

My beloved Daddy,

I didn't expect I would have to say goodbye so very near your 70th birthday.

You were born into challenging times, and into a family of Holocaust survivors. But somehow you knew how to make lemons into lemonade... You assembled yourself with your own two hands, and you became a special person, a therapist and a teacher who influenced so many other people.

Until recently, you frequently travelled abroad. I couldn't always keep up with where you were and whether you had just set out for Kiev or just headed back from Brazil... I remember that as a little girl I was always sad when you left. But in order to help, you would send a postcard from wherever you visited.

One day you brought home a big cardboard box and explained that there was a "facsimile machine" inside. To me it looked like an outlandish contraption. But we would fax letters to you at your hotel or wherever you were staying, and you would fax us back. I think that over the years, we sent you — and you sent us — some hundreds of faxes, postcards, and e-mails, and in that way we were compensated a bit for your faraway absence; and through you, we experienced the world that you so loved to roam in.

Many of my childhood memories involve you performing magic and acting for us, telling stories, inventing fables, and singing songs. You sang Uri Zohar's "Inventions" song so many times that I knew it by heart at ten years old. You enriched my childhood, and Yuval's, with a lot of humor, hijinks, playfulness, and imagination.

Half a year ago, life took a turn. You had been a man who loved words, stories, theater, self-expression, and caregiving. But your body became a prison where such loves were put in chains. The last half year was hard, and full of frustrations, but somehow there still were moments of grace when we managed to communicate in our own way, to embrace, to make faces, and sometimes even to laugh whole-heartedly.

Daddy, we didn't always manage, over the years, to speak with one another about everything, but no matter what, I always knew that

you loved me and that you would do anything for me, for Mommy, and for Yuval. I knew that even if I contacted you from the other side of the world in the middle of the night and asked you to come, you would be there right away. And I want to tell you now that I love you too, even if we didn't always say it aloud.

I will miss you mightily. I will miss your wise view of life, the confidence you gave me, the calm. I will miss hearing you say to Mommy "Relax, it will be all right." I will miss the laughter, the making faces, the funny old nicknames. I will regret not seeing you with the grandchildren you will not have the chance to know, and never again being hugged to your big belly.

I inherited much of your optimism, your empathy, your ability to look inward, your self-awareness, your ability to verbalize even the difficulties, and your love of music. I don't think I ever came home without finding you listening to music... You brought thousands of cassettes and discs into our lives, with varied music from all over the world. Music gave you some moments of pleasure in the last half-year, and I was so happy for those moments.

A short time ago, I found something you had written to yourself. Among the rest, you mentioned a favorite song, "I Did It My Way" as performed by Nina Simone. I hope that you realize you really did do it, in spades, and entirely your way.

I love you very much, Lushky.