



*Ralph Shapira,
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has shared the following on
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MY FORTUNATE LIFE

Chapter 7, Grieving My Parents

Posted on August 11, 2022

My father, Saul Shapira, was a towering intellect, a good man and a business and community leader. Dad taught me how to think critically in nightly family dinner table discussions, and how to work hard side-by-side with him cutting hawthorn brush and gardening at the Countryplace. He did many good works and was widely admired in Pittsburgh. I loved him unreservedly. When he died of cancer, far too early at 67, the line of greeters at his funeral stretched for blocks and hours.

Nevertheless, I was puzzled and distressed that, aside from a few clutches in my voice when I spoke at the funeral service, I was unable to weep at his death, then or for decades thereafter.

The dam finally broke in — of all times and places — Oberlin College, Ohio, during my 50th class reunion. A woman I had known casually five decades earlier came up to me and said, “I have a story to tell you about your father.” I was surprised — this was not typical reunion banter — but of course I asked her to tell it.

She said she had spent her career as a civil rights lawyer in Pittsburgh, my family’s home town. At one point, she represented an African-American man who had been fired on trumped-up charges from his job as a butcher at a Giant Eagle store, the supermarket chain where my father was president.

The firing was the culmination of a long campaign of racist bullying by a new supervisor in the meat department he had worked in for years. It included daily insults and indignities, frequent “N”-word epithets, hanging nooses and other horrid racist tropes. Her client, a married father

with four young children, faced impoverishment at the loss of his good union job. She agreed to sue Giant Eagle for wrongful termination on his behalf.

However, she said she had a second thought before filing suit and confronting the company's lawyers. She knew that my father was Giant Eagle's president. She knew his reputation as a liberal Jewish community leader and civil rights sympathizer (under my father's leadership, Giant Eagle was the first supermarket chain in Pittsburgh to hire African-Americans as butchers; blacks "handling meat" was one of the last occupational racial taboos to fall).

And she knew he had sent all of his four children to hyper-liberal Oberlin College.

She wondered what would happen if, before suing, she called my father's office, introduced herself as an Oberlin College classmate of his son Ralph, and asked for a meeting to discuss her client's situation. Such a call would be highly irregular: it is unethical for an opposing counsel to contact directly a party she knows is represented by counsel, and Giant Eagle had plenty of lawyers.

Not knowing what reception she would get and thinking it a long-shot, she took a chance and made the call. To her pleasant surprise, instead of referring her straight to the Company's lawyers, his office scheduled a meeting with my father.

She took her client with her at the appointed time. He sat and told the whole sorry saga as my father listened intently. She then told me, "What I had hoped would happen at the end of the meeting was that your father would say, 'I'll look into it.'"



"But," she continued, "When the meeting ended, your father didn't say he would look into it. Instead, what he said was, 'I'll take care of it.'" At this point in her telling, I dissolved in tears. She continued, "Within a week, my client had his job again with back pay, and the racist supervisor was gone."

When I returned from the reunion, I called my siblings and my children to tell them the story. Every time I got to "I'll take care of it," I choked up and my eyes brimmed with tears. It's happening again now as I type this story.

With 17 years of warm memories living under his roof, it seems strange and somehow magical that this one small story from my father's life, told me by an acquaintance about an event I did not witness, held the key to unblocking my tears at his passing.

Less tragic but equally sad was my mother's passing 20 years later at 87. She gave me my love of nature and was always fiercely protective of our family. She remained feisty and sharp as a tack, and was still swimming her long slow laps in the Lake, until the end. Again I spoke emotionally at her funeral and choked up at several points, but again I was unable to cry, then or later. I'm still waiting for my breakthrough to tearful mourning over her passing.

Chapter 8, My Brief Post-Retirement Career

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My early retirement from O'Melveny wasn't quite the end my legal career. I had tremendously enjoyed working with corporate crisis counselor/political and PR consultant Mark Fabiani on the Belmont school case. After I left the firm he asked me to join him in representing some of his clients where litigation or potential litigation were involved.

The first was for a company (I'll call it "GameCo") that ran a nationwide Monopoly game for a leading fast food franchise ("FF"). FF's regular customers could easily accumulate all the pieces toward winning multi-million dollar prizes except one extremely rare one. Only a very few of that one piece were printed.

