

Hello All,

How many times it happens that you meet someone for the first time and instantly you feel close, feel bonded together as if you are meeting a brother or a sister? Rare indeed yet, it's not uncommon.

Friends, that's what I experienced when I met Bert for the first time. It was at pharmaceutical college. I felt as if I was meeting my brother. No doubts, no questions.

That was 34 years ago and, our relationship never looked back.

Four years of college went by, we graduated and parted. He went back to Washington state and I came to New Jersey. We were not in touch much but, not forgotten.

One fine day, we met again unannounced in Washington D.C. where we both were participating in a pharmaceutical convention. We met after 15 years but we did not feel the time gap and boy, we talked!!

Ben mentioned about changing a job and an opening at the company where I was working was one of the topics we touched upon. Ben applied, got the job and joined. Hurray! We were together again! We both had family by then and, our family ties strengthened likewise.

Continuing our journey together, continued strengthening our bond to a point that no one, literally no one, can ever separate us except the Almighty.

And, today I am here, we all are here, to respect that Almighty's wish, with heavy heart, especially that it all happened all of a sudden in a short time.

Under calm personality and soft spoken Ben was a happy-go-lucky guy. We both enjoyed going to restaurants, relishing good food, playing cards, smoking a cigar with a glass of wine or vodka, poker, you name it.

How can I forget those wonderful evenings spent together after work, be it a happy hour drinking or sailing a yacht.

His surprise 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebration in our basement is one unforgettable event.

He really believed and lived in present moment.

Folks, Every time Ben and I met, it was like 'let's have a drink before we talk'! No wonder I felt I met my brother in our very first meeting!

Life is not full of roses all the time. And it wasn't for Ben either. He was close to his eldest brother and at the time of the brother's death he was taken over by grief. His other brother Dan, who was more like a friend than brother to him, passed away too about 4 years ago. I could share his grief as I also have lost my younger brother Ted.

Ben: At the time of Ted's leaving us, I consoled myself that I had another brother in you. Now with you leaving, who would I turn to? It's hard but, I know Ben, you only would give me the strength and show me the way. I know that I can trust you as ever.

Friends: To find out how to live a balanced happy life, don't look any further than Ben's life. He is not with us anymore but his legendary life is. He won't fail you.

Ben is survived by his wife Jane, daughter Julie and son Ed.

Jane, Julie, Ed and all the family members: please know that my wife Rachelle, son Gabriel, daughter Barbara and I have been part of your family and we would be always. Let us get a needed strength to bear the loss of Ben together and, together we would keep Ben alive in our heart for ever. Saying last 'good bye' is not easy. While we miss him here on a planet called earth, we know that he is now in a better place looking down at all of us and smiling every time we think of him. Let us celebrate his life by trying to take a time to smell the roses and live in the moment...like he did all his life.