

## In Honor of my dad, Edward J. Rodatus -- a love story.



The greatest love story is found in the Bible. For example, read John 3:16 in context by clicking [here](#): For God so loved the world that He gave His own beloved Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Later on I will create another webpage to honor my wife, for we, too, have a story of love that is a direct result of God's love story personally effective in our lives individually and then together in our marriage. To me, Georgia is like an angel sent by God to minister grace, mercy, and compassion, her faithful love expressed to me even when I didn't and still don't deserve it.

I also plan to create a webpage to honor my mom – the most elegant woman I've ever known. She gave me life and love throughout my life. A mother's love is also a gift from God.

My story today is about a man who loved me more than any other man in this world.

This story is about my dad.

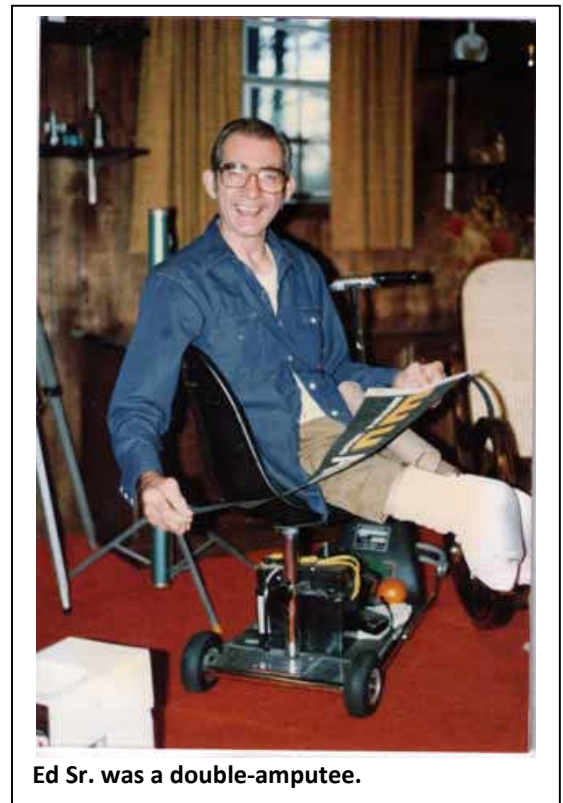
My dad was the most intelligent, hard working, and capable man I've ever met. The technical papers he published as a young engineer are beyond my understanding. When he was disabled having both his legs amputated, he was still more able than anyone I know. While I had 2 healthy legs I struggled to keep up with him when he had no legs.

My dad was also generous, trustworthy, honest, and sincere. He told the truth. He spoke his mind and his heart whenever, wherever, and to whomever he met, sometimes whether they liked it or not. He didn't hold back.

Those who knew of my relationship with my dad may think that either I don't remember or that I've lost my mind, and be extremely surprised at my next statement: My dad was the most kind, forgiving, thoughtful, and loving man than I've known.

Most people thought of him as harsh and I used to agree. When I was a teenager, I hated him--yet I loved him. Mostly, I felt and expressed hatred towards him. And yet I wanted him to show his love for me.

Now, though, I see that he did demonstrate love, very much so, but I couldn't see it at the time. Self--centerness, arrogance, and rebellion blinded me. I didn't see the unique and extensive love that he expressed so many times and in so many ways.



**Ed Sr. was a double-amputee.**



Today we talk about such things as love languages centered on a premise that each person has a love language that others must speak in order to express love to that person. But it may be the other way around. Even when love is expressed correctly for a person it might not be recognized as love. I think of how God perfectly expressed His love to Adam, Israel, to the whole world, and to you and me. But His Word reveals our blindness: "There is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away..."

I'm about to tell you a story that I have never told anyone in my life until just recently. But in order to correctly tell this story about my dad I first need to explain the kind of child that I was at the time of this story.

ADHD was not yet an official diagnosis when I was young,

but I would have been a poster child for it. All I cared about and thought about was myself. My parents suffered immensely because they loved me but I seldom returned their love. Although I was unresponsive and unlovable, they never ceased to show their love for me.



