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What to Do If You Have an Extraordinary Experience When Mourning

By Lou LaGrand

Millions of people throughout the world have reported Extraordinary Experiences (EEs) when mourning the deaths of their loved ones. These experiences are not associated with a psychic. Rather they are spontaneous in nature and appear to originate from an outside source. They include visions, synchronicities, hearing the deceased, sensing the presence of the loved one, visitation dreams, and various symbolic signs, to name a few.

These events have been occurring since the dawn of history and appear to be a normal phenomenon giving great comfort and insight to the bereaved. Because they can neither be proved nor disproved, little is done to show how they can be used, or accepted as a gift to be shared and discussed. They serve the spirit by causing the recipient to consider where these things come from and who controls them.

Here is what to do if you are fortunate to have the experience or are providing support for someone who shares an experience with you.

1. Rule out the obvious. It is good to be skeptical, especially if you have never had an EE before, and you wonder if it is just wishful thinking. Ask yourself if this is the kind of thing your loved one would do and decide if you have an intuitive certainty about the experience. Most important of all, did it bring you peace or feelings that love was being given? If you answer in the affirmative, then give thanks to your Higher Power, and use it to deal with

your loss.

2. As soon as possible, write up the complete experience. Start with where you were and what you were doing when the event unfolded. Then, from beginning to end, go into detail and give a complete description. Be sure to include the feelings that were evoked and how you interpret the message conveyed by the experience.

3. Put a copy of your writing in a safe place where it can be passed on as part of your family history. Your EE can be a wonderful legacy to give to the next generation where it will be read and speculated about as a source of love. Put it with other important papers with a note as to its importance and meaning for you.

4. Share it with your family or close friends. In doing so, be prepared that there may be some who do not agree with your view of its meaning. Do not let that upset you. In fact, it is to be expected. You and you alone are the sole judge of your experience. You know how it felt, the timing, what it was saying, and the implications. Hold fast to your belief.

5. Use it to teach your children about the fact that love never dies. The EE brings comfort and the universal message, "I'm okay and you can be okay too." It is a gift of love to deal with the transition you must face. When it involves a child, make it clear that the deceased loves him or her very much. That is

What to Do If You Have an Extraordinary Experience When Mourning

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why the child was given the experience.

6. When you have a bad day, take out your copy of the experience and read it focusing on its meaning and the love it represents. You can leave a written copy of your experience in a drawer of your night stand to be read at any time. Use it as an inspiration and a reminder that your loved one knows what's going on and wants to see you persist in adapting to your loss.

7. Create a personal symbol that characterizes the experience that you can place in a prominent place in your home, automobile, or purse. This symbol may be a special possession you own or that belonged to your loved one. It could be a

drawing, emblem, or picture that sends a particular message to you when you see it. Use it as a reminder that you are loved forever, as a motivation to reach a particular goal, or to highlight any belief that you wish to keep prominent in your thinking.

Learn all you can about Extraordinary Experiences. Much has been written about them, and there is much to study and learn about. Taking this action will not only increase your awareness but you will be educating yourself about one of the many mysteries in our universe that needs to be used as the gift it is intended to be. You will emerge with vitality

and insight about a whole new phase of life.

Dr. LaGrand is a grief counselor and the author of eight books, the most recent, the popular Love Lives On: Learning from the Extraordinary Encounters of the Bereaved. He is known world-wide for his research on the Extraordinary Experiences of the bereaved (after-death communication phenomena) and is one of the founders of Hospice of the St. Lawrence Valley, Inc.



Dr. LaGrand

To my Dearest Family:



Some things I'd like to say
But first of all to let you know
That I arrived okay.
I'm writing this from Heaven
Where I dwell with God above
Where there's no more tears or sadness
There is just eternal love.
Please do not be unhappy
Just because I'm out of sight
Remember that I'm with you
Every morning, noon, and night.
That day I had to leave you
When my life on Earth was through
God picked me up and hugged me
And He said, "I welcome you.
It's good to have you back again
You were missed while you were gone.

