

Maddie's speech

Leif came into my life in a flurry of light and noise when he approached me at a music festival and asked what my scrabble high score was. As someone who didn't know people kept track of their Scrabble scores, I lied, made up a number. It turned out to be perfect; not so high as to be unrealistic, not so low as to be unimpressive. He insisted we have a game. He quickly found out I was not very good at scrabble at all, but somehow, we remained friends, and before I knew it, housemates.

Over the course of living with Leif, he brought out the absolute best in me. He had within him a spirit many of us possess but we do not express, perhaps constrained by anxieties of social repercussions. But Leif was not restrained by anxieties. He was not restrained by anything. He was free and expressed how grateful he was for such freedom every second he was alive by expressing this unbridled spirit. I believe that is one of the reasons so many people are drawn to him.

Leif and I used to get home late at night, sit on the kitchen floor, eat roast vegetables and ask hypotheticals a lot. I remember one time one of the hypotheticals being along the lines of: "would you trade one year of your life for a million dollars?" to which Leif replied "no WAY man, I wouldn't trade a million dollars for a DAY."

He did reconsider after assessing how useful all of that money could be in land care. But the point is, that boy wanted to squeeze every drop out of life that he possibly could. He lived by his convictions with every ounce of himself and taught me (and probably all of you) a lot in the process.

Leif taught me to stay passionate.

His passion and drive reminded me that each of us truly have the power to change the world. I've always been an environmentalist at heart, but Leif reminded me how important it was to be an environmentalist in mind, body and spirit too. Not one of us is a stranger to the unconfounded altruistic activism he implemented anywhere he could. I realise now that this activism has profoundly inspired the way I have grown in the last couple of years. Always striving to do my best, for myself and for the world.

He taught me to never sit idle, and not to make excuses for reasons you could not take action. One of my favourite memories with Leif is a speedy speedy trip to Yorke, my little car packed to the roof with camping gear and 200 plants. We had about one night and one day to somehow plant a couple hundred trees, surf a couple hundred waves, visit every single beach in the national park at least once, and make it back to Adelaide to in time to catch the tail end of a concert we had scored tickets to. Of course, we loved every second.

Leif taught me to keep learning.

His intellect gave me a fresh perspective and reminded me to engage my brain to the best of its capacity. Leif undervalued his intelligence so much because he didn't have some university degree, but he was undoubtedly much smarter than the vast majority of people who go to uni.

He would so often barge into my room with questions and hypothetical debates.

"Mads, who do you think can name the most Australian PM's in two minutes?"

When Ryan moved in, the boys were unstoppable. There were a few evenings where I would try unsuccessfully to concentrate on my study while Leif and Ryan excitedly played 'name this native' on my bed. I didn't have the heart to tell them to get out, they were so excited.

He was constantly expanding his sphere of knowledge of the world. Whether it be from one of the podcasts constantly playing in his ears, a book he was keenly reading (and instagramming along the way), a

conversation he was acutely engaged in, or the greatest teacher of all; mother nature, Leif was always learning.

Leif taught me to seek joy.

His spirit reignited the joyous child inside of me, excited about the things that are truly excitable. It is so rare to come across a soul with such purity of spirit, unimpeded like a child. He always sought the most joyous and adventurous state of being.

A prime example of this is a rainy night in **October** last year. The sky was raining, the air was freezing, but most importantly; the river was flowing. My friends and I were sitting at home, insistent about being a bit tired and needing a night in. But he convinced us all to not be so boring, for the storm drains under the city had turned into free waterpark. We spent the night sliding down the freezing tunnels in the rain and being reminded of what a joy it is to be alive.

Leif taught me to care.

While courtesy and social pleasantries might not have been Leif's strong suit, he was an incredibly caring individual. In a manner that was genuinely selfless, he cared for his environment, his world, and the people in his life. Yes, he was constantly late and sometimes hard to get a hold of, but when I needed someone to pick me up from the middle of nowhere drive me home at 3 in the morning, I knew who to call. Even if he had to be up for work at 6 in the morning, he would always keep his phone on so he could respond to someone's calls if they needed him.

He truly just wanted to share the joy he experienced. Every day when the housemates would get home, he would ask us all what the highlights of our day were. Whenever he would go to Foodland across the road, he would ask the checkout chicks what their highlights of the day were too. If he was meeting someone new at a party, he would ask them what the highlight of their day was too, right after asking who they banked with.

I am so grateful for all of his teachings; I will carry them with me for the rest of my life. Events like this tragedy, they put things in perspective. But Leif had a way of putting things in perspective just by being him. He was so in love with this wild and precious life in the purest sense that time in his company felt focussed on the reality of what matters, distant from the superficialities of society.

We are so lucky to have had the pleasure of seeing the world in the light he was brought with him. This light cannot be clouded by death. It will live on within each of us and stay upon the earth's surface even after we have taken our dying breaths.