

It's such an honor to speak today about my friend David. We initially met through the acting community. I had the pleasure of being involved in several of his short films. Each time, he would contact me and begin with "So here's the idea", in his loud, barky Dave voice. Each time was always something a little crazier and more far-fetched than the last. He was always pushing himself to try something new and different. And I always said yes. After the first time, I knew what I was in for – crazy ridiculousness, mixed with so much laughter, at times ample moments of stress, where he'd put on his serious face, sweating about whether we'd finish in time, which we always did, - he always made it happen - and finally, celebrating at the end of the day for once more pulling it off. A few life experiences I have Dave to thank for include being filmed duck-taped in a basement, playing a machine gun toting nun, dancing around fountains in loose park while dressed as a 70s hippy, and many other situations I probably wouldn't have otherwise had color my life. And I know many of you here can relate.

Fun.

Dave was FUN.

Not only was he fun, he was a force. When I was asked to speak today, my main concern was how to honor such a force of nature. How does one do justice to a person who lived so big – so brightly – who impacted so many lives? And also who was such a magical concoction of colorful characteristics? As Alex so appropriately wrote – he was truth, peace and madness – creative genius – with a laugh that you could practically hear across the city. How do I take all of these pieces and mold them into something eloquent enough, but not too eloquent, because he wouldn't want that either, not with his twisted sense of humor. The honest truth is, I can't. This is a room full of rich experiences, all stemming from being a part of his life. I can only give my best attempt, but in no way will I be able to truly encompass all that he was. But here goes.

It seems he was destined to live a creative life. Growing up on the road until around age 7, touring with his parents, aunt and uncle in the family band, he was exposed to new cities, cultures and ways of being. This left such a large and lasting impression on him and he carried a deep sense of gratitude around it, frequently sharing stories about that time in his life – I think most of us here have heard at least a few of them - his eyes always lighting up – especially as he spoke of his late mother. Art and music comprised the backbone of his entire childhood, with his father involved in the music industry and his mother being a visual artist as well as a musician. It gave him such a special education in addition to his traditional schooling. He had a very rich tapestry of life school. And he carried this forward into adulthood to make his own mark. Impressively, he was self-taught with his videography and editing work. He decided he wanted to do something and he would then set out and make it happen. And he successfully did so, not only creating a living off of his art, but becoming an award-winning videographer. And thank goodness he did, because how many of our lives here are better for him doing so?

Sometimes I think when people have big personalities, others can accidentally overlook the depth that they carry. Dave had an amazing intuition and ability to read people, almost a laser-like ability. He could look right at them and simply know them. I remember once at a party at Jason and Alex's, he surprised me with a piece his mother had made. It was a wooden carving of an Aries. He said I wanted you to have this because I felt you would appreciate it. I was so touched that he was giving me something from his mother, who was so dear to him and who had passed away in 1992, but that speaks to the kind of person he was. Real. He saw people for who they are. And he wanted to touch hearts. Now, let's be honest, sometimes this realness created friction. He could be a stubborn and passionate firestarter. With Dave, there was no denying, you always knew where you stood. And where he stood. Not one to hold back his opinions, you could count on him to speak his mind whether asked to or not. A quality not everyone unanimously appreciated. But what a beautiful thing, in this age of online popularity contests, to have someone honest and true. And with Dave, you got the truth, whether you wanted it or not.

When you're dealing with a person who lives in a big way, you get a love as equally large. Undoubtedly, Dave loved big. Be it friend or family, if you were in his circle, then you were loved. End of story. But no one more so than his beloved Marley. Could a father be more proud of his daughter? I'm not sure it's possible. I know that I personally never saw him once without a Marley story. He was always updating me on what she was doing, what phase of her life she was in. He loved her fiercely, dedicatedly. Just one mention of her name, and he shone like the sun. There's a quote by Jim Valvano that reads: "My father gave me the greatest gift anyone could give another person, he believed in me." If anything rings true of how Dave felt about Marley, it's this. She was his world. Everyone knew it. It was part of his identity.

And then there's Cambi. Beautiful, smart and kind Cambi, who surprised everyone by coming into his life seamlessly as the perfect fit. Dave the eternal bachelor, settling down in Johnson County. Who would have guessed? It made for a lot of jokes at gatherings. But behind the jokes was the undeniable recognition that soulmates do exist and he had found his. And that was that. From that point on, he had his adventure partner, his disco night partner, and most importantly, someone who appreciated and loved him for who he was. To quote Cambi "I loved his gregarious nature and his one-of-a-kind mind. He was always entertaining, but at home, we were just the two bears. We liked being boring together. Neither of us perfect, but perfect for each other." And their story has a fun twist in that she had attended a party of his 20 years prior. Life has a beautiful way of bringing us together at the right time.

I've spent many years in Shamanic study. The Shamanic perspective holds that on the other side of life there's only life; that death is simply a doorway through which each of us must pass on our journey home. Shamanic wisdom tells us that after death the physical body goes back to the earth, our knowledge returns to the

mountains, and our essence or soul returns to the stars. Dave's view of the world was similar - that we are all one, all connected. He believed life on Earth was a cosmic bus stop on the way to somewhere else. That we spend long enough here to regroup before we take the big ride. This perspective led him to always seek out and participate in collective, magical experiences that were much larger than himself, such as Burning Man, Symbiosis. He had a great understanding of the macro and the micro – the bigness of our potential in that we are a part of something so much greater, and the smallness in that we are here for such a short while before moving on. For he and Cambi, Symbiosis last summer was such a sacred trip together, witnessing the total solar eclipse. Again to quote Cambi: "It was an experience that eclipsed the entire soul, body, mind, earth and all of the cosmos and demonstrated the magical nature of our world. We are all one." This was something Dave understood with great clarity.

As I was searching for a reading that would help encapsulate this understanding of his, I found this poem by Mary Elizabeth Frye. And in addition to the appropriateness of the poem itself, the backstory is also something that I felt Dave would appreciate. It was written in 1932. She wrote it in a fit of inspiration, to comfort a friend whose mother had recently passed, scribbling it on a paper bag. Dave life was connected strokes of creative inspiration.

By Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep  
I am not there; I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glints on snow,  
I am the sun on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry,  
I am not there; I did not die

Dave was a storyteller, and in his storytelling, he essentially collected each of us here, to play our piece in the narrative of his life. Some of us with larger roles and some more minor parts, but each valuable and perfect just the same. What a beautiful story he created.

So now what do we do? All of us here with our pain-ridden hearts? My opinion is that we continue to carry his light. Dave sparked and carried the light for so many, his earthly passing is our opportunity to continue that legacy for him. So, in honor of that, I'd like to finish today with a meditation to connect to his light.

