

I was never good enough for my father, or so it seemed, because nearly every time I accomplished something, he made some comment about how I could have done even better. Eventually, I learned that he didn't mean any of these comments as criticism. It was his way of encouraging me to keep doing my best, so I would continue to achieve, and it was his unique way of telling me that he was proud of me, and was confident that I would do even better in the future. While I had my struggles with Dad, and what child doesn't, his sometimes maddening way of telling me that he loved me and approved of my work made me better, and I am proud to be Bob Ringwald's son.

I was fortunate to have had Dad in my life for more than 61 years. This is longer than many friends and family members have had their Dads, and I count myself lucky even as we gather here to grieve and celebrate Dad's life. I am sure God gave me Dad for as long as he did because he knew I needed that much more of Dad's guidance.

Dad believed in hard work from a very early age. While he didn't have much choice, growing up on Grandpa's farm, he embraced the value of hard work. He was never too proud to do whatever work he could get to support himself and his family. Dad often quoted his mother, saying "Can't never done nothing," using this expression to instill the value of hard work in me and my sisters and brother, and we are passing that value on to our children.

Dad also believed in education. Dad told me that his father advised him to get his education, because it was the one thing they couldn't take away from you. He enjoyed learning, and established the goal of completing his college degree even though it took a lot of hard work and numerous delays so he could work to save enough money to come back for another semester. Dad also knew that a good education along with his hard work would lead to a bigger paycheck.

Dad believed in having fun in many different ways. Throughout his life he played games, he traveled, he engaged in ornery pranks, and he teased. When he played games he would sometimes cheat, not in order to win, but to see if anyone was paying attention. We all had a good laugh either way. When the food was good, Dad found eating to be a great deal of fun, and he loved to describe the dishes he really liked. When the food wasn't good, he wasn't shy about saying so. He frequently pulled off the fried breading, and I heard him say frequently: "I don't want any white bread. I told you, NO WHITE BREAD."

Dad loved to travel, and took about every opportunity to travel that life offered. He also loved people and could talk with just about anyone. Part of the appeal that travel held for Dad was that it gave him the opportunity to meet and talk with new people, and gave him many stories to tell when he returned from his adventures. He didn't consider language differences a barrier, and I watched him communicate effectively with many people even though neither knew the other's language.

Dad was a faithful Christian. He effectively used his ability to easily talk to anyone as a powerful Christian witness. When he traveled, he often took bibles to pass out to those he met along the way. Like Paul, in Philippians 1:23, Dad was ready and knew that he was going home.

While Dad's passing is causing my heart to break along with the hearts of everyone who knew and loved him, we are comforted knowing that he has gone to be with our Lord. And, I consider myself richly blessed to have had him for as long as I did. It has been a privilege denied to many. I will treasure his memory, as I am sure will you.

Thank you