

Vestry March 20th, 2019

So, I have had the kids since Friday for the long weekend as my wife was in New York city for the Art Fair. Friday, I decide to take them to Chestnut Hill park down the street. As I am pulling out of the drive way looking left and right, which is important for later, I get the following question from my 6-year-old son, with my 5-year-old daughter also in the car.

Dad, who am I supposed to Love More? Dad or God?

Ponder that?

I Thanked God he asked that because I realized I have my reflection on Wednesday for Vestry which I have been dodging for a while, as I have zero creativity and zero story telling skills.

Who am I supposed to Love More? Dad or God?

I was truly stumped for a good minute, First I think my son's memory is a steal trap and Second anything I say he will remember it that way, so I figured I need to get this right.

How do I straddle this between **ego**, of course you love Dad more than God? And **religion** and what we hear in Church. Mark is **not** up there at the alter saying love your parents **FIRST** and if you have time God and Jesus are a good back up. But then you start thinking, what does my son do when I am not around? Whether I am **gone gone**, or sent to Shady Acres, or mentally not there which invariably happens. **So relatively quickly, I said you can love Dad more when I am around to help you and when I am not around you can love God more to look out for you.** As I have learned over the years, God is always around, and as much as you want your parents around that changes over time fortunately or unfortunately. I have used church as a place to find inner power and strength to do the right thing, to pray for those in ill health. My mother installed in me this power of prayer for health and healing. After 4 surgeries in the last 4 years I think she needs to do better job of praying, just joking.

My wife and I first got engaged and married we went by the motto. **The other person comes first.** Followed by the kids and then the family and friends. It has been pretty good rule for the past 10 years. **But as we all wonder what does it**

mean to come first? There are times when first is not as important to one person versus the other. It has only taken me 40 plus years to figure this out. It requires both sides to realize that; and give in when something is more important to the kids, friends or family on a relative sense. It gets tricky but if you can understand someone else's predicament you are better able to decide of who should come **first**. Too often people make hard and fast judgement which we have seen way to often the last 20 years, on both sides of the aisle politically and personally as I have seen to many friends and family getting divorced this year.

Which leads me to my finally point. We all need to slow down and think of the other person **first**. Now, I should be the last person to say this to anyone, slowing down, most of you have only seen me as I am over 50. Growing up, I only had two speeds on and off, as my mother used to say just LAND! Like a fly, you get the point. Somehow, we all need to think of different perspectives and realize we can't always win and be first.

So, this past New Year's Eve, we were celebrating with a German Family that we have been with the last three years in Mamaroneck, but we had just gotten back from Germany the day before and we were getting tired with the jet lag and didn't want the kids to get sick like they usually do returning from Germany. We are getting off exit 34 on the Merritt going North, I look at the clock it is 11:58 we might just make it back home for a Midnight kiss, while the kids are passed out in the back seat. We have a green light at the bottom of the hill, and I am ready to go through the light, it had been green for a while, as I approach the light for some reason I stopped the car and in my periphery a car comes flying from under the Merritt going downtown and blows right through the red light. My wife and I looked at each other and just started shaking, I didn't know the phrase till later but **God's Wink** was there for us. Not everyone is first all the time, but at that moment in time me and my family were first in God's eyes or things would have been very different for each of us going into 2019. How and why I slowed down and stopped rather than blowing through that light quickly like I usually do, I can only guess God's wink slowed me down for a change, I didn't have to be first that night. Thank God!