

Just One Picture Please

Last night was my last night of my grief support groups. 13 weeks of Grief Share. But that's a story for another time.

Today's story is about a favorite picture of Bob.

We were asked to bring 1 photo of our deceased loved one and share a story about them to the grief support group.

Bob and I met when I was 26 and he was 40. I'm now 70. That's 44 years of photos to look through and pick ONE favorite one. I looked thorough photo albums (I have so many), looked at framed pictures throughout the house, looked at loose pictures in boxes, looked at pictures on my phone, and looked at pictures on Facebook. What a weeklong trip down memory lane. How was I going to pick just one photo of Bob? Would it be our wedding picture, our younger days skiing, our early grandparent days, our wonderful vacations, or celebrations at our home? I couldn't sum up all that I wanted to share about Bob in just one photo.

I looked at photos of us both happy and healthy. I looked at photos of us struggling as we dealt with Bob's health decline. I looked and looked. Lots of smiles and lots of tears as I hunted for the ONE best picture.

But finally, it stuck me. Why was I looking for MY favorite picture? I needed to share Bob's favorite picture with the group. The picture Bob would want to share if he had the choice. I easily knew what that picture was. If I moved it out of the room or moved it to a different location out of Bob's line of sight, he would quickly move it right back to where he wanted it. If someone came to visit, he would point out this picture to them. It was a picture that he treasured. So that's the picture I shared last night.

It's of Bob and his 4 kids standing together in our backyard.

It's at Christmas time a few years ago. I'm not in the photo as I took the picture. It represents a happy time in his life. Bob and his 4 children together. Blessed times, for sure.

Bob loved his children and out of everything he did in his life, this picture would sum up what he was most proud of. His children. And of course, the overabundance of grandchildren and great grandchildren, too. I hope they know that he loved them all and cherished family time together.

Bob and his first wife Beverly were young parents. I've heard the stories of how the family camped, swam, and even surfed. There are tales of a hippie wagon with flowers painted on it that would carry the longboards to the beach. There was softball and little league and all the things that young families did together.

When I met Bob, those 3 "kids" were young adults starting out on their own. Before we married, we had made the difficult decision to not have any more children as Bob felt three was plenty. We quickly became grandparents in our first year of marriage and more grandchildren came along in the following years. Our lives were full and there were plenty of good family times and little ones.

After many years of our marriage, Bob suggested that we have our own child! Totally out of the blue for me as I had long ago put that idea to rest. But once I realized he was very serious, we excitedly changed our plans. Kyle was born in 1990. 9 years after we were married. Bob had his first three children by the time he was 22 and had his fourth and final child at nearly 52 years old! (You know I could go on and on about our son Kyle but that's a topic for another day as well.)

So, our family has morphed and changed over the years. It's grown in huge numbers. Many of our grandchildren are older than our son. Who's who in our family takes a flow chart!

Currently there are 19 grandchildren (counting spouses, fiancés, and significant others) and 20 greatgrandchildren. Usually, a year doesn't pass without the birth of a new family member. Yep, that's why I need my organizational chart!

Bob loved being in 4-generation pictures and pushed our oldest great granddaughter Kelly to have a child so that he would have a 5-generation picture! Kelly is 22 now but I think he started talking to her about babies when she was about 18. Fortunately, she didn't succumb to her great grandpa's wishes and didn't have a child just to please him!

So, I shared Bob's favorite picture last night.

I shared his legacy.

I shared his loves.

I shared him.



Steve, Bob, Julie, Kyle, and Shelly