

**Dad**  
Andrew Richman

My father loved to eat. He was a brilliant man working to solve some of societies most intractable problems. But one of the things that made him most happy was a simple hamburger.

And one of the cruelest things about his disease is that for the last four months of his life he couldn't eat anything. And for some reason that no one really understood, the few things he could drink tasted terrible.

My dad did not complain. Instead he asked us for a play-by-play of what we were eating. As you can imagine, this drove us a little crazy, but he was somehow able to get some small pleasure from our experience.

But then about three weeks ago, when it was clear that he did not have a whole lot of time left, he went into home hospice. They changed his medications and he felt, for the moment, a little bit better. And, at that point, the most amazing thing happened, his taste buds came back. I'll never forget his first glass of water. He took a sip, and he didn't know what was coming, but it tasted good. This huge smile came across his face and he was happy. His body was falling apart around him, and all he knew was that he was drinking the best glass of water he had ever had.. And for those last few weeks, he had water, he had lemonade, orangeade and even a little bit of hot chocolate. And each time he had a drink, it was bliss.

And just as he focused on the water, not the pain, he spent his last year and a half focusing on his life, not his loss. More than anyone I know, my dad deserved 20 more years. Years of students, colleagues, grandchildren and, most importantly, marriage. But he didn't worry about this. Over and over he said to us "I've had a good life, and it's OK". My dad died too soon but he had lived the life he wanted to live and he died content. So the best thing we can do, is learn one more lesson from Professor Richman and through our sadness and loss, revel in the bliss of the 72 years that we got.