



ON THE SOFTER SIDE

By: Cam Blevins

IF ONLY.....

I woke up at 3:27 am this morning and the only thing on my mind was "If only". If only I would have had one more chance to say I love you. If only I would have told you how important you are to me. If only I wouldn't have been too busy to take your call today. If only..... As Christmas approaches I get very sentimental and wind up feeling a lot of guilt with my own "If onlys".

We walk through life not alone but in front of, behind or beside the people that are so important to us. And a lot of times we take for granted that they know how we feel about them. But do they?

My senior year in high school someone so important to me died in a motorcycle accident. Kent was the love of my life. No, we were never lovers we were so much more we were best friends. Kent was the original bad boy that your Momma told you to stay away from. Kent was the very first person in my life who wore letters and for a Momma I'm sure that's scary enough but then when you add he had the looks, he had the bod and he had the charm and smooth voice that girls would leave their boyfriends for I'm sure every Momma in town was hoping their daughters never met him. But with me he was my non-biological big brother. I was his baby girl. One of the coolest things about best friends is you develop your own language. Some of our favorite sayings to each other were, he would call me "Cum twat tweety" and that was his way of saying I'm ready to go so I would call him "Sh** for brains" meaning I'll be there in a minute. Kent was one of the few people who I've had in my life that loved me and never tried to control me. We could go to a party together and he would go do his thing, I would go do mine and if ever I needed him he was there. I've always loved dancing and Kent refused to dance (unless he was really wound up and then he would dance with me but somehow I always ended up in the air) but one of the things he used to call me was his tiny dancer (I never knew exactly what he meant but I knew it wasn't bad). Kent always encouraged me to go after who or what I wanted and I did the same for him. Kent was one of the people that would throw you into the lion pit but never let you get in over your head. Unfortunately I only got to have Kent in my life for a few years. I feel like he came into and left my life so quickly but left permanent footprints in my heart.

Kent was riding with another couple when they ran off of the first curve of an S curve. From what we were told, Kent tried to look back to see what happened to the other couple and drove straight off of the second curve into a guide line. The only physical damage done to Kent was it cut off his left pinky finger at the first knuckle and he had a 1-1/2" cut over his left eyebrow. Instead of going to my senior breakfast I went to the hospital. Two days later Kent died. The day Kent died I swore I would never ride again. I refused to get on a bike by myself or with anyone else but a few days later the wisest woman I've known to this day told me I had to get up and go again. This woman told me I wasn't allowed to stop living my life because someone I loved died. This very wise woman told me if you over protect yourself you'll miss out on life. If you wake up everyday saying "If only" or "What if" you will never get out of bed and you'll never get to experience all of the joys life has to offer.

This woman I keep talking about has drilled into my head my every day of my life "That which doesn't destroy you only makes you stronger". This woman is my Mom. She is without

a doubt the strongest, most passionate, compassionate person I've ever met. I've never met anyone who didn't love her within 5 minutes of knowing her.

Some people are born and never have to endure any hardships in life but somehow always wind up feeling like a victim. They take life for granted and never look past themselves. I in no way feel I'm special or that life has been harder than anyone else walking on the face of the earth but here are some of my "If only" "What if" moments.

- If only I would have been with Kent that night he wouldn't have been on that road. He would have had to taken me home 2 hours earlier because I had a curfew.
- If only when I was 11 I wouldn't have let someone bigger than me ride behind me on a motorcycle I wouldn't have wrecked and lost my front teeth, half of my face and almost died.
- If only I would have stayed awake that night when I was 12 our house wouldn't have burnt to the ground, my Dad wouldn't have got third degree burns over 30% of his body, I wouldn't have gotten frostbite on my feet and I would have woke up with a place to call home.
- If only I hadn't fell asleep at the party when I was 18 with the hunk I thought I was in love with he wouldn't have had the opportunity to date-rape me.
- If only I would have been stronger I would have never put up with someone who was abusive to me.
- If only I was born without a heart condition my daughter wouldn't have had to have such a hard time coming into this world..... IF ONLY.....

From personal experience here is what I can tell you about "If only" and "What if". Most of the moments we question we have no control over. As depressing as it may be the only thing we ever have control over is our own behavior and ourselves. We can't control other people's actions, we can't control forces of nature, we can't control the future and we can't rewind time and fix the things that break our hearts. What we can do is remember to show and tell the people we love that we do love them.

So as I lay me down to sleep, again, these are the things I hope the people I love already know. First, to the love of my life, my baby girl, I hope you know you hold my heart. I hope there is never a moment in your life when you say I wasn't loved enough. To my family, I hope I show my love everyday by all of the things I do. To my friends, I hope when we do get time to spend together that you always feel you have a guardian angel watching over (I know I do). To everyone who has told me they love my articles, I hope I put a smile on your face for at least one day a month. And to Dennis just Thank You for letting me find a new way to express myself.

But for this moment, it's time to start thinking about getting ready for Christmas. And I love Christmas (ok, so I love all of the holidays that bring family and friends together) but I really love Christmas!! Name one other time of the year you get presents for being really naughty (I already own the naughty Ms. Claus outfit). I'll decorate the tree and house, make cookies, plan parties, buy presents, spend time with family and friends, go to Christmas parties and without a doubt remember all of the people I've loved so much that aren't with me this year but the difference this year is I won't be saying "If only" or "What if" just I love and miss you!!

So whether you are riding to Christmas dinner on the sled or the Iron Horse I wish you LOVE, PEACE & HAPPINESS!!

To all of my friends at Thunder Roads be safe, have fun and Enjoy the Ride!!!!!!!

Cam