It turned out the game was fixed: GameCo's head of security masterminded a scheme to steal the rare pieces and distribute them to co-conspirators, who turned them in for multi-million dollar rewards. Many millions had in effect been stolen from FF's customers. FF sued GameCo, and the scandal was widely reported in the media, threatening GameCo's business for other clients. Fabiani was hired to plot GameCo's corporate and public relations strategy. Because the lawsuit was one of the moving pieces (forgive the pun), he hired me to assist. We drafted press releases and public statements for the company.

A much bigger representation followed. Fabiani was hired to assist an NFL team that wanted to move out of an obsolete stadium in a mid-sized market to a modern new facility in a much bigger one. He introduced me to the team owners and asked me to analyze their existing stadium lease and devise a strategy to terminate it, which I did. They then started consulting me about unrelated litigation and other legal issues, told me they wanted me to serve as their general counsel, and asked me to move into an office in their corporate headquarters.

It was an opportunity for a rewarding new career with a prestigious client after my retirement from O'Melveny. But I wasn't willing to move out of Los Angeles and never occupied the office they set aside for me. Instead, I continued addressing on an ad hoc basis the legal issues they called me about, by telephone and occasional trips to their headquarters.

In one such matter, I considered whether one of the largest and most prominent law firms in the country had committed legal malpractice in preparing a very complex contract, when it turned out the final agreement didn't give the club the rights it had negotiated for. I studied the facts, the contract and the law and prepared a detailed analysis demonstrating that the firm's work was seriously negligent for not protecting the team's rights.

I contacted the law firm on behalf of the team, told them we believed they were guilty of malpractice, sent them a draft complaint, and asked whether they were interested in discussing the matter and settling before I filed the suit.

We spoke after they'd had a chance to study the matter. I was disappointed with their response and concluded they weren't taking me seriously because I was just a sole practitioner without the resources of a major firm to back me up. I then contacted Tom Girardi, at that time the most feared plaintiffs' trial lawyer in the city (since then, disgraced, disbarred and placed under a conservatorship), to ask whether he would join me as co-counsel. I went to his office and laid out the case for him, and he agreed to sign on. I prepared a new complaint with both our names as counsel and sent it to the law firm, again asking whether they wanted to talk before we filed suit. This finally got their serious attention, and we scheduled a private mediation before one of the most respected former judges in the state.

I appeared at the mediation with the team's chief accounting and administrative officer. Lined up against us at a long conference table were seven of the firm's very serious senior partners, led by its head of litigation. I always enjoyed being a sole combatant against a large opposing team.

I made my presentation explaining their partner's malpractice, passing out copies of evidence that proved my points. It took about an hour. Then their head of litigation took the floor. Conceding nothing, he launched into an extremely angry, bitter attack on me and my analysis. He was practically frothing at the mouth — I had never seen such an unhinged performance.

I told the mediator that if that was the way they felt, there was nothing to talk about; we would file our suit. I began packing up my materials. The mediator asked me to hold on while he met with the other side in private. When they returned a half hour later, their head of litigation who made the offending speech was gone. The mediator told us that what he had witnessed was way beyond acceptable conduct and that he had insisted the man leave the building. I agreed to stay, and serious negotiations commenced. Eventually, with the mediator's assistance, we agreed to a settlement in which the firm paid the club a substantial seven-figure sum. We never had to file suit and there was no publicity about the dispute, consistent with both parties' desires.

Fabiani called me on a few other matters. The NFL team's hoped-for move was frustrated, so I ceased working on that project. I think Fabiani was disappointed in me when I told one of his clients they had no basis to file a suit they wanted to bring. In any event, the other Fabiani work gradually petered out. I hadn't done anything to bring in that work — Fabiani called me, not vice-versa — and I never took steps afterwards to generate a law practice for myself. In about 2007 I was, finally, well and truly retired.

Chapter 9, A California Countryplace

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When I moved to California after college I found myself living full time in the city, first Berkeley then Los Angeles. With the rhythms of my childhood at the Countryplace still embedded within me, I felt a strong need to be in nature on weekends. For decades I did my best to satisfy it by taking car trips, camping on remote beaches and in the mountains of Northern California. But I had a dream of replicating for my young family in California the life I knew as a child, and always kept my eye out for “For Sale” signs on secluded properties in beautiful areas.

