

This is a true story. It was written for a writing contest. The call of the contest was: Why create? Why write? The word limit was 250 words. This came in at 249.

It won.

And: I can point to it and say "This is art. I created it."

(And Mac: More than surrogate *academic* father.)

Best,
Mitch

Keep Writing **(A True Story)**

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1990. Three months after he told me he was sick, my father died of AIDS. We were just starting to connect—after he walked out on my mom.

1993. My college thesis. I couldn't find a topic that would stick in my distracted brain. My dad's death—that story held my attention. But was it academic enough? As Mac Miller, my thesis advisor, said: "Write from the heart, and use both hands."

Under Mac's wing, my thesis took me a year and a half. Its title, "Anything but Herpes I Can Cure," was my lab-coated urologist father's birds-and-bees advice to me.

Writing that thesis helped me.

2004. Mac, surrogate academic father, retires. My father-in-law, dear to me, sick—I almost missed Mac's retirement roast. I wrote—about my dad, my father-in-law, and Mac—in a white heat. The best speech, I was told.

Writing it helped.

2006, New York. My wife and I, at Lincoln Center. Memories from 1994: I saw Spalding Gray perform there, and met him. His work helped shape my thesis. A happy, sad memory, I wrote when we visited. Happy: He got my thesis. Sad: I hadn't followed his advice: "Keep writing."

Now, I am writing. Some blogging, keeping a journal, an occasional screed, a magazine article. (And this.) Life gets better—much. And—pain recedes.

My father-in-law died of pancreatic cancer. My father died of AIDS. Spalding Gray killed himself. And me? I keep writing.

“Keep Writing”

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