

BETTER TOGETHER



Tom Welch

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I am writing you on behalf of Carolyn Bolger as a longtime family friend. I would say that Carolyn was a second mother to me, but she was really like a big sister or a very cool aunt who was not afraid to challenge life or live it fully. She was so beautiful on the inside and out.

I have spent my life responding and reacting to other's emergencies serving the ugly underbelly of our civilization not regularly talked about, but I'm sure well understood by you. I have had a front-row seat to tragedy, witnessing first-hand the horrific acts that one human can do to another. For the better part of my life, I have served various communities as a Volunteer Firefighter, Ambulance Paramedic, Firefighter Paramedic, Firefighter Engineer, Fire Captain, Battalion Chief, and Fire Chief for a Bay Area City. I have risked and responded to thousands of calls to help and solve problems for people I don't know.

With the awesome grace extended to me, I have found the courage to forgive Raul for his acts of aggression against my family friend Carolyn.

- I forgive Raul for choking Carolyn (a person he loved) in a fit of emotion. I have heard that this was not his first time.
- I forgive Raul for the fear, confusion, sorrow and terror he caused Carolyn to experience as she struggled for her last breath.
- I forgive Raul for choking her so hard with his two hands to the point that she went unconscious. At this point, he could have stopped strangling her but decided to continue.
- I forgive Raul for choking Carolyn so hard that she stopped breathing, a point that a call to 911 could have possibly reversed the ill effects of his aggression.
- I forgive Raul for deciding to continue his cowardly act against an innocent and incapacitated Carolyn for even longer to ensure the result he decided upon.
- I forgive Raul for not deciding to call 911 to report his actions and take responsibility.
- I forgive Raul for when he swerved into oncoming traffic during his retreat in a suicide attempt later that day, putting even more of our community at risk.
- I forgive Raul for leaving Carolyn's lifeless body for her high school-aged son to find after a long day at school. Parole and forgiveness are not the same thing. Even with my strong willingness to forgive, I could never forgive myself for not standing up to defend Raul's next victim. We have not met her yet, but we know with confidence that she exists if you choose parole. As I'm sure you would too, I would regret not standing up to protect our future (my wife, your spouse, my daughter, your family, my nieces, your friends) and preserve Carolyn's legacy. Even though I have found the grace that comes with forgiveness, I implore you to deny Raul's parole. I don't envy your decision, but I have the utmost respect for it.

Best regards,

Tom Welch