

Thank you all so much for being here. My parents and I are very grateful for your love and support.

Mike was my older brother. We were born exactly twenty months apart. His life impacted mine in more ways than I can articulate. I realize this is true for most sibling relationships.

Mike's illness made it unimaginably difficult and scary for him to navigate this world. It was impossible for him to communicate what he needed, or to find peace. Only recently have I realized the courage it must have taken for him to stay with us, on this earth, as long as he did. I wish I could have seen this sooner; that I could have provided more empathy and support. Now I see that he was doing the best he could. He was brave.

I also believe, with all of my heart, that it was the remarkable compassion, support, and love of our parents that allowed my brother to perhaps find some peace in these last, calmer years of his life. There is absolutely nothing my parents did not do- or did not try to do—to help Mike. Even when people (and this often included me) told them not to, or told them to let go. It never occurred to them to do anything but love him. Mike knew that he was loved.

I am awed by what you did for him; by your bravery, and by how hard you worked to do right by your son—even when this seemed impossible. Mike was desperately unlucky to have such a terrible illness, but he was very lucky to be your son. And I am very lucky to be your daughter. Thank you for all that you have taught me, and Sam and Annie, about love.

I feel great sorrow that my brother was not able to find real peace in his lifetime. It's not fair. Most of us in this room know the feeling of contentment or joy that comes to us in certain moments—however fleeting or ordinary. We know what it is to walk through the world feeling whole; feeling connected and understood. Perhaps the best way we can honor Mike's life is to be more aware of these moments of peace; to be grateful for our ability to experience them. To know that feeling loved and understood is an extraordinary gift.

To Mike: I am sorry for your pain. You will always be loved. May you finally rest in peace.