As for your dearest family they'll
be here later on.
I need you here so badly
As part of My big plan
There's so much that we have to do
To help our mortal man."
Then God gave me a list of things
He wished for me to do
And foremost on that list of mine
Is to watch and care for you.
And I will be beside you
Every day and week and year.
And when you're sad
I'm standing there
To wipe away the tear,
And when you lie in bed at night
The days chores put to flight
God and I are closet to you
In the middle of the night.
When you think of my life one Earth
And all those loving years
Because you're only human
They are bound to bring you tears.
But do not be afraid to cry
It does relieve the pain.
Remember there would be no flowers

Unless there was some rain.
I wish that I could tell you
Of all that God has planned
But if I were to tell you,
You wouldn't understand.
But one this is for certain
Though my life on Earth is o're
I am closer to you now
Than I ever was before.
And to my very many friends
Trust God knows what is best
I'm still not far away from you
I'm just beyond the crest.
There are rocky roads ahead of you
And many hills to climb
But together we can do it
Taking one day at a time.
It was always my philosophy
And I'd like it for you too
That as you give unto the World
So the World will give to you.
If you can help somebody
Who is in sorrow or in pain
Then you can say to God at night
My day was not in vain.
And now I am contented

That my life it was worthwhile
Knowing as I passed along the way
I made somebody smile.
So if you meet somebody
Who is down and feeling low
Just lend a hand to pick him up
As on your way you go.
When you are walking
Down the street
And you've got me on your mind
I'm walking in your footsteps
Only half a step behind.
And when you feel the gentle
breeze
Or the winds upon your face
That's me giving you a great big hug
Or just a soft embrace.
And when it's time for you to go
From the body to be free
You are coming here to me.
And I will always love you
From that land way up above
Will be in touch again soon
P.S. God sends His Love.

Author unknown.



PRIORITY SETTING REDEFINED WHEN UNCLUTTERING BELONGINGS



SPRING brings out the “clean sweep” genetic factor in most of us. It’s a time to unclutter, reorganize, and relinquish the box of stuff in the basement corner. Sometimes that “stuff” includes personal belonging of a loved one that died and sometimes it’s just a potpourri of unnecessary, simply nostalgic, or clearly ready to “let go” stuff. But even though the motivation is there, the process of dealing with it is more difficult than anticipated.

Making decisions about items that belonged to a loved one who died is emotionally difficult. Some people put this task off for a very long time because it’s just seems too painful. In many cases, time makes a difference, and from year-to-year how valuable the items are seems to slightly diminish. It’s best to conquer this task when you are motivated to deal with it. Like grief, there is no right or wrong way to handle this process. You just need to go through it.

Here are a few hints for beginning the task:

Be Ready: The most important step is “Be Ready.” You will know if you are ready or not to “let go” of those treasured items that belong to your deceased loved one. You cannot force yourself to get rid of personal items unless there is a very valid reason to do it (such as having to sell a residence that a parent lived in after his/her death.) In that case, decisions may have to be made within a limited time. This is another reason to consider facing the difficult task as soon as you can.

Personally, I stored tubs full of things that belonged to our son, Chad, after he died because I wanted to keep them and look through them again. How often have I done that? Occasionally, but not as often as I thought I would. And, I confess, I still have two tubs of things I’m just not ready to part with. For me, some items I was able to give

to Chad’s friends within 6-9 months because I wanted certain people to have items I knew they would appreciate. Other things, I’m still stubbornly hanging on to for nostalgia reasons. I figure as long as I have room ...why not.

Determine the “Destinations” before you begin the project

“When there are painful “indecisions” about disposal... DON’T.”

Make 3-4 sorting spots where you can put items as you begin the process. Destroy/Toss... Consignment/Sell...Keep....Give Away are good “destinations”. Items can be re-evaluated as you progress. Sort quickly and go with your first instinct. Chances are your first thought was the best one. Linger over items while you estimate value whether cash or memory creates a greater opportunity for repacking the item and having to deal with it later.

Keep items that make you shed a tear, warm the heart and invoke a deep, hearty chuckle. For now, that has incredible value!

Give away can include many destinations. Perhaps a charity can benefit from items that might be useful to them. It’s nice to give treasured items to family items or friends of the deceased. Most communities have some individual benefit going on at any given time for someone who is in dire need of household items or clothing. I would not consider putting a deceased loved one’s item on the curbside for disposal or spring cleanup. There is



something impersonal about that no matter what the item is. And I would just hate to see it on my neighbors’ back or in his house! Just my opinion!

Enlist help.

