
The Rise

In 1991, we learned Mary was pregnant. Since we had been led to believe that she might never be able to have children, we were elated. Well, at least Mary was. Though I was thrilled with the idea that she could get pregnant, I can't say that I was thrilled with the fact that she was pregnant. Like many other would-be parents, I didn't think I was ready to have a child. In spite of my growing income, I wondered if we could afford it. I also didn't know if a child would get in the way of my plans—my career, my business, my ego. And my single biggest fear was that I would end up parenting like my father, and that my child would fear and loathe me. I was panicked.

At the time she became pregnant, we lived in a small house in suburban New Jersey a few blocks down the street from AFM where I worked. Mary had continued to work, but immediately stopped once we found out the news.

Then, our expectation turned to fear. Mary suddenly had high blood counts. An ultrasound wasn't conclusive but suggested spina bifida, a birth defect in which the baby's backbone and spinal canal do not close before birth. Our doctors wanted Mary to undergo an amniocentesis to check for possible birth defects. She refused the risky test, saying that it didn't matter what kind of abnormality or deformity the baby may have; she was having this child either way. That night, on the way home from the doctor's office, she said she wanted to go to a "healing service" with Father Brendan Williams, a dynamic Irish priest at St. Veronica's Roman Catholic Church in Howell, New Jersey. Ironically, I walked past that church every time I walked to the office, but rarely ventured inside for Mass. But on this night, I went. I would have done anything. I was desperate for something—medical or miracle—to heal our unborn child.

The service was a typical Mass, after which people lined up to receive prayer from the priest and lay people. Being one of the few men in attendance, I was asked to be a "catcher." At healing Masses, the people who are being prayed for often get so emotional and filled with the Holy Spirit that they collapse or faint. We call it being "slain in the Spirit." The "catcher" is the person who catches them as they fall, ensuring a safe, soft landing on the floor or nearby chair.

As I stood behind the people Father was praying for, I heard them seeking help for some really awful problems—broken families, homelessness, deadly diseases—problems that seemed far, far worse than mine. It was humbling. Even though there were three other prayer teams, Mary ended up in my line with Father Williams. So, I stood behind my faithful wife as she received prayer in a brogue as thick as hers. He prayed that the Lord would heal our baby. He prayed for Mary's health. He prayed for me. Then, from his heavy accent came unrecognizable syllables—babble, which I later learned was speaking in tongues, and I watched in awe as Mary collapsed back into my arms. I was shocked.

Now, you have to know Mary to appreciate this, but trust me when I tell you that she wouldn't faint just because everyone else was passing out. She's a no-nonsense kind of woman. But she went

down like a rock. At first, I was alarmed. She's my wife; I can tell when she's "sleeping," and she was out like a light. Father immediately leaned over to me and said in his Irish brogue, "The Holy Spirit is here but for what reason I don't know."

This whole situation was very surreal to me. I didn't quite know what to think of the experience, but it moved me.

Mary awoke less than a minute later and I told her what Father had said. She was gleaming with hope. She told me she immediately felt healed. Certainly, I didn't know what she meant and I didn't have any of these same feelings, but it gave her peace, so who was I to second-guess. It was a remarkable, Godly experience that neither of us will ever forget, and would eventually end up bringing me much closer to both God and Mary.

From that night on, Mary had no worries. Faithful servant that she is, she knew that although the doctors may have been right, that God had healed our child and the hole in the spine no longer existed. In Mary's eyes, our baby was healthy. Yet, I still worried.

A few months later, however, my fears were allayed when Mary gave birth to a perfect and beautiful baby girl we named Tara. With the exception of a hammer toe, Tara was the picture of health. Watching the birth of my daughter was and will remain the most amazing and thrilling moment of my existence. That sweet baby girl would become the love of my life.

That night, as I went down in the elevator, for the very first time I felt a real connection to God. I prayed hard and asked Him to help me be a better father than my dad had been, and for the first time, I really felt He was listening.

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Though some of fatherhood came naturally to me, some of it was very foreign. I loved and adored and played with her whenever I could, but I was nearly unable to care for Tara. I can't explain it, but I just couldn't change a diaper. One thing God never gave me was a strong stomach. At the mere thought of a stinky diaper I gagged, coughed, and hollered for Mary. With the possible exception of one or two, Mary changed every single diaper. The Wall Street Whiz Kid flunked Diapering 101.