I came close a number of times. In 1977 a paralegal told me her uncle was selling a 320-acre piece of Big Sur off Highway 1 that included all-year Rat Creek and an old-growth redwood forest alongside it. I looked at the land and walked its trackless creek through about 30 giant redwood trees. The creek and redwood forest were steep and unbuildable, but there were rolling meadows above with a 180-degree ocean view that could be desirable house sites. The seller wanted \$280,000 for it, far more than I could afford on my \$18,000 annual salary but, I hoped, within the range my parents could pay if they were willing to buy it with me.

Mom and Dad flew to Los Angeles and we drove together to Big Sur on a beautiful late springtime day. We walked the creek and they were suitably awed by the giant redwoods — it looked like a National Park, albeit a very narrow and steep one. Then we climbed out of the forest to the hilltop meadows. The wildflowers were blooming in beautiful profusion. My father promptly suffered the worst hay fever attack of his life. He was sneezing uncontrollably and his eyes and nose ran furiously. We had to retreat quickly to our car. Through his tears, Dad said he wasn’t interested in buying the land.

Another time I learned of a cabin for sale for \$20,000 in Los Angeles County on land leased from the federal government in a national forest. It was situated on an all-year creek that ran off 10,000-foot Mt. Baldy. It was among a dozen other cabins stretched along the creek in a very remote area — you could see bighorn sheep from the property. The very rough access road, such as it was, ran along the West Fork of the San Gabriel River and would be impassible in wet weather. There was no guarantee the federal government would renew the lease although I was assured they always had before. Nevertheless, the price was irresistible and I was close to making an offer until I inspected the bathroom. The toilet was an internal outhouse built over a pit. Flashing a light revealed the shit of generations of past residents. I didn’t want to buy a pit of shit, and I passed.

In 1990, after 22 years of fruitless searching, I was driving high in the West Malibu mountains on narrow, twisting Deer Creek Road when I saw a “For Sale” sign on a ridgetop property with a magnificent view over the ocean. I called the broker and met him on the land.

The views were spectacular, but the building site was narrow and within earshot of passing cars. I told the broker I wanted something more completely secluded, perhaps a small parcel surrounded by parkland, with usable land and paths to hike. He told me he had another place in

the Malibu mountains I should see, and we agreed to meet there the next day. We met on a hilltop at the end of a mile-long private road. The land was flat to rolling, 5½ acres surrounded by 10,000 acres of parkland with drop-dead views over the ocean and all the Santa Barbara Channel Islands.

It also had a head-on view of a magnificent adjacent ridge, Boney Mountain, with dramatic, huge boulder outcroppings.



The property was high above and invisible from any neighboring homes, and completely quiet — you could not hear a car or a person, ever. There was electricity to the property, and a working water well and holding tank. Moreover, it had private access to a fire road beginning at the property and passing through wilderness National Park land all the way down to the ocean two miles and 1,600 feet below. I simply could not believe how perfect it was, and I made an offer the day I saw it.

Before we inked the deal, the broker confessed that the property was an illegally subdivided lot that would need to be “legalized” through the Ventura County planning department. One of O’Melveny’s real estate partners helped me write a sales contract that made the closing of the purchase contingent on my getting appropriate approvals. That proved no small matter. Ventura County required me to have completed and approved plans for the house I would build and the configuration of all other improvements before it would legalize the lot. Bonnie and I hired the architect who had designed our kitchen remodel, and she began designing a house.

But I had a great deal of difficulty with the seller, an unemployed alcoholic electrician who lived on the land in a broken-down mobile home and who wanted the sales proceeds to live on. After again consulting with a real estate colleague, I entered into a new agreement with the seller, under which I advanced money to him every month interest-free, with each advance becoming a lien on the property to be deducted from the final price at time of legalization and closing.

This satisfied him for a couple of years, but eventually he became more and more verbally abusive. It came to a head one day when he appeared at my Los Angeles home, shouting incomprehensibly and threatening violence. I still wanted the land but couldn’t take the risk of closing the purchase because the County hadn’t yet legalized the lot, and I was sick of dealing with him. So I told him I was terminating the sales contract for failure to get legalization and I demanded that all my advances to him be repaid or I would foreclose my lien and force an auction sale of the property. I delivered written notice to that effect the next day. He called and apologized, I withdrew my notice, and we continued on as before, with me advancing monies to him as needed and with no more threats or trouble.

The County eventually approved my building plans. I legalized the lot and closed the purchase of the land in 1993, three years after entering into the sales contract.

Then I lost all my money (see Chapter 6, “When I Got Filthy Rich”) and put the building project on hold for the next nine years. I visited my magnificent land with my family and camped on it now and then, but could do no more to bring my dream to fruition.

