

This Is Your Memorial

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This seems like a strange thought, but why don't we show our true feelings about people, and shout it out loud, until their memorial. I know, memorial ceremonies are, for a lot of people, a form of closure and a way of saying goodbye, but at every memorial I've been to, I've always sat there and thought, "shouldn't the person whose life we are celebrating have got to hear this too?"



Maybe I'm just narcissistic and like to hear people extol my virtues, but maybe we should all take a moment to think about the people in our lives we really care about and what we'd like them to hear. How hard would it be to either tell them, or write down the words, especially for those of us with cancer, whose lives could slip away so quickly. Or maybe we should all just start having our memorials while we're alive? Kay - This is Your Memorial.

I would get everyone together who cares about me, and make them spill their guts about what a wonderful person I am. I'd choose who I'd like to eulogize my life, tell the funny stories, recount the touching moments. I could choose the music that says most about me and have the poems and prayers that touch me the most. I could look out at the crowd and feel the warmth, the joy, the love.

I could also get sweet revenge! I could bring in the old high school teacher who said I would never amount to anything. I could bring back my old boss, who claimed I wasn't a team player when the 12 men I worked with kept stabbing me in the back. I could finally resolve all my issues and have my true friends recount their fondest moments, and most importantly get to hear it all.

Wouldn't it be great? A celebration of my life, while I was still alive! You see, that's the problem. We don't really tell people how we feel about them, then one day they're gone, and it's too late. We assume they know how much we admire them, how much we love them, what a tremendous influence they've been in our lives, that their life has touched so many others for the better. But maybe they don't know and never will.

Most people get hints, and some are lucky enough to have friends courageous enough to reach out and express the joy of knowing you. But most of the time, we wait until it's too late.

So on Memorial Weekend, as well as, of course, looking back and honoring those we've lost, look around at those that are here. If they weren't here tomorrow, what you would want to say to them today?

Because for me, even if you have to wheel me in on a hospital bed, followed by an array of medical equipment, I want to hear my own memorial. I want to laugh at the jokes, cry at the sentiment, and be a part of the celebration. This is my life and there's no encore. And when it's over, I'm going to be a long time deaf.

Kay Kerbyson lives with her family in West Richland. She is a local and national cancer advocate, and Founder/President of Ovarian Cancer Together Inc, a non-profit organization supporting and networking women across the state. More information can be found at her website www.ovariancancertogether.org or by email at Kay@ovariancancertogether.org