

A week ago I made a promise to my dad that he wouldn't be alone, afraid or in pain. Together with my family I fulfilled that promise yesterday morning when he passed away.

When I arrived in Newport last week, I wasn't ready to let him go but slowly I came to accept that it was time for him to be at peace, and be with my Mam and brother. I've been doing the night/morning shift - and every night my midnight callers (my nephew who is the same age as me and his girlfriend), arrived to make sure that I wasn't alone. Some would say Carl, is the "black sheep" in the family, and I used to joke that I was the "white sheep" having been the first to attend university and move away – I suppose I was a bit of a goody-two-shoes, but that is all relative, and if any of you know me or my family you'll know I didn't have to be *that* good to get my title. My dad loved Carl unconditionally and no matter what he had done, he always had a home with my dad, even at his worst.



During the night I had a heart-to-heart with my semi-conscious dad and told him, we would all be ok, that we had people that loved us to look after us. I said that I am ready now, and he didn't have to worry about us anymore – he even turned his head and looked at me for the first time in days. I then laid my head down and was woken at 6.30 to be told that he was going – I sat up and he breathed his last breathe. It sounds like a film script, but every word is true. I feel as though, knowing that I wouldn't be able to function for much longer on only 3 hours of sleep a day, he waited until I'd had a kip.

For the last 8 days he has been surrounded by family and friends and the room was filled with laughter and shared memories. Some would say at 88 he'd had a good life – he did – and I know, in time I will probably say the same thing, but it's raw and hurts like hell.

Mel Muldowney

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