

Shower People With Love

My younger brother, Junaid, passed away recently after a two year battle with cancer. He died as I was holding his hands at Sunnybrook Hospital in Toronto on March 19, 2008 at 11:10am. Our whole family was there at his bedside when he passed away. He was only 33 years old.

Especially difficult to bear was the fact that just over a year into my brother's illness he had made a miraculous recovery after enduring several rounds of chemo, radiation and various alternative health treatments. (When Junaid was first diagnosed with stage four base-of-the-tongue cancer, he was given 7 months to live with less than a 10% chance of survival).

Unfortunately, a few months after the recovery, the cancer reemerged with a vengeance. The tumor at the base of his tongue started growing and eating through sensitive nerve and gum tissue – eventually devouring part of his jaw bone.

The pain was so excruciating (despite all the different pain meds he was on) that he wanted to end his life on many occasions. Just trying to manage the pain was an ongoing struggle with frequent visits to his pain doctor. It's a horrible, horrible disease that no one should have to go through.

I'm astounded at the enormous courage and inner strength my brother displayed throughout this whole ordeal. His dream in life was to become an actor; and despite his weakened state and slurred speech, he kept on auditioning for parts even though he kept getting turned down repeatedly.

He lived and died honorably and was the most honest person I've ever known. I'm very grateful for the time I had to spend with my brother before he passed away. He is my role model and hero who taught me many valuable life lessons from his example.

One day when my brother Junaid was staying over at the hospital, a friend of his dropped by our home hoping Junaid would be there. I protectively blocked the front porch entrance and told him my brother was not in. He had a grip of steel when we shook hands and I immediately formed an impression about this person.

I later told Junaid about his friend dropping by and mentioned that he looked a bit like a street thug. Without missing a beat, my brother covered the trach tube in his throat with his fingers and strained in a raspy voice: **"He's lived a hard life and has no one to love him. You have to shower people with love – because nobody else will."**

My knees almost buckled as I fought back tears. My younger brother was teaching me a lesson in humility and love. I was ashamed of myself for having judged someone I barely knew.

I learned that my brother had befriended a number of people that most of society had rejected, and he showered them with love and kindness.

What a powerful message. I believe we can all make a difference in the world by showering people with love. And it doesn't take much. A kind gesture to a neighbor. Catching someone doing something right. Warmly welcoming a newcomer who feels out of place in a group. Visiting a sick co-worker at the hospital. Lending a helping hand or giving encouragement to anyone that needs it.

Shower people with love.

You know, I've spent a longtime trying to figure out exactly how to break this news to you. In my desire to honor my brother and raise awareness in a big way, a crippling paralysis overwhelmed me - rendering me incapacitated and not knowing what to do.

How ironic that I found the answer to my problem in my own Hero Soul book! In the chapter titled 'Peace' I began with Anne Frank's quote: "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

I'm taking Anne Frank's message to heart by not waiting and starting now. I'm volunteering for the upcoming Canadian Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" to help raise funds for cancer research and support services while celebrating cancer survivors and remembering loved ones lost to cancer.

I've set up a tribute page with a photo of my brother, to honor his message and help raise funds for cancer research. If you'd like to make a contribution, please visit: <http://convio.cancer.ca/goto/junaidkhan>

Let's do our part in making cancer history so we can help save lives and prevent someone from going through what my brother had to go through. Let's not wait – let's start now!

"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver." - Maya Angelou

About the Author

Sharif Khan (<http://www.herosoul.com>) is the author of "Psychology of the Hero Soul," an inspirational leadership book on awakening the hero within. He has set up a tribute page to honor his brother's powerful message of love at: <http://www.showerpeoplewithlove.com>

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