In 2001 I was back on my feet financially and ready to proceed, but I was dissatisfied with the house we had hurriedly designed in order to get the lot legalized.

One weekend the *Los Angeles Times* ran a piece about a nationally renowned landscape architect from Santa Barbara, Isabelle Green, granddaughter of one of the Greene and Greene brothers who perfected the Craftsman style of architecture in California in the early 20th century. The article featured pictures of several of her projects, and I was impressed. I called her and met her on my land. She agreed to make a master design for my homestead. She recommended that I hire a Santa Barbara architect she liked working with, Peter Becker, for the actual house design.

Isabelle was a creative genius, and Peter a wonderful architect and great complement to Isabel’s leadership of the project. She sited the house and prepared a grading plan, and Peter designed a magnificent modernized Craftsman-style house with huge windows for the views and plenty of light.

The house was to have 18” thick walls made of “rammed earth” — ground dug from the site mixed with a light concrete binder and pounded on a rebar skeleton — a sort of modern high-tech version of adobe. It had a corrugated steel roof that would rust to match the color of the earth. Unlike many Malibu mansions that call conspicuous attention to themselves, my house would appear to grow out of, blend in with, and look like a part of the hill it sat astride.

Rammed earth was a relatively new building material. Although Napa and Sonoma Counties in Northern California had approved its use and there were many current buildings using it, Ventura County had never approved a rammed earth house. The County first nixed the plan of using earth from the site — too irregular — and demanded that we buy it from a supplier who could provide more uniform material. Then they wanted to test samples of the finished product for strength and durability. Then they wanted to retest it, and retest it again, and then again to test it. The County’s testing regime took the better part of a year and cost a great deal of money.

Eventually I realized the County was going to test the project to death, and I went back to the architect for a plan B. All the completed house plans were designed around the 18” thick walls. We decided to switch from rammed earth, which I was convinced the county was never going to approve, to concrete, which they surely would. So my house was to have 18” thick concrete walls, colored to match the surrounding earth.

I hired a respected general contractor and began building in 2002. The walls were up when the contractor sickened and died of throat cancer. His project managers offered to complete the project but only on a time and materials basis, not at the fixed price he had contracted. It eventually cost me more than three times the contract price. I got the certificate of occupancy in February 2004.



The house astride the hill, taken from the west

The house was magnificent. It featured huge beams, rich wood paneling and big windows centered on the surrounding views.

I decorated it with beautiful native artifacts bought during our overseas trips to South America, Africa and Oceania, and 100-year-old original photogravures of American Indians taken by Edward Curtis.

I have never had artistic talent but the house was my lifetime masterpiece (courtesy, of course, to the architectural team who designed it).



Living room

Chapter 10, Cheating

Posted on August 11, 2022

I was frequently and serially unfaithful throughout my marriage. I became addicted to the intense feeling of falling in lust with new women. I will not inflict further pain on my children by recounting any of it except its denouement.

Around Thanksgiving 2003, shortly before my early retirement on February 1, 2004, I left my laptop open to my email and walked off somewhere. Bonnie looked at my screen and found a message setting up a rendezvous. She confronted me and I had no choice but to admit the affair. She became wildly furious, beat me with her fists on my head and face, and ordered me out of our house.

Weeping and desperately distressed, I got in my car with no idea where I was going and ended up in a motel in Santa Barbara, where I stayed several days.

I promised Bonnie it would never happen again and begged her to take me back. She said she wouldn't consider it until I made a full confession of all my philandering.

I telephoned my sister, a psychiatrist, and asked her what I should do. She advised me to confess everything. I don't think she grasped how much there was. When I revealed it all to Bonnie, the outrageous extent of it made reconciliation impossible.

I was completely devastated and at the brink of insanity. I moved alone into my still-unfinished Malibu house. It had no doors, so one night I confined my two dogs in my car with the windows cracked open.

I had no idea a hot Santa Ana wind was due. The next morning, the sunshine and hot winds built up heat in the car and killed my dogs. Discovering their stiff bodies and disposing of them was my lowest point, the closest I came to losing my mind.

I shakily told my youngest daughter, and she and Bonnie drove out to check on me. I appreciated their compassion but remained alone and extraordinarily distressed.

Chapter 11, A Confluence of Disasters

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The end of 2003 brought a confluence of disasters that marked by far the lowest period of my life.

