

# To My Dad — a Tribute

As I grow older and reflect on my childhood, I am grateful for many things, and one of them is you. You were always there, with quiet, yet immovable, commitment.

I was always proud to say my dad was a senior vice president at a bank, but I know you could have done even more professionally if you had been willing to sacrifice your family on the altar of your career. Instead, you always made time for us. Sometimes after a hard day's work, when you must have been tired, you'd walk us kids down to the Village Creamery after dinner, where we greedily loaded ourselves down with junk food. I can still almost taste those awesome chocolate doughnuts! And after we kids grew too old to want walks after dinner, dear old Fred would put his head in your lap and with soulful brown eyes plead for a walk. You rarely turned him down either, no matter how tired you were.

It seems you were always ready to sacrifice for us. On Saturdays (when I'm sure you would rather have done something else) I remember your getting up early and fixing us breakfast. You would fry eggs and let us dip our toast in the yolks without eating the whites. Then you'd mop the kitchen floor. I remember you with that towel tucked around your waist. You were always helping out with dishes or something. And it was cause for celebration when you fixed your special tacos or turkey gumbo—I've still never tasted any as good as yours!

You have been an example of consistency, responsibility, discipline, and hard work. I have always wanted to be as disciplined as you are. When I was in high school, you would wake up at zero in the morning every Saturday to drive me downtown to catch the ski train. I also remember your biking to work every day (long before it was considered cool) and I mean EVERY day—neither flu nor blizzard could keep you down!

You taught us to be responsible and to set our standards high—to do the right thing. You taught me the value of being articulate and educated and you gave me a love for reading. In fact, the little Bible you gave me as a special gift when I was a teenager was the beginning of the faith that now gets me through every day.

I think my all-time favorite memories are of your wonderful “Jimmy and Suzy” stories. Remember? Just before lights out, we'd bound into bed with you and curl up under the covers for the latest installment of “Jimmy and Suzy in Outer Space.” We listened in the dark, enraptured, as you concocted a world of adventure and wild imaginings. I remember the scent of toothpaste on your breath as you talked, and I remember feeling so safe there.

After each story, we begged for more, and often you would come up with another episode—right on the spot! How did you ever do that?! But inevitably, we had to go to bed (left hanging on a precipice of anticipation).

When I remember back over the years, my mind fills with little snapshots of childhood:

- ❖ Like the time you told me there was a surprise for me in the bathroom. It was a PET FROG! . . . in the BATHTUB! As I gingerly, reached down and touched the absolutely still creature, it sprung to the back of the tub like a shot, taking several years off my young life.
- ❖ There were the innumerable times you took us sailing at Cherry Creek Reservoir or sledding on Ruby Hill.
- ❖ You provided great vacations every year: Disney Land, the Black Hills, Carlsbad Caverns, the Grand Canyon. . . Do you remember the time we all sat around the fire at Dome Lake and laughed 'til we cried (something about singing “Here we sit like birds in the wilderness,” and striking matches on the zippers of our jeans)? . . . You did teach us how to laugh, and to meet even the difficulties in life with a sense of humor. That's so important.

I love you, Dad. This tribute doesn't say it all, but I wanted you to know I'm grateful for the legacy you've passed on to me. Thanks for being my dad.