

Conscious Dying

*My Mom's
Final Gift
to Me*

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When I was about 5 years old, I remember a conversation with my older brother while we were outside playing. He explained to me that what had happened to our pet dog, who had died, was going to also happen to us!

I had no words. I immediately felt numbed & doomed by this horrifying news and the thought of dying. It was the worst thing I had ever heard! The fear of it would be buried deeply for other times. However, during many moments during my life, I have traced other, unrelated fears or anxieties back to my dread of dying. What can you do about it?

As an adult, I have been drawn to reading many books written by Tibetan Buddhist monks. Why? Because they practice the reality of living with death as inevitable and they adjust their attitude to come into surrender and acceptance of it on a daily bases. Their practice stresses the fact that everything and everyone is transient. This is a way of living with the inevitable. I admire this practice and I put it into my own arsenal to contemplate regularly. It has helped.

I have also read many books on near death experiences (NDE). These stories lend much comfort with their vivid detail of the experience of crossing over. And, then returning. Many of the NDE stories have been validated medically since they occurred during surgery and the patients were pronounced dead. Their amazing stories give much light to the subject of the hereafter. In fact, there have been themes in the collective stories regarding these people who report seeing a tunnel, immense light, being greeted by those who have passed on, as well as the indescribable love and joy they felt. This has also been a help.

I also became a certified Past Life Soul Regressionist where I explored individuals' reasons for coming here, their soul missions over many lifetimes, what they were learning in each life, & how they could most evolve presently.



This offered me unique views beyond death. It has caused me to incorporate each one's true identity & given me a new context for viewing reality. This has been very helpful. In fact, over the years, my fear of death has lessened significantly. It was interesting to see how I was led, with this wealth of information, to be consciously present with Mom in her passing from this life.

From the moment my 96 year old mom began radiology, I began asking my inner knowing, "Is this her time? Is this the design of her soul? Is she ready to go forward to the next place?" As a spiritual healer, I asked within in order to know how aggressively I should be treating her condition in order to heal it. I believe that when our souls are ready to leave and go on to the next stage of evolution, that they pick a way for us to exit. I wondered if mom had chosen, albeit unconsciously, cancer as her means of exiting.

The answer I received early on is that this was a time of her soul's calling. And I was here to be with her during this time as she began her departure. What I did not know at the time is that this would be her gift for me.

We called hospice. Though at first, hospice was not able to be particularly helpful, since mom still felt like taking her exercise classes and going out to dinner and outings and attending family gatherings. She was enjoying her life! She didn't know she was dying. I also believe she thought that whenever the hospice nurse (who I deeply appreciated!) or team showed up, that they were here as people who were nice visitors. I believe she even felt the need to entertain them!

She had dementia. As the doctor said, "She has the good kind." She seemed to take on as her task the opportunity to make sure everyone around her felt loved. Her heart chakra was wide open. People throughout her retirement community felt her love.

One woman asked me to lean in as she told me privately and wholeheartedly that whenever mom wasn't in the dining room,



it felt absolutely dead. And when mom entered, it was as though the room had come to life. Her love lit up an entire room! That's the power of love. And she was loaded with it, some for everyone, although to be honest, she was not easy for dad to live with at times. Her confused state brought on occasional outbursts of blame or anger. People with dementia can be high maintenance as well as needing to be watched over and protected.

Fortunately, she married the right guy! And she adored him. He was always full of understanding and forgiveness and he never lost sight of the big picture. This was his sweetheart and they'd been happily married for over 75 years. He told me that if someone wrote a book about their marriage no one would believe it since it was so amazing and they had been so blessed all their years together!

As her exit journey progressed, she slept a lot. After breakfast she would go back to bed and sleep another two hours. And maybe in the afternoon another two. This continued to be a deepening pattern. This was, I learned, part of her dying process.

Eventually, the last two weeks were the most telling about my experience of consciously watching her die.

