

## **JUNE, TIME FOR REFLECTIONS**

**by Howard Diamond**

To begin, I propose a question. What does June mean to anyone? Maybe it is the beginning of summer. Then perhaps, it is the month of Father's Day. For others, it signifies the end of the school year and the start of the summer vacation season. Yet, for many there are June brides and grooms. But for all it is just June and only June.

For me June is the beginning of spending more hours outdoors while the pool and beach season commence. Although I do not spend much time on an actual beach. My preference is being at an outdoor pool while basking in the sun with blue skies, plus using plenty of sunblock protection. Also, I like to spend more time on the boardwalk, enjoying the warm weather, the elongated hot days of the summer and free outdoor concerts at night. Nature needs to get wet, so let it rain overnight. Hopefully, most days are full of sunshine.

Unfortunately, all my Junes were not good ones. June 2015, my life was altered forever and for the worse. For the first part of the month, I spent almost every day visiting my significant other, Maureen in the hospital. She had a brain aneurysm and was being treated by a series of quality neurosurgeons. On the tenth she had a procedure that hopefully would reduce her bleeding issues in the brain. By the next day, she went into a coma and never recovered. On June 12th, 2015, she died and on the 16th, she was buried. So much for having fun during that June. Yes, I still miss her a whole lot!

Four years later, in June 2019, my existence got even worse. My mom was in an Assisted Living Residence a few miles from my place. At the beginning of February 2017, she was transferred from the hospital and after her adjustment period, she did reasonably well there. Although, mom needed a rollator to get around, she attended various activities, went to three meals daily and mom was at least content. In addition, she made a couple of friends which made her days a slightly better experience, if not tolerable. About a year and a half later, mom fell and was brought to the local hospital and was told she fractured her shoulder, sent to a rehab which improved the range of motion in her arm, but it still hurt when she returned to Assisted Living. Towards the middle of 2018, mom was starting to forget more and more and was diagnosed as having Dementia, which by 2019 was getting real bad. Often after visiting her, I wondered if she knew who I was. Mom died on June 19, 2019.

Right now, I take things one item at a time. At least in most cases. Basically, that is all I can handle. My tasks for the day are broken into segments. Yes, just like an orange or a grapefruit. Each portion is either one person or one hour of assorted things to do. Also, I try to prioritize important things from other things by creating each piece of my twenty four hours are handled separately and each situation or my time on my tablet is different. This way the whole day does not become overwhelming and keeps me better focused.

It is hard to believe it has been four years after my mom died and eight for Maureen. "They" say it gets easier, but in my way of feeling about this, it is still very painful. Way too painful, and who are "they", anyway? I would like to meet, "they". Anyway, since my physical health has been getting worse, I have been working and trying to break down my life one day at a time. During the last several months due to being admitted to hospitals plus rehabilitation settings, my anxiety and my OCD levels have been higher than usual, so my treatment teams recommended changing my medications in an effort to control many of my symptoms. I'm glad that I continue to make improvements.

As I write this piece in 2023, it is about seventy and mostly sunny. It is hard for me to tell, due to being in a rehab room. Between my latest hospitalization, and now in another rehab totally over six weeks has cramped my style. Slowly, I am recovering from left hip surgery and contagious C-Diff which has cleared; nevertheless, it has become more difficult to walk. Later on, I hope to have both physical and occupational therapy plus trying to relax. Relax, what is that? Maybe tonight, I will do more writing or there will be other times when I will attend an online group. Unfortunately, most days and evenings are spent alone. My nights are eating dinner, watching reruns or baseball or writing. It is not as enjoyable when my team is playing poorly, but it is only one inning or game at a time. **LET'S GO YANKEES! LET'S GO YANKEES!**

This June, my motivation is getting through this month, like every month the best way that is possible for me. That is all I can do. My belief is that I will get better, improve and recover to go home and get stronger to continue my life. June begins with the 1st and ends with the 30th, but I try to take one day at a time as it comes. I miss you, I love you, Maureen "SWEETIE", as I think of you each and every day. Yes, every day. MOM, of course, I love and miss you, too. And naturally, I wish that both of you were still here. For everyone out in readerland, enjoy June, the summer and for always as long as possible. Also, have a healthy, joyful and safe life ahead, now and forever.

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