

I know this comes as a surprise to most, but I can do whiney. At times I can get lost in self pity with the best of them. And like most, I can totally justify my pity-party. After all, if you took away my daughters (there is no denying that I am a great Dad), I pretty much failed at everything else. Really. I've been married twice and though both my ex's would have nothing but nice things to say about me, the truth is that I've never known a woman who felt enough about me to fight to keep me around. I guess in the eyes of women, I'm a really nice guy, but I'm not a keeper.

I tried my entire adult life to make it as a writer and though I have truly enjoyed everything I have created and feel in my heart that I should have made a living off of my writing, the reality is that I never really even came close. Again, everyone will say I'm a good writer, but there was never anyone who thought enough about what I wrote to help me get it going.

As I close in to retirement, I look back and see many jobs that paid the rent, but I always worked on the front lines. Never a promotion. Never encouraged to leadership roles. Just a hard-working nice guy.

Now don't get me wrong – I love my life. I think I've done well and have made the right decisions for the most part. I like who I am, I like how I think and would not trade my life with anyone for anything. I'm just sayin' when you wake up in pity-party mode, I have plenty of fuel to ride that pony for a good while.

So the other day I'm at the peak of pity-party perfection. I have 'Mr Cellophane' from the movie 'Chicago' on my mind and if people could read my mind, there would be a huge run on tissues with so many people crying, 'How could such a wonderful man go through life so invisible?' ['scuse me while I go get another tissue- this is killing me]. It's a Sunday and I come very close to bailing on church – God doesn't need to hear my whiney pity-party... but at the last minute decide that maybe if I go to Mass, it will help me get out of this funk.

So now I'm at church quietly sitting where I always sit minding my own business when suddenly out of the corner of my eye, this young lady asks if she can sit with me ...

I look up and it's one of my all-time favorite people that I worked with when I helped out with the youth group at church a few years back. She has since received her doctorate and is now working in a hospital in Houston and was up for a wedding. She was going to go to Mass Saturday evening, but thought that I would be at 8:30 Mass so decided she wanted to at least see me there.

Not five minutes later a tap on my shoulder... it's one of our past kids who is now a student at Notre Dame University who is back for the summer and chose to come to this Mass because he figured I'd be there (I'm getting way too predictable) instead of going later with the rest of his family.

As I quietly sit with these two great people in my life, I started thinking about how I almost didn't come to church today because of my whiney pity-party. As I looked up at the altar, I could almost hear God telling me....

“Once again, let me remind you that I judge from the heart. These people went out of their way to come to church at this time because they knew you would be here. Don't ever think of yourself as Mr Cellophane I see your heart and I am well pleased with what I see.”

Ok – pity-party over ... now I just have to avoid the Catholic guilt of my conscience whispering in my ear, ‘You know he's right ... you're an idiot' Fortunately, I also have a great sense of humor ‘aaaaaaaah shut-up and leave me alone so I can enjoy this moment!’

Just A Thought