



Boyd Mallett was a technician during World War II. Upon returning home, to Roaring Spring, Pennsylvania, he became a TV repairman and married Dorothy Williams, with whom he had four children. According to the kids, the sun rose and set around dad. He inspired them to learn, to read, to discover. They wanted to be like him - he would sometimes take his oldest son Ron to work with him, to learn the inner workings of a television set. Ron said that his day didn't start until dad came home from work.

When Boyd died suddenly at the age of 33, he left Dorothy to raise the four kids on her own, all of them feeling the profound loss of their father. They discovered him where they could - in work, in fighting for our country in Vietnam, in art and science. Everything they did was for their dad.

The eldest son, Ronald, wanted only one thing in life - to hug his father again. He was ten when his dad disappeared forever, and the next year he found a Classics Illustrated Comic Book version of H.G. Wells's *The Time Machine*. Ron was inspired, and knew what he had to do.

He looked at the pictures and figured that if he could make that machine, he could go back in time. He found scraps of metal and wired it all together. When he plugged the machine in, he was honestly surprised that it didn't actually work the way the book described.

Ron started learning more, worked unflinchingly toward his goal. He studied Einstein and Star Trek and took his academics seriously. He became a

mechanic, studied calculus and received a PhD in physics, earning awards for his teaching, becoming a tenured professor at the University of Connecticut.

You might think that the more he learned, the more he would realize that time travel is a ridiculous idea, but the opposite happened.

The more he studied, the more certain he thought it was that people will eventually travel through time.

His only goal is to hug his father again. It has been 65 years, but he is still hard at work. He has admitted that time travel will probably not happen in his lifetime, but he knows it will be possible one day.

I tried reading the science, but it is way beyond me. Most science is beyond me. Yes, I got an A+ in science in middle school - thank you Mrs. Bethe and Mr. Thompson. I don't have to know how a plane flies or a vaccine works or a phone sends videos around the world to take advantage of the technology. So clearly I follow none of the theoretical or astrophysics in Dr. Mallett's publications. But I love his idea.

His agenda is not to change history - not to stop a war, though that would also be noble; not to meet a famous person from history nor buy Apple stock. His goal, his entire career, has been merely to hug his father again.

I think of Dr. Ron Mallett. Of all the missed opportunities for closeness. Of all the funerals that were Zoomed and shiva minyanim that were held online. Of the people who had babies and felt alone, with no one able to help them. Of the new grandparents who could not hold these infants, missing all of the milestones, all of the firsts, as if they were an ocean away.

I have shared time with so many of you this year, faced with a new level of loss. A grief that cannot be shared in a traditional shiva, who could

not have a fitting service with long eulogies recounting someone's goodness and uniqueness. How hard, how impossible, the heartbreak, without Judaism's structures built into the process.

I am reminded of the countless visitors to our Zoom minyans this year - people from around the world, searching for a place to say Kaddish, and sticking with us. When the mayor of Princeton, New Jersey, died, her family came to say kaddish with our online community, someone finding us in the mysteries of the world wide web. The weeks we had Morissa in Boston and Barbara in Florida join us online - we thought they came together, since they started coming at the same time, but they were strangers who found our minyan and came to cry with us, to remember with us. Joel who has been a mainstay of our services, so that he can remember his mom with us. Together we shared stories. We did the best we could to bring the Jewish traditions to the ever-changing world.

Dr. Ron Mallett introduces us to an idea: go back in time with one soul purpose - to hug a loved one. To just hold them and not let go for a full five minutes. To take in their scent, to use all five senses, to breathe them in, to understand them now that we are older, more mature, have a new perspective. Is there anything else we need?

We come together - kind of - on this holiday, thinking about who we are and who we want to be. Sometimes we think so big. We think of the major life changes. But Dr. Mallett has another perspective, teaches another beautiful lesson.

While I cannot go back in time and hug my grandparents, to meet my father-in-law and reconnect with so many people who I have lost in my

lifetime, as much as I would like to, what I can do is embrace the people in my life now. To appreciate them. To hold them.

To somehow bottle their scent and the feeling of them and their laugh and their hair and their uniqueness. To capture that moment so that I can bring it up again.

We come together to remember, to reach into the past and grasp for the pieces we can recall. And to pass along that wisdom, that love, to the next generation. And to remember to hold on tight to the people we still have.

While Dr. Ron Mallett never got to travel through time to hug his father again, his life's work let him dwell in that time, to think about his dad constantly, to work towards a goal of love and re-connection.

One of Einstein's colleagues heard Dr. Mallett's presentation, using Einstein's theories being of wormholes, black holes, space-time, being used in this unique way, and went up to him afterwards. He said, "I'm not sure you'll see your father again, but I know he would be proud of you."

Through the words of Yizkor, we cross time and space to give a spiritual hug to those we are remembering today. And one day, Dr. Mallett's dream will come true, and we will truly hold them close.