

Ann Idzik

IN AN INSTANT

On a February night in New York City; my husband and I met for dinner at a new popular restaurant. I wore blue. He gave me a beautiful bracelet. I had just secured an internship at an excellent school district working for the school superintendent. My goal was to be become a middle school principal. During dinner I shared my dream, it wasn't new, we had discussed my future many times. He pleaded with me to continue my studies and volunteer work because now we would have time to travel together; his work took him to interesting places around the world and he wanted me to join him. Our last child left for college. My MS symptoms had subsided, I was feeling strong and ready to live life fully. We would soon celebrate our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, he hinted at plans for a celebration.

After dinner we went to a concert at Carnegie Hall. We heard Maurizio Pollini, our favorite Italian pianist. Seated on the stage, we were close enough to hear him humming. As I looked out over the audience I felt I was the luckiest person in the world. Life couldn't be better. I would continue my studies, maybe get a doctorate, work would wait. We were going to travel the world together. Little did I know how our journeys would diverge.

Memories surged through my mind that evening. We met after college while we were involved in the National Student Association. For a year we traveled the country together representing American students. The friendship turned into a love affair and we married in Switzerland. Our first child was nine months old when he began Harvard law school; two daughters were born before he graduated. I worked full time, life was a constant challenge and I

loved it. Our marriage grew with many shared interests; we raised four children, moved eleven times, and lived abroad twice. We felt we were citizens of the world.

That night, as I listened to the music, all these rich and full memories swirled, my heart was bursting with joy.

The next month we went to New Orleans. It was our youngest child's parent weekend. Her older sister, on spring break from her college in Wisconsin, came to join us.

As she got on a plane to go back to college she said, "Good luck, Mom. Don't know what is wrong with Dad". He was unavailable to all three of us during the weekend. At night when just the two of us were together I asked him what was going on. He was curled up in another bed on the opposite side of the room in a fetal position. This behavior was most unusual. His job as general Counsel of a major corporation could be tough; I thought he was having a difficult time at work.

Once back at home, while sitting at the kitchen table, he looked out at the greenhouse which he loved, abundant with spring blossoms. He looked at me and then delivered his message. He is leaving me, he is unhappy, he hasn't been happy in years.

He detailed his plan. In 3 months he will travel around the country and visit each child at their college. He will explain his intentions. Then he will leave. He is going to be happy.

Three months later he moved out. The four children and I were all gathered on the deck the day he left. He returned to get some extension cords. "Would any of you drive me to my new apartment?" he asked. "No" was the reply. "Go and get happy".