God blessed us with a very happy, blissful baby. Like many sleep-deprived new parents, we were walking zombies for a while. However, we eventually figured that part out and things in the Grandich home were great ... just as I had planned. Recently, my now-grown daughter told me she has never feared me, and never thought I took my frustrations out on her, so I guess He really was listening that day in the elevator.

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Prior to Tara's birth, we moved to our first house of our own. Our previous place was too small for a family and raising Tara there would have been difficult at best. So, Mary and I decided that she would stay at home with Tara in our new, modest home. Little did we know that my career was about to take a bad turn.

The partners at AFM Investments decided they no longer wanted to handle stock trading and they were shifting to a financial planning business model. Since I didn't feel qualified to become a

financial planner (the only thing I knew how to do at that point was buy and sell stocks), they asked me to leave. I was very hurt and angry. How could they do this after all we had been through together, not to mention the fact that I was a brand-new father?

While I quickly found a home at a nearby firm after leaving AFM, I soon saw the all-too-familiar signs that something wasn't right. One of the partners was a strange character named Hank. He was always whispering to clients, but when one client in particular called, he closed his door in secrecy. He had instructed us that no one else may ever talk to her. My suspicions were correct and Hank was ultimately found guilty of embezzling from this lady and others, and he was sentenced to seven years in prison.

There was only so much of that I could take. I wanted to serve my clients with no dishonesty and no "gray areas" and without the risk of building a book of business and then being fired. I decided to open my own firm. There was just one obstacle: I didn't have the funds to do so.

I had seven clients who actively traded the market. I approached them and proposed that each would put up a sum of money for an interest in the new firm and, in return, I would reduce their commissions to the point where they would recoup their investment over time. They all agreed, and The Peter Grandich Company was born. Since I didn't have all the necessary licenses to trade on my own, I contacted Bob Knapp, who came to work with me in my grand new office on Route 34 in Wall Township, NJ.

My name was on the door, the letterhead, and business cards. Looking at it felt like success. It was about that time that I reached new, remarkable heights in my arrogant, self exaggerated, "living legend" status. Even though God and I were getting to know one another and I was grateful he intervened with Tara, I had not fully committed to living my life for Him. For now, it was still pretty much about me.

As the new firm moved forward, I became a regular keynote speaker at gold shows and investment conferences worldwide. I was doing a lot of on-air and print media interviews, as well as my local TV show. At one investment conference, I met a man named Rick who came looking for someone to manage four hedge funds he and his partners were forming. He chose me and later started a new mutual fund that I managed and which bore my name, The Peter Grandich Contrarian Fund. I finally had a fund with my name on it. My head grew another two sizes. As far as my pompous self was concerned, I had hit the big time.

Despite the opportunity he afforded me, it became increasingly difficult to work with Rick. He was a brilliant but extremely demanding man. He was controlling and never left me alone. He'd call nights, weekends, even on Christmas Day. I felt a constant pressure to perform, which I just wasn't accustomed to. At the same time, I started marketing a small, select group of public companies and received fees and stock options for my work.

Of course, everything was disclosed. As a matter of fact, thanks to advice long ago from a wonderful attorney name Jerry Selvers, I have always disclosed so much information that people laughed at my disclaimer. But, Jerry taught me long ago that if you don't want to be sued and found guilty, there are three rules.

1. Fully disclose.

2. Fully disclose.
3. Fully disclose.

“Tell them everything,” Jerry would say, “Even if your disclaimer is longer than your commentary.” It often was.

Around 1995, one of the companies I was doing marketing consulting for went from one dollar to nine dollars. Another went from two dollars to twelve dollars. I exercised my options, which were part of the disclosed compensation package, and cashed in big. It didn't take long to realize that I (and the firm) made more money on those two stocks than the grand total that I had made in the last several years combined. At the same time, it was becoming harder and harder to work with Rick, and the hedge funds and mutual fund were going nowhere fast. So consulting to these public companies really seemed like a no-brainer. That's when I decided to get out of the brokerage business altogether and turn my book over to one of my old partners from AFM. Since the fall-out, we had resolved our differences and became good friends again, and I announced that I was going full time into consulting and newsletter writing.