

The 8 Biggies

A Professional Psychic Medium Answers Your 8 Most Common Questions about Your Loved Ones In the Afterlife

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**Dedicated to those who have passed into spirit and surround
us with their love, reminding us that we are eternal.**

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Introduction

“You’re a what?”

“A psychic medium.”

“What exactly is that?”

“The dead talk to me and I talk back.”

“That’s weird.”

“I know.”

That’s me.

I’m a medium.

And, like Lady Gaga sings, I was born this way.

Communication with the other side has been a way of life for me for the last couple of decades. During that time I’ve noticed people bringing the same questions over and over again to their readings, so I’ve decided to write this short book addressing these commonly asked questions. I will be giving you real life examples (with all names changed to protect client privacy, of course) of how deceased loved ones have answered them in hopes that you will receive the answers to your questions, too.

But let’s start further back. I’m often asked how I first knew I could communicate with the deceased so I’ll include a quick overview before I get into the details of the questions. I’m starting way back in my life and so if you’d rather bypass this introduction and go straight to the questions, I won’t be offended.

As a child I saw what I'll call semi-transparent people. I didn't fully understand it then, but I've come to realize that I was seeing inhabitants of the spirit world, the place people and animals transition to after they pass. It's all around us. I know this flies in the face of the conventional belief that heaven is somewhere far away, but this book is about my experiences, not a regurgitation of others' beliefs.

As a young girl I thought it odd that people cried so hard after the death of a loved one. I could see the deceased standing close by and looking absolutely radiant. If I could see their loved one, why couldn't they? It would be a long time before I understood the answer to that question.

Today I'm often asked, "How do you do that? How do you see and hear the deceased?" It's a good question and my answer is "I don't know." It's actually much less of anything I do and much more of something I experience. Other mediums I know say the exact same thing. We have no idea how spirit communication works, it just does. When I sit with a family member or friend who wants to connect with their deceased loved one I focus on a certain spot in the middle of my head and wait for the message to begin. I know that may sound simplistic and way too easy, but it's the best answer I can give you.

In early 2000, when I decided to get serious about exploring my ability to communicate with the spirit world, I assumed I needed some outside guidance and so I found the few available “new age” books on mediumship. Basically, they explained that the development of mediumistic ability required natural talent and a “high spiritual vibrational frequency.” They went into depth on exactly what one must do in order to attain and maintain this rarified state. I became convinced that mediums were a unique and special breed of exceedingly evolved humans who constantly meditated on love and light, never allowing in a bad thought, let alone a bad day. According to that definition, I was quite low on the spiritual ladder. I certainly couldn’t possibly be a bonafide medium, and so, even though I was pushing myself forward by giving messages to others from their deceased loved ones, I was constantly battling self-doubt about whether or not I was a “real deal” medium.

After 6 months of giving away readings to anyone who would sit and let me practice with them I was feeling particularly insecure because, though “it” always happened, communicating with the other side was sometimes easy peasy and at other times like pulling well-rooted teeth. The mediums on television made it look incredibly effortless and so I thought I must be doing something wrong. I didn’t understand how communication with the spirit world worked so I continually doubted the whole process. Back then I ended each reading thinking “gosh, I hope that wasn’t the last time that happens...I sure hope ‘it’ happens again.” One day I finally asked a good friend if she thought my newfound ability would ever suddenly go away, evaporate forever.

“Seriously,” I said to my friend, “what if I sit down to do a reading and I get nothing...no names, no faces, no details? The family would be let down and disappointed. I’d be so embarrassed that I’d never, ever try to give someone a reading again and even if they begged I’d say ‘no!’ I’d never speak of mediumship ever again...” (And yada, yada... the drama.)

My friend casually shrugged her shoulders, “It’s the way your brain works,” she said. “I suppose if you got a head injury with some sort of brain damage maybe that could make it all stop.”

Oddly, that one observation still gives me the courage to sit down and let it happen, “spiritual” or not. Today, I continue to believe that my ability to communicate with the other side is a fluke in how my brain works, albeit a fluke I have figured out how to create on demand.

Oh, and I stopped reading “new age” books.

Today for me, the spirit world is like elevator music, a soft melody faintly playing in the background, noticed only when I pay attention to it and then the volume automatically raises. When I was young the volume button was random and outside of my ability to understand or manage. Today, I firmly control the knob.

Dear reader, my intention for the following pages is to answer the most common questions you have for me about your deceased loved ones. I’ll include where they are now, what they are doing and what they want you to know now that they have gone home to the other side. This book is based on a class I used to give at my local community college. I intend that it be a concise and easy read. All of the stories in this book are true. Because I am often asked how I came to know that I am a medium, as well as when I first began giving readings I will also include personal stories of what has brought me to this point. If this doesn’t interest you, please skip the first chapter.

If at any point I come off as giving personal advice or spiritual lessons, I apologize, that's *not* my intention. This book is about my experiences and only my experiences. If you've read or heard information about the spirit world contrary to what you read here use your discernment. I'm not asking anyone to believe anything I say. Ever. I also won't be addressing "new age" thought. And, just so you know, I'm about as "new age" as a double bacon cheeseburger.

How I Began Giving Readings

Tanya was lying face down on my chiropractic table. I ran the heavy-duty massager across her upper back and shoulders, relaxing her muscles after her adjustment, completing her treatment.

I took a deep breath as I flipped off the machine and returned it to its hook on the wall.

“I hope this doesn’t sound weird,” I asked, crossing my arms, “but do you know a guy named Richard, nice looking guy with dark hair, died when he was young, maybe 24 or 25?”

I hoped she couldn’t hear how nervous I was feeling. “No, why?” she responded as she raised herself up off the table and turned and faced me.

Oh great, now what? I thought.

This was my first experience with sharing this kind of information so I had no idea how to deal with being completely and utterly wrong. I had known Tanya for 10 years as a chiropractic patient, but not on a personal level and certainly not well enough to chit-chat about messages from the dead.

I took another breath, “In my meditation the other week a deceased guy named Richard showed up and asked me to give someone named Tanya a message. You’re the only Tanya I know.”

“That’s really cool that you got a message,” she said as she casually picked her purse up off the chair next to the table and slung it over her shoulder, “but I don’t know any Richard who died.”

I felt relieved that she had been so nonchalant about the whole thing. Now I could forget this whole mediumship thing and the bizarre scenario leading up to it. I could drop this crazy burden I'd been carrying. *Phew, case closed.*

As I said in the introduction, I've always been sensitive to the other side and to the people who live there. As a child, my parents took me and my four siblings on long, cross country camping vacations. We slept in the homemade canvas tent my dad sewed together on my mom's 1960's Singer machine. We ate at the best, most scenic picnic tables all across America. Along the way we'd stop at old forts and historic monuments. They fascinated me. While there I could usually count on seeing at least one semi-transparent person, in period clothing, moving around the grounds. I surmised that they were people with a connection to that place and my young mind supposed they were either visiting or they still lived there. They always kept their distance and only waved. I'd secretly wave back.

Growing up, I loved visiting my grandparents' farm in North Dakota. Grandpa and grandma took us to visit nearby relatives and there was usually at least one see-through person (hereafter referred to as spirit person) visiting at the same time. I decided that spirit people liked to hang out in old places.

I don't remember the exact moment when I realized that I was the only one seeing them. I think it simply dawned on me in a general way when no one else seemed to care about them. I decided that the spirit people lived amongst us solid people, just in a different way, because I never saw any details of their day to day existence. I never saw them eat or sleep. Did they live in that same house all the time? Did they play games? Did the children play outside and get called in by their mom because it was time to come home to eat supper? And why did they only show themselves when *they* wanted? Most were not interested in chatting with me. And then there was that nice man wearing the cowboy hat who occasionally came to visit me in the basement in our house in Valley City when I was 5. That friendly guy...the one who liked to chat with me about my day. As it turned out he looked just like the photo of my grandfather who died of a heart attack when my mom was 9.

Once I started school, seeing the spirit people became rarer. When I did see them I still had no answers as to why they showed themselves or if it meant anything in particular. I was busy being a child. Looking back I think the spirit world was respecting my space to grow up with the feeling of being "normal."

When I turned 11 a wee glitch developed in the whole "feeling normal" thing. My mom decided it was time to leave the neighborhood Methodist congregation and committed us all to joining the local fundamentalist Christian church up the road.

Don't get me wrong, the members of the new church were wonderful. However, the teachings weren't exactly supportive for an adolescent like me. I quickly learned that there were a whole lot more "absolutes" and rules in this new place. There were no gray areas about who would get into heaven and who would be left out in the cold (um, heat). The only place where people lived was here on earth, in heaven with God or in hell with the Devil. For some reason the church considered any type of contact from the deceased to be demonic trickery. I especially remember one sermon where the minister warned that if you saw or heard from a dead person you were no doubt being led astray by the devil, possibly marked for possession and most certainly in need of being prayed over.

Yikes!

It was made abundantly clear that those who purposefully communicated with the dearly departed "ought to know better the dangers of dabbling in that sort of thing" and would be most deservedly called out and severely chastised. The dire warnings washed down from the pulpit and spilled over my terrified preteen ears. The preacher said that those who "conjured the dead" (whatever that meant) were full-on witches with Satan voraciously nipping at their heels, eagerly salivating, hoping to inhabit their bodies and claim their pathetic lost souls for himself.

It was scary, the, "If I keep seeing dead people I'm going to hell and be tortured for all eternity and that's *after* a life of being horribly demonically possessed"... type of scary.

Don't even get me started on those who claimed to communicate with angels. A hint? It won't end much better for them. My dad wasn't overly excited about going to church and I wasn't sure if he had an opinion one way or the other about afterlife communication. My mom, on the other hand, rigidly adopted the church line and when my mom had an opinion there was nada... zero...zilch...wiggle room for us 5 kids to have an opinion of our own. In that environment no sane child would risk getting caught exchanging waves with semi-transparent people. As for me, I was sane, and so, even though the deceased people were always gentle and friendly, I decided that it would be in my best interest to distance myself from them. Shortly after joining the church, even though they rarely came around, when I saw one I firmly asked them to stop showing themselves to me. They kindly obliged and I stopped seeing them altogether.

It was right to send the spirit people away but that didn't squelch my curiosity. The preacher said that the appearance of a deceased person was a reason for fear because it was a trick and that they were actually demons in disguise. I was conflicted. It didn't feel right to call them evil. There just had to be more to the story. If only a select few went to heaven and everyone else went to hell, then who were all these spirit people and why were they hanging around? Did that mean heaven and hell was all around us? Were these people somehow different and didn't belong in either place? Regardless of this Devil guy, I was going to have answers. I'm a Sagittarian. We don't take kindly to being told how or what to think. (By the way mister minister, your deceased loved ones are only a thought away, no 'conjuring' necessary.)

When I turned 12 I was finally old enough for my own public library card. On Saturday mornings I looked forward to stopping there on my walk home from piano lessons and would check out two or three books for the week. I was in curiosity heaven with the endless supply of volumes on every imaginable subject. When I stumbled upon the section on paranormal phenomenon I knew I'd hit the jackpot. Surely, if there was a book about people from the past who could show themselves to me in the present it would be there...somewhere between Bigfoot and UFOs.

Yes!

There they were. I didn't dare check one out and take it home. So every Saturday for months I squirreled these forbidden books to the far corner table and studied them where no one would see me. No one would know.