Because this is an overwhelming job laced with emotions and memories, it’s good to have some other family members or friends help you with the process. When there are painful “indecisions” about disposal, **don’t**. Hang onto the item for another day or time when you feel more comfortable about relinquishing it.

If you have trouble throwing away personal items or clothing, enlist someone who can make those decisions. Have the assigned person remove the bag of items so you don’t have second thoughts later. Speaking from experience, I’ve literally rescued many items by bringing them back into the house again. That’s why I still have the clutter!

In some cases you may require professional assistance. You may wish to hire an appraiser for items of value that family members don’t necessarily want to keep. There are businesses that specialize in estate sales and auctions that can take some of the burden off of you. Also there are businesses that “clean out” abandoned properties and dispose of items for a fee. These are all decisions you will need to make depending upon the circumstances. If you just can’t deal with the intense emotions and overwhelming tasks of all the little things, this is a good option. Go through first and save what you desire. Then leave the rest in good hands and don’t look back!

Share and Take Day

If there are extended family that may have an interest in some of the items you would otherwise discard, it’s nice to have a gathering when these can be displayed and gifted. The hardest moment here is accepting that some items may be rejected

PRIORITY SETTING REDEFINED WHEN UNCLUTTERING BELONGINGS

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by those you invite. Don't judge. Everybody puts a value on different things. Some people are not keepers of "things" regardless of the sentimental value. Remember, these items seen important to YOU, not necessarily



someone else.

I always think about Gary's grandmother... many years before her death, when she was giving up her household, she had all the children and grandchildren come. In an orderly fashion (such as by birthdate), each could pick an item they wanted to remember her by. We took the item that day and kept it in memory of her both before and after her death. (She lived at least twenty more years!)

Sentimental Items (Picture, Family Albums)

You may find some items you never saw before or some that bring back vivid memories of better times. You may want to set these aside and look through them at a later time rather than disrupt the process of sorting. Then, you can make a better decision of what to do with that item. Appreciate and enjoy the special moments as you read, touch or feel items that capture another time in your life or the life of family members. These are treasured experiences.

Pictures and family albums become a huge collection over time. I am facing that problem right now with genealogical information and family photos that date way back in time. No one wants to be the "keeper" of the tub full of information; yet, everyone thinks it has some value and should be kept somewhere. I finally decided to scan the old pictures that were badly worn, along with others that were good as well as scan documents. This way I

can identify them and keep them on a computer, flash drive, or cloud for someone.

Follow through even if it gets tough!

A dear friend of mine who now lives in a nursing home reminded me of a very valuable lesson that seems heartbreaking but truly does identify our journey through this life. She had a nice home and many treasured items which systematically have been downsized through her illness to the present moment where she has very little of her tangible treasures anymore. It speaks to us about our transitions through life. At one point, we are "gatherers" trying to accumulate things. And as we age, if we are that lucky, we realize that things aren't what our journey is all about. So now we try to unload items which we thought were valuable and find that they have depreciated over time—just like we have.

The lesson in this is to appreciate the blessings for all the personal items we had to use and enjoy over the years. Most of us will admit that we have much more than we REALLY needed. We had it because we liked it and could afford it. Whether you are redistributing your loved one's items or downsizing your own, the task makes us face loss and reality in very personal ways. What to salvage that really tells our story is the decision that requires honest assessment and can be emotionally exhausting. If it hasn't happened already, it resets your personal list of priorities. Ask yourself; if I had to move to a one-room apartment immediately, what couldn't I live without? And if you are honest with yourself, nothing is as valuable as all the memories or stories that came with any item in your stash.

So this Spring begins just like the last... we are making a project out of letting go of a few more possessions that have served their purpose, are unused, and can give me some peace that I'm doing my part. I didn't say this was a one year project. I'm into it several years now because I've had

the luxury of taking my time. In the back of my mind, I'm always thinking about those who have to clean up after us when we die. What will they think with all we've accumulate that tells the story about our life? And it's no surprise, that the items we value may not seem important to them at all. We are the ones who place value on all the things we have. It's likely Craig's list, eBay, or the local consignment shop would not agree.

The final outcome of this lengthily process is Relief and Happiness that I've accomplished a little more of the burdensome task. It even makes the future look brighter. My rummage sale closet is getting fuller and I'm feeling good about it.

