

# Timothy valente

[Family](#), [Father](#)



Timothy Valente Who Am I...? I would consider this question not completely answered until my time here on earth is complete. Especially given the circumstances of my life at this moment, I'd have to say that if I were to die tomorrow, I would not be satisfied or serene with how things turned out. So let's pray I have some time to reflect on my past mistakes, learn from them, and try to use them constructively in helping others so they don't have to go through what I have during my twenty four years of living. I was born on October 24th during the year of 1988, to my mother Lauren DiBenedetti and my father Raymond Valente in the wonderful state of Massachusetts. My parents ended up being better as friends rather than spouses. They were only married for a few years and got divorced when I was around two years old. Soon after, possibly too soon, Mom remarried a gentleman by the name of Gary Maltz. He ended up having a tremendous impact on me. Dad also got remarried, but unfortunately set a world record for shortest marriage ever; it lasted a whopping two weeks. I lived with my mother and stepfather in a little town in Massachusetts called Bolton. I stayed with them Monday through Friday so I could get an education in a smaller school system. During the weekends I would stay with my father in Natick and play hockey for a variety of different teams depending on my age. On July 9th 1993, I was blessed to have a sister enter my life. For some reason I was upset about it at the time, although I don't recall the details of the resentment. I'm sure it had something to do with the fact I was not the center of attention anymore. Hayley Matlz, born to my mother and Gary, is technically my half-sister, but in my opinion if the word sister has to be described as half, it means I must love her twice as much as normal people love theirs. She's an amazing

person, and one of the strongest people I've ever met. She has been through quite a few trials and tribulations throughout her young life, but thankfully dealt with them much better than I ever did. I'm going to fast forward a little bit to the first monumental point of my life that forever changed what things could have been, what they were, and what they ended up being. On September 17th, 1999 I went for a traditional visit to my father's house for the weekend. Rather than taking me to hockey practice like we usually did, he took me to the mall and we had matching bracelets made and he bought me a couple video games. I found this odd, but was reluctant to express my curiosity in such a fashion that it would make me seem ungrateful or unappreciative. I remember sitting in the driveway with him, talking about something much too deep for my liking. This was the icing on the cake so to speak. The day had been so strange and unpredictable up to this point that I actually ended up predicting what the point of it all was. Let me elaborate a little bit. Sometime during our emotional talk sitting in the car, I just threw it out there, not knowing the gravity of what I was saying. I interrupted my father midsentence and said, "Dad... what are you dying or something?" A question in which I was half kidding, half trying to lighten the mood. It wasn't until he started crying and replied, "Yea T-Man I am..." This was a pivotal moment for not only myself but for everyone that was a part of his life. I was eleven at the time, and had just found out that my father had been diagnosed with stage four throat cancer, and he was now about to start a journey through hell, that neither of us were ready for. He started both chemotherapy and radiation to battle the cancer, and during all of it he told me he'd beat it. I was a firm believer that he was stronger than the disease

and demon inside of him, and honestly thought he could conquer it. This was the first time I had ever expected the best and received the worst. He fought a long and hard fight. Gave it everything he had, but in the end he did not prevail. He died exactly a year after he broke the tragic news to me on September 17th, 2000. I don't know what's harder, watching someone you love die slowly... Or having someone you love die quickly, without getting a chance to say goodbye? Some questions don't have answers. Yet some have answers that you'd be better off not knowing. I tend to dwell on the past more than I should. I frequently look at a situation in which I've made a choice and wonder, did I make the right one? Could I have done that better? Would things be different had I? Where would I be now, given those circumstances? What I've come to realize after years and years of wasted time, thought, and effort put into it is: It really doesn't matter in the long run, because that's not where I am or what I did. I can't change the past but I also don't wish to shut the door on it. I can only change what's happening right now. Had I known what I know now, at that time, life would have been a lot less difficult. However, I believe walking the path of least resistance isn't as simple as people claim it to be. I watched my father lose his hair, weight, and worst of all, his ability to enjoy the things he loved doing. I witnessed him feed himself through a tube in his stomach, have his tongue cut out, and deteriorate into nothing compared to the man he was before. I spent the last six months of his life talking to him through a computer screen because he was unable to speak. I would have loved to say goodbye, and should have, but couldn't fathom losing him no matter how far down the mountain he fell. My mother and stepfather tried to prepare me for his loss by telling me from