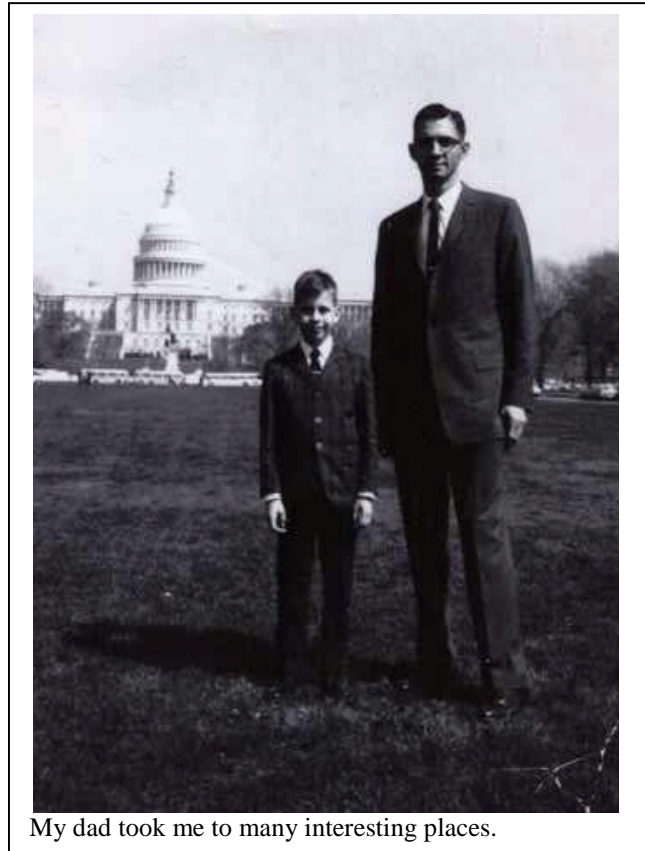
The little guy is me compulsively carrying my umbrella on a sunny day.



Close-up of the infamous, comfort umbrella that I brought with me everywhere. I was *prepared!*

Here are some of the ways that I now recognize how my dad loved me:

- \* My dad encouraged me to become a better person. He demonstrated good character qualities to me throughout his entire life.
- \* My dad introduced me to good things to do. (ham radio, TTL logic, guitar)
- \* My dad taught me many things. (electronics, plumbing, engine repair)
- \* He also taught me good things about character, good work ethic, honesty, etc.
- \* My dad spent (or tried to spend) time with me on many occasions.
- \* My dad spent money on me generously giving me the best toys and even paid my college tuition though I didn't deserve it.
- \* My dad took me to many interesting places.
- \* My dad thought very highly of me and often told others how he was proud of me.
- \* My dad often overlooked my many serious mistakes and shortcomings. He forgave me. Frequently. He had to...



*My dad loved me in many more ways,  
...more than I can count.*

\* Another attribute of both my dad and mom that I should mention in this day of volatile “race” relations is this: Neither my dad or mom were in any way concerned about race, that is, I’ve seen them relate to people of any color with equal consideration and love. This had a huge impact on me growing up but it was subtle. There isn’t a problem when there isn’t a problem. Skin color, and “race” was never an issue in our house.

The reason that I put “race” in quotes is because technically there’s only one race, that is, the human race. All this talk about race is, in effect, racist. Look it up. It was promoted by the nazi fallacy. Anyone who subscribes to race apart from the human race is, well, I would think that they may be a racist. Or they are misinformed. They don’t understand that there is only one race and any other definition of the word “race” is a throwback to the horrible nazi fallacy.

I am still so ashamed and so regret that I did not show my dad that I loved him. That’s in part the reason why I’ve never told the story that you’re about to hear. But there is a happy ending to this.

Those who really know me know how I can strongly resist, even attack a person without realizing fully what I am doing until it’s too late. Thus whenever my parents stood in my way, even when it was for my own good, everyone hid (one way or another) except for my dad. He loved me and didn’t give up on me--or on God.

I have no recollection of what we were arguing about this one day. There were so many heated arguments and I was always in the center of them. In the heat of this major argument with my dad he cried. In tears he told me that he loved me. I yelled at him that he didn’t. Then he did something that nearly crushed me completely..

My dad's hands were seriously disfigured due to a combination of severe rheumatoid arthritis and diabetes. They were knurled & twisted and often had open sores. He had horrible pain--different than mine but no less severe. His hands and joints were painful.