The authors called people who communicated with the deceased "gifted" at doing what was called "spirit channeling." People who had died and were now eager to communicate with the living were interchangeably called "the deceased" and "spirits." I learned that those on this side who could communicate with the spirit people were called "mediums," named for their place in the middle between this world and the next.

According to the authors, mediums operated in different ways. Some mediums can hear the deceased in their heads. These mediums would direct a question to a specific spirit person, write down the responses and then put the writings into books for the public to read. The questions were usually about what life was like on the "other side" where the deceased person now lived. I was happy to finally find some answers. It seemed that the deceased continued to be fully "alive", just in another place.

Though I no longer saw the deceased, the idea of spirit channeling as a way of communicating with them fascinated me. The problem was that I didn't know any spirits that I wanted to talk to, nor was I drawn to experiment with letting strange deceased people talk into my head. I would leave that to the experts who wrote books.

There were a couple of older books by British authors that described mediumship as "the act of 'conjuring' up the dead" (there's that word again) during special gatherings called séances. For some reason just because the medium was in the room the spirits could levitate tables, bang on walls and speak loudly through long metal trumpets floating independently around darkened rooms. These books from the Brits described some pretty unique ways mediums expressed their gifts. For example, I remember reading about one medium who brought forward spirits by extruding copious amounts of a white substance from her mouth. It oozed down her front, poured over her lap and pooled at her feet. From there it would rise up and form into a person...I think. The white goeey stuff was called ectoplasm.

There were pictures. They weren't pretty.

To my 12 year old self it sounded a bit scary, somewhat shadowy and hugely ectoplasmically disgusting. I felt little connection to this thing called mediumship. It seemed like a good time to let go of the whole topic. And I did.

Indulge me for one more moment to confess that while I hold an unwavering faith in God, growing up I was never a very good fundamentalist. I tried really, really hard, I just couldn't get the hang of it. (Please don't tell my mother about this book, she thinks I'm still a Chiropractor.)

So back to answering the question of when I first knew that I could communicate with the other side. I always felt that there must be a way but it was the *how to* mechanics of it that eluded me. That finally came 31 years later.

I was first introduced to the famous, now deceased, psychic Sylvia Browne in spring 2000 when I watched her give psychic readings on a popular daytime television talk show. Audience members in turn stood up and one by one asked her questions. She quickly and effortlessly answered, telling these strangers about their talents, finances, careers and love lives. Everyone looked so happy to receive Sylvia's answers. I was fascinated. During the show she said that we all have the ability to do what she did and that it was the topic of her newest book. I needed to know more so after the show I ran down the block to Hastings Booksellers (shows how long ago this was) and bought her book. I easily gobbled it down that evening.

Sylvia's secret was that she had a personal guide living in the spirit world and they communicated telepathically back and forth. The guide's name was Francine. Francine lived on earth centuries ago and it was she, now living in the spirit world, who gave Sylvia the answers. It apparently worked like this: someone would ask Sylvia a question and Sylvia would then mentally pass it on to Francine. From her position in the spirit world Francine somehow came up with the answer and gave it to Sylvia, who then passed it along to the questioner. Sylvia explained that we all have at least one spirit guide who's willing to answer all of our questions. She wrote that it was simply a matter of meeting them and went on to describe exactly how to do it.

Excellent!

Like many people I had received random intuitive messages for myself and others all of my life and I'd always wondered where they came from. Maybe this was the answer I was looking for. What would it be like to meet my own guide? What would her name be? Maybe it's a *he*? And what would it be like if they really did have access to all the knowledge in the universe and could give me answers to all of my questions? I'll tell you what it would be...it would be handy...very handy. I had been living in the left brain world of chiropractic medicine for 20 years, but I'd also had enough experiences with helpful inner voices to suspect that spirit guides were probably real. Here was a book telling me how to meet mine and get direct guidance on demand. What could be more perfect?

On a warm evening in May 2000 I stepped out onto my back deck to meet my spirit guide. My family was out and about so I would not be disturbed. The sky was fast growing dark. Thunder was rolling in the distance and the air smelled of ozone. A powerful Nebraska spring storm was approaching from the south and I estimated 30 minutes before the rain would hit. The setting couldn't have been more perfect.

I sank deep into the cushioned patio chair, nestling and wriggling, shooing away all tension that could distract me from my mission. I would follow Sylvia's "how to" instructions laid out in her book.

First, I needed to make myself relaxed and comfortable. Second, I was to imagine myself sitting in a peaceful, beautiful place of my own choosing. Then, once fully immersed in my imaginary landscape I was to glance around at my make-believe surroundings and watch for a friendly *someone* to magically appear. The *someone* would approach me, introduce themselves as my spirit guide and we would begin a profound and deeply meaningful conversation. I was already experienced with this type of guided imagery technique and it sounded simple.

I closed my eyes and put myself on an exquisitely beautiful ocean beach, somewhere in southern California, on a warm summer evening. I sat cross legged on fine, soft white sand and deeply inhaled the moist salty air. In the distance hungry seagulls noisily vied for their dinners. I allowed imaginary waves to rhythmically lull me deeper and deeper into a profound and serene oneness with the vast ocean before me, visually pulling me further and further into the distance, my eyes finally absorbed into a fiery orange sunset.

Sufficiently tranquil and ready to receive my spirit guide, I turned my imaginary gaze to my right, expecting to see a luminous being gliding towards me from afar, joyous and radiant, smiling with arms outstretched, beckoning me into a loving, long awaited spirit world reunion.

Not quite.

I saw an enormous cloud of dust and emerging from it a determined horde of hundreds of people of all ages and sizes stampeding directly towards me. Shocked, I stood up and turned to run. But when I turned to my left I saw the same thing, a huge out of control mob, charging towards me, sand flying everywhere.

Luckily, on a pretend beach you can do anything you want, so I quickly created a tall boulder and jumped onto it as the human swarm closed in around me. As I looked down at the sea of faces I was amazed and beyond pleased that I had so many spirit guides. I was expecting only one, but with so many at my beck and call I knew there wasn't a question in the universe that couldn't be answered...and believe me, I had lots and lots of questions.

Bless you, Sylvia! This is going to be amazing!

I happily surveyed the crowd, expecting ethereal smiles and wise faces gazing up at me, awaiting my questions, eager to offer their wisdom.

Once again, not quite. The faces looked more anxious than excited, more desperate than eager. It hit me pretty quickly.

“You people aren’t my spirit guides...are you.” They shook their heads from side to side. “You’re dead people...right?” (Tact has never been one of my strong suits.) They nodded their heads up and down in unison, as if wired to the same machine.

“What are you doing in my meditation?”

Clearly, Sylvia had left this part out of the instructions.

They all began shouting. The gist of which was that they knew I could hear and see them and they had messages for their families still living on earth that they wanted...no...*needed*...me to deliver. Basically, because I could, I should. More accurately, because I could, I would have no choice in the matter. Their words, not mine.

Hmm, let me see if I had this correct. Imaginary dead people, which I had just now met on an imaginary beach, wanted me to find specific living people in my world and pass along messages from them. Hmm.

Really?

Granted, I knew there was life after this one, but I’d long ago stopped thinking about it and how it all worked. It was May of 2000 and everyone I knew allowed for two, and only two, accepted beliefs on the matter of what happens after we die.

Belief number one; we dissolve into the ground. No one left to talk to. End of story. Belief number two; we do and say the approved things while alive and Archangel Gabriel escorts us through the pearly gates of heaven and then promptly slams shut the door behind us. We are never seen nor heard from again until some future date when the righteous gather. Anything other than these two scenarios was just plain crazy talk. Further, anyone attempting a two way conversation with the dead was considered to be a misled wacko no doubt into Ouija boards and séances. I wasn't currently interested in rocking any boats. I'd long since stopped thinking about what happens after we die. I was a happy wife and mom living peacefully in the rational scientific world. I was busy. I came to this beach to meet a handy know-it-all spirit guide, period.

But, what if...

What if these imaginary people were who they said they were? What if deceased people actually did communicate with the living and this is how they did it? And what if they were right about me and I could do what they said I could do? It was obvious that these imaginary people thought it was me who could help them and not the other way around. What they were proposing was interesting...but...at the same time, way too scary to interject into my current life to even consider doing.

I announced to the imaginary people that I didn't know who their loved ones were or how to find them. I added that the people of an early 2000s-era city in Nebraska may not believe what I have to say. I pointed out that I had no idea how to get messages from where they are to their loved ones on my side, and further, I had no intentions of making a fool of myself while trying. I suggested they go find Sylvia. She seemed like a nice lady. She would help them.

Once again, they began shouting that I needed to try because there was no one else they could turn to and that I just had to do this. (Imaginary people can get really pushy, really fast.)

I felt the softy in me who can't resist helping others starting to give way. Heck, what harm could come from giving in to pretend people. Pretend people who, by the way, were becoming pretty darned real.

“OK, OK,” I waved my hands over the crowd, quieting them down, “I’ll agree, but on these conditions.”

I pointed out over the throng, “One of you step forward and give me a message to deliver. It has to be for someone I feel comfortable delivering the message to. The message has to be perfectly clear and the person in my world needs to easily understand it. Understood? Now, who has a message they want delivered?”

A young man eagerly elbowed his way to the front of the crowd. He said his name was Richard and he had a message for Tanya. He said to tell her that he is OK, he knows about the baby, the baby is fine and it's all good. One of my chiropractic patients immediately came to mind. Tanya was 30, personable, open minded, and hopefully, someone who wouldn't hold one weird question against me. Since it seemed that a momentary embarrassment was the worst that could happen and I had little to lose I told Richard I'd give his message a try. But I warned him that if the message turned out to be hooley I'd immediately drop the whole subject and he and his buddies there on the beach wouldn't get a second chance from me.

Richard agreed and then added while slowly pointing to those around him that if it successfully played out in the physical world I had to agree to start delivering messages from his side to mine. He said that the spirit world needs bridges and since I am one I am obligated to help out and do the work. Though I had absolutely no idea how I would carry out what I was agreeing to, I promised to help if the message turned out to be legit. I agreed to deliver the message to Tanya.

It seemed OK at the time to make the bargain, though looking back, it was a pretty huge commitment to make on a whim...even if it was to pretend people on a make-believe beach.

“So you don’t know anyone named Richard who died years ago?” I repeated my question to Tanya.

“Nope.”

“OK, then.”

I followed Tanya out of my treatment room into the waiting room and greeted my next patient. It was obvious that there was no message from a dead man named Richard to be delivered to a living woman named Tanya. I felt a little foolish and a lot relieved. When it came right down to it, the idea of putting myself out there as someone who communicates with the dead felt overwhelming and I was convinced that my chiropractic practice would evaporate if my patients learned I talked to the dead. Except for two close friends, who would stand by me no matter what, I had zero support. I was glad it was over.

Fast forward two weeks. I was lying face down receiving bodywork from my Massage Therapist, Tony. I had known her and her family as patients for nearly 15 years. Her heart is as beautiful as she is kind and I had always felt comfortable around her.

Half way through the session it occurred to me that Tony wasn't her given name. My office submitted insurance forms for her and they require the patient's legal name be used. Tony's birth name is Tanya. I'm sure you can see where this is going. I flat out told Tony that during a meditation a dark haired, nice looking young guy named Richard had shown up in my meditation telling me to tell Tanya that he knows about the baby and that it's all good. It was the first message I'd ever delivered and I didn't know what to expect. Her reaction, though now common, surprised me.

