

## IN MEMORY



### Tommy V. had a way

To the community,

I never really thought about it before, but the last couple of days made me realize that Tommy V. had a way,

A way to make you smile, a way to make you laugh (uncontrollably at times), a way to make you think, a way to make you care, a way to make you love, a way to make you feel, a way to make you see, listen, deal, want, give, and so on and so on. It was a way, so subtle that I didn't even realize it. It is only now with the flood of memories that each encounter was actually a lesson. Only now, I learned.

**LESSON- Time, Quality Time**

I guarantee that on Tommy's last Friday, like so many other days forgotten, Tommy V. gave quality time to a lot of people. How you ask, there is only so much time in a day. Only so many places a person could be.

But it was in that short amount of time that he spent with you, that was packed with so much quality. It was you he was with, no one else. Even if it were just a couple of minutes. And later that night when he didn't show up at one of the many places he said he might go, he was there, because you were thinking of him. He was everywhere Friday night, like so many other forgotten nights.

**LESSON- Laughter**

That's a given! If you didn't laugh with Tommy V. you didn't know Tommy V.

**LESSON- Priorities**

It was always good to be with Tommy V. when you had to make a decision on responsibilities or fun. It was the way he said "f—k it" have fun, responsibilities will always be there.

**LESSON- The line (I wish I didn't say that)**

The verbal line that most of

us cross, is a thin line for us because we can't see it. That same line for Tommy V. was as wide as a street. It was his playground, he could say something shocking, but before you could even register it, you would be laughing about something else. His quick wit allowed him to play on that line with out ever really crossing it. Imagine big Tommy V. playing on our thinnest tight rope.

**LESSON-There is one lesson you seem to repeat more than others—the "you're never as tough as you think you are" lesson.**

One of the first was when I went to visit Tommy & the family in "Watsonville", which coming from Crested Butte seemed to be the low rider capital of the world. I tagged along with him & the Crew. The Crew: baggy pants, all ironed with a crease in the front & one up the back, no wrinkles. Pendleton shirt only buttoned at the top few buttons, ironed. Underneath, a white T-shirt, ironed. Shiny shoes. And my favorite, the finger comb in the back pocket. I remember thinking, they should just leave it on their finger, because it came out every 30 seconds to comb their hair straight back...unless you were wearing a hair net. A tough Crew, any one of them looked like they could kill you. And then, there were the guys. I tagged along, doing the day to day things, checking every car door (to see if it was unlocked) on the way to the arcade. Standing outside, toes pointed out, leaning slightly back. Throwing hard looks at the cars that passed. I didn't fit in wearing my wrinkled T-shirt, tennis shoes, and Tough Skin Jeans. But I was family & it was O.K. I remember taking off at a full

sprint, jumping fences, down alleys, quick strange short cuts, every time someone yelled "la whoda" (English pronunciation). That would be "The police" for my friends! In the evening we would hang out in the alley where the boxing gloves would come out. Starting with the youngest Vatos first. Yes, Michael was there, fine tuning his skills on friends and family. The gloves came around to Tommy and I. I thought "Wow, this is going to be fun, whipping up on my younger cousin, with out getting in trouble!" It came apparent real quick, that Tommy was no longer the Tommy Turtle I knew! Cousin Joey, you taught him well. Lesson learned...No. Lesson Remembered...100%.

**LESSON- Love**

Tommy V. loved, in every way. It's so obvious, just look around. (I read this at the park, after the service, where hundreds of people showed up & stayed on a very cold day) Our family is full of love. (Our lives are shattered at this moment) And so are many of yours. We will all heal, some faster than others. Everyone deals differently in situations like this, please respect that. But do not forget the Love. There are many people Tommy affected that don't know members of our family. Please, feel free to give any of us a huge hug. You don't have to say a word, just feel the Love. That's what Tommy V. would like, especially if you're cute!

There are so many more lessons. I just didn't have time to write them down. I have kept very busy; it's my way of dealing.

Tommy V. I Love & miss you, so very much, Cousin David V.

