

Like Father, Like Son?

Category: Loss

written by Kevin Dorsey | July 9, 2025

As I dwell on the recent death of my oldest son, I can't help but think of my father, who dealt with his share of losses.

At the age of 16, he lost the use of his (dominant) right arm during a polio epidemic. The response from one girl he asked out was "I don't date cripples." How's that for a confidence-booster?

After graduating from college in 1927, he went to work as an accountant on Wall Street, just before the onset of the Great Depression. Talk about poor timing. But one of his proudest moments was that after working a few days around the clock, trying to balance the books, he kept his job through the Depression.

Fast-forward to the 1950s, and another polio epidemic (pre-Salk vaccine) took the life of my sister—his youngest child and only daughter.

And yet through all these losses, he carried on, providing for our family and never complaining.

Now, as I look for ways to cope, I find myself wondering how my father managed to do that. My conclusion is he did it by looking forward—focusing not on what he had *lost* during his lifetime, but rather on what he *had*.

Now if only I can summon the resolve he showed, maybe I can come to grips with my own loss and continue to contribute to the well-being of my family, my students, and my community.

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