I lost my marriage, which you must believe — notwithstanding my infidelities — I had loved and cherished from the beginning.

I lost my house by Bonnie's forced ejection of me and my possessions.

I lost my job through my ill-advised early retirement, and from that I lost not only the comfortable contact with people that days in the office always brought, but also, not having work or anything else to do, I lost all purpose.

I lost most of my friends. Bonnie spread the word about my misdeeds and made clear they had a choice to make. Understandably they chose her; only my two closest, Carl Sohn and Merrick Bobb, maintained a comforting friendship with me.

By moving alone to my unfinished Malibu house an hour out of town, I lost contact with people and lived pathetically alone like a hermit.

Above all, I feared the loss of my grown children, who were completely devastated by our utterly unexpected breakup and knew how I caused it.

Thankfully, that was not to be. My son was the first to reach out, telling me I would always be his father. My youngest daughter called frequently to check on me. My oldest daughter was prickly for months but came around. I knew then that although I was a terrible husband, I had been a good father who built unshakable bonds with my children.

Chapter 12, Computer Dating and Holly

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Alone in my Malibu home, I discovered computer dating. That became my lifeline back to socializing with people. I joined Match.com, JDate and other services. I announced in my dating profile that I wanted someone to help me make a warm home where my children (and hers) would feel comfortable visiting. I spent most of my time scanning profiles of available women and carefully crafting messages to a handful. One woman I met told me I was way better-looking than the photograph I had posted and set me up with a professional photographer she knew. I got more replies after upgrading my profile picture.

I became interested in a lovely actress who wrote clever messages. When we met it was apparent that her picture was at least 30 years old. Virtually all the women I met shaved a few years off their actual age, which I came to expect, but not nearly to the grotesque degree she had.

I had a witty correspondence with a gorgeous woman who lived in Wellesley, Massachusetts. I flew across the country to meet her, but she proved quite brittle and I was upset that she refused to let me stay in a spare room in her house. Despite the awkward beginning, we became close. Later took a week-long trip with her to Vermont to visit my best old Oberlin friends, but I wasn't interested in pursuing the relationship further.

Then, after 18 months of meeting more than 70 women, I met Holly for lunch in a Pasadena restaurant. She was a speechwriter for Steven Sample, the widely respected president of USC. Her profile said she had recently traveled halfway around the world to see a six-minute total eclipse of the sun from a cruise ship. I thought that was an extravagant and silly thing to do but it was grist for conversation. When we sat down I asked her to tell me about her eclipse trip. She described the darkening sky, calming waters, brightening stars and unearthly quiet of the eclipse so beautifully that her eyes filled with tears as she spoke. Then, listening to her vivid descriptions, my eyes filled with tears!

I thought a woman with such depth of appreciation and gift for expression was very special. We extended our lunch date to take a tour of the Norton Simon Museum together. Before we parted late that first day, I told her I was willing to stop seeing other women and give it a go with her. She said she felt the same.

Within ten days I had moved into her house in South Pasadena to live with her and her teenage son Jeremy. He was initially distant and we were no more than wary housemates, but within a month he thawed. He was a hilarious, great kid and we eventually became so close that I worried my own children would be jealous. I didn't get quite as close to her older son, who was already out of the house living in a USC dorm when we got together, but I also had a good relationship with him. We moved into a nicer rental house with a huge backyard, a wild hillside and a creek. I became close with some of her good professor friends from USC, so once again I had friends and a social life.

After a couple of years of living together, Holly said she wanted to get married. Having just gone through a protracted, painful and expensive divorce, I didn't really want to. But I appreciated that she was in her late 50's and it was reasonable for her to want security in exchange for giving up the opportunity to find someone else. I agreed to marry her. I didn't ask for a prenuptial agreement. We had a beautiful wedding in a meadow overlooking the ocean on my Malibu hilltop, which my children and hers, and family and friends. My remarriage was four years after Bonnie threw me out.

I then bought a gorgeous Spanish style home for us and Jeremy in the Los Feliz hills. We traveled extensively, often with Jeremy. The highlight was a spectacular three-week National Geographic cruise in Antarctica.

The longtime president of USC whom Holly worked for retired, and she was left out of the incoming president's administration. She resigned from USC and worked in a nonprofit she formed (and I financed) promoting non-violence. I thought we were both happy.

