

I don't know how to use a few words to adequately express anything that feels meaningful. This is the type of thing I would normally solicit Ikse's thoughts on, but they have not been responding to my messages. They did say something that could have been interpreted as guidance on this issue which is that they hoped my memories of them wouldn't be dominated by their final moments. I actually have a good story that involves cancer and I decided to go with that.

The day before Ikse's first chemotherapy was going to start, we were driving from Two Harbors to Saint Paul to make it to Ikse's dentist appointment later that day. The dentist appointment was significant because chemotherapy can be pretty hard on gums, so it helps to start off with good oral health, and gums can get less able to withstand dental treatment during chemotherapy. While we were on the way, Ikse got a call from the dentist's office saying that something had come up, and their dentist wasn't available at their appointment time, so they'd have to reschedule Ikse for a later date. Ikse explained why they needed to go to the dentist that day in particular, and the receptionist said something like, "Wow, that really sucks. I'm so sorry. But we don't have any open appointment slots today, so it's not possible to get you in today. There's nothing I can do." Ikse pointed out that she could cancel someone else's appointment instead, and give Ikse the slot. The receptionist said that she couldn't do that. So Ikse suggested calling someone, explaining the situation, and asking if they'd be willing to reschedule voluntarily. The receptionist said they don't really do that sort of thing, so Ikse explained that that's because there usually isn't a good reason to, and the receptionist could just do it and nothing could go wrong. She agreed to try this. Throughout the whole call, Ikse was being extremely polite, expressing gratitude for the receptionist's help, even though she had to be pretty heavily prodded into helpfulness. The receptionist called back a few minutes later and said that she'd been able to get Ikse an appointment that day.

My take-away from this story is that often people have a habit of being difficult or don't know how to stand up for themselves when they need to, but neither of those things were true of Ikse. They were kind even when they were disagreeing with someone and they were certainly willing to stand up for something when they thought it was important. They encouraged others to do the same. This is just one of many things that I appreciated about Ikse.