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SHARING THE CROSSOVER AT DEATH

by P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D.

When we think of the deathbed, most of us envision a sterile place: a hospital bed, whispers, fear, muffled crying, tubes sticking out, machinery beeping, frustration, suffering, and the inevitable “weight” of silence. No place is more solemn or to many, more dreadful.

I invite you to rethink your vision of the deathbed.

Our comings and goings are not done in random bits and pieces. Life and death are a single continuum, a flowing stream of feeling and thought. Fear becomes fearsome when we try to divide or separate one part of a person’s life from the other parts. Honoring the whole continuum returns the power to where it belongs: the individual. So, bring in family and friends. Music. Pleasant smells. Laughter. Poetry. Maybe a wiggly puppy. Children. Sounds. To the extent that the one who is dying can handle it, enliven the place.

All of us have more power than we realize to alter and rearrange the circumstances of an individual’s final moments. We can even personally participate in helping that person move through death’s threshold, during the body’s actual passage, with an exercise called empathic or shared experiences. Make certain first that you have the permission of those involved before any action is taken, as the freedom to choose must always be respected. If there is agreement, then reclaim the power of the deathbed by reconnecting death with life.

Empathic or shared experiences are where two or more join together in consciousness and feeling to share in the act of dying. These sessions are heartfelt and consist of the person who remains “becoming one with,” or “participating in,” or “witnessing fully” both internal and external aspects of the death event as it actually happens to the individual who is leaving. Although initially this exercise may seem little more than a standard visualization routine, I assure you that once the session begins, anything superficial or fanciful is replaced by a quality of absolute realness.

Shared experiences, if sincerely engaged in, can directly align those involved with soul-level energy - creating a rare opportunity for true spiritual intimacy.

An example of a shared experience that occurred spontaneously concerns a woman who began to hear soft melodious music as she maintained a vigil next to her dying brother. She looked around to see if a radio was on, and, as she did, a brilliant light filled the room. She turned just in time to see her comatose brother open his eyes, smile, and raise his arms upward. Then, “As real as anything I’ve ever seen, a being of light reached out and took my brother by his wrists and pulled. My brother’s spirit popped right out of his physical body - snap - just like that. I was so surprised, I jumped.” With eyes wide open, the woman witnessed the being of light and her brother (now in spirit) float out of the hospital room through a mistlike archway that had formed in a nearby ceiling corner. A scent of roses permeated the air where the discarded body shell lay.

Another of my cases was a woman who saw a murder happen in broad daylight on a busy street in Russia. As the assailant ran, she rushed to help the one who was stabbed, but before she could begin emergency measures, she found herself suddenly unable to move. Instantly, she joined in consciousness with the dying individual and empathically shared in the victim’s life review from birth to death, as well as the spirit’s crossing to “the other side.”

Then there's the incident in England of a woman who saw and felt every aspect of her husband's death as he died, as if she were his proxy. And a young man in Texas whose dead parents came to visit him shortly after they were murdered, as he himself lay dying of an illness. Their appearance and what they told him was so comforting that against all odds he revived, totally transformed.

No one planned to have the empathic, shared experiences I mentioned. They simply happened. Yet wonderful miracles such as these can be *invited* and *caused*. We can return the deathbed to what it once was, the province of family and friends and those with an open heart who choose to support the dying process by aiding their loved one in every possible manner.

I would like to share with you what I've seen others do and what I have done myself regarding three ways that shared experiences can occur.

1. *Accidental Empathic/Shared Experiences*. As with the woman and her

dying brother, the actual moment of death is unpredictable. If you're not alert, you could miss it. What might prepare you is to know the *common precursor signals*, such as the suddenness of soft music when nothing is playing, a pleasant smell that cannot be associated with anything nearby, a light that mysteriously brightens, a glow that appears around the dying person, changes in his or her behavior that indicate a heightening of awareness and the sensing or feeling of an unseen presence. Should any of these incidents occur, immediately look straight at the dying individual and allow your vision to diffuse (as if you were looking slightly past him or her). Relax. Wait. You may sense more than you see.