Okay, now that I wrote this I'm motivated to get back to the task at hand...maybe I'll even give those tubs of Chad's a second look! But I can guarantee you that next spring I'll be back at it (and there will likely be another article!)

For more information humorous and sage advice on this subject, read Nan's articles at her website:

Your Legacy is Probably Not a Box of Stuff

For Sale: Madness Memories and Maybes

FOR OUR NEXT ISSUE: What do you Think?

Will you share with our readers how you made a decision about what items to destroy, which items to deliver to someone else, and which items you needed to keep? How did you deal with the emotion of "letting go:?"

Send Nan an email at wings1@charter.net and give her your feedback.

Basketball: Peace of Mind

by Logan Kesty

logankesty@yahoo.com



Everyone's life has a meaningful template to it, whether they know it yet or have acknowledged it; something that shapes the very viewpoint they see life through. This thing becomes the basis of their life, something that can explain and provide comfort for every experience in a lifetime. It is not only the primary focus, but the lens through which we individually see the world. And when dramatic experiences happen, good or bad, all the emotions and decisions we go through, ultimately, lead us back to this thing, with a more mature and grateful view of it. It is our comfort zone, our meaning of life. It is who we are.

Basketball has always been who I am. Whether I knew it or not at a young age, it defined me. Every emotion I feel, everything I see, everything I love, all finds its way back to basketball in my mind. I am able to show my pain, my joy, my passion, and perseverance through it.

I have been experiencing a journey through basketball for 7 years now that has taken me to many ups and downs, joy and pain, loss and gain, all the while making the game of basketball more prominent in my life. It starts with my family, most importantly, Sumner, my sister who taught me how to play basketball, as well as how to live through basketball. Sumner is my guide in basketball, and also my spiritual guide who allows me to excel and be strong and powerful no matter what test I face. Through her guidance in basketball I have experienced a Going-forth that has led me to become one with the game of basketball.

I wanted to be like her in basketball all my life, and now I realized that I wanted to surpass her. Basketball became an addiction.

Just as every addiction starts off as the greatest thing you've ever felt in your life, it soon turns to something that brings unexplainable pain, but cannot be given up. For all the years I had

played basketball up until my junior year in high school, I had relied on Sumner's guidance. She had always been there to provide a trail for me to follow, a set of goals for me to accomplish, a swagger and style to keep up with. But during my junior season, that trail she had left me came to an end. Even though this made me afraid, I had no idea the road of tests that would lie ahead for me.

One night I was sitting at the kitchen table eating by myself when Sumner came in to sit with me. She was acting different that night than I had ever seen her before. She seemed sort of lifeless, emotionless, and was trying to convince me that she was a good person. She was my representation of life through basketball, my rock, my mentor of strong powerful imagery, and yet she seemed weaker than I had ever seen. It was when she got up to walk away that I realized what was going on. In the back pocket of her jeans, she had a blackened spoon and next to that spoon, was a syringe. I was shocked, but immediately became angry. For me, basketball had now become my addiction.

For the next two years, she continued her struggle with heroin as I continued my struggle to find myself through basketball. I had success in streaks during my senior season, averaging 23 points per game over a 3 game stretch, 15 over another stretch, but had streaks where I played some really bad games as well. Sumner had success with her addiction, being sober for a couple weeks or a month at a time, and eventually relapsing. I had been recruited by some schools and had really taken a liking to the basketball coach at Plymouth State University, and decided to carry on my basketball career at Plymouth. Throughout my senior year and the summer leading up to college, I had experienced the full effect of a household affected by drug addiction.

Would you like to share your story or poem?

If you would like to submit a short story, poem, or article, we welcome it. The material does not need to be original, but if it isn't, please include the author or credits that can be printed along with the material.

We are looking for articles that inspire the bereaved, teach, and offer hope which is the focus of our ministry of Wings—a Grief Education Ministry. Poems or material may be submitted ***In Memory*** of your special loved one.



Basketball: Peace of Mind

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It wasn't until my second month at college that I took a step back to confront my lack of passion for basketball and my sister. Sumner had just been arrested and put in jail for a 30-day sentence, and I was up at Plymouth losing the desire to play basketball. In October, I went to

visit Sumner twice in jail. This was the first time I had talked to her in 7 months, and it was the deepest conversation I ever had with her. I got to tell her how much she meant to me, and that I was thinking about never playing basketball again in order to be there for her. I wanted to be her role model to be clean, like she was my role model in basketball. The first time I cried about her situation was looking into her eyes, our hands

placed over each other's through the glass of the visitation room. We both held the phones to our ears and cried together. On October 19th, 2012, just a few days after she was released from jail, Sumner overdosed and died. She was 23 years old.

