

My Father's Eulogy:

Attention Getter: Hello. Thank you all for making the time to come today whether you knew my Dad or are here supporting a loved one. Is everyone enjoying the *less than* 100-degree temperatures?

Well, my name is Chad, I am Mike's oldest son for those of you that I haven't met.

Introduction:

My Dad, Gene Michael Reisinger, or "Mike" as most of us knew him, died this past week from a sudden heart attack. And although death is always shocking, especially when it comes without warning, I can't imagine there were many people overly surprised to hear the news, or the cause. The other likely scenarios being accidents involving a high-speed collision, or while operating some piece of equipment well outside of Osha standards, and without a license.

And why do I say that? Because anyone who knew my Dad, knew he had one speed and one approach to just about everything in life and that was, Har and Fast. You could say that he was always in 5th gear, well since they go up to 7th nowadays... let's just call it 3rd at 5500 RPM! My dad went hard as they say, driven by the virtues of work-ethic, force of one's will, maximum physical effort, and sheer determination.

In recent years and since last week I've heard stories about his childhood from his brothers and sisters growing up, and how he would love to race and always had to win. He'd race motorcycles, cars, snowmobiles, anything with a motor. Whether it was his old 440 6-pack he still talked about to this day, or his Yamaha 1100 Midnight Special, *free and fast* was what he wanted to be.

Buck said that he was able to witness one last time the joy and excitement that my dad expressed as he rode around on Christopher's new motorcycle, and this was just last weekend! It let you know he was right where he loved to be: Free and Fast. And Buck's expression when recalling the story was the same look that I've seen many times in my life as I've listened to people recall stories about him. It's like a combination of disbelief, along with concern, but mostly pride just knowing someone like him is a part of your life. And probably also from knowing that there's no way he's going to stop or change anyways, I imagine! Like an excited surrendering to something that otherwise makes you uncomfortable!

So yeah, my Dad was apparently a pretty cool-dude, revered by the guys and admired by the girls. I often meet people who when they find out I'm "Mike's Son" it's the first thing they say, "Oh your Dad was so cool, he had the coolest car, the coolest this or that." Toes shared with me a fond memory of her youth. One day her and her girlfriends were in town and what do you know, here comes some loud maniac riding a wheelie down the middle of Mainstreet and of course, it was my Dad. With beaming pride she looks at her girlfriends and says, "That's *my Brother* Mike"!

It's moments like these that seem to surface the most when people think about my Dad. Moments when he inspired you to go for it, to push the limits of what conventional thinking will have you believe is the right and safe way to live. To take risks, and to feel the excitement that comes with, no matter the potential danger. They say you don't quite feel as alive as when you're close to death and he wanted to feel that way every day... don't we all!

Mid-life:

As most of us know, whether riding around like Evil Knievel, having disregard for authority, or just living without much consideration for others, that inevitably things start to catch up. As my Dad got older and was looking to face consequences for living with such reckless abandon, well, what did he try to do? Outrun it, of course! And this meant we didn't get to see him much for long periods of time, and as a kid that felt like years.

Throughout his 20/30s he drifted around the region working various construction related jobs, and even had to take a few court-ordered time outs. Yet he continued to live for the moment and without much fear of consequence. He tested the limits of everyone he knew: teachers, priests, his brothers and sisters, my Mom, his girlfriends, and especially Grandma. Yet, when all else failed, she would always be there for him and he knew that the basement was open... or when it wasn't he could take one of the rooms upstairs!

He continued to live this way until one day in the early to mid-part of the 90's, as some of you may recall, he got himself into a situation down in Chicago that left him in a coma. He had been severely beaten and suffered significant damage to his head and brain. We were told that he wouldn't ever be the same. I remember seeing him for the first time and he clearly wasn't. His speech was slowed, and he struggled to complete sentences or find the right words. It was a humbling experience and one that did in fact have a lasting impact on him.

But with stubbornness, pride, and determination being at the core of who he was, it wasn't long before he was all but back to normal... *his normal*! It was then he decided to somewhat stop chasing, the work at least, and found a stable gig up at Twin Pines Resort near Mille Lacs working as a handy-man for his room and board, as I understand it. And for the first time, he was in a single place for longer than a few months.

I remember this time because it was the first time in my brother's life that he got to spend time with, and get to know, my Dad. For a couple of summers, he would go up and spend a few weeks fishing and helping out around the resort. It was up there that my Dad had another health scare when his forearm was crushed in an accident involving a skid loader. This put another chink in his armor and contributed to the eventual humility that he would display in later years.

