

WINGS



Fall 2001

ASSISTING THOSE AFFECTED BY AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS

No. 6

Extraordinary Experiences Provide Comfort to Families

By *Louis E. LaGrand, Ph.D.*

The Extraordinary Experiences of the Bereaved (EE's) is an exciting new field of research which focuses on a variety of experiences in which a person believes he or she has been spontaneously contacted by a deceased loved one. It is important to emphasize that the living person is not actively seeking to make contact with the deceased; the experience does not in any way involve a psychic. Instead, it is the deceased (or the unconscious or a Supreme Being) who seems to reach out to the bereaved and in doing so provides much needed comfort and solace. Although a contact experience may occur at any time, it commonly takes place when one is mourning the death of a loved one and becomes the basis for the bereaved person to deal with the loss and begin the task of integrating it into his/her life.

EE's include sensing the presence of the deceased, feeling a touch, smelling a fragrance, hearing the voice or seeing the deceased, and meeting the loved one in a vision or dream. Messages are also received in symbolic ways: finding an object associated with the deceased, unusual appearances of birds and animals, or the unexplainable happenings which occur at or shortly after the moment of death. Several combinations of the above phenomena may occur within weeks of the death or over a period of years.

EE's have a long and eventful history, but the nature of the experience has caused many who feel they have had contact with the deceased to maintain their silence. They seldom shared the experience with others out of fear that they would be considered in need of professional help. It is only recently, with the openness displayed toward miracles, the paranormal, and near-death



Louis E. LaGrand, Ph.D., author of Gifts from the Unknown, made several presentations to caregivers and others in Phoenix, Arizona. Among those attending were volunteers from the local Arizona Chapter of Wings of Light, Inc.

experiences that people have been willing to speak about these helpful contacts.

A new book entitled, *Gifts from the Unknown*, places in your hands a step-by-step guide for using the dreams, synchronicities, apparitions, and numerous other contact experiences that have been reported by millions of mourners. It is inspirational, instructional, and filled with compassionate wisdom. This book will add insight into the lifelong process of meaning making so critical in adapting to the loss of a loved one, while bringing peace of mind and assisting in the restructuring of one's inner life.

For more information on Dr. Louis E. LaGrand's book, *Gifts from the Unknown*, visit www.anotherreality.com or contact your nearest Barnes and Noble Bookstore.

United Way Donations To Wings of Light, Inc.

Several local United Way chapters allow donations to be designated to a particular charity through a Donor Designation program. Since we are a nationally recognized 501c3 public charity and have activities throughout the United States (as well as overseas), we have received United Way contributions from across the country. If you are interested in designating your United Way contributions to Wings of Light, please contact your local United Way agency to see if they participate in the Donor Designation program. They may require additional information from us. If so, please refer them to Andrea Waas at 800-613-8531 or awaaswings@aol.com. Thank you!

It is estimated that more than sixty million people have had a contact experience.

WINGS

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www.wingsoflight.org

Assisting those affected
by aircraft accidents

Allied Member of the
Association for Death Education and Counseling

Wings of Light, Inc. is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting those touched by aircraft accidents. The most important goal of the organization is to bring people together through the existence of three support networks.

Survivor Support Network

The *Wings of Light* Survivor Support Network is a support group for those who have been involved in and lived through an aircraft accident. This group helps individuals understand the feelings and issues of surviving the accident and coping with the impact on their lives.

Family and Friends Support Network

The *Wings of Light* Family and Friends Support Network provides families and individuals with specialized support that addresses the unique issues surrounding aircraft fatalities.

Rescue/Response Personnel Support Network

The *Wings of Light* Rescue/Response Personnel Support Network brings together individuals involved in the rescue, recovery and investigative efforts. An often overlooked group, individuals in this network are given a forum for peer counseling and voicing concerns.

Other activities include the development of local chapters, the planning of a conference for network members, distribution of related informational materials and resource kit, and referral to qualified counseling professionals.

Wings of Light, Inc. is a 501c3 public charity; contributions are tax-deductible. If you are interested in more information or would like to make a contribution, contact: *Wings of Light, Inc.*, PMB 448, 16845 N. 29 Avenue, # 1, Phoenix, AZ 85053.

Dear Friends,

Marv wrote the following poem after exploratory/biopsy surgery for a "thymoma" . . . it proved to be benign. When Marv came out of the anesthesia enough to be coherent, he asked for a pen and paper. I watched as he scrawled each verse on the yellow legal pad . . . saying "I've had this in my head for hours" . . . he never changed one word . . . little did we know these were the last 18 months of his life.

Mrs. Cecile Randall



The Call

I had a wake-up call last week,
The message was so clear.
The caller said, "Get up, my friend,
Your time is drawing near.
And as you go into the night,
No matter right or wrong,
Just know that there is precious little
You can take along."

"No job, no home, no bank account
Will see you through the night.
The things you've worked so hard to earn,
Will soon be out of sight.
It's time to look inside yourself,
To stand up to your fear.
To ask yourself just what it is,
That you hold near and dear."

It's not an easy task, my friend,
To inventory life.
The things we've worked so hard to own,
Are barely worth the strife.
The simple things we take for granted,
Things we barely heed,
Like faith in God, and friends and family.
These are what we need.