2. *Invited Empathic/Shared Experiences*. This involves knowing about the

"signals" just presented (clues that alert you to what may soon occur) and having the willingness to relax, wait patiently, and be open and

receptive. More important, though, is intention. Your desire to be an active participant needs to be admitted and prearranged, either with the one about to die, if that person is capable of communicating, or with the family. Once the appropriateness of your being there has been established, I recommend that you -

- Consider your role as being that of a helper.
- Communicate this to the dying individual either verbally or telepathically (a mind-to-mind connection made through the process of thinking and feeling it so).
- Hold his or her hand, if possible, or touch in some other appropriate way.
- Verbally and telepathically reassure the individual that it's okay to "leave."
- Be aware of and alert to your own feelings and inner promptings.
- If it feels right to do so, within your mind's eye, "see" yourself "walking" him or her into the Light.
- Allow subjective imagery to arrange itself by itself. Don't assume.
- Withhold any tendency to force or control the situation or to go farther than the initial entry into the other worlds.
- Offer a prayer or some form of positive upliftment/protection.
- Share on whatever level feels right, then fully release; let go either by

saying the words, or thinking or feeling that the individual is gone.

3. *Preplanned and Guided Empathic/Shared Experiences.* Shared experiences

that involve a guided visualization exercise prepare the one about to die for the death event. All parties concerned need to agree to this preparatory exercise in advance. You must be comfortable with your role as a guide - relaxed, respectful, and in a spiritual state of mind. Prayer or some form of positive upliftment/protection is helpful at the start. The visualization itself incorporates the basic elements of the near-death phenomenon as a pattern. This is done verbally and as follows:

- Pace your breathing with that of the dying individual. Should his or her

breathing be erratic, your own steady breaths are usually enough to

bring calm.

- Talk softly, saying that the individual is now leaving his or her body and

floating upward. Speak of how easy and effortless this is, and how good it is to leave the heaviness and the pain of the physical body behind.

- Acknowledge the gathering of simple shapes and forms in the airspace

around both of you. Dark or light makes no difference. Just note that something is coming together. The person's body may still be visible as his or her attention shifts to whatever seems to be forming midair. Encourage this shift in attention, as you. . .

- Affirm the presence of a special light that is slowly growing brighter and
 brighter, but does not hurt the eyes to see.
- Mention that any sudden sense of speed is okay, that it's all right to go
 faster and faster, maybe even to feel a wind brushing your face.
- Prepare the individual for a stop and an increase in light, and for the
 presence of strangely familiar, melodious music and sweet smells.
- Assure the individual that it's okay to greet those who might appear, be
 they a loved one, an angel, a light being, a religious figure, a pet, or
 some other type of animal or being.
- Encourage engagement between them: talking, dialogue, a question-and-
 answer session, or whatever the individual might feel drawn to do.
- Remain in this state for a while, then return as you came - the two
 of you -
 back to earth, back to your separate bodies.
- Linger with the feeling of being back, as you continue to talk softly to the
 individual in a gentle way until he or she opens both eyes or you sense sleep has come. The session is over.

Should you use this type of guided visualization or something akin to it, remember to invoke all the faculties. I have found that the deeper you get into this, the more feelings and sensations and emotions you can describe and invite, the more successful the dying individual will be in accepting what is about to occur. Once may be enough for this exercise, or several sessions may be desired. Whether the eyes are open or closed really doesn't matter since the intensity of desire is there. Also if the imagery is vivid, it does not make any difference if the dying individual is conscious, asleep, or comatose. Research has shown that the brain can still register what you say and, in most cases, follow along.

Shared experiences, like any other near-death-like state, can be life changing for those involved. The depth of intimacy and core spirituality that can be accessed in doing them is extraordinarily rich. Whether done as part of a religious ritual or in an act of love and support, shared experiences often mimic or duplicate what is known about physical death and the moment of crossing over.

Reports from people who co-participate in such events are on the rise. Surprising is the large number who claim to have co-experienced the entirety of a dying person's life review and later are able to testify to details in that review that they could not possibly have known previously. Credit for this phenomenon is given primarily to the hospice movement's emphasis on stay-at-home care for the terminally ill. I rather suspect, however, that the real reason for the substantial increase in things of the spirit surrounding crossover is that the public is finally willing to listen to their own heart instead of to the experts, and to be more open and receptive. . . *allowing rather than controlling*.

You and I, any and every one, can make an important and invaluable contribution in the process of dying. We can share in the actual crossover. We can co-participate in the spiritual dimensions of a person's death.

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(Excerpt from *We Live Forever: The Real Truth About Death*, A.R.E. Press, 2004. For more information, access Dr. Atwater's website, www.pihatwater.com.)