I ran outside to get away from my parents. We were just outside the house and my dad was pleading for me to come inside because I was upsetting my mom so much. He looked at me with tears in his eyes and said, "What do I have to do to show you that I love you?"



Saying that, he picked up a brick and smashed his own hand with it several times. It was a terrible thing to see and it was terrible for him to do it but he desperately wanted to reach me and communicate his love for me. I cried for him to stop.

I don't condone what my dad did that day. He was desperate. But my dad's love--in many ways--reminds me of the cross and my Heavenly Father's perfect love for me. He did not spare His Son. But because he loved me--unlovely, rebellious, and sinful as I was--God gave His Son up to die a terrible death on a cross to redeem and reconcile us to Himself.

The cross is a rough, shameful, hard, and hurtful device--much like a brick.

I've often quietly wondered about what my dad did on that day. It terrified me; It affected me; I was never the same after that. But I still needed one more change. I needed to see Jesus' death on the cross. Just as it was my sin that resulted in the pain that caused my parents to suffer, it was my sin that caused Jesus to die on a cross. For me, both the cross and the brick remind me of the result of my sin.



This is a true and accurate account. I remember it vividly--I will never forget it. There are several lessons that can be learned from this story. I believe that at least one point of this story will encourage you and give you strength. But first I want to share a couple of other points that may be difficult to hear.

My dad wasn't a perfect dad. He made mistakes. I judged him harshly throughout most my life. I was wrong to judge him because that is God's job. I'm usurping God's authority when I judge my dad.

I also won't excuse things he did or try to justify them. That, too, is judging. It's not my place to justify. God is the judge and the One Who justifies.

There are several verses in both the Old and New Testament that speak of a parent's privilege and mandate to train their children. There are ample guidelines, principles, and laws governing their task. The bottom line is this:

"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness."



And "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right."

Children are not to obey parents "for they are right" but because it is right for them to do so. Dads didn't discipline the best but as they thought best. Dads are not perfect but they are nevertheless God's instruments.

Even in harsh circumstances God accomplishes His will. Consider Joseph, hated by his brothers, thrown into a pit left to die, then sold into slavery. Near the end of this story, with tears and with love Joseph tells his brothers, "you meant it for evil but God meant it for good."

This doesn't excuse sin nor do we sin so that grace may abound. But even when family and fathers blow it, even when they are harsh, think, "God meant it for good." It would be very instructive to read the passage in Hebrews 12 in context. [Click here](#). Also read the account in Genesis about Joseph and his family.

Dad & I started getting along better just before he passed away.

As I grow older and become more like my dad, I understand him more and love him more because now I see how very much he loved me, not just in one of 5 languages, but in his own language, imperfect, yes, but, I believe, one born of God.

I'm confident that when I go home to Heaven, my dad will be there. We will look at each other and smile, because we will both be worshipping the same God—Who is love.

I want to make one point which should be applicable to the rest of us who live in my dad's heritage:

God has given everyone a unique language of love with which to speak.

1st Peter 4:10 & 11 says this: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." Note that various forms means many forms, not just 5 or some other finite number. It goes on:

"If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen."

Our family may not hug each other as much as some other families do. I now wish that I had encouraged hugging more. Yet I see a deep, deep love expressed uniquely by each of my children.

Loyalty, self-discipline, obedience, compassion, faithfulness, and so many other godly aspects of one's character express love. I see these traits in each of my children and many other good character traits as well. In spite of what I thought when I was young, I see now that it was my dad (and mom!) who taught me these things.

You should remember, my children, that not everyone in the world will recognize your love, just as I did not see my dad's love. God loved the world yet men did not seek Him. As Jesus said, "This is my command: Love one another. If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first."

Don't allow the hatred of the world to prevent you from loving others with God's love that is in you.

Keep on loving with the gift and power that God has given you. Don't ever give up even if your closest friends don't understand you, or don't return your love, or even if they forsake you. People may malign you, slander you, hate you, and even seek to destroy you. But don't give up. Love.

My dad never gave up on me even though I attacked him in hatred. That is the nature and character of God—and that the calling for all who are in Christ.

I love my dad and I soon will be able to tell him myself.

I love you dad.

Ed Rodatus, Jr.