She burst into tears.

Between sobs she explained that her best friend Richard, whom she called Richie, had died when they were 24. He was the only person in her life, including her own family who, to this day, has ever called her Tanya. She said that she was beyond happy and relieved to hear that Richie and the baby were fine. As I waited for what had just happened to sink in, I heard a distant familiar male voice say in singsong, “You proomissed.”

Tanya thanked me for the message and we never spoke of it again.

I was stunned. I honestly didn’t see how mediumship could work like that. Was it really that easy? With such a clear confirmation from Tanya, and despite my fears, it felt right to keep my bargain with the spirit world. But I had no structure upon which to build and deliver the messages. So I told the spirit people that I would do the work but that I needed their help to find me guidance. I didn’t have long to wait.

A week later while channel surfing I came across a guy named John Edward. He was delivering messages from deceased people to members of a large audience. *I should try that.* I made detailed mental notes of how he organized the information coming to him. The next day over the lunch hour I grabbed my office manager and told her I had added a new duty to her job description. It was under the heading of “guinea pig.” I pulled up two chairs and gave my first ever reading. Out of nowhere came names, pictures and feelings. They effortlessly flowed to me. I told her what I was receiving and each time she validated a detail as belonging to one of her deceased loved ones (hereafter referred to as DLO) such as, their cause of death or a shared memory, I got more and more excited. Perhaps this was something I really could do and be of service to both the living and the dead.

After that I grabbed anyone who trusted me enough to experiment on them and gave them practice readings. I'm very appreciative to friends who early on, patiently and graciously, donated me their time. They created a safe space for me to fine tune my skills and figure out what it means to be a medium.

It has been many years and I'm still learning and evolving. I have studied with pioneering western mediums James VanPraagh, Doreen Virtue and John Holland. I've traveled to the famous Arthur Findlay College outside London, England to learn from British mediums including Tony Stockwell, Jackie Wright and Simone Key. It's been challenging and rewarding and I wouldn't change a minute of it. Now onto the questions.

“Are They OK?”

The new age fair was in full swing. Noisy laughter and perfumed incense swirled playfully around the throngs of fair goers milling around the four long rows of vendor tables running the entire length of the exhibition hall. They enthusiastically admired the crystals, artwork, jewelry and other colorful goods offered for sale. Having given readings for less than 2 years, I was constantly looking for new ways to hone my skills and the fair offered the perfect opportunity to challenge myself. I'd be giving rapid-fire readings to strangers who would pay me \$20 for a quick 15 minute session. I rented half of a 4 by 8 table and 2 metal folding chairs. I covered my side with a purple cloth and propped up a sign listing my services and fees alongside a sign-up sheet. I reasoned that if I could connect with spirit amidst this chaos I could do it anywhere.

The other half was rented to a bejeweled silky-robed older woman selling yummy smelling homemade soaps and lotions. I don't remember her name, but I do recall lots of gold bracelets clanking whenever she reached for something. I also recall that she was pretty curious about what was being said at my end of the table. She'd slowly lean sideways towards us, jingle jangling all the while shuffling her jars around as if tidying up her display. Once her ear was sufficiently filled she'd straighten up and quickly switch her gaze out into the room as if she'd suddenly noticed something important elsewhere.

It was mid-afternoon. A thirty something woman had been pacing in front of my table since lunch, nonchalantly attempting to overhear what was being said to other sitters. Finally, it was her turn. She gingerly lowered herself onto one chair while setting her purse on the other. She looked anguished yet hopeful. It was a mixed expression I had grown accustomed to seeing when someone still in raw grief came looking for help. She was hoping I was a real deal medium, praying that a reading would help alleviate some of her still raw grief. She was clearly nervous as she bravely thrust her hand at me and said her name. I softly clasped it while giving her mine.

I closed my eyes and waited. In this situation I always feel extra pressure to take my time to get as solid a connection as possible before speaking. Anything less can be devastating to someone in such pain. It took about a minute before I firmly recognized the familiar sensation of a spirit approaching. I relaxed to fully invite the spirit person closer. I felt information enter the right side of my head. As it gently slid further and further into my inner awareness a picture formed.

“I’m seeing a short, stocky, 30-something man. He’s bending towards me and smiling. He’s pointing to...and now tapping on...the top and center of his very shiny, very bald head. He makes me aware that he passed quickly to the spirit world. How do you know this man?” I asked as I slowly opened my eyes and looked at her.

Eyes wide and filling with tears she stared back at me, motionless, her face bright red from holding her breath.

She squeezed shut her eyes and covered her face with her hands. Nodding, she gulped in some much needed air and sobbed, "That's my husband."

After a few seconds she dropped her hands and slowly opened her eyes. While wiping her hands across her now wet cheeks and with a fitful mixture of laugh and cry said, "I used to help him shave his head. We had so much fun. It made us laugh really, really hard. I miss him so much."

I gently offered her a tissue and paused to give her time to absorb what she had heard. Dropping her hands into her lap, she looked straight into my eyes as her face relaxed. Her sobs turned into sighs of relief. A solid connection had been made. Her husband was OK. We continued with his messages to her and their children.

I think that those asking "Are they OK?" are actually asking, "Does my loved one still exist and how can I be sure they are in a good place?" I think it's only natural that this is the first question needing to be answered by the grieving.

Why? Many reasons.

Unfortunately, some belief systems teach that if we fail to live an exemplary life our souls may be condemned to eternal punishment. Others speak of in-between places where the dead are required to aimlessly wander as they await some type of second coming event. The popular *Tibetan Book of the Dead* describes a complicated landscape fraught with dangers and distractions that must be navigated before eventually finding one's afterlife destination. With such conflicting theories why wouldn't we angst over the whereabouts and safety of our loved ones?

We spend tremendous physical and emotional time and energy caring for and protecting our loved ones while they are alive. Worrying about them after their death and out of our reach can be overwhelming. We want to know for ourselves, absolutely and positively, that they're fine.

Mary, a petite, 40-something woman with a warm smile and easy manner strode confidently into my office. Her hair was perfectly coiffed and she presented every bit the professional in her flawlessly tailored designer suit. Though her makeup was impeccably applied it couldn't disguise the look in her eyes...that unmistakable look of being tired of being sad. I gestured for her to sit in my comfy burgundy recliner in the corner by the window.

"Have you been to a medium before?" I asked, settling into my matching chair directly across from hers.

"No, but I watch one on TV," Mary replied.

"Let me guess, the Long Island Medium?"

"Yes!" she smiled, "Have you seen her?"

"Of course."

For those two or three of you who don't know, *The Long Island Medium* is a television reality show starring an outrageously entertaining wife and mother living in Long Island, New York who also happens to be a professional medium. It's an incredibly popular show and I swear it must have the largest fan following on the planet today. When I ask a room of 40 to raise their hand if they follow the show, all but two hands will go up. The show's star is a terrific medium and week after week she gives flawless readings. Allow me to point out, however, that it's an hour long show with 2 or 3 readings per show and so, for entertainment value, we are shown the most jaw-dropping accurate four or five minutes of each reading. What is left on the cutting room floor are the awkward silences and quizzical looks exchanged between the medium and family members as they try to interpret what the DLO is communicating. Let me explain.

No psychic is more than 80-90% accurate. Don't get me wrong, the information coming from spirit is 100% true, but spirit needs to use the medium's body, senses, and mental frames of reference to get their messages across. The majority of the time, at least for most of us, the information comes as symbols. A medium must hone her ability to receive and pass along messages by becoming an expert at translating her own inner symbols. This takes time and practice. The more adept the medium is at deciphering these shortcuts the more seamless the communication appears. Eventually the medium's brain is able to quickly translate the symbols into words and recognizable situations for the family.

Let me give you an example. When the DLO puts a picture of white gloves into my mind I have learned that going to Sunday church was important to them. How did I learn this? I was shown white gloves and I mentioned them to a family member who then said that they didn't know what white gloves would possibly have to do with their mother...she never wore gloves...didn't own a pair...no idea...*sigh*. Later in the reading I found out that their mother was a devoted church goer. The next time I came across the inner image of white gloves in a reading, remembering the church reference, I will mention that the DLO "tells me" that she had spent a lot of time in church. The sitter will say "yes," amazed that I knew this. Not so amazing, the DLO "told" me by showing me white gloves. Eventually my brain deletes and moves past the gloves and I receive the knowing of "church" without the gloves.

At any time spirit people can send a new symbol. Last week a deceased grandfather sent me the feeling of extreme pain in every bone in my body. Not sure what this meant, I asked the family what it was that was significant about deep pain in his bones at his passing. They told me he had died of cancer that had metastasized to his bones. And so, from then on when a DLO makes my bones hurt in that specific way, I know that it is a clear validation that a loved one passed with cancer that had metastasized to the bone.

I have identified hundreds of mental and physical symbols over the years. The gloves are an example of a mental symbol. Physical symbols are sensations sent by the DLO and used to validate something about themselves while alive or as a cause of their passing, such as the bone pain. Other examples include, pain and tingling in my legs and feet means the DLO was diabetic in life. A thin line of pressure running from my forehead to my lips means I've connected with someone who passed because of cancer. If I spontaneously burp the DLO liked whiskey shots or beer while on earth. DLOs get a kick out of knowing they can make me belch.

The easiest messages are those with no symbols to interpret. I might simply hear the words “I’m her mother” in the middle of my head. Those who can communicate this easily were usually known to be excellent communicators in life. DLOs constantly send me new images, forcing me to ask questions, continually enlarging my catalogue.

Back to Mary.

It works best for me to avoid small talk when I meet with a client. I don’t want to know anything about the relationship between my client and their DLO or any details about them prior to the reading otherwise it just makes my job harder. This might sound counter-intuitive, but information about their loved one causes my mind to run in circles looking for evidence to support what the family member told me. If my mind is yacking at me it makes it tougher for the DLO to get around my thoughts and deliver the message.

I closed my eyes, relaxed, and waited to accept the connection Mary’s loved one would offer me. I soon felt the familiar warm, rippling sensation I get whenever a spirit enters my awareness. I felt pain on the right side of my forehead that traveled down my right arm, a physical symbol letting me know that I had connected with someone who had passed suddenly in an automobile accident. I heard the words, “this is my mom and she needs to hear from me.” Most spirit children coming to connect with a parent introduce themselves with those words. I knew from experience that this reading would be emotional and at the same time incredibly healing for Mary.

I told Mary what I felt and heard. She nodded and began tearing up. I handed her a tissue. The connection had been made and I waited for the next piece her child would offer me.

“Tell my mom that it all happened so fast. Tell my mom I didn’t suffer. Tell my mom that grandma came and got me and that it’s beautiful here and I’m happy.” I told Mary. She vigorously nodded while wiping her eyes, “That’s what I came here to find out. That’s what I needed to know.”

It turned out that her 17 year old son had recently died in a car accident. Mary came to the reading wanting to know if her son was OK, whether or not he had suffered before his spirit left his body and to be reassured that he wasn’t alone on the other side. Her son knew her questions and opened our reading with the answers. He let her know he is OK.

Our deceased loved ones don’t like seeing us in pain. They always know what to say to help us heal. It’s my job to simply pass along what they are communicating while keeping it as clear and as accurate as possible.

So, what does it mean to be OK in the afterlife? How exactly do we know that they still exist and are alive and well on the other side? By me insisting that the DLOs give me unique information that only they and the sitter would know. Simply put, if your DLO no longer existed I wouldn’t have any information to pass along to show that I’m communicating with them. To me the definition of OK is that they continue to exist as a conscious being with the memories of the person they were before passing.

Let me go back a step and give you another example of how a DLO lets a living family member know that she is ok. This time, a DLO knew her husband needed to be asked a specific question that was on his mind, through me.

Saiid made it clear from the moment he walked into my office that he was a skeptic. Without so much as a “hello” he brushed past me, plopped himself into my chair, crossed his arms and legs and declared, “I don’t believe in people like you but I’ll give this stuff a try anyway.”

Fortunately, DLOs show up regardless of their living loved one’s attitude about what I do.

I quickly established a connection with his deceased wife and we received some general validations including; how wonderful their marriage was, their sharing in the raising of 2 sons as well as descriptions of multiple family members and pets she sees on the other side. Saiid responded to the information by saying it wasn’t what he expected. He said that he was disappointed and didn’t want to hear more. He wanted to leave.

His choice, no problem. (And yes, he would still need to pay me for my time)

As he stood to leave his wife showed me a beautiful ruby ring that he had given her in life, telling me that it was still sitting on the corner of their dresser. Saiid agreed this was true, but it didn’t slow his progress towards the door.

His wife suddenly prompted me, “he has a question, make him ask the question.”

If it were up to me I’d have just let him keep on walking out the door. But, when spirit speaks you pretty much have to listen.

“Saiid, your wife says you have a specific question for me. Before you leave, what is it?” He stopped, turned, shrugged his shoulders and said, “OK, ask her what she’s doing right this minute.”

“She’s showing me that she’s outside sitting in a wheelchair next to a large water fountain, enjoying the sunshine. She’s living in some type of medical center. There are attendants in white robes caring for her and she says they are healers who are reminding her how to use her arms and legs again.”

Saiid suddenly looked interested.

“What did she say she was doing?”

“She says she’s with healers who are reminding her how to use her arms and legs again,” I repeated.

“That’s it! That has to be her! She was paralyzed from the neck down for the last 12 years of her life,” Saiid beamed. Finally satisfied.

Was Saiid’s wife actually in a wheelchair being attended to by heavenly therapists? I don’t know. What I do know is that she knew what he needed to ask me to get my attention so I could get her point across to him. If she needed to prompt me into getting him to ask for it, then prompt me she would.

Carol came for a reading to connect with her recently transitioned mother. Her mother began by showing me a brightly colored 3D picture of Julie Andrews swirling on the mountain top in the opening scene of *The Sound of Music*. With my inner ears I heard her mother say, “This is how I feel now.” I hesitated to tell Carol what I was getting. I couldn’t decide if this was a new symbolic image for me or if her mother was actually now living in some heavenly version of 1940s Austria. The scene seemed kind of generic. Who wouldn’t feel like that on the other side? Plus, the scene seemed a bit corny to me and I tend to avoid corny.

I decided to ignore Julie Andrews for now and keep moving forward. Her mother wouldn’t have it. She just kept twirling and swirling and singing. Finally, corny be darned, I told Carol what I saw. She smiled and said that *The Sound of Music* was her mother’s favorite movie and the family had played that movie in her room through the night as she passed. With this simple scene Carol’s mother sent a beautiful message to her family that she was no longer racked with pain from cancer and now throws out her arms and spins to her heart’s content.

She’s OK.

Once the DLO has established a strong connection with me they spend most of the remaining time giving validation after validation that they are alive and better than ever.

Everyone who dies is OK.

Everyone goes to heaven.

Everyone. Yes, everyone.

This takes us to the next question. Who have they seen on the other side?

“Who Have They Seen?”

When a family member asks this question the DLO usually answers in one of two ways. With my inner vision I may see them point to a spirit standing next to them and say “I’m with my husband/mother/brother,” or I’ll be introduced to a companion through a validating piece of information, often in the form of a story. Here’s an example.

Julie’s mother had recently passed and Julie was worried that her mother was alone on the other side. She explained that her mother had lived to a ripe old age, but had been a self-imposed recluse the second half of life. Julie was afraid that her mother would continue to push others away in the afterlife, too. Even though I know that our loved ones are never without others it’s my job to let the DLO do the showing.

I mentally asked her deceased mother who she was with on the other side. I was shown a scene of a middle-aged, dark haired woman emerging through the back door of a small white house, carrying a large, colorfully decorated rectangular cake. The woman paused and bent slightly at the waist, proudly displaying the delicious piece of art to the small, noisy crowd gathered around patio tables several steps below. As she straightened up the party goers turned and began applauding as she stepped forward and began her short descent to the concrete below.

Suddenly, she stumbled forward. She bobbed the cake as she grabbed at the metal railing. She caught herself but lost the cake. The crowd gasped then erupted into loud laughter and clapping. Motionless, the woman stared horrified at the heap of colorful mess at the bottom of the steps.

Julie squinted her eyes and threw back her head, laughing. She said she recognized the scene as an infamous story told and retold within her family about the day her aunt Dora, her mother's sister, dropped Julie's 30th birthday cake. Dora was also deceased and Julie now felt certain that mother and sister had found each other on the other side. What a great way for Julie's aunt to say "Hello", share a good laugh and at the same time reassure her that her mother was with family who loved her.

Parents especially need reassurance that their child is with someone who loves them. Parents often believe that their child had to know the deceased relative while alive in order for their child to go to that person...afraid their child may be still obeying the "don't talk to strangers" rule. Rest assured that this is not the case. When a child dies and enters the spirit world somehow the word goes out and relatives known and unknown to the child, as well as angels, Jesus, or other figures of spiritual importance to the child are there to greet him. Here's an example of how one DLO let me know she was with a newly passed child.

"Is he with anyone? Is anyone caring for him?" Sarah asked. The loss of her 8 year old son to a genetic disease was recent and her grief was still very raw.

"I'll ask him."

I knew her son was being cared for by loved ones, but I also knew Sarah needed to hear for herself who he was with. I knew that the message would only be accepted by her if it contained something that she could understand and relate to.

“I just got a huge bouquet of daisies shoved in my face. Who on the other side would do that to get our attention?”

“Oh, that’s my grandmother,” Sarah beamed. “She loved them. When I was young we used to spend hours and hours putting together arrangements of silk daisies. She died about 10 years ago, before Jason was born.”

“Then that’s who’s stepping forward to let us know that he’s not alone. Your grandmother and your son have met each other on the other side and are now together.”

We can’t underestimate how important it is for parents to know that their child is not alone. A few years ago I was asked to give a one hour talk at a daylong conference focusing on topics of Mind, Body, and Spirit. I spoke about angels and their roles in our lives. The conference organizers videotaped the talk and put it up on the local city public television channel where it was played several times throughout the day for about a month. During that time my father lived in an assisted living facility and as part of our routine I visited him on Thursday afternoons. We played bingo, watched television or simply sat and chatted. On one of those Thursdays, as my dad and I were relaxing on the porch enjoying the afternoon sunshine, the social director came rushing up to us. She looked excited and asked permission to interrupt us to tell me a quick story.

She sat down, smiled, nodded to my dad and then turned to me. Debbie said that she had recognized me while channel surfing the previous week. She stopped to watch the show because she heard me mention angels. She believed in them and she wanted to hear what I had to say. She said I said something that she would never forget.

Debbie explained that her 16 year old daughter had passed three years before and since that day Debbie hadn't slept through a single night without taking prescribed sleeping pills. She had sought the advice and treatment of many doctors and therapists and still had no success falling asleep without the pills. She said that she heard me explain that no child is alone on the other side because angels and loved ones, even relatives they never met on Earth, immediately come to guide them to the other side to be cared for. Debbie said she fell asleep naturally that night and has not needed to take a single sleeping pill since. Up until then no one had been able to assuage the fear she carried...the fear that her daughter was lost and wandering alone. Debbie now slept peacefully, knowing that her daughter is with others and being cared for on the other side.

The afterlife is full of people we love and expect to hear from, but please know that heaven is for animals, too. They show up right alongside humans. I love it when a deceased pet wanders into the middle of a reading. Invariably, the sitter will identify the animal as belonging to them or another living or deceased family member. This is the animal's way of saying hello and showing us who is caring for them on the other side. It can be a huge relief for the sitter to know that their dog, cat, or even horse, bird or pet chicken has found a home on the other side and patiently waits for them.

Imagine yourself passing into the spirit world. Your human friends and family come rushing to greet you, smiling with arms open wide and alongside them are their pets and alongside their pets come yours! I can't imagine a more joyous reunion.

“Do They Know I Love Them?”

When I hear this question I always have to resist blurting out, “Of course they know you love them!” But, reasons for asking this question vary. It appears near the top of the list if the family member and the DLO fought. The surviving family member may be fearful that their DLO is holding a grudge in heaven.

Sandy was grieving the loss of her second husband to cancer. Her daughter-in-law, an acquaintance of mine, told me that the marriage had been rocky and asked if I would step in with a reading because Sandy was having difficulty with moving forward with her grief.

Sandy’s husband came through and began the session by showing me a car driving down a dusty country road towards an isolated and weather worn two story farmhouse. Sandy smiled and said she recognized the house as their first home together.

He then escorted me into the living room of the old house where I could see daylight coming through slits in the wood paneling covering the walls. I passed this image along to Sandy. She giggled and began dramatically waving her arms in circles above her head, “The house was so drafty that on windy days the curtains blew around even with the windows closed!” I just had to laugh.

Her husband then showed me a small wooden box containing several tiny mice. He gently put the lid on it, drove it out to a faraway field and opened it, setting the mice free. He said that after trapping them he always let them go because Sandy had a soft heart and couldn't bear to have them killed.

Nodding and tearing up Sandy said, "We named it 'the mouse catch-and-release program'." Wiping her eyes she went on to say that those were such happy times and that she was relieved he still remembered them. She said she hoped that in the end, despite their problems, he knew how much she loved him. The tenderness exchanged between the two of them at that moment, each from their own side of the veil, was palpable and exquisite.

I love my job.

When a loved one passed by suicide it can be especially hard on the surviving loved ones. I'm absolutely not an expert so forgive me if I'm off base, but it seems to me we possess a human belief that if we love a troubled person well enough it will fix something in them and hopefully they'll want to keep living. When someone passes by their own hand, "Do they know how much I loved them?" can come from a very painful place.

Karl's grief therapist sent him to me because Karl was having trouble understanding why he couldn't move past his brother's death. When his brother connected with me I felt a blinding pain at my right temple along with a metallic taste in my mouth, my signal for death by trauma involving a metal object, most likely a gun. Karl acknowledged that his brother had shot himself in the head. His brother then said how sorry he was for forcing Karl to watch. Karl nodded and said that his brother had done it right in front of him 10 years earlier.

I began getting dizzy along with a pushing and pulling sensation in my head, my signal for distorted and chaotic thinking. Karl agreed that his brother had been severely mentally ill for many years before his death.

Karl's brother showed me a picture of Karl standing and speaking over his closed casket. His brother insisted that I tell Karl to release himself from the longstanding vow Karl spoke of over his casket that day. I passed this along to Karl who told me that, yes, when his younger brother was diagnosed with mental illness he had indeed made a personal vow to always care for and protect him. He acknowledged that on the day of his funeral he had stood over his brother's casket and apologized aloud for not keeping his vow.

Karl said he felt like he failed his brother by not preventing the suicide. His brother then told me to tell Karl that he heard what Karl said over his body, but that Karl couldn't possibly have prevented his suicide. Karl's brother said that at the end of the day he knew how much Karl loved him in order to have made such an impossible vow. He said to tell Karl that he now understood that he, and not Karl, was solely in charge of his own life and death.

Karl said the therapist had tried to tell him this but it just "sounded like something a therapist would say." Hearing it from his brother made it feel true. Karl found some peace knowing that his brother knew how much he was loved.

An issue that often comes up is when a family member is contemplating suicide in hopes of joining the DLO in heaven in an effort to continue with their earthly relationship. Their DLO will give me a heads up so they can confront the family member about their plan. The DLO lets the family member know, in no uncertain terms, that it is an unacceptable choice and that they *do not* support it. Besides, according to the DLO, it doesn't work that way.

DLOs tell me that when a family member commits suicide to be with them the family member doesn't get his or her wish. I haven't been given the specifics of how this works, but DLOs have told me that it has to do with the family member and the DLO being held apart until the time when the family member would have died naturally.

DLOs repeatedly tell me that they take the love and the joy that they gave and received while on Earth with them to heaven and leave all other emotions, grudges and unresolved issues here on Earth for us to work out. They completely forgive us for everything needing forgiveness and they ask you to forgive them for when they've wronged you. Some people don't like to hear this, but I've been told that in heaven they've also forgiven themselves for wronging you. This doesn't mean they don't accept responsibility and hold themselves accountable for causing us pain, rather, they see a bigger picture. They know full well how hard it is to be human.

Do they know that you still love them? Yes.

“Do They Know What’s Happened in the Family since They Died?”

“Does grandma know what’s been going on? Can she see what’s happening in the family from where she is?” asked Mindy. Mindy’s mother, Vivian, was sitting next to her, nodding her agreement that this was a very important question. Her mother had passed away several years prior.

“I’ll ask.”

I went inward, knowing I would get some form of a ‘yes,’ but as always, I would make sure they heard it straight from Grandma.

“She’s showing me a baby with a pink bow in her hair. She’s telling me that in her day they absolutely *did not* glue bows to baby’s heads. And, just so you know,” I added “she’s wagging her finger and sounds a wee bit disgusted.”

Right after I said it I realized how silly it sounded. I doubted that I understood the grandmother correctly and braced myself for the inevitable, “Huh? Glue? What the heck are you talking about??” (Hey...gluing bows onto babies...you’d be bracing, too.)

“That’s mom!” Vivian shouted.

Mindy and Vivian laughed and slapped each other's knees. Excitedly tag teaming each other's sentences they explained that the previous Saturday the whole family had gathered for a sitting with a professional photographer. Mindy had a new 3 month old baby girl, the first grandchild born into the family. Mindy wanted to decorate the baby's hair with a pretty pink bow but her hair was too fine and the bow kept sliding off. Vivian went into her purse for a solution and found a glue stick. They used it to attach the bow to the baby's head.

I seldom react to spirit's stories, but I laughed hard at that one. I think it was pretty safe to say that Grandma was completely up to date with the happenings in the family.

DLOs bring up current events to let us know they're watching over us. I've heard TV mediums say our deceased loved ones are with us all the time, day in and day out, right at our sides, watching over us and never missing a thing. May I be so bold as to say that can sound a bit creepy? DLOs tell me they're not typically hanging around in our 3D world but they are always just a thought away. They tell me they do check in to see what we're thinking about from time to time, especially if it's something pressing or a happy occasion.

Some don't accept this and choose to believe their deceased loved ones are still involved in the minutia of their daily lives. Newly widowed women whose husbands made the majority of decisions often come to readings with a long list of questions that range from "does he like my new dress?" to "should I sell the house, and if so, how much should I list it for and what realtor should I use?" Believing a DLO is still walking around the house and involved in their old Earth life to that degree, in my opinion, is a form of denial and only serves to delay the grieving process. Newly deceased husbands remind their widows to trust themselves to solve problems and to seek old and new avenues of support.

I'm not saying they *never* answer a question, but the question must involve something they can answer without interfering with our free will. They know that living on earth is an opportunity to make choices and experience the consequences of those choices. For example, if you're trying to decide whether or not to go back to school they won't tell you whether or not to do it. But, once you've made the decision they'll support you. Your DLO is aware that he's there and you're here. DLOs have told me that there are rules on the other side that they're required to follow and one of those rules involves giving us space to live as humans with little influence from the spirit world. They're allowed to check in on us in a general sense and are allowed to "hear" thoughts directed towards them, but they're not allowed access to thoughts that don't concern them. Personally, I'm good with that. I love my grandma who's now in spirit. To have her hang around 24/7 and watch everything I do feels awkward and kinda creepy.

Sometimes family members are so sure that their DLO is around them and can hear their every word that they will give their DLO a set of pre-arranged signals to bring to a reading. Before the reading the family will instruct their DLO to ask me to mention a code word, secret song or something else so the family knows absolutely and for sure that I am communicating with them. Whether or not the DLO wants to play along isn't something I can control. Assuming the DLO does want to play along and tries to give me a specific prearranged message it doesn't mean I'll always be able to receive it. Having said that, sometimes it does work.

I recently did a reading for a woman who wanted to hear from her deceased mother. Half way through the reading and after plenty of evidence the mother showed me that her wedding ring was hanging from a chain around her daughter's neck. When I mentioned this the daughter reached up and pulled a chain up from under her shirt with her mother's wedding ring dangling from it. The mother then told me it was her daughter's way of seeing if I was the real deal. The daughter admitted that it had indeed been a test. She then insisted that I give her the other **four** specific pieces of information that she had instructed her mother to give to me so she, the daughter, could absolutely and positively know, for sure, I was really, really talking with her mother.

Really? Really.

Mother said 'thanks, but, no thanks' and so did I. Looking back I wonder if the mother knew her daughter well enough to know that if answering one specific request wasn't enough, then 5 wouldn't satisfy her either.

DLOs often mention if they notice you wearing or carrying something in their honor such as a tee shirt or picture in your wallet. They also like to mention something you recently talked about within the last day or two or even on the way over to the reading. I just did a reading where the deceased grandmother showed me a picture of her granddaughter using an older sewing machine. The living daughter and granddaughter laughed and explained that on the drive over to my office they had discussed the granddaughter's interest in taking up sewing and therefore needed to find her a good used machine. They were pleased that grandma, an avid seamstress, had witnessed that moment.

Sometimes the spirits will send messages to absent loved ones, letting them know they are watched over. For example, at a group reading I received a message for a man from his deceased mother-in-law. She told him to tell her daughter that she had watched her make punch in the old punch bowl the night before. The man laughed and said he couldn't wait to pass the message along. He said his wife was skeptical and had refused to come with him to the group reading. He said hearing that her mother had come through and mentioned seeing her make punch in her mother's big old crystal punch bowl the night before would surprise her. Hopefully in a good way.

One last thought before we leave this question of whether or not your DLOs know what is currently going on in your life. Your DLO wants you to understand that their ability to see and hear into our world isn't perfect. It's not as though they walk around as normal people who just happen to be invisible. They're in a different dimension and as such they have spiritual, not physical, eyes and ears. They do their best to receive messages from us just as we do from them. It's not a perfect or direct communication to or from either side. They are happy you came for a reading so they can share with you that they still care. Do they know what has gone on in the family since they left us?

Yes, they do.

“Do They Forgive Me For Not Being There at the End?”

“Does he forgive me for our last conversation? I didn’t mean for it to end that way between us.”

“I only left the room for a few minutes and she died. Did she think that I abandoned her?”

“Did he hear what I said to him before the ambulance got there?”

These are a few of the common questions family members have. The idea that their loved one is in the afterlife in a perpetual state of disappointment over their last moments on Earth can be incredibly burdensome to the family left behind. Many have difficulty finding closure with these questions continually circling in their minds.

It happens all too often that family members sit day after day with a dying loved one, waiting for the last breath, not wanting them to be alone at the very end only to have them pass during the 5 minutes they ran to grab a sandwich. Why? DLOs have told me many times that they purposefully waited for the family member to leave the room so they could pass in privacy. Here’s an example.

An acquaintance entered hospice after a long battle with cancer. As her passing approached she fell unconscious and the nurses withdrew food and water, a commonly used method to peacefully hasten the inevitable. Her rather large group of loyal friends gathered close and vowed that she would not die alone and so they took turns sitting vigil at her bedside. At least one of them was there at all times, constantly, day in, day out, ever vigilant, watching for her last breath, 24/7, 86,400 seconds of every day. I heard through the grapevine that it took 5 full weeks before she finally took her last breath.

I checked in on her after she passed and expressed marvel at how tenaciously she had held on without nourishment. She laughed and said that it wasn't so much a testament to her desire to stay alive as it was her waiting for a moment alone so she could pass in privacy!

Your dying loved one may not want their final breath to be your last living memory of them. I realize that many of the dying feel supported and nurtured by the presence of family and friends at the very end and that's wonderful. However, you may find it difficult to force that on a dying loved one if that isn't what they want. Unless I change my mind down the road my last breath isn't something I want my family to carry in their collection of memories. That's just me.

When I get a call from family members with loved ones in hospice who are experiencing difficulty leaving their earthly bodies I suggest that they leave the loved one alone for 5 to 10 minutes every so often to give them some personal space to make their exit.

How will the family know when the time of passing is close? For the dying loved one the veil between worlds gets progressively thinner and they often begin to speak of, and point to, angels and deceased loved ones that only they can see. These are their escorts coming to take them home and this a good time to start giving them some private time.

It is important to keep in mind that as someone is passing they have a lot going on in their inner world that only they are privy to. As their spirit makes the transition they become more and more aware of the other side, the people they know there, their loving angels and spirit guides, as well as the beautiful landscape awaiting them.

While becoming less focused on the physical world the dying nevertheless know what went on during their final moments here on the earth plane. Before their spirit leaves the vicinity of their death they always seem to know what is going on around them, even if the physical body is unconscious. Here's a perfect example.

Ivory was from a small rural north central Nebraska township who wanted to connect with her son, Josh, who had died in an automobile accident a few years earlier. He had been the driver and it was an especially violent head on collision. During the reading between validations of connecting with family members left behind, current events in the family and details of the night of the accident her son randomly slipped in the name "Bobbie." Ivory wracked her brain. Was Bobbie a friend from school? Perhaps a childhood friend he wanted to say "hi" to? She couldn't place the name so we moved on.

A few minutes later, remembering something, Ivory suddenly teared up. She explained that one of the details she had heard involving the rescue attempt was that the rescuers, surmising that Josh would probably not make it, pulled him from the wreck, laid him aside and then rushed to get to the others still trapped inside the vehicle. Ivory anguished over the thought that Josh may still have been conscious and suffering in his aloneness as he took his last breath. To this day the thought of him dying alone was almost more than she could bear.

After Josh's funeral Ivory received a letter from one of the emergency crew present at the scene. The crew member had recognized Josh because their sons were classmates. In the letter the EMT told Ivory that when she arrived at the scene she saw that Josh was already pulled from the wreck. She said she saw him alone and knelt down and briefly held his hand. Her name was Bobbie.

Josh mentioned Bobbie in our reading that day because he wanted his mom to know that he absolutely knew that Bobbie was there at the scene. He knew of her kindness and reassured her that he had felt Bobbie's presence as he slipped away. What a wonderful gift from a loving son to his grieving mother.

