

Susan Shpeen
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Beth Emeth, Albany NY
Rabbi Randi Musnitsky

As Rabbis, Ron and I are often called upon to convey the thoughts of other people. Today it is an especially difficult and painful responsibility, for we are here to mourn with all of you, the premature death of our beloved Susan. While my friendship with Scott goes back to High School days, it was as couples for more than 30 years, which forged our relationship with Scott and Susan. We shared 4 years in Cincinnati commiserating over our studies, feasting on Graeter's ice cream, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, kvelling at the birth of Hilary, with one "L", (and later Adam) and marveling everyday at the meticulous and orderly life of college sweethearts who not only had it all, but put it all together with such panache and style. While Scott toiled in his studies and took on the additional burden of redecorating our dilapidated student lounge, Susan quietly, gracefully and brilliantly supported the family and studied for her CPA exam, passing the first time. Those years created the foundation of our life long friendship and sealed our admiration and love for both Scott and Susan that would continue with 30 years of memories created with our children, extended families, and communities.

I must admit that it is nearly impossible to voice the name of one without the other. Scott and Susan are voiced in one breath, in one syllable. That is why today we utter in total disbelief, how one so loved, so giving, so special to so many could be taken from us at the age of 52. Together we are left to grapple with profound questions: "How do we

cope with such a loss? Where is the fairness in life?" There is hurt, there is anger, there is frustration. For we have been robbed. Stolen from us are the vitality, beauty, elegance, energy, talent, humor, compassion, intelligence, independence, and strength of your wife, mother, sister, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, co-worker, synagogue family member and friend. Our hearts are broken...our lives are fragmented.

And yet, I can offer no answers that would satisfy no explanations to comfort, nor any religious doctrine to ease the pain. But, what I can do with all of you is to help fill the emptiness in the days, weeks, months and years ahead by sharing, reminiscing and remembering the goodness, grace, stylishness, fun, joy and courage of Susan which brought us all such happiness during her years.

In just a few moments, Scott will share with us all most intimately thoughts and reflections about Susan, but as I mentioned from the on-set, it is impossible to speak about Susan without talking about Scott. Thus, please permit me just a few words directed to Scott, the consummate caregiver and nurturer to Temple and community who now needs to be comforted, supported and acknowledged. More than 31 years ago, when you stood under the chuppah with Susan, Rabbi Hertz recited the words: "This is a day the Lord has made, let us be glad and rejoice in it." Truly, you and Susan embodied the message to live life with no regrets and make each day well-lived. There was always a vision of hope in your plans for a future together with your greatest blessings, Hilary and Adam. You spoke openly and honestly knowing each others requests and wishes in the best of times and during the most challenging of days. Throughout these past 12 weeks,

you were tested time and again striving to make decisions that would sooth, comfort and ease Susan's path. In the end, you enveloped her with the same love that sustained your marriage and filled your lives. In short, your presence blessed her in life and sanctified her in death.

In conclusion, may we find comfort and guidance for the words of the poem: "When I Die", author unknown. It was selected by Hilary: