

Simon Bernstein Eulogy

9/16/2012

First, I want to express my deepest sorrows and regrets to all of you who loved my father and were his friends, as the death of a friend is often equally as tragic as what I suffer today, so thank you all for coming and thank you all for the joys you gave my father and mother throughout their lives, I know they loved all their friends as they would their own blood. As with my mother, with my father I started his eulogy writing only hours after he passed this world and then as his home safe was opened there was a single hand written letter amongst some baubles my father loved of my mothers. The letter was from 1983 and it was sent with a return address of ET and so I assume that it was there for me to read on this day 29 years later. For those of you who attended my mom's funeral you are already prepared for a lengthy eulogy from me and so with no further ado, I will start with that letter of love.

1983

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hi! How are you? Me, just fine. Sometimes when separated from those you enjoy the most you get this feeling of true appreciation of all they really mean to the security of your world. You feel as though the feelings you really have towards them cannot be expressed when interacting with them. I know that after my accident I wasn't the easiest person to get along with and I could not quite explain the true feelings I was having for both of you. If you don't know, I'll tell you now, I have quite the intimate sense of love towards the two of you. You're two of the most influential people on my life and yet struggling for autonomy is so very hard when you're struggling to get away from that which you hold so very high. My struggle to develop has been so greatly aided by the support you've given me in all my failures that somehow it takes those failures and turns them into great successes. I know that my struggles have been of the kind that aren't so easy on parents nerves but I'm so thankful to have parents of nerves of steel. I know you may not see it in this light but the proof lies in the strength both of you seem to have year in and year out with me. In a world where I see human values consistently diminish, your values, your ideals and your morals never seem to give in to the superficial bullshit that surrounds us. More amazing is that you seem never afraid to defend those values no matter what the consequences may on your interpersonal relationships with others. Admiring all of these seemingly natural characteristics of yours, I've grown to incorporate a great many of them as my own, yet, I'm not very understanding of the rest of the world's failure to understand them. I've witnessed people turn against you, for the same reasons I admire you for and I guess in a way it was my idea that I could revenge them for their wrongs in some way. Now I see that there is no reason for revenge for they are the ones who have to live with their fate and I think what makes them think of your ideas [of therapy] as screwy is their own fear of seeing how deviated from truth they are, against such a clear background of love. I think what makes them hostile against you is their failure to make you see their incomplete unsupported ideals, which are false for that matter. To me, this holding on to what you intrinsically see as right is part of the strength which I admire as beautiful. If you ever need support of the way you think, compare it with all you see around you in the form of other thoughts and compare the effects of each of those kinds of thoughts on

people. I often wonder what my life would be like if I just simply forfeited thinking, as I see so many do and just hoped everything would turn out right, my vision is however not good enough to see such total boredom and furthermore succumb to such a simply wasted life. No, I'm not straying away from the point, instead all this seems to hit the nail directly on the head. I'm so thankful that throughout the 20 years of my life you've allowed me to create my own sphere of thought, no matter how obscure, and I'm so glad it was done in a sphere of thought as open and real as my home. In regards to my accident it has almost been a year and if I forgot to tell you and everybody else how I feel, there seems no better time than now. A Love so deep that I believe it's the kind that survives long after our times. I'm so damn glad I'm able to feel such wonderful feelings of love and even more so glad that it's towards people as beautiful as you and the family you have created. As for your strength, it is a far greater strength than ever have I witnessed, more powerful than a speeding locomotive, in fact, equal to the power one would need to split a Red Sea. In regards to the sphere's I spoke about it reminds me of a great old quote,

"The mind grows narrow in a narrow sphere,
And man grows great with greater purposes."¹

My hand is beginning to have spasms and although an infinite amount more can be said of you, all I really have to say is,

I Love You and Miss You and may your purposes one day equal your
greatness!

Love Eliot

I want to close my parent's lives with a few final thoughts I had for them from my book I wrote a few years later called

"The Handbook For Your Own Mind: A Thought Journal"

*Dedication: To my mother and father for unconditional love, a disease I hope to spread to all the children
of this world.*

Within the super structure of my family, my rebellion was not only nurtured but in fact promulgated. My parents came from painful childhoods and with intensive psychoanalytical therapy have vowed to pave a different path for their kids. In defying their parent's methods and practices openly, their own methods were suspect and open to their children. Not only did they allow us to question their methods, they urged us to undertake therapy in an attempt to understand our behaviors and their behaviors, and, the effect theirs were having on our own. I was the first in therapy at eight. The reason, mass non-

¹ The source of this inscription is unknown, but it may be based on Friedrich Schiller's Wallenstein Trilogy, set during the Thirty Years' War. The plays explore the Catholic general's downfall in one of Europe's most destructive conflicts. Schiller's line reads:

"Thus in a narrow sphere the mind contracts,
But man grows great along with greater goals."

conformity to the norm. I still go at 28, the reason now, mass conformity to the norm. I am an extremist...