DLOs bring up the events surrounding their deaths nearly 100 percent of the time. They know that we can get emotionally stuck here and have difficulty finding closure because of it and they want to help. They want you to know that at the moment of death they simply got up out of their bodies and moved with ease into the spirit world. We often find it difficult to resolve the feelings and fears surrounding the last time we saw them alive. Since this is where a lot of the unresolved pain surrounding a death is held I want to help by giving you an analogy of what it's like for your loved one as they leave this world.

Imagine for a moment that you tripped and fell and that it was witnessed by your family and friends. You stood up from the fall, brushed yourself off and waved that you're ok. Everyone was relieved when they realized you weren't hurt and went on with their day.

Now imagine the same people saw you fall but for some reason did not see you get up and walk away so from their perspective you fell and simply disappeared. You vanished into thin air.

You've become a DLO.

Now imagine that you are a short distance away watching their distress. Remember, you disappeared right there in front of them and to their minds you're seemingly no longer alive. Since they can't see or talk to you anymore they're distressed and immediately begin to miss you. They're also worried about what you were thinking when you fell, wondering if you are still in pain from hitting the pavement and maybe even wondering if you blamed them for your fall. But, there you are, watching. You know you're fine, have no pain and you understand what made you fall. You have compassion for what your friends and family are going through. You are not forever replaying the last thought going through your mind as you passed. You understand that life on Earth is hard as you turn and catch the next plane to Maui (my version of heaven). You are now taking the love and joy you shared with your family and leaving everything else behind knowing you will all be together again in the future.

And oh, you're looking pretty fine right now. You'll check on them from time to time through some sort of one way heavenly Zoom.

Your DLO knows you did the best you could to be there for them and in the end appreciate all you did on their behalf. Their physical life is over and they're ready for a new adventure. DLOs encourage you to let go and not get stuck at their deaths.

It's important to know that when someone we love passes in a situation that is scary or traumatic like a drowning, accident or even murder that they move peacefully to the other side. I've been repeatedly told that when it's our time to go God sees to it we are drawn away from the awful situation, deeply comforted and away from the trauma while it's happening.

God is kind.

If your DLO passed suddenly and you were not able to say “goodbye” they know about the agony you may be carrying. At a psychic fair I did a quick read for a woman and her teenage daughter. They had lost their husband/stepfather to a sudden, massive heart attack a few years earlier. The stepfather gave some nice validations then closed by saying that the stepdaughter was having a hard time in school. He said that she had withdrawn from her friends and acted out amongst peers because she could not reconcile her grief over not being able to say goodbye to him. The stepfather released an overwhelming surge of love, palpably enveloping the 3 of us as he assured his stepdaughter that he heard her say “goodbye” the first time she said it and every single night since then. The feeling of love was intense. That connection brought the three of us to some pretty hard tears.

Once again, when someone passes they take their memories and the love and the joy they shared while here. They leave all, and I do mean ALL, of the rest of the messy stuff here with us.

They do not hold it against you if your last words to them were not “I love you,” or even if your last conversation was a fight. They are not in heaven stewing over unfinished business nor are they holding some sort of eternal grudge. They forgive you for anything you feel you need to be forgiven for. They move to a place of complete peace and broader understanding and hope that we will find the same. When you mentally say “I’m sorry” or “please forgive me” or anything else directed towards them they hear you the first time...and the ten thousand times you repeat it after that. If they need your forgiveness about something it will all be sorted out when you see them again. They still love you and they know you still love them. It’s all good.

So, yes, your loved one knows that if you could have been there to say goodbye to them at the end you would have.

They know.

“What Do They Think of Their Funeral?”

When this question comes up the DLO will usually answer by telling me something about the funeral to prove that they were there and the family’s efforts didn’t go unnoticed. They’ll often mention something about the funeral, such as, what flowers were chosen, any unusual happenings or how their remains were handled. I have yet to have a DLO say they weren’t happy with how they were laid to rest. It’s the intent of the family members and not the specifics of the funeral itself that the DLO pays attention to.

A reading that stands out when I think about funerals and the handling of the remains is the one where Jason received a message from his best friend who had passed in a motorcycle accident the year before. I could tell Jason was still deep in grief and sorely missing his friend.

In this reading it was his deceased friend who brought up the topic of his own funeral. He started off by showing me a long line of motorcycles while thanking Jason for the great “send-off.” Jason said that 30 of their friends rode to the funeral on their motorcycles and after the service paraded through their small town and down several miles of the local highway in his friend’s honor.

Next, his friend showed me an urn, meaning he'd been cremated. Jason agreed that he had been. His friend then told Jason to "tell my wife to take a scoop of me and throw it over there, take another scoop of me and throw it over there, and tell her to keep a scoop for herself." I inwardly chuckled at how casual his friend was about throwing scoops of himself.

Jason agreed that his friend's wife did indeed still have her husband's ashes and wanted to do just that. She wanted to spread his ashes over several important personal locations, but her husband's friends convinced her otherwise by telling her it was a bad idea. Jason explained that his friend had been Native American and even though his wife was not, their Native American friends argued that separating his ashes went against their spiritual beliefs. They warned her that her husband's spirit wouldn't be at peace if his ashes weren't kept together. As a result, his ashes were still sitting on her fireplace mantle.

Jason's deceased friend adamantly insisted that he wasn't his ashes nor was his spirit attached to his ashes. He gave his wife his full blessing to do whatever she wanted with them.

Good for him.

Jason said he would pass this on to his friend's wife and hopefully it would give her the permission to do what she needed to do to find closure.

Not long ago a woman made an appointment with me to hear from her deceased brother. During the session she asked me to ask her brother if he approved of the way the family had handled his body. I assumed he'd respond in the usual way, showing me a headstone, urn, unique funeral proceedings or something like that. Instead, all I got was the sound of him laughing and the impression of a mixture of some sort of green swishy art. I didn't understand the image and I told the sister so. She laughed and asked if I wanted to know what her brother was trying to show me. I like a challenge and so I said, "No, let me try again."

I asked her brother again to show me something about how his remains were handled and whether or not he was pleased. He laughed again and showed me the same patches of color but this time I could tell they were attached to something square and small. Whatever he was trying to show me apparently made him happy. For the life of me I couldn't figure out what it was or what it had to do with his internment.

I cried uncle.

The sister happily explained that her brother was the world's biggest Packers fan. The family kept his ashes in an antique Green Bay Packers lunchbox as a befitting testament to his biggest passion in life.

Yeah, no frame of reference for that. I wasn't going to get 'he's in an old Green Bay Packers lunchbox.'

As readings progress the question of whether or not DLOs approve of their final arrangements tends to morph into the family member asking "Do they approve of how we handled their stuff?" When answering this question the DLOs tell me over and over again that they have a perfect new home now and with one exception, couldn't care less about anything material they left behind. That exception is their legal Last Will and Testament.

The DLO knows absolutely whether or not the terms of their Will are being honored. I've done several readings with siblings who were in charge of handling their parent's estate who had decided that another sibling was unworthy of full inheritance and had decided to withhold their fair share. The deceased parent will call them out on it right there in the reading and let them know, in no uncertain terms, that it is not up to them to determine who gets what. It is up to them to honor the Will. Pure and simple.

Even though DLOs don't care what happens to their stuff they do notice if you are keeping something in their honor. A piece of furniture, a special photograph, or perhaps you're wearing something they left behind such as a piece of clothing or jewelry. It's always in the context of them knowing that you're remembering them and that you feel good honoring them in that way. If it makes us feel good it makes them feel good. They like to see us happy.

If you're keeping something only because you're thinking "mom would want me to keep this," let that thinking go... mom doesn't care what you keep or don't keep. In the end their stuff is just that, stuff. They released their attachment to it the moment they left their body. They really do take only the love and the joy and leave all the rest here. All of it.

When it comes to beloved pets left behind the DLO knows its whereabouts and may speak up on its behalf.

Kathy came to connect with her friend Aaron who had committed suicide. During the reading he asked Kathy to please get ahold of his sister because his sister knew where his dog had been taken after his death and that his dog was being abused in its new home. Aaron asked Kathy to go and get his dog and take it to safety. Kathy promised to check into it. She got back to me a couple of months later and confirmed that she had found the dog after finding Aaron's sister on Facebook. Kathy checked out the dog's situation and indeed ended up rescuing Aaron's beloved pet. Good for her.

One last thing before we move on to the next question. If there is a pending lawsuit surrounding the circumstances of their death the DLOs will know about it and sometimes bring it up. They do this to validate that they know what has been going on since they died and also to inform the family member that they are not invested in the outcome. The DLO wants us to understand that they went when it was their time to go and that they don't hold a grudge against any doctors or hospitals or other parties being held potentially liable for their deaths. The idea that we should seek restitution for what we consider a wrongful death is purely our concern. Though they want us to do what we feel is right, our DLOs remind us that they are at peace and are just fine regardless of the outcome of any lawsuits brought on their behalf. Initiating a lawsuit because "this is what Uncle Fred would want" is our notion, not Uncle Fred's.

Honoring our loved one's final wishes is something we here on Earth hold dear. Their wish for us is to be happy, seek health, love one another and go after our earthly goals and dreams. Their existence here on Earth has ended and they continue on into the next world wishing us wonderful lives and are looking forward to the day when we are once again all reunited

“How Did He Actually Die?”

At first glance this appears to be a pointless question. How could we not know how our loved one passed? After all, there’s a death certificate and the cause of death is always listed. If someone passed with an illness there was a diagnosis made by the doctor and if there was an accident, well, it was the accident. Right?

Not always. There may be more to their story.

While reading for a mother and grown daughter, spirit gave me the smell of “funny smoke”. They grinned at each other and asked me to continue.

“I see stairs leading to a basement. Does this go along with the funny smoke?” I asked. They nodded vigorously.

“That’s my mom’s friend. They used to smoke pot together,” the daughter giggled, playfully elbowing her mother’s ribs.

“Yes, that’s my best friend June,” the mother said, “she died by falling down those basement stairs. We used to have so much fun together.” Judging by the smell I had no doubt about that.

“Ask her, was anyone with her when she died?” pleaded the mother.

When I passed the question on to June I immediately got the sensation of my feet being tangled in a rug. The spirit friend pointed down at her feet, giving me the impression that it was just she and the rug.

“Oh, that’s good,” the daughter said, nodding at her mother. “We’ve always wondered if it was an accident or if her boyfriend pushed her down the stairs.” Mystery solved.

A woman in her mid-30s came for a reading asking to hear from her fiancé who had passed several years earlier. He showed me that he was killed in a car accident while driving at night through another state. He showed me that he fell asleep at the wheel and drove off the road, landing in a ditch. He died alone at the scene.

“Yes,” the young woman nodded in agreement. She leaned forward and asked, “But how did he die?”

Hmm, I thought he and I had answered that question.

I returned my attention to the deceased fiancé and waited to see if he would give me anything more. Within a few seconds I felt an impact on my chest followed by the feeling of my torso and pelvis filling with blood. This was a brand new sensation for me. When I told the young woman what I was feeling she sat back, apparently satisfied.

“Thank you. What you are describing tells me his chest hit the steering wheel and burst his aorta (the large vessel carrying blood away from the heart to the rest of the body) and that’s his cause of death.” Then she added, “I’m a trauma nurse.”