Basketball has been many things to me on my pilgrimage. It has been my first love, my passion, my pain, my addiction, we separated, and found each other again. Basketball has led me to become a stronger person, a better person, find myself, understand my strength and power, and has led me closer to God and understanding what it means to have faith. I am a lot more patient and

understanding of a person. I have developed a greater understanding of myself and use my newfound knowledge to help people who need me.

(Read Logan's entire story at our website: wingsgrief.org)



Be Good to Yourself-Grief Tip

BE STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE

When we grieve we lose sight of who we are now. Our strengths seem to fail us and we fall prey to our lurking weaknesses. Find a role model— someone who inspires you that has met challenges in their life. This can be challenges of any kind, and is not limited to grief. Perhaps someone beat a health diagnosis through healthy living. Maybe a veteran from our armed forces has an inspiring story that give you pride in America. Perhaps, someone has gone through bankruptcy, foreclosure, or loss of job and started over to achieve even more than last time. Find someone who inspires you and study how they got through their life crisis. Take what you can from their example that will work for you and apply it to your pain. You, too, can come back stronger than ever before.

How To Connect With Wings:

Email: wings1@charter.net

Postal: P.O. Box 1051, Wausau, WI 54401

Phone: 715-845-4159

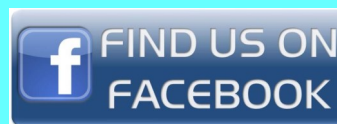
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What Do You Think?

Our Readers Share Their Thoughts

Thank you for your responses! The feedback was outstanding. Your stories were heart-warming, but we were unable to print them in their entirety so we printed content relative to your tribute to the person who helped you in your grief. Thank you for helping us all know that during times of loss, there are those special people who are there to help!



"Who helped you the most in your grief?"

My sister: After the death of our daughter, my sister Mary, has been a constant, quiet presence at our side. Mary would sit at our daughter's bedside with us or stay overnight as one of us was always with Pam. Mary would also make extra meals so the refrigerator wouldn't be bare when we came home. She prayed with us, cried with us and offered simple advice only when asked, never telling us how we should feel or what she would do. Mary offered a strong and loving shoulder to cry on and lean on for both my husband and me. Mary is a blessing; and we are so very thankful to have her in our lives.

Gale, Wausau

My sister: The worst moment of my life happened on a Wednesday in August 2009, when I received a call that my 25 year old daughter had died. Within 15 minutes of learning that my daughter had died, once I could finally speak, I asked for a phone and rattled off a phone number for someone to call. I was calling my sister who lives a couple of hours away. After telling her what happened, I just said, "I need you". She immediately came and stayed for days, helping both me and my husband get through this impossibly difficult time. I honestly don't know how we could have done it without her. She somehow knows what to do, what to say and how to help without telling you what to do. In the days, months and years since, she continues to be someone I can always turn to. Everyone should have a sister like her.

Judi, Wausau

My Rabbi: My son, Darren, was murdered in China on April 14, 2005. Several months after that, I was sitting in Temple for Yom Kippur and Yiskor. There was a Book of Remembrance listing the names of everyone that had died that year. Our Rabbi said, "I know those of you who have lost loved ones wish you could be with them. But if that happened, who would keep their memory alive?" Although there were hundreds of people there, I felt like the Rabbi was talking directly to me. Those words changed my life - giving me focus, hope, and healing.

Maxine B. Russell, California

My friend, Melissa: She has been a loyal & fun friend since 8th grade. When my mother, Margaret, was terminally ill with congestive heart failure in 2001, I planned to cancel a trip out of town, but my mom insisted I should go. Melissa stepped up and visited my mother in hospital. I am forever grateful to my cherished friend, Melissa, who makes me laugh and upon whom I can depend, no matter what. Marguerite, Illinois

My new neighbor: Nine months after my husband's passing I moved out of my home and into an apartment complex in Weston. Moving to a new home was the best choice I could have made. I owe most of this transition to my new friend and neighbor. Many times I would be so down and she would be there to lift me up.