Simon married Shirley and true love stirred. Both determined to pave a world for their children in which love would be forever unconditional. Love would never be withdrawn or used to gain control, guilt and manipulation of their children's minds unacceptable, logic and understanding used to persuade. Both had lived pasts in which love could be used or manipulated against them, my father's mother disowning him in jealousy and anger, my mother's mother waiting to create misery in my mom's life at every turn. Both turned their cheeks in pain and agony, love lying at the roots, they would make it different, they would not submit. The more they turned from that pain and rejected it, the greater the force and thought control methods became from their parents. Both turned to each other and prayed...

They reproduced and promised to break the chain for my siblings and myself. Five children, no idea of how to bring them up properly, no proper role models did they know. Turning to their parents for advice would be detrimental, I do not recall ever sleeping at any of my grand-parents homes. Us children seemed almost veiled from any harm that could come from our parents pasts. And believe me it is not easy for my parents, they constantly worry if their methods were right or wrong, have they done the right thing for their children, I guess the children will tell. All I know is that I value more than life the love I have received from them. I know that will be passed down to my children, unconditionally....

By no means is this road the normal course, and by no means are we the normal family. In fact we are quite bizarre in relation to the norm. Can you imagine being raised with the primary goal being unconditional love and the rest treated on a day to day basis? As children, my siblings and I were allowed to be children, and we abused the privileges and still were showered in love. Nothing we could do was not forgotten and replaced with love. We were never expected to act like adults, accept on holidays and the likes, and we failed miserably in comparison to well-disciplined children. Discipline, and trust me I am the one sibling who required the most, was administered in love only, only to try and protect us from harming ourselves. I cannot remember the use of guilt to persuade me to change, instead I was forced to try and understand myself. When my parents and I could not see eye to eye, I was not turned on, guilt was not levied, and love was not withdrawn. I was not abandoned, heaven may exist here on earth. Foolish reader, do not think that I did not test this unconditional love. Most parents would have turned on the likes of me in frustration, they would have given up, and this is another complete and separate story though. I might add that because of the unconditional love and support provided the likes of me, I was able to turn a corner on life, gain control of my own destiny and survive that type of life which leads to prison or death. My parents did not try to force me to think their way, they allowed me to journey my own life, they sent me to therapy, they allowed all their children the privilege....

My parents were never apart. I mean they did nothing without each other. They had friends but they were best friends, everyone else was company. All kids usually accompanied them, each bringing a friend or two. Their friendship, like their love, had no conditions, it still does not. When they were apart, they were so lonely. Now I do not want to paint to rosy a picture, they had their fights and arguments... and yet somehow they always came together with open arms and overcame the pain. I

always remember open arms when I think of my parents. They would either talk it out or love it out, either way the kids were out.

In closing...

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hi! How are you's? Me, just fine.

Sometimes when separated from those you enjoy the most you get this feeling of true appreciation of all they really mean to the security of your world. You feel as though the feelings you really have towards them cannot be expressed when interacting with them. I know that after my accident I wasid the easiest person to get along w/ and I can't quite explain the true feelings I have for the both of you. If you don't know, I'd tell you, I have quite the intimate sense of love towards the two of you. You two of the most influential people on my life and struggling for autonomy is so very hard, when your struggling to get away from that which you hold so very high. My struggle to develop has been so greatly aided by the support you've given me in all my failures, that somehow it takes those failures & turns them into great successes. I know that my struggles have been of the kind that aren't so easy on a parents nerves but I'm so thankful to have parents of nerves of steel. I know you may not see it in this light but the proof lies in the strength both of you seem to have year in and year out. In a world ~~etc~~ where I see human values consistently diminish, your values, ideals & morals never seem to give in to the superficial & bullshit that surrounds us. More amazing is that you seem never afraid to defend those values no matter what the consequences may be on your interpersonal relationships w/ others. Admiring

all of these seemingly natural characteristics of yours, I've grown to incorporate a great many of them yet, I'm not very understanding of the rest of the world's failure to understand them. I've witnessed many people turn against you, for the reasons I admire you so for and, I guess in a way it was my idea that I could revenge them for their wrongs in some way. Now I see that ~~there~~ there is no reason for revenge for they are the ones who come to live w/ ~~the~~ their fate & I think what makes them think of your ideals as screwy is their own fear of seeing how deviated from truth they are against such a clear background.

I think what makes them hostile against you is their failure to make you see their incomplete unsupported ideals, and false for that matter. To me, this holding on to what you intuitively see as right is part of the strength which I admire as beautiful. If you ever need support of ~~the~~^{the} way you think, compare it w/ all you see around you in the form of thought and compare the effects of each ^{kind of} thought. I often wonder what my life would be like if I just simply forfeited thinking, as I see so many do and hoped everything would turn out right; my vision is not good enough to see such total boredom & furthermore such a simply wasted life. No, I'm not straying away from the point instead ~~it~~ all this seems to hit the nail directly on the head. I'm so thankful that throughout the 20 yrs of my life you've allowed me to create my own sphere of thought, no matter how insane,

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I love and miss you
and may your purposes
one day equal your greatness

Love
F.H.

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