



a lot of pain and conflict about it. Certainly, the alcohol didn't help. When he was drinking, he was a nightmare; I couldn't be around him because he'd go crazy. One thing would tick him off and he would blow. I remember having dinner with my manager one night when he picked up a chair and suddenly started smashing it and screaming at me. Ruth and I were sitting there going, 'What happened?' What happened is that the alcohol hit him and he realized all the rage that was pent up inside of him. At the same time, he was truly a magnificent person, and I say that with reverence because I honestly revered him."

David never made peace with his father before he died; in fact, had not spoken to him for the nine months before his death. Plus, David was already in psychoanalysis when he became involved with abusive substances, the darkness of his early retirement getting the better of him. "I spent 3 1/2 years trying to get numb," he reveals.

While he never went to the Betty Ford Clinic or some such place, David says that drugs never "worked" for him. It took him almost five years of constant focus before he began to realize that he had things to be thankful for. He learned how to be resilient, and came to understand why his father left. He also got in touch with what caused him to leave his enormously successful career behind.

"Fame was great because it made me feel less rejected," he relates. "It made me feel accepted and loved, which is what I always wanted to feel from my dad. But the reason I walked away from it and tried to destroy myself was that it created more conflict with my father. It made him reject me more. What I really wanted was for him to put his arms around me and tell me he was proud of me, but he could never do that."

After three-and-a-half years of retirement, David decided to take up acting

again. He pretended he was 18 years old and unknown, and started all over again. When he went back to work in 1978, the first job he took was a role in a two-hour "Police Story" called "A Chance To Live." Not only did it become the highest rated episode of the "Police Story" anthology, but David was nominated for an Emmy. From that came what David calls an "ill-conceived and thrown together TV series," which, he admits, was an error in judgment. It was called "Man Undercover," and lasted one year on NBC.

But David had learned something very important—the public had never left him. "My fans are loyal and always have been," he maintains. "I've been blessed by that, because when this business rejected me, I could still perform and sell tickets—even though I wasn't making the same kind of money—and that kept me alive. When "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" was dying on Broadway, I came into the show and kept it open for another year."

It was this ability to recreate himself that enabled David to survive. In fact, he recreated his life and career, overcoming tremendous obstacles, not the least of which included his tremendous early fame and Keith Partridge.

Still, the 80's were very difficult for David. He couldn't find work. He went to England and had a hit album over there, resulting in sold-out concerts at venues such as Prince Albert Hall. But despite his success in Europe, when he came back to the States, nothing happened.

"I had a couple of good years, but they were peripheral," he recalls. "I did some Broadway and such. I needed to work and the good jobs were no longer available. I couldn't get people in television to see me, but I'd show up at a shopping mall and 15,000 people would be there to see me. I'd think to myself, what's wrong with this picture? I ended up knowing I had all this talent that no one would let me use, not to mention all this following. It was incredibly frustrating."

According to David, all of that changed five or six years ago. "It just melted away," he says. "The world changed. People began to long for anything that reflected The Seventies." In 1990, David introduced himself to a new generation of music fans with his hit single, "Lyn' To Myself." He and his wife, songwriter Sue Shifrin, played an active role in 1994's Rebuild L.A. campaign, composing the effort's anthem, "Stand Up and Be Proud."

But the turning point for David came in 1993 when he accepted a fortuitous challenge and stepped into the financially ailing production of Willy Russell's musical drama "Blood Brothers." Sharing the stage with his half-brother Shaun, David once again broke box office records. More than that, he saw his dream of being recognized as a credible actor take hold.

"It was the first time in my life as an adult that people said about me, 'There's really something here,'" he enthuses. "Not only does he sell tickets, but he's really got it.' People really took me seriously at that point. My god, the feedback I got..."

After a successful run on Broadway, David and the show enjoyed a limited run in London's West End. That was followed by a successful national tour back in America, which ended in May 1995. Then came the chance to step into "EFX" when the show's star, Michael Crawford, sustained a groin injury and left.

"My only trepidation was that I didn't want to do what my predecessor had done because ultimately the hotel wasn't completely happy with what it was," David reveals. "They wanted it to be something else and it wasn't, so they never had an official opening. Although a lot of it was sensational and brilliant, a lot of the story didn't make much sense."

So when David stepped into the guest starring role on November 8, he took a different perspective of the character. Whereas Crawford had been the "EFXMaster," David plays an everyman who takes a wonderful journey and actually *becomes* the characters Crawford played. Currently, more than 75 percent of the show has been changed, with the remaining 25 percent—the first 15 minutes, more or less—due to be changed this month. Except for the lines uttered by the EFXMaster, the book and dialogue have been totally rewritten. The show, says David, is much brighter visually, and more contemporary musically. It's now, in his words, "rockin,' sort of funky, with gospel overtones." David, had a lot of input into the changes so the show could take advantage of his strengths—which he says are humanity and humor.

So what about the future? "I'd be perfectly happy if I could do this show for another eight years," David exclaims. He is, however, discussing the possibility of doing a comedy TV series with one of the networks. But for now, David Cassidy, who says he is the luckiest guy on the planet, is living contentedly in Las Vegas with his wife and 6-year-old son. Where will he be five years from now? The best we can offer is, *stay tuned*. ♠