

FIERCE SPIRITS

A Eulogy for Cliff Govier 8/21/03

Sometimes Fierce Spirits come down to Earth to live here amongst us. These are creative, visionary people who look at things differently and question the status quo. They are brilliant, remarkable individuals who inspire us...make us laugh...make us think, through their actions, words and deeds. They live on their own terms, making their own path through the world. Oft times these Fierce Spirits are famous people, whose accomplishments are widely known. But sometimes they can be the guy next door, a seemingly 'Average Joe' who is anything but average. If anything can be said about my brother Cliff, it is that he was one such Fierce Spirit.

Unfortunately Fierce Spirits be cannot be summed up in just a few lines as they are complicated, intense individuals. Although having known my brother for 44 years, any words I may express here today will be grossly inadequate in capturing and conveying the person he was; they are a poor representation. Many of the people here today knew him well and understand this. However, I will make a meager attempt to share with you a few observations and impressions:

- He was the most creative, funniest individual I have had the privilege of knowing.
- Cliff's need to create was intrinsic: whether it was through his music, his work, his cartoon art or the stories he told his children
- Though it sometimes resembled English, Cliff spoke his own language.
- The music he created well exemplified him in that it was eclectic and edgy
- As a self-taught artisan in the craft of A/V system design and implementation he strove for quality and perfection in his products and built intense loyalty in his clients.
- You could not find a more devoted husband and father; he was loving, caring son
- He enjoyed a good time; he enjoyed the company of his friends and family, whom he loved dearly; when he played, he played hard; when he partied, he partied hard.
- Though not a religious man, he was deeply spiritual; he loved the outdoors and had a reverence for Nature and enjoyed its full spectacle
- He had a quick and agile mind that was open to new possibilities and different ways of doing things; the wide diversity of his background helped give him the strength to do so.
- He did not let things hold him back; he was a catalyst who either directly or through others made things happen: in his own vernacular 'a tool'; the words "I can't" did not often come from his mouth.
- He took the risks others might not take, he pushed the envelope; he was not tentative: when he did something, it was all the way.
- He strove to live life fearlessly, on his own terms, unbridled by convention and succeeded in doing so.

As the Irish folk might say, 'he was himself'.

In his book on stress reduction through mindfulness and meditation, Jon Kabat-Zin makes reference to a passage in the book 'Zorba the Greek'. In the book, Zorba is asked by a companion 'have you ever been married?' He replies 'Am I not a man? Of course I've been married! Wife, house, kids, everything...the Full Catastrophe!' Now Zorba's intention was not to bemoan the institution of Holy Matrimony but to express an appreciation of the deep richness of life and all that comes with it: accepting the sorrow and pain along with the joy and exuberance. This was very much how my brother lived his own life: he wanted to experience it all in no uncertain terms. In accepting his life, and ultimately, accepting his passing, everyone must understand that this was the essence of who he was. He was an individual who took risks and lived life to it's fullest: he did not close himself off, he took it all in. If there is any one thing that he would want his family, friends and colleagues to 'get' from his life is that one should open their hearts and minds and experience all that life brings.

Sadly, Fierce Spirits often leave us too soon; the earth cannot contain their turbulent, gifted souls for too long. Though we are all devastated by his untimely passing, we can take heart in that Cliff left this world doing one of the things he loved best and he left at the top of his game. As my good friend Mandy said to me in an e-mail late last evening, we can all be touched by how the hand of G-d directly called my brother home.

Over 30 years ago Lennon & McCartney wrote the following lyric: 'And In The End, The Love You Take Is Equal To The Love You Make': call it karma or what you will, but the statement holds true. It is certainly true in my brothers case. If one's wealth may be measured by the friends one has, then Cliff passed from this life a very, very rich man. The outpouring of the last 4 days from friends, family and colleagues has been astounding; though he realized he was loved Cliff would have been surprised and quite pleased. Speaking on behalf of Cliff's family; we would like to thank you for all of the support and comfort each of you have provided, as well as your prayers, thoughts and good wishes, through what has proven the most difficult time in our lives. My brother touched many lives and helped many folks through the course of his life; he was many things to many people; our lives are richer for having known him, shared experiences with him, and loved him through these short 44 years.

Our hearts are filled with sorrow and grief now but with him we have experienced much joy: he brought light into our lives through his humor, his music, his caring, his generosity. He inspired us all and we will miss him terribly. Though he is gone from us now in body, his spirit will live on as long as we all remember him and keep him in our hearts: remember him as the Fierce Spirit who was not afraid to live his life to the fullest.

Glenn Govier 8/21/2003