

# The First Time

Category: Hope

written by Darren Colyn | April 19, 2017

Walking with my mother through a recent time of ill health was unlike the countless times I had supported individuals and families through their own times of grief and loss. As a spiritual health practitioner (aka hospital chaplain) at Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, on an island near Vancouver, I found the setting and the situation very familiar. But the emotions were anything but.

For me and my family, this was our first time experiencing such a serious illness within the family. Our first time contemplating that our mom might no longer be with us within a short while.

It was here, on the other side of the bed, not as a staff member but as the son of a sick mother, that it dawned on me how hospital staff provide hope and comfort for those in the throes of loss. This experience led me to write these words:

“This is my first time walking these halls. My first time waiting for the death of one I love. My first time learning of fluids drained, of long-named problems destroying her body. My first time smelling these smells, hearing these sounds, feeling this fear in my heart. My first time looking ahead and imagining her not by my side. The first time I’ve called to her and she hasn’t spoken back.

“This is my first time, and so may your many times—of watching disease progress, of walking to the edge of death, of seeing families struggle, of seeing just how death comes—bless us in our first time. May your many times give us strength for this, our first time.”

*Darren Colyn*

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