

## BUSINESS EYE

# A tribute to my dad

WRITTEN BY

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**T**his week's plea for more kindness and mutual respect comes to you from my stepmother's living room couch in St Andrews, Scotland.

It is Saturday evening and we have just endured four hours of the funeral director's conversion process. It comes to about £4,500 for a basic funeral, if you are interested.

On Thursday, November 21, 2019, just before midnight, my dear dad finally gave up the

ghost and breathed his final breath, just minutes before my stepmother could get to him in the care home he had moved to after becoming bed-ridden three years ago.

Dad died alone but without pain in his sleep and he had seen many of his family in recent weeks.

Dad could be a difficult man. As a boy I often struggled with us, but then I was a wilful son. We had a few years when we were estranged.

I will always remember the day when he broke the deadlock and drove up to Scotland and apologised to me in tears.

In that moment, I felt cut to my core because I suddenly realised that it was me and not him who was the problem.

It was the moment when I understood just how much he loved me, and I loved him more for it.

In latter years we spent a lot of time together.

He had always wanted to go

to the Grand Canyon and the feeling of swooping down in a helicopter knowing I'd made his life-long dream come true somehow felt like some minor payback for my lack of respect and appreciation as a teenager.

He also loved our day trip to the Robbie Burns Museum in Ayr: 'O wad some Power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!'

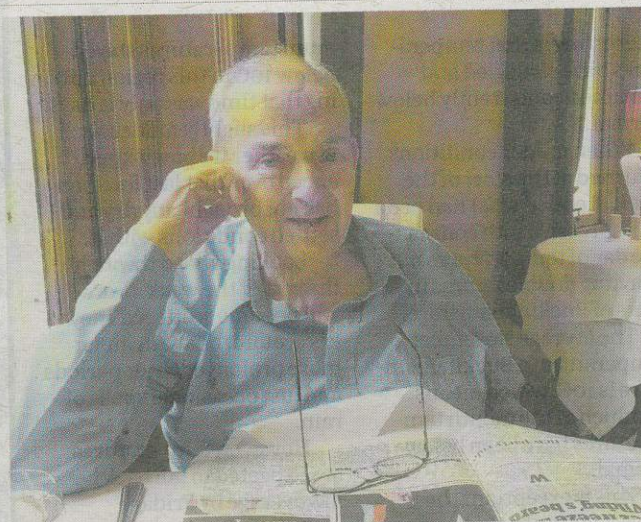
He struggled all his life to become more than he started out as, something which he bred into me and which he achieved.

He was generous and kind and we often laughed together about just how difficult he was to be with.

Len was most difficult with those he loved the most, but his heart was huge... as was his belly.

His best quality was his enduring sense of humour.

He got so much right and, of course, plenty wrong, as do we all.



Alex Pratt pays tribute to his dad, Leonard John Pratt, pictured.

Once I had accepted him for who he was and stopped wishing for someone else, we got on like a house on fire.

We loved each other deeply. We were proud of each other.

I think his proudest moment was when I told him of

his grandson's GCSE results at AGS. It felt to him like validation and had been worth the tough journey.

He was often outrageous, usually funny, very creative, hard-working, a great singer.

I cannot express how much it hurts to lose him.

When we last parted, we shared that last lingering smile and look together without words that whispered 'I know' to each other.

Back to the couch. Dad used to invite in Jehovah's Witnesses and door-to-door salespeople to argue the toss with them.

I explained to the funeral director that his conversion process of filling in all the eight forms, using empathy, and triggering influencing forces such as the consistency, scarcity and reciprocity principles, before mentioning the costs at the end when we'd lost the will to live, was text-book consumer manipulation.

It was pure sales value maximisation under the camouflage of 'sincere empathy' directed at people at their most vulnerable, and I told him so before negotiating a £400 reduction.

I thought I could hear the old man say, 'Well done son'.  
RIP Leonard John Pratt.