

Mary's Fight

by Mary Vivenzi

Introduction:

Some may wonder why I chose to publish this letter on a support line. As I have said many times before... We are here for accountability, validation, knowledge and support. This letter is an example of how frustrating and debilitating this process can be and what workplace deaths do to all of us at some point (at least).

Why is this so important? The best example that I could come up with is: I ask my son over and over again to please wait on the crossing guard. He knows to wait on her, I know I have told him and there are school rules telling him to wait. My son still starts to walk right out into traffic and many times I have had to be there and save his little hinny. Employers have been told and told of the rules, know the rules and acknowledge them still they proceed and the result is the death of another. A preventable death that no one is responsible for because of a loop hole or their claim of ignorance (which by the way is never a good excuse for the general population).

Betsy's word of encouragement: "Enjoy what we have because everything is changing every day. I will see him again because I know he is waiting for me. I know he is watching me and I know every time I see a sunset he is smiling down on me. For this phase in my life I have some things to do and I can't do them if I have a dark heart."

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Today marks the third anniversary of Kevin's death. After falling to his death (on August. 13, 2002 at 9:15 am) working on the golden gate bridge for Shimmick/Obayashi's (joint venture of phase 2 of the seismic retrofit). As I try to look back to that horrific moment when I learned for the first time that my life, the lives of my children and so many others had in a moment's time had been changed forever. Reflecting on what has changed between that day and this, I see nothing.

All the emotions are still there from the pain that was expected. To the anger that most rejected, as if we were not allowed to display anger for fear of falling on deaf ears and would undoubtedly be mistaken for blame. The media and those who knew what was happening refused to speak. I remember all the letters I had written to the media in a desperate attempt to expose the truth of what the company had not said in their typical statement given to the media following Kevin's death. That did nothing more than lead the general public to believe there was a fatal accident because the company was looking into whether the victim had been properly tied off. Which successfully led the public to believe that Kevin was indeed to blame. This is an all too commonly used trick that the corporate world uses to gently shift blame giving them the opportunity to quietly clean up the mess and any responsibility they may have had in it.

I remember each response I got from the media. Most of them were the same a quick apology followed by were sorry but we can't help you at this point because without solid proof everything your saying is nothing more than hearsay. I remember the tortured feeling of helplessness that overwhelmed me after being told by Michael Cabanatuan of the S. F. Chronicle that I was nothing more than a hurt angry soul overcome with grief placing blame in order to make sense out of something I could never possibly hope to understand. Which at the time felt like the cruelest most heartless words anyone could ever say to another person in my situation.

It took me some time to come to grips with the fact that those words would soon become a blessing of sorts to me. ALONG WITH THE VERY THING THAT HAS THE POWER TO KEEP ME GOING WHEN GIVING UP SEEMS TO BE THE EASIER CHOICE BY FAR. It was never me who didn't understand or needed to place blame. It was him he was the one who didn't have a clue choosing to look the other way making up his mind to remain blissfully unaware of the pain he helped to create. Ultimately he helped me come to understand that in every profession there are those who show up because they want to be the best at what they do and there are those who show up just for the check. My point

being that no matter who says what or who does nothing at all in the end it is up to each of us on our own to keep on trying instead of allowing the negligence of others to cause us to choose to just lay down and die.

3 year's have passed and nothing has changed and getting over it has not occurred to me as ever being a choice only a sign of weakness. Bottom line is although the fight in front of me is a long hard uphill battle. I have made a choice not to back down. And although I have frequently been ambushed by lies and negativity I tread on and against even the worst possible odds I will not budge an inch. Because in the end I will be able to say even if I am unsuccessful in making change I did the right thing. My friend's are all that matter. I Love You Kevin Scott Noah now and forever.

~Mary