Even though she had not eaten for a couple weeks, and she wanted little water, and was very weak, she still wanted to get out of her death sleep in order to use the portable toilet. I thought to myself, "How on earth can she manage this?" She had assistance, but still, her desire was great to maintain her dignity. She was called a lady by many people throughout her life. My buddy, Tim, our hospice R.N., commented on how deep that runs within her!

So far, I was surprised by several things. First of all, the amount of sleep she needed and how deep it was! I called it the "death sleep" since it was near impossible to rouse her from it.

Mom was very musical. Her wonderful hospice chaplain, Steve, played a great guitar and sang healing songs, which she enjoyed. She loved his upbeat music!



I was surprised that when she was in the deep sleep toward the end, he sang to her in spite of her seeming coma-state. Once, out of the sleep, she briefly lifted her head and said, "Hallelujah!" She was enjoying it! Then returned to her deep sleep state.

There was another surprise. How little pain she had, thank God! Her comfort was maintained by Tylenol up until the last week when hospice offered her half doses of morphine. I was surprised learning how hospice workers studied her to read her body language as an indication of being in pain - her facial expression (the eyebrows, a grimace, the lips) as well as when she was turned from one side to the other. They have this down to a science! And their devotion to understanding their patients' comfort levels as well as maintaining their patients' need for dignity was a testimony to compassion of the highest kind! She had lost the ability to communicate how she felt so Dad and I were so deeply grateful for their amazing expertise at this!

Because of the lack of connection with mom, I had to rely on my intuition, which was running high. I mostly sensed everything about her, allowing my intuition to tune in and supply the answers to my many questions. "How was she doing? Was she in pain? How much longer would she last? Would she be able to exit before it became very problematic and highly complex to take care of her? Would she be able to have a peaceful transition?" I was haunted continually by these questions. And my intuition showed up to answer each one of them.

The last week, I wanted so much to help her in any way. Her physical needs were cared for by hospice and others. "What," I wondered, "were her other needs? Was she ready to make the transition? Was she afraid? Was she resisting?" Or, "Was she okay with what she had to do?"



I had many talks with her during this last week. Although it appeared as though she couldn't hear me, hospice says that what is last to go is the hearing. I had that confirmed.

Tim told me early in the week that it was time for me to go to her and tell her it was okay for her to leave. And he advised me to assure her that I would be okay. And that I would take care of Dad and he would take care of me. And that we'd be okay. As I poured forth this message to mom and also thanked her endlessly with all my heart, through my tears, for being the most wonderful mother on earth all these years, she managed to open her eyes twice and smile, even gesturing with her hand for me to hold it. It was one of the most intimate moments of my life! She heard me! She received my message! This was so important to me!

During this period, whenever I was not with her, I thought of her continually, even waking up in the middle of the night. It was a fully engaging event for me, emotionally as well as physically. I worried and tried not to. But one thing I found myself doing that was most helpful is that I continually looked beyond her physical body and appearance, remembering, not only her essence, beyond the body, but also the big picture and what was really going on.

The fact is, she was trying to move past this 3D experience. It was time to go. I felt assured many times, intuitively, that her soul was completely in charge and knew exactly what it was doing and how to do it. I trusted this as much as possible, viewing her as a soul, rather than a mother, a dying person, my dad's beloved wife.

I was continually regarding her as a soul. She was, indeed, a soul. And in the last few days I began speaking to her soul, intuiting what she may want or need. This is the part I most want to share here.

On one such morning, I brought my Bible to her bed. I found some wonderful verses from Psalms, that were marked in my book, which I felt she would appreciate. These very verses had comforted me many times over the decades. I knew she would love them



too. She was a deeply Christian woman. I wanted to speak to her spirituality in this way. She loved Jesus, his teachings, and above all, she loved God. She loved prayer. And there were other things that day that came up.

As I shared some of the wonderful, brief verses, which reminded her of God's great love and care, I told her that she had the confidence and courage to do whatever it was hers to do, including moving on from here. I opened my mouth and wonderful things poured out, which even inspired me. I felt like a channel for God. It was such a relief.

I was able to access deep within to tell her some things I'd never told her which were very significant to me. Things I'd never said before and which needed to be said.