My son's life has changed as well. A few months after his dad's passing he found a new job which has totally changed his life for the better and he really believes his dad had something to do with that.

Julie & Dean Brzezinski, Weston, WI

A friend: Nan reached out to me so many times. She always responded with compassion and understanding. She acknowledged my pain and the love I had for my son, Shaun. I also had a friend who remembered every tough day for at least the first 4 years after losing Shaun. Even six years out, she still remembers the worst day along with a couple others that she knows are hard for me. She also allowed me to cry without trying to stop me or apologize. I felt safe with her.

Cindy, Wausau, WI

My son: After my son, Christopher died, my other son helped me the most. Even today when I have a bad day I try and think of what Christopher gave us not what has been taken away. I miss him every day but I remember that beautiful boy and his big smile and infectious laugh.

Deb, Wausau, WI

Group facilitator and: About a month after the sudden death of my son I began attending grief sessions at the Peace Lutheran Church in Antigo. Sarah, the group facilitator, hugged and welcomed me, I knew I had met a very special person. Her love, compassion, hugs, and even tears for me, a stranger, impressed me immensely. I will always be grateful to my friend, Sarah.

Ruth Meyer, Antigo

My friend: My husband died suddenly and unexpectedly in January, 2012. There was no chance for "good bye. While I was feeling sorry for myself a dear friend gently told me how painful it was to watch her once strong, healthy husband lose his strength and health a little every day. I have learned from others how difficult it is to be a long term caregiver and what a toll that takes on the whole family. Caring for a spouse that can't communicate and no longer knows you, adds another whole dimension of pain and sadness and can go on for years. I now realize that no matter how it happens, it's a terrible tragedy for the remaining spouse and the family. There is no "better" way. I have found in Wings and other grief groups a level of help and support that I didn't anticipate as I go down the rough road to a different life.

Polly Wausau, WI

My nephew after the death of my pet: When my beloved dog Lucy passed away, my nephew who was only 7 at the time, drew me a picture of Lucy with a big sunshine in the background that said in his cute kid handwriting "I THINK OF LUCY EVERY SINGLE DAY!" I still have his drawing on my fridge alongside a picture of Lucy right before she passed away. When my nephew last visited my home he asked why I still had his picture on my fridge. I told him that it means so very much to me today as the day that he gave it to me and that it will remain on my fridge FUREVER.

Paula, Wausau, WI

What Do You Think?

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My sister Carole: She has been an angel. To add to her very special demeanor of warmth and positive thinking, she has empathy well earned. She lost her first-born son, as a teenager, to a senseless accident. When we lost our son to the unbearable waste of suicide, she provided whatever was needed. Her voice offered consolation, support, acceptance, forgiveness, validation and concern. She listened with endless patience, and unwavering unconditional love. She brought meals, worked by our sides helping us get our house in order, and in general did anything she could to comfort my husband and I. I now realize how inadequate my empathy was when her son died and can see that there is a special comfort that can be offered when grief has been personally endured.

Lynda, Pewaukee, WI

Family physician: My mother (Lorraine Plautz) passed away on 10/5/13, the person that helped me to cope with her passing was her family physician.

Nancy, Wausau

My daughter: My daughter, Jessica who is still my fellow traveler through this. She is my rock. Even with her own grief and life as a single mother of 2 she is the one who is always there. Thank you GOD for sending one of your angels to me for my daughter.

Sybil, Wausau

My Friend: Many people helped me walk my journey through grief. Recently I saw a friend at the grocery store on one of those tough days. Later that afternoon, she was at my front door telling me she was there to listen and hug. Ironically her husband just died also and you better believe, I will be there for her as she has been for me.

Mary, Spring Green WI

My Mom: My father recently died as a result of Alzheimer's. I have to say my mom was incredible, she never told of the many nights dad would lay

in bed twisting the sheets or of the nights that he would talk and yell out for any of us kids. My mom felt that with distance and our own families we didn't need to worry about dad's care. It is amazing how distance, lack of knowledge and just plain wishing that everything is going alright will make you believe it is alright. She said she never regretted keeping dad at home for as long as she did.

