This Father’s Day is Different

July 16, 2011 By David Capogna

Now my dad had lung cancer. My dad has lung cancer? YIKES, MY DAD HAS LUNG CANCER! This is a guy that never had a hospital stay ever. To my recollection he has only been to the emergency room two times. Once after braking he leg playing football when he was eleven. Rather than an ambulance, he rode on the handlebars of a friend’s bike. And later after a lid from a Pyrex plate sliced through his hand, after which he actually drove himself to the emergency room. Plus my dad literally came into this world on my grandmother kitchen table!

My father recently turned eighty while my parents where in Florida over the winter months. Soon after he was diagnosed with pneumonia, a half of a gallon of blood red fluid was drained from his lungs and he spent five days in the hospital. I was freaky out! My dad in the hospital! For almost a week! I was the ONLY sick one! How dare that father take away my thunder? I was projection my fears on my dad. Was he scared of being poke and prodded, the needle stuck into his skin, the terrible food, etc.? The situation was the complete opposite. He was just going with the flow. Meanwhile, my mom was a nervous wreck. She has made being worried a profession.

A few weeks later cancer cells where found in the fluid drained out of my dad’s lungs. MOM: FREAKING! Dad: Shocked, but cool. The tumor was inoperable and chemo had to be started once they returned home. I imaged the worse: my dad throwing up all the time, lying in bed for days from exhaustion, etc. It was nothing like that. He’s only having trouble swallowing which is a common side effect of chemotherapy. Visiting my dad for Father’s Day, I asked him “How does it feel being confronted with your mortality?” He looked at me like I have two heads. My dad is 40 years older than me, he grow up during the Depression, survived the Korean War and he thinks therapy is for wackos. He said I feel fine plus my mom’s keeping track of the doctors’ appointments, chemo scheduling and draining the fluid from around his lungs.

I value my time with my dad, now more than ever. I’ve been visiting my parent’s house for at least a week once a month. Now I finally realized the importance of family. When I was near death I thought who’s really going to miss me. Some of those feeling were from the pain and suffering I was going through. I just wanted it to end. Now I realize those thought were very selfish.

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