I told her she had always been my hallelujah mom! She taught me how to sing the high notes in life, how to rejoice, how to feel joy's highs! Lucky me! I remember coming back from church many Sundays where we would still be singing the anthem or one of the songs which were very uplifting. (She was the choir director, so these songs were her personal choices!) In this way, I learned to carry joy and hallelujah in a field of resonance, which I can access anytime, and often do. What a gift! And I got to tell her this!

Another thing I was able to access deep within is that I had received her generous, outpouring love for me all my life and her love was not only unconditional, but it was fierce! She loved me fiercely! I was incredibly grateful that I was able to share with her the gifts which contributed enormously to my life's happiness. She had modeled joy, playfulness, and unconditional love all my life. She showed me how it's done! Isn't this all we ever want or need? I received this in spades from my mom!



I also followed intuition in singing hymns and spiritual songs to her. Some of them were ones she'd sung at church. Although at church she sang this one in a fast pace, I sang it slowly to her... "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning and ever shall be. World without end. A-men." How beautiful those words at this time! These words and songs reached my heart as well.

I recalled a poem that I had put to music when my daughter was young. I had turned it into a lullaby and sang it to mom. "I know that God is where I am, beneath, around, above. Providing, guarding, guiding, encircling me in love."

Over those couple days there were songs that came to me I had not thought of in decades. And they were so meaningful and perfect, each one brought a message for mom, and also for me. "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow." And, "Open My Eyes That I May See," and "How Firm a Foundation."

Sometimes I couldn't remember all the words. There were times she offered me a slight facial expression of raised eyebrows, to let me know she was getting it. I was encouraged. I knew how wonderful these healing sessions were for me. And I knew how meaningful they were for her as well. It felt as though this was exactly the support she needed in order to feel absolutely free of fear and ready to make her transition.

I recognized that this was less of a dying experience and far more about her spiritual evolution and moving forward, out of time and 3D, and into eternity as a soul, where loved ones were waiting and where there would be a celebration waiting for her upon her arrival.

In fact, before she began the coma, it had occurred to me that there would be a big party for her! It would be such a happy event! And a couple days later, she had an extraordinary Monday, which I'd like to share with you.



She came out of her deep sleep on that Monday. And this is where the family members were guided by Tim to give her permission. Earlier that day, she was agitated. She wanted to sit up in her chair. She was adamant. We got her in her chair. And although she continued to sleep on and off, she was very glad to be in her chair. It was important to her.

In her agitation she said, looking around the room, “Where’s the party!”

Then she began her cadence saying “I need to go!” She declared this over and over. All our hospice team was present. And dad along with my daughter were there as well. I told her, “It’s okay. You can go anytime now.” But she persisted, saying, “I need to go!!!” It occurred to me that she was, in this moment, feeling a little stuck. She knew she needed to go. But how?

Then she told everyone in an emphatic voice (she was so incredibly weak, she could barely get it out but we felt the super strength of her intention), “I have an announcement to make! I want everyone out of this room! I have got to go!” She was practically pleading with us.

We all left immediately. Our wonderful hospice social worker, Paula, suggested that dad and her care-giver put her in the wheelchair and allow her to leave the room as a symbol of what she knew she needed to do. I asked them to take her outside to see the sun and sky and onto the patio to see the flowers, then return. It was done.

That’s not all.

I’ll regress here to share something else.

My brother, Jed, died suddenly a year ago. It was a shock to us all. It



put me in a mode of being deliberately conscious of how transient we all are. It was a big wake up. And, a few months after he'd gone, I had a strong intuition that he was telling me, "I'm coming for mom, Sis. Don't worry." His message was as clear as a bell. I hadn't even been thinking of him that day.

I hadn't thought about that in a long while. But a couple days before the Monday I'm discussing, I asked my brother, Jed, to please give me a sign if this was the time he was coming for mom.

On that Monday, when we were taking turns giving mom permission to leave and telling her we would be okay, my daughter was with mom. And, during this time, mom looked up and to her left side and said, "Well, hello Jed!"