the beginning that he wasn't going to make it. They insisted he was too sick to be fixed, and it was only a matter of time. It seems to me that they were trying to give me the opportunity to be able to say my goodbyes, but I wasn't having it. My dad continued to tell me to have hope, and that he would prevail. If only his words were the truth. I tried to ease the pain of his passing away so many different ways that listing them would probably fill the minimum requirements required for this paper. So I'm only going to get into a few of them: I would try to completely avoid places, people, and things that reminded me of him. I would cut myself until the point where I bled out the pain. My rationality was that if I had physical pain rather than emotional, and I could see it dripping down my arm, I had a reason to hurt. Neither of these worked for long because people either noticed my scars, or I ran into situations that reminded me of him anyways. I tried running away for a long time, but what I've come to believe is, some things cannot be run from, only faced and fought. The third way that I coped with the misery of what happened, and the one that has been the most important and influential in my life, was drugs and alcohol. I started masking my emotions with poison when I was twelve and it's been a struggle ever since. The first substance I ever tried was oxycontin, courtesy of my father's struggle with cancer. It was love at first sight. I describe it as deja vu. It was like I had been here before and knew what was going to happen. I had found the answer to my problems, or so I thought. Little did I know what I found as the answer, was actually the cause of all my problems in the future. Press the forward button a few times and pass by a couple scenes in this movie. Hit next and skip a couple tracks on the cd. From a very young age during my drug use, I got in

trouble with the law, got suspended at school, and did a lot of things that the majority of people would call "suspect." It didn't faze me. I was having a good time, not dealing with anything, and being responsible for nothing. Try to tell me something and see what happens, was my outlook on life. That went on for quite a few years. So as we fast forward through time you're not missing too much. In 2004, my stepfather broke the news to my sister and I that he had cancer. His was Hodgkin's lymphoma, the most easily cured cancer someone can have. He was very skeptical about telling me due to the fact I had already lost my dad, but he did. I appreciated that he told me, but I was not so appreciative of what he was actually saying. Now at this point he had been my father for longer than my real father had the chance too. He had been the one to teach me things that a father teaches his son. He and I were close as pasta and meatballs are. He battled the cancer for a while, and ended up beating it. It went into remission and we had a party of celebration for him. I tried to have the opposite look on this cancer than I did on the first. Since I thought my dad would beat his and he didn't, I figured I'll just assume Gary won't beat his and he might. Reverse psychology. I was thrown a curve ball when he did beat it, but I was ecstatic and didn't have anything to complain about. It wasn't until the cancer came back that I cursed the world and everything in it. Now I had been continuing to drink and drug ever since I lost my dad. I used the things that happened in my life as excuses, to try and deal with the pain of his death. Now with the current war my stepfather was fighting and all that going on, I had double a reason for getting loaded, smashed and jamboozelled. I didn't care about anyone or anything, only how I was going to escape reality that day. You'd think that someone who has

been through the loss of a parent would have some advice for someone who hasn't lost one. I without a doubt had knowledge on the subject, but was so busy focusing on myself; I failed to realize that I could be of any assistance to anyone but my drug dealer. I was so wrapped up in my own world that I fell short on the ability to help my sister with the struggles that she was facing with her father. I chose drugs over my family, and everything else I that I ever cared about. I gave away the opportunity to have the time, and memories that I could have cherished with my stepfather before I lost him. He died three days after my birthday on October 27th, 2008, and I will forever hold him dearly in my heart. My sister and I have both lost fathers in our lives, and my mother has lost two husbands. I believe you don't know what you have until you've lost it. However on the flip side, sometimes you really do know what you have, and that's why it hurts so much when it's gone. I used things like drugs, money, women, violence, crime, gambling, and so many other negatives, to get my mind off the past and into somewhere else. Anything to keep me from thinking about the stuff that hurt so much. It reached a point though, where none of it worked for me anymore. It didn't matter how high I got, or how low down I went, that feeling of shame and remorse was still there. No hit, sip, or sniff could take it away. If I did a gram or an ounce, I still had the same problems. If I blacked out or passed out, I still ended up waking up. It took me a while, but I finally realized something had to be different. If not, I was to the point of desperation, where a bullet would do the job. That's where drugs and booze brought me. I knew there was a better way to live. I've had glimpses of it I just never immersed myself into it completely. I tried to take the easy way

