

KIM STOCK

Death reveals inner humanity

The last fifteen years have been an uphill battle for my friend. She fought an endless string of heart attacks, cancer and triple bypass surgeries. Each time she conquered the problem and came out successful. But, that was the way people saw her — as a winner.



It's when people are able to break free from their egos and inhibitions, and bend their backs so others can lean on their shoulders, is when we understand what it means to be human.

In late May, my friend had to go into the hospital for what doctors called "a routine surgery." That was nothing to fear because she had seen many "routine surgeries" and we all had faith that she would come out of her hospital stay again a winner.

But it was almost as if there was a plan God had in mind for her that was greater than any of us could understand. Routine turned into complications and a relatively safe fifth floor hospital room turned into a rush over to Lincoln General's Intensive Care Unit.

For over a month, I watched my friend's body deteriorate until the point when I could hardly recognize her. She no longer looked like the woman that I'd debate topics with and feel warm inside because she smiled at me. Having numerous tubes running through her throat and body, and being so drugged that she couldn't see or hear us, my friend looked more like someone who was wrestling with an angel for her life.

Last Tuesday night, the angel must have convinced her it was time for her to leave. That decision marked the end of my friend's suffering and the beginning of a long road of grief for those who cared about her.

But, what I want to write is not about the pain of death, but the strength of those who survive. There's nothing more beautiful than the feeling when

people pull together and support each other. It's when people are able to break free from their egos and inhibitions, and bend their backs so others can lean on their shoulders, is when we understand what it means to be human.

For that emotional month, people came to join in a tiny waiting room to give warmth and to feel the warmth of others. At times, the nurses would come and scold us because our laughter echoed throughout the hallways. I couldn't believe how much people could accomplish when they pulled together.

Something special happened in that waiting room that is hard to describe. Friendships were made among the different families, and bonds were made stronger. When we knew my friend had died, we still joined our hands in a circle and prayed. Even

then, we knew it was not time to abandon the hope that had helped us remain strong.

Yes, sometimes from times of tragedy people are able to grow.

The first time I learned this was when I was a sophomore in high school. Within a week, two students committed suicide, marking the second and third that year. This came as a great shock to us and it felt as if someone had taken a knife and slashed away our innocence. Youth and death had united and this was beyond our comprehension.

But, after the tears were shed and the pain had healed a little, we were again able to feel free and laugh. Despite what we felt at the time of this occurrence, nothing could destroy our laughter.

And, to those people who find this to be too drippy and sentimental, all I have to say is, open up your hearts and allow yourself to feel emotion. It's OK to be human.

The funeral for my friend was Tuesday, and I wasn't sure how easy it was going to be. But, every person that supported her, supported each other and was there with open arms.

One of my favorite quotes is from Albert Camus and says, "In the midst of winter, I found an invincible summer in me." That quote has always made me feel better when times have been hard in my life. In this past month, because of the help of those around me, I have no doubt that summer is around the corner waiting.

Stock is a sophomore secondary education English major and a Summer Daily Nebraskan columnist.

WHAT DOES UNL THINK?

What do you think about the recent events in the Roger Bjorklund case?

"He's trying to give the public the perception through all this maneuvering that he is innocent. He's taking the emphasis off of himself and onto the process."

Lance LaRue
Senior
Agriculture Business

"He shouldn't be able to pick a jury. I don't think it is right. The people in Lincoln were all affected, so the jury should be from Lincoln. I don't think there's anyone in Lincoln that thinks too highly of him."

Scott Schroeder
Junior
Biology

"It's not different from any other court process, it just takes a long time. It's pretty obvious there is a serious flaw in the court system, but nobody really has the power to change it."

Tim Timmermas
Senior
Business Administration

—Compiled by Carma Loontjer

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