This was my sign! He would be receiving her! This was immensely comforting to me.

How is this conscious dying?

It was a metaphysical experience. And although there was an obvious physical experience of dying taking place, I mostly addressed it and lived in a meta (above) place. This allowed the conscious dying experience to take place in a number of ways.

First of all, I continually reminded myself that she was an eternal soul and not a dying person whose life would be ending. This was a constant practice. Secondly, my spiritual intuition was engaged and it offered me continual insights and guidance on how to be appropriate to her and to be spiritually helpful to her.

It also allowed me to live in an expanded awareness of divine Love. (I am sure it was the same for mom.) It caused me to know that we were, indeed, being divinely guided, and that this was less a physical experience and far more of a soul experience. It caused me



to give full reins to her soul, knowing it was all-intelligent to direct and guide her on this path onward. And her soul would know the exact moment in which to make her departure. And although she had dementia, her Higher Self was at work!

All this knowing put out a lot of fires for me. The fire of fear, seeing her as a pitiful, dying mortal who was helpless to stop the inevitable. The fire of death as real.

There were fires ignited as well. The fire of knowing life goes beyond the human experience and that we continue our journey as an eternal soul. The fire of love which burned so brightly that it continually took most of my (and I believe, her) fear away as I faced each step of her transition.

I was able to feel confident that mom's purpose on earth had been fulfilled. And although it appeared that cancer was taking her and killing her, it was actually very different than this. The metaphysical picture showed me that her soul chose cancer as the means of her exit and that her soul needed to depart in order to advance in its eternal, evolutionary path.

During her last days and nights, my sleep patterns were often interrupted, wondering if someone was going to call me at any minute. Oddly, the morning she passed, I slept through the call! Fortunately, dad called me a second time and woke me up.

As I came into the room and saw dad, I said, "Onward Christian soldier!" He said, "Hallelujah!" We hugged big! We felt triumphant for her!

As I came to her bed, I touched her toes, as I had often done many times. Her toes were cold. I thought to myself, "She isn't in this body. This body is a shell. She's moved on. She's fine!" I felt deeply happy for her.



I congratulated her on making her transition! She did it! Her soul had been in charge the entire time! I felt relief that she had bypassed the many complications that would have soon been upon us. And she had avoided extreme physical advances of the disease. The disease, after all, was never in charge. Her soul was in charge all along.

During the last week or so of her earth life, Tim had asked me, “Is she waiting for someone important to her to come?” Is anyone coming?” I assured him there was no one. Tim felt she was ready to go but that perhaps she was waiting for someone or something. He asked, “Is there an important date she may be waiting for before she passes? A birthday? An anniversary?” I knew of none.

It wasn't until the very end that I had a clue of why she was waiting. She had been my spiritual teacher all my life. This was the final lesson. Conscious dying. She wanted to show me what all the fuss was about and how insignificant it was. Dying. No big deal. Just another thing the soul takes us through. We come here to learn lessons. There is a time we exit. It's okay. It's supposed to happen.

Because of this experience, her slow-motion death was like a meditation, giving me time to digest it from her soul to mine. And to understand significantly how death works and the real story behind it.

This experience has deeply etched in my consciousness the truth about death and dying. It's normal. There's life hereafter. We'll be fine! Our soul knows what it's doing! We can live in peace knowing this.

If I have left the impression that this was a cake walk or that it was easy, let me be clear. It was not. I cried a lot. Much of the time my heart felt as though it was breaking wide open. The entire experience was sad, stressful, and emotionally and physically exhausting.



But my Herculean efforts to rise above it, to view it spiritually, listen for divine guidance, offer endless prayers, and to keep in view that this was her soul's evolution, helped me to live in the truth.

After mom's departure, these efforts continued to offer me (and I'm sure mom) strong support which was needed. I felt sustained by what I had experienced of conscious dying and the deeply spiritual journey we had traveled which opened my eyes like never before. I had received mom's final and astounding gift to me! I will never be the same.

I am no longer afraid of death!