About five years into our marriage, Holly began to see a psychologist. Over the course of several months, she let on that she was increasingly unhappy. I attended couples therapy with her psychologist but didn't like the doctor and felt ganged up on. I refused to go back.

My perspective was simple: I loved her and had always been happy being married to her. Moreover, being stepfather to Jeremy was one of my greatest pleasures. She and her psychologist demanded changes in my behavior — I no longer remember the particulars — that I was unwilling or unable to make.

Nevertheless, I had no idea the depth of her estrangement until it all came to a head one night at the dinner table. The two of us were sitting with Jeremy when she began to speak. She had a mental list of grievances and let me have it. I wrote down what she said immediately afterward, so I can recount it virtually verbatim:

You are a narcissist who never thinks of anyone but yourself and doesn't care what other people want or need. No one who has to live with you can stand it. Bonnie and I are the only people who know what that's like, and Bonnie couldn't stand it for 27 years. [I later confirmed with Bonnie that she had never told Holly anything of the kind.] Jeremy doesn't feel that way only because he is a rare saint.

Since Carl [Sohn, my closest friend in Los Angeles] died, you have had no friends.

You are depressed and unhappy all the time.

You sit around all day doing nothing and no one any good.

You ruin all our vacations and special times.

You take the joy out of any happiness around you.

You suck my soul dry.

Throughout her angry recitation, Jeremy pleaded over and over, “Mom, don’t say that, it isn’t true.”

I was stunned when she finished. My reply was calm and dead earnest: “If that’s the way you feel, I don’t see any basis for a marriage here. I want a divorce.”

I slept uneasily in the spare bedroom that night. I saw her in the morning and said, “I’ve thought it over and changed my mind. I *don’t* want a divorce.”

She quickly and firmly replied, “*I* want a divorce.”

That was it. We hired lawyers and went at it.

Neither of us could afford to buy the other’s half of our beautiful house, so we had to sell it. I moved into my daughter’s house a few blocks away.

The divorce ground on, with me paying both sides’ legal bills. Eventually we settled after mediation.

Then, after a while, I went back on the same dating sites where I had met her.

Chapter 13, Lynn

Posted on August 11, 2022

I began computer dating again after my divorce from Holly. I met an attractive African-American physician and dated her for several months. Then I took her to a weekend away at a beautiful desert resort for the extravagant wedding party of my nephew and his new husband, attended by my whole family, Bonnie and her new mate, and a large cast of well-wishers. One night my physician pulled Bonnie aside and said, “For what he’s paying you in alimony, you could be a lot nicer to him.” This was so wildly inappropriate it suggested she had a screw loose. Bonnie was shocked and offended. When one of my kids told me about it, I was livid. I broke off the relationship after we returned to Los Angeles.

Next, I was excited to find online a woman I knew and liked. She was an attractive horticulturist who had designed and installed a California native plant garden surrounding my Malibu house, and I had enjoyed working with her. We began seeing one another and I grew fond of her. However, in the dozen or so times we got together, she never once would allow anything physical, even a kiss. I concluded something was amiss.

Around this time, I met Lynn on a Wednesday afternoon at a Hancock Park coffee shop. I was instantly at ease in her company and we enjoyed a happy hour of conversation and laughter. She had been a TV production executive until that high-pressure job conflicted with her child rearing, then had taken up interior design and painting. On the way out, I asked whether she wanted to see me again. She said yes and asked me the same question. I said “Absolutely yes!”

I texted her that I had never enjoyed a coffee date so much, and invited her to come to my Malibu house with me that Sunday. She accepted. I told my youngest daughter excitedly that I thought I had found “the one.” She cautioned me not to rush into anything like I had with Holly and to “pace myself.” But I was irrepressible. I couldn’t wait for Sunday, so I wrote again asking her to dinner Friday. We got together and our attraction deepened. The Sunday trip was terrific. Our kiss was a long drink of cool water on a hot day.

I didn’t move in with Lynn quite as fast as I had with Holly, but close. Within weeks she had moved into my Los Feliz rental house. We spent weekends in Malibu. Eventually we moved full time to my Malibu house, where she set up her painting studio in my garage. My children liked her very much. She has a huge circle of friends who have become mine too.

We remain blissfully together now, six years since meeting. Unlike my two wives, my quirks never seem to displease her; she finds the whole package lovable. It is the most tranquil relationship I have ever had. I love being with her every day, and she says the same of me.

With Lynn in it, and my happy relations with my children and grandchildren, my life has once again become extremely fortunate.

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