



*One  
Moment  
In Time*

*If Steve Barton and Tanya Stern were not late for a college English class, they might have been two people simply passing one another in the complex, unpredictable game of life.*

**L**ife is a series of bizarre, unrelated incidents that cannot really be explained. Unless you believe in fate.

In the case of Steve Barton and Tanya Stern, fate is exactly what brought them together on The Day They Met in Costa Mesa, California.

The year was 2006 and the place was Orange Coast Community College, where they had enrolled in an English night class.

“We both missed the first day of class and we both showed up late on the second day,” Steve says. “So I wound up sitting right behind her in the last seat in the room.”

When Steve struck up an innocent conversation with Tanya during a break, he told her he didn’t feel comfortable in class.

“I wanted a smaller, more personal class,” he says. “Tanya turned around and looked at me with these deep, sad eyes and said, ‘Oh, you’re not to drop the class, are you?’”

That’s all it took for two lives to change, two lives to ultimately merge into one.

Tanya had exposed her inner and external beauty, and any thoughts that Steve had of dropping the class had evaporated.

“I never gave it second thought after talking to her,” he says.

**T**hey wound up becoming the very best of friends. They often spoke by phone and would get together every month or so for lunch.

Their relationship didn’t switch gears until five years later, when they were about to attend a wedding together.

“A week before the wedding, I was in San Jose on a business trip and when Tanya called to talk about the wedding, she mentioned she had just moved from Apple Valley to Irvine.

“So I said, ‘Great, why don’t you pick me up at the airport, and we’ll go out to dinner,’” Steve recalls.

**T**hat dinner at McCormack and Schmidt’s in Irvine turned out to be one of the turning points in their relationship.

Toward the end of dinner, out of the blue, Tanya burst out in tears, stunning Steve, who said, “*What? What’s going on?*”

Tanya proceeded to tell him how she *really* felt about him, how she had cared for him for years, but was afraid to say because she felt it would jeopardize their relationship.

But her confession was music to Steve’s ears.

“In the five years we were friends, we never discussed our feelings,” he says. “I wanted to tell her how much I cared for her, but she always stopped me, saying, ‘No, no. I don’t want to ruin what we have.’”

But that night at McCormack and Schmidt’s solidified their relationship and ensured their future together ... for they were married on July 28, 2012.

“I’m really excited about our future,” Steve says. “Tanya is a wonderful person with a great personality. She’s very spiritual, down to earth, open-minded and is a great listener.

“I couldn’t be happier.” ♥

— *By Rick Weinberg, Editor, StoryCentral*