I guess there's specific and then there's trauma nurse specific.

I've also given readings where the DLO was incredibly detailed about how he passed, but the family had decided somewhere along the way that a mystery is a mystery and it should stay that way.

At a psychic fair many years ago a mother and 30-something daughter sat down for a quick 20 minute reading. They wanted to connect with their deceased husband and father.

Right away I felt dozens of pricks all up and down my body, as if I was being hit by tiny sharp objects. I had never experienced that sensation from spirit before, but it was quite distinct and so I asked the mother if the sharp pokes could be connected with how her husband passed.

“No.”

Apparently, I needed more information so I went back in and asked for more details. I got the same zings, except this time stronger. Again, the mother denied understanding anything about multiple pokes as the cause of her husband's death.

Time was ticking and others were waiting and so I asked her to please flat out tell me what had caused her husband's death so we could move forward. They simultaneously furrowed their brows and threw up their hands saying they didn't know how he died. I was confused.

Suddenly, I heard the word “shrapnel.” With the mystery of the pokes solved I confidently asked the mother if shrapnel was involved.

The mother let out a heavy sigh, looked at her daughter then back at me while giving me an exasperated “No! We don’t know how he died!”

This reading was quickly moving from confusion to embarrassment. I believed I had a solid connection to her husband’s spirit and I stubbornly wanted to finish this reading, but, if that wasn’t going to happen I would apologize and advise her to visit another psychic at the fair in hopes that they could successfully connect her to her deceased husband. So, in a last ditch effort to save the reading I asked her if she at least knew where on the planet her husband was when he died?

She told me he was killed in Vietnam during the war.

Back to confusion.

I asked, what was for me, the next logical question, “What did the military tell you about his death?” (Hey, you never know, he could have died from some type of Southeast Asian jungle fever.)

She said that he had been given a special honor because he had thrown himself on a grenade to protect his buddies. Exhausted at this point, I asked her if she knew how grenades worked. She said “no.” I explained that they explode and do bodily damage with multiple pieces of flying metal called “shrapnel”.

She came back with, “We honestly don’t know if you’re communicating with my husband or not because we don’t know how he died.”

Oh my goodness. Next sitter please!

Luckily, other family members came through and the two received meaningful messages from them.

I’m going to move into a sensitive area that comes up from time to time when asking the question of how someone died and that is when a loved one died at the hands of another. I have connected with many DLOs who have been murdered and found that they rarely wish to talk about the circumstances surrounding their deaths and even more rarely do they wish for family members to pursue the actual cause of their deaths, including who was involved. This may sound counterintuitive. We tend to think that the call for justice is solid and unwavering on both sides of the veil. It isn’t. At least not always. Here’s an example.

Many years ago, I did a reading involving a woman who had gone missing. She was a single mother who disappeared late on an October night after leaving a local downtown bar. I am going to call her Sally. The whole story is long and involved and I may tell it in its entirety in a book one of these days, but for now here is the part relevant to the question at hand.

The skeptical police detective in charge of Sally's case had sent Sally's brother to me for a reading, in hopes that Sally could give the two of us information on her whereabouts. The detective wanted to know whether or not Sally was in fact dead, and if so, could she tell us what happened to her the night she went missing? Frankly, I had never worked a missing person's case before and I didn't know what to expect so I made no promises.

First of all, Sally was a gifted communicator. During the reading I could hear Sally so clearly in my head it was as if she was sitting across from me in a physical body. She validated who she was by giving ample evidence including personal details about her children, friends and her life in general. Her brother validated everything she said and though he was happy to recognize that it was her he was sad that she was confirming, at least to us, that she was not just missing, she was deceased. Before the reading ended Sally's brother reminded me to ask her if she was murdered, and if so, could she tell us who killed her and where could the police find her body?

Sally told me that she had indeed been murdered and showed me where her body was. She let me know how she was killed and even gave me the first and last name of her killer. (Like I said, she was a really, really good communicator.) She then added a list of present time details about her killer including the brown brick house he lived in that had yellow kitchen walls. She said that he drove her away in a small blue foreign-made car and he had stopped driving it the month after he killed her. She ended by saying that he was still living in the same house but that he was packing to move out of town and would be gone in a week. She ended by giving me a picture of his face and what he was wearing the night of her murder.

Just as I was ready to pass this information along to the brother Sally stopped me. She told me that I couldn't tell anyone the details of the murder nor where her body could be found. I was confused. She went on to say that she didn't want one of her sisters to stop considering her as missing because that would give her sister closure and she didn't want her sister to have closure.

Huh? Sally didn't want her sister to have closure?

Sally said she trusted me to not say anything to her family about where her body was, how she died or who killed her. She said the only reason she told me was so that there would be someone on the Earth who knew the truth about what had happened to her besides the psychopath who took her life. She left after letting me know that the police would never, ever find her body. (By the way, as of this writing it has been over 20 years and her body has never been found.)

It made no sense to me that she would let her family suffer this way. At the very least didn't she want to let them know where her body was to prove that she had passed into spirit?

She was adamant that I keep those details to myself.

So I told the brother that I was not certain of where his sister's body was nor how she died and left it at that. Technically, I didn't lie. We'd have to physically see her remains to know for sure, right?

In the end this reading with the brother, police-wise, went nowhere. The evening after the reading the detective working the case called and told me that he had just finished speaking with the brother about the reading and asked to get together to further discuss the case. I told him that I couldn't go any further and ended the relationship.

(As an aside, when I spoke over the phone to the detective that evening it was obvious that his attitude towards me had significantly changed. Before the reading he was dismissive towards me to the point of rudeness. However when he called me that night he gushed all over me while praising my ability to communicate with Sally. It was too much. I sensed he thought I “knew” too many details about Sally and her family and was suspicious that I may have been involved with her disappearance in some way. In my mind it was another very good reason to back out of the case.)

At the end of the day I hoped that her brother had received some healing from connecting with his sister. As for me, I was stuck having to trust Sally and not help her family. I would have to wait and see what, if anything, would play out in this physical world to explain why Sally wanted me to keep quiet.

A year and a half later it did play out and it finally all made sense.

In 2002 I went to Laguna Beach, California for a week of study with well-known angel communicator Dr. Doreen Virtue. One evening I went to dinner at a beautiful beachside restaurant with a small group of fellow classmates. Amongst the ladies was a woman who mentioned in passing that she ran California’s state program for the rights of families of crime victims and missing persons. I felt the urge to mention that I had done a reading for the family of a missing person in my hometown. She perked up and said that they had a speaker from there at the national conference her department had hosted just a few weeks before. She mentioned the name of the speaker and asked if I knew her.

I recognized the name. It was Sally’s sister. Up until that evening I didn’t even know that Sally’s sister was an advocate for the rights of families of missing persons. Small world.

It dawned on me as the evening went on that if the sister had received closure over Sally's disappearance she may have ceased her advocacy. Had her sister stopped after learning about Sally, she may not have pushed herself to go onto the national stage and subsequently help thousands of families. Now I was the one who finally had some closure.

This case taught me a great deal about how the other side views their own life and death and so I'm going to expand on it just a little further.

Going back to the day after the reading. I was determined to check out the guy Sally said killed her. She had given me many specific details about the perpetrator for a reason. Perhaps she needed someone here on Earth to know absolutely and for sure who did it. Maybe she wanted someone to look him in the eyes and say, albeit silently, "I know it was you."

Armed with the details Sally had given me about the guy I grabbed my friend Anne, a fearless sleuth type, and together we looked in the phone book for the name Sally had given me. We actually found it.

How could we **not** jump into the car and drive over? But first, we needed a plan.

We decided that we would knock on the door and pretend to be looking for 'someone,' and at the same time get a good look at the guy, his house, and other details Sally had given me.

Anne stayed on the driveway while I walked to the front door. It was propped open and I could see quite a ways into the house, showing pieces of information Sally had given me in the reading. The type of house her killer lived in, (single story with brown brick), the color of his kitchen (yellow), and that he was probably moving soon (half-filled packing boxes were strewn in his living room). As I stood in the doorway I mentally ran through some of the other details Sally gave me including what he looked like, and what he was wearing.

I got brave and knocked. I mentally rehearsed what I'd say when someone answered... *"What? Jennifer doesn't live here? I'm so sorry, I must have written down the wrong address. Thank you so much. Goodbye."* But, no one came to the door. I knocked again, nothing.

I looked over at Anne still standing on the driveway. She stood looking at a blue, small, older foreign made car, just as Sally described to me, which I hadn't even noticed that I walked past it on my way up to the door.

Anne took a step back and waved for me to come look. She pointed to a "for sale" sign in the back window and then down to a black and white temporary license plate affixed to the back bumper. She bent down and touched the paper license, wanting me to notice that the plates had expired at the end of November the previous year. This meant that the car would have stopped being legally driven at the end of the month following Sally's disappearance.

The details were all right there just like Sally said they would be.

This was quickly becoming very, very real and by now my heart was pounding pretty darned hard. It all seemed incredible. I knew I needed to actually see the guy to be sure. According to Sally he would be average height and stocky with thick blonde hair and mustache. He'd be dressed in a plaid long sleeved flannel shirt.

Anne and I needed to see this guy up close and personal and we needed a fool proof plan for exactly how to do that. So we did what all women do when they need to form a solid plan. We got back into our car and headed out to find some nachos and a margarita.

Anne had had the presence of mind to write down the phone number from the 'for sale' sign and it was she who suggested that we call the guy and pretend to ask about the car for sale. We would pretend that she was looking for a used car for her son and I would tag along for support. Maybe we would even test drive the car to appear more legit. It was brilliant. No, we were brilliant. Well, so it seemed after a plate of nachos and a strawberry margarita.

Anne made the call from her brick-sized cell phone (hey, it was 2000). The guy answered. He told us we could come by and look at the car the next day, Saturday, at 2 o'clock.

When the next afternoon came we were so incredibly intrigued by the idea of a spirit solving her own murder that it barely registered that we ought to be cautious about the guy. Besides, one of my more practical alter egos, Skeptical Sandy, had been yacking at me all night. She had me pretty well convinced that this whole thing couldn't possibly be true. Surely a victim couldn't make it so easy to solve her own murder. Could she?

Looking back I can say with confidence that, yes, Sally was indeed perfectly capable of making it easy for us to solve her own murder.

We recklessly dove headlong into the guy's territory.

The moment he stepped out of the house I recognized he was the one who had ended Sally's life and that everything she told me was true. I know my jaw dropped when I saw him. I doubt he noticed. He was a macho guy and if he did notice the stunned look on my face he would no doubt have thought, 'yeah, she thinks I'm hot.'

Gag.

The guy was just as Sally had described, except it was summer so he wore a "wife beater" instead of a flannel shirt. The guy offered to let us take the car for a test drive. He handed Anne the keys and while crawling into the driver side back seat he casually mentioned that I would see "stains" on the front passenger seat and "not to worry" because they were "merely cigarette burns." When I opened the door and looked down I saw that the "stains" were indeed small round holes in the seat that looked like someone had taken a cigarette and burned completely through the fabric. They started out as a few dots that fanned into many as they curved around the inside edge of the seat. For you CSI fans, a splatter pattern, if you will.

Throughout the entire test drive the guy leaned forward and bobbed his head back and forth, back and forth between us while asking all sorts of personal questions. Half way through the ride he leaned over close to Anne, nuzzled his mouth up against her ear and whispered that he'd give her a really good deal...he was moving to Wyoming in a week...he needed to get rid of the car.

