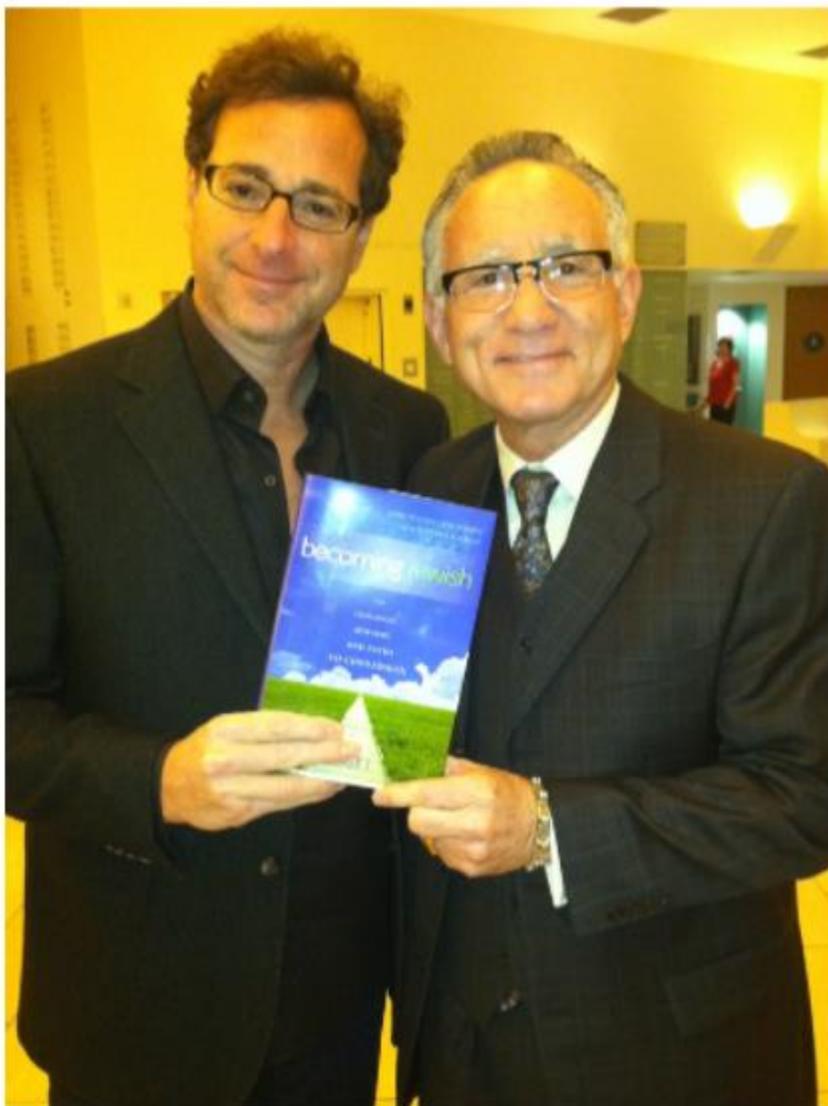


OPINION

I was Bob Saget's rabbi. This is what made him special.

Steve Carr Reuben January 10, 2022



Courtesy of Steven Carr Reuben

Bob Saget with his Rabbi Steve Carr Reuben

The hardest job he ever had, Bob Saget used to tell me, was serving as emcee of our annual synagogue gala. He could never just say the first thing that would pop into his mind, he explained, because it would inevitably be a joke that was too risqué for a synagogue event. He constantly had to censor himself. So, he'd think of a joke he *couldn't* say and then, on the spot, without a moment's pause, think of another joke that was more PG — and all of it happening in the split seconds of his non-stop comedic mind.

That's just one of the reasons I loved Bob Saget.

"It sucks when funny people die," Bob wrote in the opening sentence of the chapter entitled, "Death and Comedy are Closely Related" in his book, "Dirty Daddy."

Sadly, that sentence has never been more poignantly true than now, with Bob's own sudden death at the tender age of 65. I knew and loved Bob for over 30 years as his rabbi and as a friend, and like the rest of the world I am devastated by his death.

Bob's whole life was lived in the shadow of death. Two twin siblings died in infancy before he was even born, and he carried the name "Robert" in memory of the boy twin his parents lost shortly after birth while still in the hospital. His sister Andi died suddenly of a brain aneurysm at the age of 34 and his sister Gay from scleroderma at the age of 47.

Bob was literally the "menschiest" of men. He is renowned for having raised millions of dollars year after year for the Scleroderma Research Foundation in memory of his sister Gay, and he actually expressed regret to me that he hadn't been raising money for research into brain aneurysms as well.

“It’s just part of who I am that I try to raise money for people who are suffering,” he once said to me, and he did that with a vengeance.

Whether the joys of celebrating the bat mitzvahs of his daughters Aubrey, Lara, and Jennifer whom he adored and was always so proud of, or the death and funerals of his father Ben who died in 2006 and his mother, Dolly who died in 2014, Bob brought his special brand of love, compassion, open-hearted joy for life itself and humor into every moment.

He idolized his parents and would always credit his father as the source of his own humor and comedic timing, claiming that Ben was actually the funniest person in the family, and tell anyone who would listen that he got his compassion and loving heart from his mother Dolly.

Of course, everyone knew Bob as simply one of the funniest human beings on earth. He was dazzlingly quick, and his stand up was always a 100 mile-per-hour stream of consciousness. Whether he was on stage or in his own living room, he couldn’t get through a sentence without turning it into something funny. That’s just the way his mind worked.

He actually loved the schizophrenic nature of his professional persona, where he was famous as the super-clean, wholesome dad Danny Tanner of “Full House,” juxtaposed with his standup routines, which are among the raunchiest in the business. Hence the title of his book, “Dirty Daddy – The Chronicles of a Family Man Turned Filthy Comedian.”

For me personally, Bob was one of the greatest gifts of my life. No matter how busy he was with his remarkable career, he was always there with his love, his humor and his giving heart for every event, celebration and important moment in my life as well.

When he heard I helped to found griefHaven.org, he was the first person to appear at our gala to receive the “Peace of Heart” award and support our grief work. When my retirement event took place at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in 2014, it was Bob who immediately volunteered to be the host and emcee for the night, and when my book, “[Becoming Jewish](<https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Jewish-Challenges-Rewards-Conversion-ebook/dp/B005XNC9N0>)” was published, it was Bob Saget who wrote the foreword.

As the tributes continue to pour in from around the world and throughout the entertainment community, it reveals the true measure of the man — he was the same loving, caring, giving, compassionate “dear friend” to literally everyone who knew him.

Bob once wrote, “When tragedy strikes, it’s more important than ever to look for anything that can bring humor and joy to every moment.” That is Bob’s true legacy – the gift of bringing humor and joy to every moment, every relationship, every day of his life. The greatest tribute we can pay to Bob and his life is for those of us who knew and loved him dearly to carry that gift of his humor and love, and share it with everyone we meet every day of our lives.

Steven Carr Reuben is the former senior rabbi of Kehillat Israel in Los Angeles.