

From Irene to Michael
Memorial 8/21/16

My husband, Michael Slater, was a remarkable man. You will be hearing from several people today who will talk about some of the ways he impacted them and the world.

But today I would like to talk about what Michael was to me, and I to him. **We made a good team.** When we first fell in love, we fell hard! I'm sure I was attracted to his boundless but quiet confidence, his intelligence, and his dry wit. He was cute, too. I think he was attracted to me because I was smart enough to get the gist of even fairly technical discussions, and asked good questions. He appreciated my warmth of character, and that even if timid, I was always game to try something new, whether it be going to fancy restaurants, quite intimidating to me at that time, or learning to sail so we could rent a boat by ourselves in the Caribbean. Oh, and he thought I was pretty cute, too. **We made a good team.**

A year or more later, we decided to marry and commit to one another. We made the decision and then had the rockiest month of our relationship to date! But by the end of that month we were sure we wanted to go ahead. And the years and experiences began to roll. One thing we shared was a love of nature. We both loved collecting rocks and mineral specimens and rare shells. We joined our collections and added special things over the years. I taught him the names and habits of birds, and he taught me the names of flowers and plants. I taught him to watch for interesting roadside geology, and he taught me about boating. We went backpacking together. **We made a good team.**

Over the years we loved to travel together - we took several great vacations, mostly boating, in truth, because it was the only reliable way for Michael to detach from his business and work brain and really relax. Even overnights on the bay on our boat had that effect. We both loved to learn the history of the places we went, whether it was 30 minutes away from home or across the ocean. I was the cautious one, and he was the one to

jump in without always considering the consequences. He wanted to be visible and I was more comfortable with invisibility. We tended to balance each other, I with my rich inner life and he with his rich outer life. I brought him more inward and he brought me out. We were both insatiably curious about any number of things and enjoyed sharing our finds with each other. **We made a good team.**

There were other things we shared. An abiding love of cats - my Strider joined his Sarah & Jackson when we moved in together. Then a decade and more later, we added a dog to the mix, our dear departed Shasta and now Rio. There were more things: Michael loved to hear me sing, I loved to see and hear him speak to his conferences or classes - he came alive when speaking publicly. He loved to write and I loved to edit. He loved to create and I loved to facilitate. He loved to start businesses and I was good at the administrative details. We both loved listening to good music. Mostly, we just liked each other and were happiest in each other's company. He wasn't afraid to be affectionate wherever we were and so holding hands, and arms around each other was commonplace for us. I treasure those memories. **We made a good team.**

As with every relationship, it wasn't always easy and happy. Our experiences and worldviews were sometimes at odds. Our saving grace was that we both wanted to become the best people we could be. We each did individual psychotherapy several times over the years to that end, and a few times we did couples counseling as well. All our learnings, and reading about what makes a good relationship and what doesn't, helped us grow within ourselves and with each other. I always appreciated that Michael was willing to be called on his "stuff" and really think about it and make a change, as was I. We got better at resolving our differences over time. **We really did make a good team.**

We also shared a desire for children, specifically two, preferably one boy and one girl. When we were unable to conceive we explored adoption and were so fortunate to find two situations for private adoption that brought us first, Gregory, in 1990, and then Mandy in 1996. Stating the facts is far

easier than living through the emotional roller coaster of that time. But our kids brought so much to our lives! We both love them to the moon and back and are so proud of who they each have become as adults. But of course, finding common ground in parenting was sometimes a challenge. By that time, though, we had learned a great deal about ourselves and each other and it made it easier to navigate the waters of parenthood. We respected each other's opinion and were mostly able to talk, think, talk again, and then decide. We learned that sometimes one person had a strong preference and the other didn't, so that was how we decided. Sometimes we had to agree to not agree and find a way to move on. He learned to trust my intuition and emotional intelligence, and I valued his ability to think through a situation and get to the heart of the matter every time. **Here too we made a good team.**

Michael was a wonderful Dad, striving to be there for the kids as much as possible. Supporting their interests, whether it was coming to watch Mandy's skating performances, or helping Gregory build his magic prop creations, and of course he was their IT Guy, too.

Michael was so tender and loving and supportive to me and the kids. It is more than hard to lose my teammate, my companion, and my beloved. But I treasure everything he brought to my life from his abiding love to all the different kinds of adventures we shared. I will hold him in my heart forever.

Thank you.