

## The Gift of Do Re Mi

Sometimes I feel lonely. Sometimes my heart feels empty and yearns to be filled. Instead of turning to drugs, alcohol or food to fill my soul, I turn to special loving memories of times I have shared – holy, soulful moments -- some verbal, some non-verbal. I feel blessed to share a few with you.

First is with my 12 year old nephew cuddling close in his living room. He was dying of cancer. A loving couple from Make-A-Wish Foundation came and asked him what was his wish. Pauly cuddled up close to me. He whispered in my ear, "Aunt Deborah, I have 2 wishes." He said he wanted to meet Michael Jordan and he also wanted the Michael Jordan rookie card. (I knew this was worth a lot of money). Squeezing my hand and with a huge grin, he shared his well thought-out decision. He wanted the rookie card because it would last forever! That moment with courageous and delightful Pauly is right here in my heart.

Next memory. My Mom had always been my best friend and with us both being talkers we always had lots to share with each other. We had a code for "Time Out" just to get a word in. [Show Time Out gesture] In my Mom's last years illness changed how we communicated. One day I brought my boom box and the *Sound of Music* CD. That was OUR musical. There in the nursing home lounge we held hands and swayed to the strains of *Do Re Mi* . . . Please join me now. Take the hand of the person next to you and let us sing and sway together: [Sing together] Doe, a deer, a female deer; ray, a drop of golden sun; Me, a name I call myself; Fa, a long long way to run . . .". I left that day feeling Mom had worked hard to reach across the far reaches of her mind to reach me, and I opened up to receive her in a new way. Together we received the gift of the song *Do Re Mi* to find a connection. This memory fills my heart.

My most recent soulful moment was the first night I came to Shir Tikvah three years ago. That night Rabbi Michael asked those in mourning to share a story about their loved one. At Oneg after service I went up to him, introduced myself, and told him how touched I was by that practice. He said, "Oh that is selfish on my part." I thought, "WHAT! What does he mean by that!" He explained he was a bit selfish because he never knew the person, and now he felt that he knew some things special and unique about them. In that moment I became connected with Michael across the Oneg goodies. The memory is right here in my heart.

What brings the three experiences together for me? Pauly, my Mom, Rabbi Michael . . . it is called soulful connection or holy moments . . . . It is something felt in the heart. I have found that remembering helps so much during challenging days. From the living room at Pauly's house to the boom box with my Mom to the Oneg table with Michael, these memories fill my heart. One thing I know for sure is I can come to Shul empty or filled, and I feel safe. Tonight, sharing these memories with my community, I feel full. Amen.