No doubt.

We were more than a wee bit out of control back then and I promise to never, ever (knowingly) ride in a car with a murderer again.

It's been many years since Sally disappeared and my heart still goes out to that family. Even though the case will never be solved I have peace knowing that Sally is fine on the other side. She sees a bigger picture of her life and death from heaven. I think that she and I could have become friends had we met in life. Then again, does it really matter what side of the veil someone is on in order to call them a friend?

Whenever I tell this story at my lectures inevitably someone in each audience is completely appalled. She will raise her hand and say that I have a moral duty to solve a case if it is solvable because justice needs to prevail at all costs. "That killer is still at large and free to kill again! You must tell the police what you know!" they demand. I understand where they are coming from. I respectfully disagree. I would rather have a lifetime of the full trust of spirit, because they do keep track of who is loyal and who isn't, than give it up over the solving of a single case. From the DLO's new perspective they gain a larger picture of the meaning of their life and death and what they have left behind on earth. I honor that.

Before we leave this question of whether or not DLOs know how they died I want to tell you about one more reading. I read for a woman who I will call Barb. Barb had traveled to Lincoln from Colorado to visit family and while here decided to get a reading. A young woman came through who turned out to be the daughter of Barb's best friend. She showed me that she had recently passed in an automobile accident and she wanted to pass along a big "hello" to her father back in Colorado. Barb was pleased to hear from her friend's daughter and said she would certainly be happy to say "hello" to her father for her.

As the young spirit woman backed away to leave the reading she added one last thing. She said that her accident was the direct result of her brakes being tampered with. She showed me that she lost control when the brakes failed going down a steep mountain road, ultimately causing the fatal crash. She gave me permission to go ahead and tell Barb about the brakes. This seemed like sensitive information and I had no idea whether or not the family knew this detail. However, I needed to trust that the young woman wanted Barb to hear what she had to say, so I told Barb what the young woman said about her death.

Barb went quiet for a moment and then asked me to ask the young woman who had cut the line. The young woman told me it was an ex-boyfriend whom she had recently broken up with. He apparently didn't take the breakup well. The woman nodded her head and said that the girl's father had suspected as much but that no one around him gave much credence to his suspicions. She said she would have to think about the information and whether or not to pass it on. It was the last I saw of the woman from Colorado and I have no idea how this story ended.

So...do they know how they actually died? Yes.

“Can They Tell Me About the Future?”

I have found that if your DLO was not a fortune teller in life they will not suddenly become one once they cross. Passing into the spirit world gives the DLO access to a bigger picture, but they do not become all seeing and all knowing. What they can do is let you know about upcoming events in your life based on direct knowledge that they are privy to on their side of the veil. Let me explain what I mean.

Before children are born into this world they are fully active and alive in the spirit world. It is not ‘from dust we are born and to dust we shall return,’ it is more accurately ‘from heaven we are born and to heaven we shall return.’ DLOs will often point to a young girl or boy standing near them in the spirit world and indicate that the child will soon take on a new physical body and become a new earthly family member. In the reading it usually goes something like this: I will say, “Your mother has a child with her and is telling me that the child is waiting to be born into the family. I take it there is a current or hoped-for pregnancy in your family.” The sitter might then say, “Oh, yes, my daughter and her husband just found out they are pregnant!” And I will say, “Do you want to know if it’s a boy or a girl?” If the answer is “yes” I will tell them the sex of the child that I see waiting to be born.

Not long ago I had a child come directly to me rather than through an introduction by a DLO. I was finishing up a reading with an older woman when a young dark haired spirit boy looking to be around 5 years old suddenly popped into the middle of the room. He fiercely thrust his finger at me and sternly announced “my mom and dad are here and they are waiting to hear from me right now!” I had never been yelled at by a spirit child so this was a new one for me.

I asked the woman if there was anyone in her family who was pregnant or hoping to become so anytime soon. She shook her head no. I looked back at the boy who was still standing there, arms folded, glaring at me.

When I don't understand a message in a reading I have learned to let it go knowing that if I'm intended to understand it, it will come back around to me in a form I can grasp. And so, I let it go and turned my attention back to the reading. When I looked up at the clock to see how much time was left I saw that our session had already run over by 10 minutes and I presumed my next clients would be seated in my waiting room. I apologized to the woman for the abrupt ending to the reading and hurriedly said 'goodbye' as I walked her to the door. On the way out we passed through the waiting room where my next clients, a young couple, were patiently waiting their turn.

I apologized to the couple for the delay as I showed them into my office. As we settled into our chairs I saw that the little spirit boy hadn't left yet so I asked them what seemed to me to be the obvious question, "Are you pregnant?" They looked at each other, astonished. They had just found out two days earlier and asked how I knew. It wasn't hard to figure out. Apparently, the couple was going to give birth to an impatient, dark haired little boy who didn't appreciate that I had kept his soon-to-be parents sitting in the waiting room. This could have been seen by the couple as a psychic prediction, but from my point of view it wasn't, it was an introduction.

It seems that DLOs have the ability to arrange circumstances in this world that look like foreshadowing to us that are actually situations organized by them.

Early on when I was first giving readings the daughter of an acquaintance came to connect with her fiancé who had passed 5 years earlier. Melissa's fiancé came through with the usual unique validations indicating that he was OK on the other side. He expressed how incredibly and deeply in love he was with her while alive. Melissa acknowledged that he had been the love of her life. She went on to share with me that since he had died she had had a series of awful relationships with a couple of them bordering on abusive. She doubted she would ever again find a wonderful man like her fiancé and so she had given up dating altogether.

As the reading came to a close I suddenly received the image of a swarm of loose feathers floating towards me. I asked Melissa if feathers had significance to her with regards to her fiancé. Melissa said that nothing about feathers clicked with her. With that the session ended and I wished Melissa well, hoping that she had found some closure.

A year later Melissa came back for another reading. The first thing out of her mouth was to ask if I remembered the feathers from the previous reading. I told her "no. Seldomly do I remember details of readings once the sitter leaves the room. (The only reason I remember the stories in this book is because I've written them down or they stand out strongly in my mind. It has always been this way for me. Not sure why.)

Melissa explained that shortly after our first reading she met a new guy at work who wanted to date her and repeatedly asked her out. She said that on the surface he seemed like a reasonably nice guy. She found him to be a bit shy and definitely good looking. She didn't trust herself to judge whether or not he was for real or just putting on an act and she wasn't interested in suffering yet another bad relationship so she told him no, there would be no dating her. End of story.

He was persistent, though, and risking rejection one last time he approached her in the office break room. Melissa giggled as she described how he nervously approached her and how he stumbled over his words as he asked her to dinner and a movie. Just as she was on the verge of saying 'no thank you' he pulled a feather out of his pocket and presented it to her. He told her he hoped the small gift would convince her of his sincere desire to get to know her. Remembering the feathers from our reading Melissa knew that her fiancé was encouraging her to give this guy a chance. It turned out he really was a nice guy. They dated for several months and though it never went further they had remained friends. Her faith in the idea that there really are nice guys out there was restored thanks to her fiancée who was helping her to move on and find happiness without him.

Love it.

I don't know how Melissa's fiance knew the details of an upcoming event in Melissa's life. Perhaps the man already had a propensity to use this feather tactic to woo women he's interested in.

Sometimes sitters have specific questions about the future and are hoping their DLOs have the answers to them. Several have asked me to ask their DLO to give them lottery numbers. They laugh while they ask, pretending to be joking but, hey, we know they're serious. If I thought my deceased grandmother could give me lottery numbers I'd ask, too. But no, your DLO does not know what random numbers will be chosen for an upcoming Power Ball or Mega Millions. My standard response is, "If they gave me the numbers, do you really think I'd pass them along to you? Heck no, I'd be the rich one...splitting my days between my Puerto Rican beachfront mansion and my Villa in the south of France." (I'm a Sagittarian. We're the queens of sarcasm.)

If your DLO actually does have the ability to predict your future they have yet to divulge that knowledge to me in a reading.

More, but Less Common Questions

“What is my deceased loved one doing now?”

I don't want to burst any bubbles or step on any toes, but I feel it is my duty to tell you just how mundane the spirit world is. Those who have passed over do not spend their days strolling streets of gold nor are they floating through the ethers garbed in billowing robes of shimmery chiffon. DLOs live in houses, visit friends, go to school, cook, fish, farm, write, sing, go to parties, garden, carry out research, etc. Everything we do here they do there. They frequently remind me that their world isn't a reflection of ours, rather, ours is a reflection of theirs. Your DLO will let me know what they are doing now whether they are working, traveling, learning, or just taking it easy.

They have also mentioned that they are ahead of us technologically and socially. Artists and scientists living in the spirit world send creative works and new ideas into the minds of earthly inhabitants, in the form of inspiration, to be used for the betterment of this side.

“I saw my deceased grandmother in a dream, was it really her?”

Probably. Our loved ones often come to pay us a visit through dreams because it is a time when we are mentally relaxed and they can easily access our minds. As a general rule if the dream of your loved one seemed vividly real and made you feel happy and comforted it was them coming to say “hi.” If the dream made you feel scared or uncomfortable, it was not your loved one, and it was just a dream. If when you wake up there is a familiar feeling of your loved one lingering and it feels wonderful it is a sure sign they visited you while you slept.

“What does the other side smell like?”

Lilacs. (Too random?)

“Does anyone ever get stuck here on Earth and not make it to heaven?”

Yes, but if they do, only briefly. Regardless of what those ghost hunting shows on television would like you to believe, becoming earthbound is so incredibly rare that I hesitate to even bring it up. It is a complicated topic and so I would rather save my comments for my next book where I can fully address it. Suffice it to say that everyone gets there.

“My priest said that people who commit suicide go straight to hell for all eternity, is that true?”

No. No. No. Did I mention, no? I know I answered this in the text of the book, but I want to say it again.

Sadly, I’ve had several people yell at me, “How DARE you suggest that people who committed suicide aren’t burning in hell at this very minute!?”

They aren’t. Just like everyone else, they’re with friends and family on the other side.

No matter how “compassionately” the minister or priest justifies their belief in hell (yeah, I’m a little sensitive here...seen too much unnecessary pain created) in the name of God, it simply isn’t true. God doesn’t create us just so he can watch us “choose” to screw up and then throw us into hell and watch us tortured and burned for all eternity. Those who take their own lives do so because they are mentally ill, chemically imbalanced or in such deep pain that they see no other way out for themselves. There is acceptance and healing for them, for you, for me and for everyone else who lives an earthly life. Everyone.

“My wife was mentally ill while alive. Is she still?”

No. Mental illness is an earthbody condition. Again, your loved ones take the love and the joy and leave everything else here. They are not the exact same people there as they were here. They give me personality traits and memories to let us know they are still alive, but they’ve gone to the afterlife with a broader understanding and the opportunity for a clean slate. They know the bigger picture of their life on Earth and why they acted the way they did. You’ll get to discuss all of this when you next see them.

In conclusion, thank you for reading my book. I’m hoping that my experiences with communicating with your loved ones has brought you peace, if that’s what you were looking for, or has helped to open your mind if you were looking to be entertained. It’s taken me way too long to get it off of my computer and into your hands, but the journey, for me, has been worth it. I hope you enjoyed it and found some answers you’ve been looking for.

Warmly,

Sandra Monroe

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