My mom managed to play cards once a week, she went to church, and she even took dad for daily car rides. Dad would go with her shopping, he would sit in the car and watch the people. My mom was lucky that dad wasn't very mobile, so mom never worried about him wandering away. These last few days with my mom has held us together as a family. She has lifted each of us up individually to our spiritually, emotional and personal best. My mom has had chemo, radiation for cancer - she is fighter, but my mom is hero to me. Anyone who can keep the home fires burning and still have the patience, love, and support of her children - during the hard times.

Kim, Kansas City

What's on the Calendar?

March continues:

How Grief Changes Your Life-Six week grief education/support series

April 24-25, 2014

Seminar: Guest Speaker Lou La Grand, Holiday Inn and Suites at Cedar Creek. See flyer in this issue.

May 14, 2014

Nan & Gary invited to speak at Antigo chapter The Compassionate Friends

May 20, 27, and June 3, 10

Finding the Other Side of Sadness—Re-Inventing Yourself After Loss-4 week education and support group for individuals ready to move on in their grief

July 11-13, 2014

37th annual National Compassionate Friends Conference, Chicago, IL. Nan and

Gary will be presenting two workshops.

August 25-28, 2014

Attending class at Center for Loss and Life Transition, Fort Collins, Colorado

For more information about any of these events, contact Nan at wings1@charter.net. Subscribe to Wings and receive updates and announcements by email.

Understanding Grief Spring 2014 Seminar

Presented by Wings - a Grief Education Ministry

Louis LaGrand, Ph.D.

Louis LaGrand, Ph.D., is a Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the State University of New York and adjunct professor of health careers at the eastern campus of Suffolk Community College in Riverhead, New York. He was a member of the debriefing team for the Nassau County Medical Examiner's office on the TWA Flight 800 disaster, a former member of the board of directors of the Association for Death Education and Counseling, and a founder and past-president of Hospice & Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley.

The author of nine books and numerous articles, he is known worldwide for his research on the Extraordinary Experiences of the bereaved (after-death communication phenomena). His first two books on the subject of the extraordinary have been translated into several languages. *Messages and Miracles: The Extraordinary Experiences of the Bereaved* is listed in the 100 Top Bestsellers for Counseling by the Online Dictionary of Mental Health. *Love Lives On: Learning from the Extraordinary Encounters of the Bereaved*, was released in November, 2006 by Berkley Books, a division of Penguin. It is also available in a Kindle edition as is his newest book, *Healing Grief, Finding Peace: 101 Ways to Cope With the Death of Your Loved One*. Website: www.extraordinarygriefexperiences.com.

Both seminars will be held at

Holiday Inn & Suites Cedar Creek

1000 Imperial Avenue
Rothschild, WI



For information or a
program brochure contact:

Nan Zastrow
715.845.4159

or

Amy Kitsemel
715.847.2703



Wisconsin Department of
Safety and Professional
Services continued education
units (CEUs) approved.

Ask for details.

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A community seminar for grieving families

Messages and miracles: the healing power of signs from the deceased

Thursday, April 24, 2014  7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Free of charge and open to the public

Millions of mourners have reported Extraordinary Experiences that have convinced them that they have received a sign or message from a deceased loved one or a Higher Power. These highly controversial events happen to people of all creeds, races, and social status, and clearly assist the grief work of the mourner. This presentation demonstrates the major role EEs play in how individuals cope with the death of loved ones, establish a new relationship with the deceased, learn to love in separation, and become a turning point for reinvesting in life. It will include types of experiences reported, how they can be used, as well as ways to help the mourner authenticate them.

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A seminar for clergy, hospice, caregivers and those who grieve

Understanding the differences between mourners who adapt and those who have long-term difficulties in coping with the death of a loved one

Friday, April 25, 2014  9:00 am - 12:00 noon

Cost: \$40.00

This presentation is based on 35 years of teaching and counseling the bereaved. It presents the key actions taken by those who adapt well to their losses and those who make choices—or refuse to make choices—which result in prolonged unnecessary suffering. A special focus will be on:

- Learning how not to grieve 24/7
- Strengthening your inner life
- Creating a path to acceptance
- Getting rid of "labels"
- Recognizing and letting go of resistance

Sharp differences will be drawn between those who cope well and those who have extreme difficulty. Also, strategies for building a nurturing support network, dealing with loneliness, increasing spiritual awareness, using memories, and managing intense emotions will be addressed as time permits.

Presented by


A Grief Education Ministry

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