

Reflections on Aaron

Eric Herman

Aaron and I were close friends for just short of ten years. Over the course of this past decade, he and I traveled together through five different countries, performed music together, and shared many of the best times of our lives. We laughed a lot together - I think we packed a century's worth of laughs into this past decade. Aaron had an infectious laugh - it was a wonderful gift. Just one of many...

Anyone that met Aaron, even if they only met him once or twice, could tell that he was an original in the truest sense of the word. I always admired Aaron for his ability to defy conformity - social, cultural, aesthetic - wherever the pressure to conform presented itself, Aaron would exert an equal and opposite force to repel it. He didn't need the direction of others, nor did he need their approval. He knew what he liked and, perhaps more poignantly, he knew what he didn't like. And he was anything but shy about making sure you knew exactly what he liked, and exactly what he didn't like. One of the things that I consider most remarkable about Aaron was this unabashed honesty - he would speak his mind regardless of the context -- and where honesty was most controversial or uncomfortable to address - when most of us would dare not breathe a word - that is precisely when Aaron would take it upon himself to tell it like it is. Where anyone else would hide from the elephant in the room, Aaron would leap directly on its back and tug at its ears. I loved that about him. His courageous candor not only illuminated the humor in all aspects of life, it challenged all of us around him to be more honest - with others and with ourselves.

But Aaron's courage ran much deeper than that. The bravery, patience, determination and grace with which he lived these past years were utterly astonishing. While most of us find plenty of occasion to complain about our lives and lament all that we don't have, Aaron had the true license to lament and complain. But he never did. Ever. To put it into context, I never once heard him complain about having to undergo brain surgeries and chemo therapy regimens, whereas I can remember him complaining about Doro playing the least cool Phish album on at least thirty-six separate occasions during the course of our freshman year. Wherever it really counted, Aaron had a thoroughly positive outlook on life and he inspired others to share it. While it makes me almost too sad to bare thinking of the extraordinary friend that we have lost, I cant help but smile and marvel at all we have gained having Aaron in our lives to show us what loyalty, bravery, honesty, and inspiration truly mean. Our lives are gifts nothing short of miracles, made so much richer for having had the chance to share them with Aaron.