

Three dollars and a whole lot richer

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Digging through plastic bag after plastic bag of utility bill stubs, bank statements and greeting cards from the past nine years left me wondering if my father ever threw anything away.

That task of cleaning out my dad's tiny efficiency apartment after his death didn't seem so daunting until I was half a day and 10 full trash bags into it.

That's when I realized the chore of sorting and the overwhelming sense of loss were outweighing his gift of pre-planning.

I sat down to find peace on the kitchen chair he always occupied, surrounded by his things and engulfed in his memories.

"Daddy, I know you're here," I whispered to no one in the room. His spirit was definitely with me but the harsh reality is his body will never be there again.

Still, I could hear his voice saying, "Sweetheart, you know you can do it."

With renewed courage, I continued my task.

I folded the quilt from his bed and stuffed it in a sack to take home. Then I decided to clean the dresser. On top I found knickknacks and pocket knives and a few pieces of paper stacked haphazardly next to the lamp.

When I moved the alarm clock, I could see a small jar tucked between the lamp and the wall. In

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all the times I'd been in this room, I'd never noticed that jar.

Three coins broke the silence in the apartment as they clanked against the glass when I picked it up. The lid was sealed tightly but it didn't take long for me to set the coins free.

As soon as the cool silver hit my hand, I knew this was everything I needed to find in the aftermath of my father's death: Two traditional silver dollars and one bearing the likeness of Susan B. Anthony.

I will never know exactly what my dad was thinking when he put those three coins in that jar. I know when I found them, though, that I had an instant sense of relief, that everything is going to be OK.

The two dollars depicting Dwight D. Eisenhower represent his two grandsons. No one made him more proud than they did.

And the female dollar? Well, I am his only child.

My father didn't leave me a fortune but the three dollars I found will always be all I need.