

Our better angels are those who can transform crisis, tragedy, and even death into moments and gifts that bring joy and life to those who remain. This is why I have always admired transplant teams, organ donors, and donors' generous families. They bring joy and life born out of their tragedies to those who remain. As a transplant recipient (corneal transplant), I have enjoyed much improved eyesight for a number of years; I know firsthand the joyous gifts of better angels.

I say this by way of introducing you to one of my own better angels, Maggie Rose. I first met this remarkable woman nearly a decade ago when I worked for her in a sales position with a large national consulting firm. I wasn't much of a salesman, and she knew that, but she gave me a chance at a time when I needed a chance. I didn't last long with that company, but our friendship has remained solid ever since.

In my darkest hours, I reached out for the hand of a friend, and it was Maggie Rose's hand that was there for me. She dropped everything she was doing and rushed to my side. She held me up and loved me through a dark valley. On the other side, I emerged to a new life that eventually included attaining my masters in social work and a doctorate in the same field. Today, I teach social work at a state university. Students benefit from my life's experiences and my education. They don't know that they have Maggie Rose to thank for those gifts as much as anyone. She was the "transplant doctor" that brought about this change.

Here, in these few brief pages, you are going to meet people from all walks of life. Each has taken on the care of an aging parent or spouse. Each is reaching out in the darkness for help, for wisdom, or for courage. The hand they touch is Maggie Rose's hand. She shares her wondrous wisdom and her remarkable courage with each of them – and now with me and with you. Her thoughts come not from a textbook but from the hard school of life. You will hear the story of her own mother's stroke. You will learn how love and forgiveness and second chances can change our destinies, as Maggie Rose changed hers and her mother's destinies.

Above all else, you are about to meet a friend. One of the real joys of my life has always been sharing friends – that delicious moment when you introduce one friend to another, knowing that both of their lives are about to be greatly enhanced by the synergies of new friendships forged. In this short introduction, I have the great pleasure to introduce you to a new friend – one of my oldest and dearest friends – the inimitable, indefatigable Maggie Rose.

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