

Older kids tend to think they have certain rights when it comes to dealing with their younger siblings. When Mom and Dad aren't looking, they take whichever toy they want when they want it from their smaller brother or sister, they might purposely exclude them from fun activities, and they may even give them the occasional cheap shot. As the 3rd born child in our family, I can say I bore my fair share of the brunt of my older siblings' power trips. Then, Naomi came along. I remember thinking, alright, now it's finally my turn to exercise some older sibling privileges. She's was a whole 2 years younger than me, smaller, and a girl. I figured this was going to be easy.

Well, it didn't take long for me, David and Roslyn to figure out that with Naomi, we would enjoy no such privileges. From the time that Naomi could "bite" and "throw", she made it very clear that she was no pushover. Her simple yet highly effective methods made us quickly realize that we had a strong willed, determined little sister that was going to stand up for herself, no matter what.

Over time, she fortunately grew out of the biting and throwing phase, but throughout her life, she would always speak up for herself, be heard, and say what was on her mind. Most of the time, I could understand what she was saying, but sometimes I admit I could not keep up with her pace. To say Naomi had the gift of gab was a massive understatement. Most people couldn't think as fast as Naomi could talk.

Another special gift was her unique ability to instantly connect with people from all walks of life; literally making friends everywhere and anywhere. Anyone that visited Naomi after she moved to Aspen would understand this first hand. Walking around the town with her made you feel like you were with the mayor or a celebrity. I remember being a bit confused at first, because everywhere we went people would greet her by saying "Hi Wyoming". Then, I learned that "Wyoming" was the nickname she picked up from the Chinese restaurant where she worked because the owners had trouble pronouncing "Naomi". In typical Naomi fashion, she thought it was funny and went with it.

Her charm and her love of baking were a great combination, especially, when it came time to hooking up family members with good deals on ski equipment. Let's just say that Naomi's Rice Krispee squares were better than hard currency in most of the ski rental shops in the greater Aspen area.

Naomi's amazing ability to connect with people became even more evident when she and her family moved to Houston only a few short months ago. Most of us live in a place for years and never really get to know those around us. Yet Naomi, struggling with the extreme physical and emotional effects of this terrible disease, got to know everyone at the apartment complex (including neighbors and their pets, office staff, the pool guy, and many others). Not just their names, but also who they were and what was important to them.

Naomi did not need a terrible disease to make her appreciate life and live it to the fullest. She did that anyway. She followed her heart and pursued her dreams. In her final months, she told her family and friends that she was truly blessed to have lived a good life, better than most, and for that she was thankful.