



Jillian Vella

November 5, 1981 - February 14, 2025

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Jillian Vella, a compassionate therapist, mentor, wife, and friend, who passed away on February 14, 2025, at the age of 43.

Jillian dedicated her life to helping others, supporting adults through life's complexities. Specializing in stress, trauma, and PTSD, she provided a safe and nurturing space for those facing emotional challenges. Her work addressed a wide range of issues, including grief, anxiety, self-esteem, and relationship difficulties. Jillian's commitment to her clients' well-being was evident in the personalized care she provided.

Using diverse therapeutic methods like Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, EMDR, and Internal Family Systems, Jillian tailored her approach to meet each person's unique needs. Her belief in the power of healing and growth inspired those around her, empowering many with the tools to build resilience and emotional health.

Jillian was passionate about supporting individuals and couples on their journeys toward a fulfilling, meaningful life. Her warm, empathetic nature left a lasting impact on everyone she encountered. Her legacy will continue to resonate for years to come.

Preceded in death by her mother, Theresa Vella, Jillian is survived by her husband, Jake Hatfield; her stepchildren, Jacob and Oliver; her brother, Christopher Vella; her father, Daniel Vella; her stepmother, Catherine Martin-Vella; her aunts and uncles including; Lisa Greggo, and her husband Patrick, Tony Vella and his wife Leslie, George Vella and his wife Pat, Karen Seitz and her husband Robbie, Lynn Vella, Diane Vella and her husband Andy, all her cousins, many dear friends, including her clients, whose lives she transformed.

A celebration of Jillian's life and legacy will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Humane Society and the Climb for Cancer organizations that reflect the passion Jillian brought to her work.

Jillian will be remembered for her kindness, dedication, and unwavering belief in the resilience of the human spirit. May her soul rest in peace.

Donations in Jill's memory may be given to the:

- Humane Society of North Central Florida, online at <https://www.humanesocietyncfl.org/donate/> or by mail to 4205 NW 6th St, Gainesville, FL 32609
- Climb for Cancer Foundation, online at <https://www.climbforcancerfoundation.org/> or by mail to 5745 SW 75th Street #317, Gainesville, FL 32608.

Tribute Wall



“Jillian was my very best friend. My one in a million person. To say that I am saddened at her loss is a gross understatement. I will miss her fiercely and every day, for the rest of my life. To help honour her memory and the life of my absolute favourite person, I'd like to share a few sentiments below.

I don't know if people know this about Jillian but she was always fiercely determined. Some might say stubborn in her younger years, but this determination is what allowed her to accomplish anything she put her mind to, including her PhD. I am so incredibly proud of her.

When we were little, I remember she refused to share her pencil crayons with me when we first met in school, but I grew on her. The more she got to know me the more we shared and we never looked back. Jillian had a way of getting you to do activities that she wanted to do. She was incredibly charming (and a bit stubborn LOL!)

Jillian loved anything from the band KISS & Korn when we were really young. She also loved the Hip and Fiona Apple. We even rocked it out to Nickleback and Carlos Santana on our travels when we were younger. There was also this techno music from Kompressor that we listened to. We loved it! It was so funny. We laughed/cried for hours over it.

Also spent hours watching Mr.Bean and Sex in the City & British comedies like, Are You Being Served? & Keeping Up Appearances. Some favourite movies; Little Miss Sunshine, Bridesmaids (we loved the car scene where she's trying to get the cop's attention) & Father of the Bride (the supermarket scene was her favourite when Steve Martin throws a tantrum over the "superfluous hot dog buns").

She also loved anything to do with horoscopes and spirituality. She gifted me with some Chinese tai chi baoding balls to help with stress and hand dexterity. At one point, Jillian wanted to be a Buddhist

monk, known as a, bhikkhuni (female). When we were very little she wanted to learn the art of Wicca, this nature based pagan religion. Jillian even cast a spell for me.

We spent a lot of time shopping for deals at stores like, Giant Tiger whenever Jill came to Canada.

We always took a trip to eat sushi or pho. They were our favourite foods when we hung out.

Jillian loved animals and nature. We did a lot of hiking behind Danny's house. We were always active. I was a little bit more hyperactive (LOL) and Jill was always a calming presence for me, even when we were very little. When we had sleepovers as kids, Jill would be able to sleep in the next day while I'd be bouncing off the walls waiting for her to wake up. She was always good at catching up with her rest. Wish I had that ability to calm myself.

Jillian also loved to accessorize and sport jewelry and she suited it. Silver was the colour of choice.

When we were little we loved Kissing Coolers, the lip gloss that tasted amazing!

One of her favourite philosophers was, Friedrich Nietzsche. Here's a few quotes she would like;

Nietzsche believed that "Without music, life would be a mistake". He saw music as a powerful force that enriches life and allows for the expression of emotions.

Nietzsche said, "We love life, not because we are used to living but because we are used to loving," suggesting that love is the driving force behind our appreciation of life.

There are too many things to share on paper when you've known someone your entire life. It's impossible to summarize this into a

short post. Jillian was simply the most amazing and inspiring human to me and I'm forever grateful for the time that we shared. Until we meet again Bestie!

Karen Woytowich - March 13, 2025 at 12:49 PM