

Shirley Janet White

If you were not lucky enough to have made her acquaintance, you would have liked her.

For her spirit. Which was strong and which never wavered in the worst of situations, like her battle against the cancer that took her body away. Most of her life, Shirley's spirit flew high up above and did loop-the-loops, like when she went zip-lining with her daughter Erin or when she went for a trip where there were whales or when she walked into a room. When she walked into a room Shirley more or less seized it with her infectious laughter and her poignant, truthful and off-the-wall observations.

You would have liked her as a friend because once she was your friend, she was your friend for life. One of those rare friends you can always count on to be there when you need them and especially when you do not really need them, because it was a gas to be around her.

You would have liked her for what she stood for, and what she stood against. Far before she contracted that foul disease, Shirley White was on the front lines helping people who already had it to come to terms with the nuts and bolts of it. She made it easier for hundreds of people to make it through that horrible diagnosis with a reassuring voice of true kindness and caring. She was against cancer before she got it herself. She chose her battles, and this one was worthy of her. It killed her body, but not her essence or her spirit. Cancer is tough, but it can't kill the best of you.

You would have liked what she did to put bread on the table. She chose a tough job. Shirley White spent her days and nights phoning people who had been sexually abused when they were children and who had chosen to fight that injustice. Those people needed all the support they could get and when they

heard from her, they knew they were going to be alright. Shirley White was the kind of person you would have wanted to telephone you if you were thinking life was so sad you might just end it all. Because by the time you were finished talking with her, you and Shirley would be planning on having a coffee together the day after tomorrow, and laughing about what you would each wear.

You would have liked Shirley White because, without help, she instilled her essence into her daughter Erin, who, in her turn, has become a person of iron will and humour and wisdom. Shirley White was a good mom who cared more about her daughter than anything else in the world. There should be a lot more mothers like Shirley White.

You would have liked Shirley White for her iron will. Iron will on the side of good is not often found in people these days. Shirley White never thought of it in those terms. It was just how she lived her life. The rest of us marvelled at that iron will, disguised by the easy manner and the sense of the absurdities of life. Again, she chose her targets carefully and gave her fullest measure to winning. But if you were to put that to her, she would have denied it as being all too grand. She would have said something about doing her job and all the nice people she got to meet.

You would have liked Shirley White for her self-effacing manner, realizing how much good she was doing for people in the world, but regarding that as an honour, and never thinking to be bold enough to suggest she might be making a big difference in peoples' lives.

Yet Shirley White made a difference in the life of every person her life touched. She didn't plan it that way. That's just the way it all worked out.

Shirley White was born in Stepney England on April 11, 1956 and grew up near Gold River B.C. Her body stopped working in

June, about fifty years later.

If you would like to remember Shirley White like the people who knew her will, please do something nice for someone when you get a chance. Shirley White would have liked you to do that. She would have liked you even if you didn't.