 - September 5, 2022

I would like to share with you some of my thoughts about a life that I thought I would never live long enough to see end, one that ended far too soon. Today, I would like to tell you a bit about my wife Teresa and our wonderful life together, both happy and sad. This story begins after I accepted that my first marriage was over with no reasonable hope of reconciliation, and I was finally ready to meet someone new. I mentioned this to a close friend, that I was ready for an introduction. Soon after I was invited to a puppet show with my three year old son, David. I met someone there to whom I was immediately attracted. I didn't know who she was. I felt a bit dejected when she left early. I didn't know at the time she was a volunteer for Crisis Hotline of Houston, and that she had to leave for a four hour shift there. Her attraction to me was immediate, too. We would talk on the phone for many hours. But, at one point I thought this might not work when she raised the topic of religion. While I was raised Christian, I no longer had considered myself one since the end of my Freshman year of college. I did mention that I long had an interest in Judaism. To my astonishment, she told me that she had been attending a Jewish congregation called Beth Israel. She loved the Rabbi (Samuel Karff) and the Cantor (Robert Gerber). I attended services with her, and was very pleased. I wanted to learn more. At the bookstore, I picked up a copy of "Liberal Judaism" by Rabbi Eugene Borowitz. After reading it and attending more Friday night services at Congregation Beth Israel, I knew I had found my new spiritual home. Teresa and I quickly became engaged. About six months after

the puppet show, we married. Soon after, we took conversion classes and converted to Judaism. We had our Jewish marriage exactly one year after our church wedding a year before. Years later we did a B'nai Mitzvah together. We have been members of Beth Israel for over 35 years. Teresa was a dedicated Occupational Therapist for 45 years, both as a clinician and a supervisor. I always got the sense that she was incredibly supportive of her staff and so very kind to those she treated. In addition to her professional work, Teresa was a dedicated volunteer in our community. She logged more than 2500 hours at the crisis call center, and over 500 hours training others. One year she was awarded volunteer of the year. She was active in other volunteer organizations, such as the Dispute Resolution Center, Harris County Sheriff's Deputies, and the Family Service Center. Both in her professional work and in her volunteer activities, Teresa showed her true self: caring, supportive, considerate, and generous. She was just the same in our home and in our marriage, exhibiting all these characteristics and more: she gave me so much love and friendship, too. Teresa and I have always had cats and dogs. She adored them, and they adored her. She loved watching murder mysteries, and spent much of the day watching them after she retired. She enjoyed opera, especially the most famous tenor arias. During one of them at a live performance of Aida we attended, she started singing along very quietly, I think unconsciously. She was always supportive of my outside interests, especially my passion for live classical music concerts. Her support was put to the test after my retirement when I had the time to attend classical music concerts more frequently. In February 2020, just prior to the pandemic lockdown, we attended 25 concerts. Not once did she ever complain. Although, she would comment on some of the "sour note" works that I liked so much. And with time, these works became less and less sour to her, and she even ended up liking some of them. Teresa maintained strong connections to her closest friends, and was always there for them. She was a devoted and loving daughter. We took in her mother after she became too demented to safely live by herself. She lived with us for two years until she died peacefully

in our home under the care of home hospice. She was also a loving mother to her stepson. Teresa enjoyed exceptionally good health all her life. In our 35 years of marriage she didn't miss a single day of work because of illness. Her grandmother lived to age 102. She has an aunt who is currently 102 years old. Her father lived to age 94; her mother, 89. When I retired in 2018, I expected that we would have many wonderful years together. I fully expected she would outlive me. Then we got a shock in February 2021, in the middle of the worst pandemic in a century. Our primary care physician was doing a routine abdominal palpation in response to recent symptoms. He looked at me with the most worried look on his face I had ever seen. He told us that he suspected ovarian cancer, and referred us to MD Anderson. Her surgery in March of 2021 went extremely well. And, her six rounds of chemo went very smoothly. Not once did she experience any nausea. Through all of this she demonstrated incredible strength. But, the pathology after surgery was troubling. She had what's called a clear cell carcinoma. Once this escapes the reproductive system, the five year survival rate is 10%. And unfortunately, cells were found outside of her reproductive system. But, the six rounds of chemo worked. A key blood test marker went back to normal. Maybe she would be one of the lucky few? Unfortunately, the drug that likely worked the best, nearly killed her. One known complication of the drug is bowel perforation. And, she got one ten days after her sixth round of chemo. With low platelets and a chemo drug that can cause excessive bleeding, surgery was out of the question. The only hope was her body would repair the hole in time on its own. And amazingly, it did. This is often fatal. Somehow, she got a second chance. But, that drug was now out of the question. The plan had been to use it for six more rounds. Teresa was in remission for over seven months. Unfortunately, at a routine follow-up appointment, the blood test indicated that her cancer returned, and a biopsy confirmed it. She had two more rounds of chemotherapy. But, the blood tests continued to get worse. Additional complications brought us to the place where we were out of

options. She was getting worse in the hospital, and wanted to go home. Our next step was to bring in home hospice, to assure that she would be comfortable and peaceful for her transition. Through all of this, Teresa was so very strong. She was clear-headed about her situation always. She had hope, but realized that the odds were against her. She peacefully died at home with me at her bedside. A Jewish hospice counselor recently paid me a visit. He listened to my story, some of it very similar to what I have just told you. He used a Yiddish term I hadn't heard in a long while, Beschert. It literally means destiny, but often is used to mean "soulmate". And, without a doubt Teresa was my soulmate. He asked me if I had any regrets. I answered no. I told him that I had been so very blessed over 35 years with such an incredibly loving friend, who was so amazingly supportive and compatible. We had so much fun together. I consider myself so very lucky to have found her. Teresa has now found eternal peace. While I now have a large hole in my heart, I will fill it with my memories of her and her love for me. She was a wonderful wife, mother, and friend. She will be missed so very much. But, she will never be forgotten. Her memory will live on in our hearts. I love you so much my darling, always. Lovingly, George For a recording of the service, please visit: <https://view.oneroomstreaming.com/authorise.php?k=1662499646206521>

Tribute Wall

KB

“ Teresa lived as a force for good no matter what the world served up. She was invested in the well-being of co-workers and patients, friends and family, and more animals than I could keep track of. She was a generous and devoted friend of mine for decades. Because her family was so long-lived, the notion of her not being around was unthinkable until recently. It will take a while to get used to the reality of not being able to reach her on the phone. May angels surround and comfort George and David and her far-flung relatives.

Kathy Biehl - September 08, 2022 at 05:10 PM

GJ

“ Funeral Service

George C John - September 08, 2022 at 03:55 PM

GJ

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“ *Funeral Service*

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JD

“ *With our all our love.*

James & Deborah Dunham - September 08, 2022 at 12:40 PM

BI

“ *I had the blessed opportunity to meet mrs Teresa as just someone to sit and chat with and she truly touched my heart with her warm smile and kind words. Truth is that my purpose with her was to provide comfort but in reality she provided me with compassion, love, and a basket full of laughs! I will always remember you ms Teresa rest in paradise as one of Gods highly favored angels it has been an honor to be if only a glimmer in your amazing life I love you*

Bianca - September 08, 2022 at 10:17 AM

AN

“ *So sorry for the loss of your beloved.*

Anonymous - September 07, 2022 at 10:06 PM