

# Priscilla Best

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I was not yet 19 when I first met Priscilla; we were working at Woolco. She was a pretty cashier and I was a cocky shoe salesman. I would try to get her attention and make her laugh while I was doing PA announcements about 15 minute specials and the like. I gave her a discount on a pair of shoes for her Dad and finally I made some headway.

The dating began and our journey together was off to the races. Priscilla saw something in a shoe salesman and I saw something in a cashier. Neither of us saw or imagined what was coming for us as we ventured down the road of life.

We had little in the way of material things but we didn't need anything else. We had each other. When we married in 1976 we lived in a one bedroom apartment with a fine view of the parking lot and the communal dumpster. We bought our furniture from a third or fourth hand grungy shop near the rail yards in Hamilton. We had a 19-inch black and white TV complete with a coat hanger strategically aimed over Lake Ontario. Twenty-dollar slip covers from the Eaton's catalogue turned an ugly brown polyester couch into a colorful statement of newfound opulence. When we found change in the cushions and crevices of the old wreck we thought we won the lottery. Our parents bought us our bedroom suite. We pieced together the rest of the stuff and our mansion was born.

Six months later Priscilla had her first battle with melanoma. We thought it was the end of the world but we knew that if we stuck together and fought with all our might we could beat it. Radical surgery and a watchful medical team gave us more hope. The next couple years were marked with ups and downs but we started our family in spite of the cancer. The cancer clinic gave us a clean bill of health and we moved on.

We moved on but always looked in the rear view mirror; vigilant and hoping we would never see the bastard again. Thirty years later and living the kind of life we could never have imagined we once again set out to build the perfect home. We renovated the whole house, built the dream kitchen, and found change in the cracks when we tore apart the rooms. Once again we thought we had won the lottery.

Once again our dreams were interrupted by melanoma. Over the last six months of her life we had lots of time to reflect and to talk about our journey together. We talked about how different things were for us now than before. We laughed about getting introduced to Presidents, Prime Ministers, and even the Queen. Meeting with movie stars, athletes, and other celebrities had become regular occurrences for us. We had raised three great young guys. We drove nice vehicles and lived in a great house. Over those six months we realized that things were not really that different after all. The house and cars and the trappings were quite incidental. We did not need those things. We had and needed each other.

We fought together and we looked for change in the cracks. This time the change was not shiny coins but glimmers of hope and sometimes we found some and once again we thought we had won the lottery. In the end we lost the battle but we didn't go out without a monumental fight. Now when I search the cracks, the change I find is the memories of her, and I think I've won the lottery all over again.

- the Best Family