

I'm Betsy, more formally, Elizabeth Schneider--- Elizabeth Mary Schneider Kreider's oldest niece and namesake-- although I have another aunt, also named Elizabeth so maybe its just that my parents didn't have much of an imagination.

And she was, aside from my parents, the most important adult in my life.

I was told from an early age that she insisted that I come to her wedding at 11 months old and that my mother not take me out-- regardless of how much sound I made-- and according to the story, Aunt Joan, you are the only other one who was there and, according to legend I babbled. Which is really-- something i sometimes do...I'll try to keep this short ish. But its hard as we all know, to sum up almost sixty years of knowing someone.

I wanted to start with a list of some random list of things I remember that she said--

- "I am not an insect"-- why we called her Auntie Liz instead of Aunt Liz...
- I don't watch TV--whenever we'd mention a TV show. And then one day on a visit in the basement I found her collection of VHS tapes of Star Trek.-- "of course I watch--that Star Trek"--the original series of course.
- "Pepperoni, the sole reason for the existence of pizza." (maybe not an exact quote...but close)
- She used to say that she never ate Fritos, maybe even that she didn't really like them, but she needed them for her special Fritos salad. I feel like we had that salad like every day when we visited.
- I only eat blizzards after hiking --we went on a lot of hikes.

When my father and Auntie Liz were young adults, they lamented the fact that they were never very close to their cousins-- so they made a commitment to make each other and their families close. By the time Sarah was born it was pretty clear that the families would be planted on different sides of the country-- So this was going to take an effort-- and the effort was put in-- -- We were a small and tight little pack of cousins-- we were all born within six years of each other. These vacations were always full of laughing -- We kids laughed and the adults laughed.

---As I was writing this and putting together the slides, I realized how definitive and pervasive her laugh was-- and how both of you Christopher and Sarah--inherited that full and present and easy laugh.)

And there was always intensity, food and hiking and games and endless discussions (that often drove Uncle Kent crazy). board card games. --(of course there was always drama too--usually about when we'd finally stop talking and actually get out of the house).

They are among the most special memories of my childhood, actually my whole life-- times with the Kreiders.

I have to share one memory in particular-- we went to a "health food restaurant" in Boulder-- sometime in the late 1970's early 80s maybe called Harvest?-- It was before it was really a thing. Health food was being "invented"--

So we cousins sat at the kids table, and the only thing we wanted to eat was the beef Stroganoff-- don't ask me why it was on the menu, but it was. Fake meat hadn't even been invented yet-- There were these proto-smoothies--no idea what was really in them--but One of us got one, maybe you Anne, and so we all tried it and decided we wanted one too--And then, they tasted good at first and then halfway through they tasted like dirt-- early health food-- . So none of us finished them. I can still visualize 5 unfinished smoothies and the bill for beef stroganoff -- as we ran out to play outside while the parents were very unhappy with us. It was a Schneider-Kreider thing that was never repeated.

She made these events happen. The annual Leo birthday party here in Denver, several She came to our graduations, Christmases, family reunions , Sarah and Juan Ramones amazing wedding, more recently memorials, taking over for several years the role of the remaining parent for all of us. (I inadvertently omitted this part).

My dad, Uncle Kent and my mother were a part of this, but I know it was Auntie Liz whose planning and energy and intensity and will--(okay it was usually Uncle Kent that actually got us out the door)--made these events so special -- our family.

I have another partial list of some of the visits that stick out--

When I was seven I flew to Denver alone--(Anne and Christopher also later took these solo trips and they all spawned family legends.) For my trip she'd planned six full days of activities. -- Without activities on the seventh day I got homesick and wanted to go home-- She tried to make me feel better, sang me songs and talked ways that she soothed Christopher and Sarah not be afraid of things-- I remember in particular Stapleton was nearby and she talked about helping them not be scared of the noises from the planes--maybe there was a song for that?. But I missed my family, and so arrangements were made and I went home. Even at that age I felt it was a little shabby to bail the first day that wasn't fully scheduled. But I missed my family--I was seven-- So I flew home-- and then as soon as I saw my mom, dad, Anne and Rachel I realized I'd made a huge mistake. I cried the whole hour and a half drive home from the airport For years I lamented the fact that I could have stayed there as long as I wanted and that I came home after 7 days...I had thrown away Kreider time.

There are a few others on this list

In 2002-- I had a job interview in Arizona I was living in Norway and had my son Viktor who was a 12 week old baby, with me. Coincidentally Auntie Liz and Uncle Kent were planning on being in Arizona for the first time in like 20 years. They set aside three days of their vacation to be in Tempe-- they stayed in the same hotel, took me out to dinner, they watched Viktor during my interviews and drove me around to see what it might be like to live there. This ended up being a

pivotal moment in my life. I took that job and lived in Arizona for 12 years--the closest I've ever lived and living in Arizona led to yearly visits en route the to the east.

In 2011, When my father was dying. Auntie Liz flew in and we sat together in the ICU with her younger brother hooked up to the machines. Sharing the complexity of her loss-- the one person who had known her the longest, her little brother, --Yet she was there for me and my sisters and my kids--a month later when he was in Hospice I remember not knowing what to do should I let my kids be a part of watching him die-- she said "the kids can handle what the parents can handle". So Madeleine and Viktor were with us-- What was I think for both of them a profound moment of their childhood-- Without her wisdom and presence I might have made different choices-- Another life moment.

50th Birthday 2015

She rented a cottage in New Hampshire for the whole family to celebrate me turning 50 and her turning 80. It was a wonderful and incredible time.

One last moment-- We had our last in 2019-- She and I drove to Crestone--talking all the way-- and Sarah and Rachel and Matt joined us. We played some comeptitive card games-- we drove down together-- and at the time two of my kids Viktor and my step son Julien were getting ready to apply to colleges-- and I told them, don't worry in 5 years no one is going to care or remember. But then Auntie Liz who had recently moved into her retirement home said to me "That guy just keeps talking about Harvard and how he went to Harvard" Doh.

I am so grateful for the more than 50 years of incredible and rich experiences and wisdom-- feeling important, loved and cared for being entertained, stimulated and challenged.

And I have her to thank for having this amazing relationship with Christopher and Sarah and Aunt Joan and her family, I have these amazing cousins in law, Juan Ramone and Amy. My kids have a connection to their second cousins, My kids had a connection with their great Aunt and uncle that was closer than anything I had with any of my grandparents and they are connected to their second cousins. Pablo, Diego and Jyuna.

Auntie Liz forged this family it is in many ways her legacy--by showing up for us, by making relationships starting with my father her brother, Kent and Joan -- and cemented it by the love she nurtured between all of us, I love my two cousins so much, and I know my sisters, my ex husband, my wife, and my children-- all feel part of this love and this incredible family--

She built this with her energy, strength, determination, love, wisdom-- her crazy laugh and her junk food and TV exceptions--her what I am sure was ADD-- along with a genuine and deep interest in the world. I am so sad that she is gone, but I am so grateful for what she gave me in those 59 years, and for what she left behind.