

A Belated Farewell, But He Would've Understood. He Always Loved Me Just the Way I Am.

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By Susan Dunn

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Ten years ago my sister and I were in a hotel room in the Florida Keys with my sons, one in college, the other in middle school. They'd been horsing around doing macho stuff as we waiting for the dinner hour. Suddenly the trolley car sound ... my younger son froze in his tracks, halfway toward the hotel room door and stared at the television, mesmerized. On the bed, his older brother froze in place, delta waves in his eyes. Locked in. My sister and I poked each one to take note as Mister Rogers wove his magic spell.

Henrietta Pussycat, King Friday XIII, Queen Sara, Prince Tuesday, X the Owl, Lady Aberlin, Chef Brockett, Lady Elaine Fairchilde, Mr. McFeely, Daniel Striped Tiger ...

To this day when one of us is on a high-horse, the other will say "Correct as usual, King Friday." "As a latch-key kid in the 80's, I can remember coming in from school and turning on Mr. Rogers," wrote Crystal Thomas, from Statesboro, in the eulogies. "Hearing his voice made the house not feel so empty. I felt very safe. We have lost an angel on this earth."

I wasn't a latch-key kid in the late 60's when my oldest son and I watched "Mister Rogers" every afternoon. I was a young married woman with a husband in medical school who was rarely home except to sleep, with no money, no relief, no car, no dryer, far from family, at home with my first child.

I had the typical days of an at-home mom with a two year old boy - busy, full, emotionally turbulent days as we had friends over or visited and the boys tumbled around, and by 5 pm I was tired of him, he was tired of me, we were longing for "Daddy" to come home, which wouldn't be for hours and he'd be even more tired when he got home and it was, yes, definitely time for Mister Rogers. My son would crawl up in my lap, a tired little bundle, and would stare ... mesmerized.

How did I feel? Mister Rogers made the house not feel so empty. I felt very safe. He was quite often the kindest voice I heard in a day.

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Mister Rogers competed with the advent of "Sesame Street," but it was no contest. Mister Rogers was special.

He stood for what he believed in. I have his quote on my website, as he is a standard bearer for me: "At the center of the universe is a loving heart that continues to beat and that wants the best for every person. Anything we can do to help foster the intellect and spirit and emotional growth of our fellow humans beings, that is our job. Those of us who have this particular vision must continue against all odds. Life is for service."

"Sesame Street" hyped up my son; he would run around, yelling. Captain Kangaroo had things that scared him - Town Clown for some reason.

Mister Rogers was honestly considering doing a late-night t.v. show in his later years, reading to put

people to sleep. Now when you think about it, that man's incredible authenticity gave him the courage to meet a need ... do we adults need to be watching violent news before we go to sleep, or cutting comics, hyped-up music, high-voltage super models? Would it not be emotionally intelligent - and good for our wellness - if we had a glass of warm milk and let that incredible voice soothe us on to sleep?

"In a world that prizes macho, he was gentle; in a culture devoted to noise he was quiet; in a country addicted to self-aggrandizement, he was modest," wrote Bo Emerson, for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. "His show was anti-television; slow, calm, predictable."

"What he tried to do was bring human values to a really unhuman medium," said Tom Junod, who profiled Rogers several years ago for Esquire magazine. "And he fought tremendous battles to do so."

Shortly after his death, GPTV broadcast a rerun, a Mister Rogers show on the theme "noisy and quiet" that symbolized his lifelong mission. He told his listeners that sometimes they might see television with people shooting and hitting one another, television that was loud and scary.

"Whenever you see scary television you can do something about it," he said, peering intently at the camera. "You can turn it off. Then you can show you're the strongest of all."

Would that we could, Mister Rogers, would that we could.

"Misser Boggers is dead," Emily Redmon emailed her brother in Canada ... their name for him when they were little. I wonder how many other names he had with the children of the land.

Vincent Woods remembered Mr. Rogers speaking at his University (NCSU) Graduation in 1996. "He had the entire stadium of 40,000 people singing `neighborhood.'"

When I read the news on the computer, I was at my son's. He's grown now, the father of two, and owns his own business. I stared at the computer ... "What was the name of the ti..." "Daniel Striped Tiger," he said immediately, turning away. I could've sworn there were tears in his eyes.

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Simone Presley of Dublin Georgia wrote, "I along with millions of others, grew up in his neighborhood...and we all knew him as the kindest, gentlest man that we would ever meet...who will replace him? America has been so blessed to have one such as he to care enough for the children to give them values that they can rely on forever."

I join Simone Presley from Dublin, Georgia, in saying, "You are remembered dearly, Mr. Rogers...see you in the New neighborhood.... "

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Osama and Saddam

By Rocky Ramsey

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Osama and Saddam

You know that if he could've done it before 911, Osama would've come out of his cave and gone to the top of a mountain where his cell phone reception was better and had a conversation with Saddam that would've probably gone something like the following (translated into English for your convenience):

Osama said, "Hello, Saddam?"

"Who's this?" Saddam asked.

"Osama."

"Omarosa?"

"No, Osama. Hold on while I try another spot... Can you hear me now?"

"Osama! What can I do you for?"

"Saddam, my buddy, my friend. You know that we've never quite seen eye-to-eye."

"That's because you're almost eight feet tall, you freak."

"That's what I like about you, Saddam, your sense of humor."

And your desire to kill the infidels."

"What are you trying to butter me up for? I'm really busy. The American dogs are barking on my doorstep. I've got nerve gas, nuclear materials, smallpox and anthrax to pack up before they arrive and get it out of the country so they can't find it. There are banks to loot. I've got sons-in-law to behead. A dictator's work is never done."

"I hate to ask you, but I've got a plan to attack the Great Satan America, and I need a million dollars."

"A million dollars? Is that all? Pocket change. I can get you a couple of million and I'm sure there are others in the Middle

East that would kick in something."

"Good. Good."

"I can send you a truck full of cash a week from Thursday. By the way, I've got a question for you. You've evaded the Americans since you attacked the USS Cole. Do you have any suggestions on how I can hide from them if they invade?"

"Have you considered living in a hole in the ground? It's worked pretty well for me."

"I don't know. I've been living in palaces for a while. Living in a hole in the ground doesn't sound like much fun."

"What are you whining about? Try dragging a dialysis machine around from cave to cave while evading the Americans, then you should complain."

Rocky Ramsey publishes Movies, Money and More – Movie reviews,entertainment, humor, money, contests, sweepstakes, freebies,and more <http://www.MoviesMoneyandMore.com>

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