Around 2007 or so, my Dad eventually “came back home” both literally and figuratively. He moved back into Grandma’s basement where he spent the remainder of his life. And this is the chapter that I want to spend time emphasizing.

Final Chapter:

For the first time in my life, and with somewhat predictability, I knew where my Dad could be found. At first, I wasn’t sure how to deal with it. I think it took some adjusting for us all. I was a twenty something year-old kid who longed for nothing more than a father growing up, and to now have him making effort to be a part of my life, well, I wasn’t sure how to respond.

Well that all changed for me personally once I found out that I was going to have a Son of my own. I found the courage to forgive him and welcomed him into my life. It took some time and was a bit uncomfortable at first, but once Peyton started to grow, my Dad had an ever-increasing presence in our lives and the same went for Lisa, as her son Connor was also quickly growing up.

My Dad for the first time in his life was showing *through his actions* that we, or at least our kids, were important to him. He displayed new levels of consistency, patience, and his temperament was more controlled, and dare I say even kind. As all 3 of our families started growing, so did his presence and effort. My sister then had her daughter Kali, I had my daughter Piper, and Cole had Carter and Jayla and before long, my Dad found himself surrounded by 6 biological grandkids, and 7 when you count Caden, as Lisa and Don became a family.

For much of the recent past, through his hard work, and by the grace of God, my Dad was gifted the opportunity to experience much of the life he missed with us kids growing up. He got to see the true blessing and joy that children are and bring into the world, and he valued that tremendously. He was a regular on the sideline at their sporting events, remembered everyone’s birthdays, randomly dropped off treats, and always had candy for the kids. It might not seem like much, but coming from him, some might call it a miracle. He also had the unconditional, stable, and loyal support of his girlfriend Julie.

During this time, he was also able to show Grandma his appreciation for all the sacrifices and support she provided him throughout his life, especially during his more troubled years. His presence may have driven her nuts at times, and we know that he wasn’t always nice to her, but just knowing that he was in a safe place, in addition to all the added help he offered around the house, it was a tradeoff she would take every time.

As Grandma aged she came to rely on him more and more, and you could see the pride he derived from being able to pay her back. He knew her medical and health related needs, dieting routines, he could communicate with doctors any information that was pertinent to her care, and he even became *her* Taxi driver! I know this brought him great satisfaction to the point that when she died, he was at peace with their relationship.

In Closing:

Being born the son of Gene Michael Reisinger gifted me tremendously and taught me many things. Some were genetic gifts and others just things I had to learn from seeing what not to do. But I will boil it down to just a few final things:

1. That Life is short, play hard, but remember it's just a game.
 - a. So show up early, get in a warm up before you take the field, remember that you don't always swing for the fences, and go home afterwards, give yourself a break, get some rest, because it's a long season and you want to be healthy for the playoffs.
2. That hard work and good intentions, without spiritual intelligence, might beget an abundance of Grace, but everything has its limits.
 - a. My Dad's work-ethic and charisma were keys to his success and got him very far in life. It provided him a sense of self-worth and resources to survive up until his final days. This is highlighted by the fact that he was literally on a scrap pile the day before he passed. But, effort and good intentions alone are not complete without an awareness of your results, and continuously improving your methods. Because to repeat mistakes over and over again, especially ones that cause hurt to others, will eventually lose their effectiveness and bare unintended and unpleasant consequences.

and finally, ...

3. That people Do change!
 - a. My dad was far from perfect. He was a determined soul, hell bent on pushing life to its limits, and he never stopped trying or caring. Often that meant conflict with family and friends as he could be very impatient, critical, and harsh at times. Yet despite many setbacks and humbling experiences in his life he remained confident in his abilities and beliefs up until the very end. And although his pride that final day was as strong as the day he was born, his heart had truly softened. He had finally come around to understand, accept, know and Give Love, and he was in large-part able to redeem himself. We all know you loved us Dad!

For that I am beyond grateful, have been ultimately blessed, and I will forever remember with a simple saying that highlights what he taught me: "Slow is easy, easy is fast"

... or from a quote my sister cherishes: "If you don't have time to do it right, when will you have time to do it over"

Dad, I Love you, we all Love you, and I hope you can finally: *"Take it easy Fella"*

Thank You all for coming,