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# Striving to be like Dad

**Every June when Father's Day comes around, it tends to hit a little differently than other holidays. For me, it's not about gifts or cards. It's about remembering a man who set the standard for how to live, how to treat people, and how to show up every single day.**



Patrick Newton

My dad didn't miss a game. Not one. Rain, work, whatever ... he was there. My brothers and I never had to look to the sidelines and wonder if he'd show. He put his wife and his kids first, plain and simple. That was just who he was.

As I got older, our relationship changed in the best way. He wasn't just my dad anymore — he became my counselor and my best friend. He had a way of listening that's hard to find. No judgment, no lectures. Just honest conversation. You could tell him anything, and you knew he'd meet you with understanding, not criticism. That's the kind of man I've tried to be ever since.

We lost my dad on March 30, 2007, to esophageal cancer. He was 57 years old. Way too young. It's still hard to say that without shaking my head. A guy that strong, you don't expect him to be gone just like that.

Looking back, there's a part that sticks with me even more now. My dad had bad acid reflux. Like a lot of guys, he didn't think much of it. He would grab some Tums and keep moving. No doctor, no follow-up, just pushing through. The problem was, that only masked what was really going on.

There are early warning signs with things like that. Conditions like Barrett's esophagus can be caught, monitored, even managed if you take it seriously. But when you don't, when you just cover it up and keep grinding, it can turn into something much worse. In his case, it turned into cancer — a quiet, aggressive kind that doesn't give you much time if it's caught late. From the day he was diagnosed to

the day he passed was three weeks. Three weeks!

And here's the part I'll never forget. He handled those three weeks like a saint. The jokes never stopped. He kept things light, even when everyone around him was struggling to hold it together. He made the time to say goodbye to just about everyone in his life. Friends, family, coworkers anyone who mattered to him got that moment. It was incredible to witness, even in the middle of something so hard.

What stuck with me the most was his grace. He was at peace. A devout Catholic, he truly believed in where he was going, and he was ready. There was no anger, no fear that he showed us. Instead, he made everyone else feel comfortable. Think about that. He was the one facing the end, and he was still taking care of the people around him. That tells you everything you need to know about the kind of man he was.

Father's Day for me is about carrying that forward. It's about striving to be the kind of dad who shows up, who listens, who puts family first. It's about treating friends, coworkers, and strangers with the same respect and decency he did.

And it's also a reminder don't ignore the signs. Take care of yourself. Get things checked out. Pushing through might feel like the tough thing to do, but sometimes the tougher, smarter move is to slow down and deal with what's really going on.

I miss him every day. That doesn't go away. ☺