out of addiction. Like stopping the drug use and just drinking. Or I'd stop drinking and just smoke weed. Or I wouldn't drink vodka, just beer. It always led me back to the same vicious cycle, doing as much of everything as I could, whenever I could. I felt like I could do part of the work to stay sober, and expect the full result. Put in a half an hours' worth of work and get paid for an hour. I'd been to a bunch of rehabs, a couple halfway houses, and a sober house, so I knew recovery was possible. I just didn't know how to untangle this mess of a life I'd created for myself. I had just gotten out of jail on September 11th, 2012, for a drug related crime. I had lost all family contact, all my belongings, and had nowhere to go except up. It's only until you've lost everything, that you're free to do anything. I firmly believe that, and I had lost it all. I was sitting on the train after just being released from Nashua St. and was contemplating my next move. I'm looking at the seat across from me, and there was this homeless man acting like an idiot, drinking a bottle of wine out of a brown paper bag. I was praying to god that I didn't pick up again, now having a little bit of clean time under my belt. I kept watching this man, knowing that if I picked up, this is what I had to look forward too. He got up and stumbled off the train. It was like I was looking at myself in the mirror as I watched this guy. It was almost as if god was testing me on my determination to stay sober and do the right thing. The only problem was... he had left his bottle of wine underneath the seat he was sitting in. He must not have been an alcoholic. I walked over, sat down and started drinking what he didn't finish. Knowing that I was fifteen minutes out of jail, for exactly the stuff I was doing at that moment. Talk about insanity in its finest form. I continued to rip and run, hopping around from shelter to



shelter. I've always known how to hustle, so I could get what I needed to when I had to. It had just reached the point where I was fed up with it. The hustle, the life, the crime, and the time were just not worth it anymore. I had reached my breaking point for the last time. I was broken down, beaten up, and ready to do whatever it took to change my life. I checked into my last detox on September 19th, 2012. Since then I have given sobriety everything I've got. I have reconnected with my family and we have a much better relationship now than we ever have. I've built a network of positive people in my life, and I have entered college full time. The change I've made I can't put into words. I'd rather my actions speak louder than my words. They always have in the past, and usually not for the better. I've had to change everything to be able to achieve anything. No one is going to keep me sober, nor do anything for that matter, for me. It's up to me to go out there and work for it. My theory is: why give up everything for one thing, when I can give up one thing for everything. I wake up in the morning and wonder who am I? And when the days done, and I'm lying in bed, I ask myself WHO AM I?? I don't know if I'll ever have a solid answer for that question. I know I'm a lot of things. I'm a son, a brother, a nephew, a cousin, a lovable person, a kindhearted individual, an empathetic man, a person who will help whenever I can, a person with a lot of dreams, and a person who's seen nightmares in reality. I'm an alcoholic/addict, a student, a hockey player, a musician, a writer, a reader, and a whole lot of other things. I also know that there are a lot of things that I'm not. I'm not perfect, I'm not empty inside, I'm not unable to be there for people, I'm not ashamed to wake up in the morning, I'm not dreading the future and what it holds, and I'm definitely not free of

all my demons. Does that make me who I am? Not entirely. It adds a little flavor that's for damn sure. But what really makes you who you are? I think it's a combination of many different aspects of life that give you that answer. I think the most important piece of it all that makes up who a person is, is MEMORIES. What I'm remembered by will determine who I was. It's eventually going to hit a point where I'm not around to answer that question. I believe my life will answer the question for itself. Depending on who you ask, you'll get different answers. Hopefully there are a lot more good ones than bad ones, but who knows? Only time will tell. I try to be a better person today than I was yesterday. I hope that I impact people in a positive way rather than a negative. I hope I'm remembered as a happy person who helped more people than he hurt. I hope that I'm loved when my times done, and I hope that I'm missed when the games over. So who am I?? I'm a work in progress.