These are what it takes, my friend,
To make it through the night.
It's prayer and care and love to share,
That brings us to the light.
So please help me remember, Lord,
The way to conquer fear.
For now I know just what it is,
That I hold near and dear.

by Marvin Randall

SUPPORT NETWORK APPLICATION

Yes! Please add my name to your support network for:

- Survivors Family and Friends
- Rescue/Response Personnel

(please print)

Name _____

Company (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email address _____

Please provide the following information:

ACCIDENT INFORMATION

Date _____

Location _____

Type:

- general aviation airline (passenger)
- business/charter airline (crew)
- other, (please specify) _____

If applying for the Family and Friends Support Network, please provide the following information:

Name of relative/friend involved in crash _____

Relationship to you _____

Please complete and return to Wings of Light, PMB 448, 18645 N. 29th Avenue, Suite 1, Phoenix, Arizona 85053.

Our Sincere Thank You

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A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE WINGS OF LIGHT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND THE SUPPORT NETWORK VOLUNTEERS

Our thoughts and prayers are extended to the family of **Steven B. Welch** who was killed by a drunk driver this past summer.

Steve was a volunteer on our Family and Friends Support Network. Steve's father, William H. Welch, was killed in an air crash on September 27, 1989 in the Grand Canyon.

DETACH FORM HERE RETURN FORM TO: WINGS OF LIGHT, INC. PMB 448, 16845 N. 29TH AVE., #1, PHOENIX, AZ 85053

CONTRIBUTOR

YES! PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONTRIBUTION OF:

- (please print) \$25 \$50 \$100 \$150 (Nepenthe Sponsor) \$200 \$500 \$ _____

Name _____

Company (if applicable) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone number _____

Email address _____

Please make my contribution in memory of _____

Please notify the following family of my gift: (please provide name and address)

Life is a sequence of risks

By Barbara Schischa

“Life is a sequence of risks, to fail to meet them is to destroy a part of one’s self.” A very profound statement with a simplistic meaning. This is etched into a memorial stone in an old cemetery from the Civil War era. It is a tribute to the two young lives lost as they adhered to their pledge of allegiance on their philosophy of life.

Within minutes of receiving a phone call on the evening of March 10, 1978, my life was changed from an idyllic one, to a living existence of chaos and strife.

My husband and sons were invited to join our friends, another father and son, to fly the following week to Maine to ski on virgin snow. Alarms immediately sounded in my head, and I desperately tried to change their minds. I spent the entire week leading up to their departure telling my husband that if he wanted to destroy his life, well then fine, but to please leave our two sons home. Oh, I was the brunt of every joke during that long week, and even given the world’s title of being the “most overly protective Jewish mother.”

The night before the trip, our friend called to say that the plane was too loaded with baggage to accommodate both of my sons, and that one of the boys would have to stay home. The next morning at the crack of dawn, both fathers and sons took off to enjoy their last ski vacation together. Sunday evening, on the day of their return, I was informed over the phone of the crash of their plane shortly after departure for home. The plane had mechanical difficulty and upon returning to the runway, a wing hit a pine tree causing it to nose dive and explode. The four occupants were incinerated.

Over the months following their demise, I found few things during my “cleaning out” stage. This confirmed my original belief that they had accomplished what they needed for this lifetime and it was their time to move ahead.

The passing of my husband and son has dramatically altered my way of viewing life. Once taken for granted, I now see my life as a precious silver thread wavering in the wind, at the mercy of the unseen energies of the universe. This self-realization of my being has fostered within me a love for all God’s creations. I no longer see myself as a guest on this planet, but as one instrumental in its fight for

survival. To enmesh oneself within the beauty of life is to fully allow self to experience the joys of life, and the finality of death on this plane of life. Treading lightly through life makes very little impressions on our planet’s environmental issues, and on the souls that we cross paths with, on our own path through life.

Tolerance, an expectation on my part that has been greatly modified over the years and integrated with the term acceptance. For all of the planet to be in sync with each

other, man and his environment must be unconditional and nonjudgmental within their interactive communals. My feelings on maintaining this working balance is clearly defined in the use of our three important body organs, the brain, the heart and the gut. When we are dealing with people, we work only from the heart. In work situations, we deal with the brain. And in decisions on a personal level, we work from our gut. If everyone followed this golden rule, I feel that we would become a more humanistic society.

A Survivor’s Search for Meaning

The following are selected excerpts (published with permission) from *The Bridge Never Crossed: A Survivor’s Search for Meaning* written by Captain George A. Burk, USAF (Ret.) who was the sole survivor of a military crash on May 4, 1970.

As the sole survivor of a plane crash, I’ve had the opportunity to reflect on my life, its purpose, my personal and professional aspirations and faith. I was incredibly blessed to have survived the crash and thank God for giving me a second life. Every day is a gift. I thank John Davieau who found me and saved my life, Dr. Wellford W. Inge and staff who refused to let me die, and my family and friends who love me.

Since that rainy day in 1970, my life has been a journey toward continuous improvement. Striving for renewed purpose isn’t easy. Every day brings new opportunities and challenges to grow personally, professionally and spiritually.

Along the way, I discovered that life is far more than material wealth, status, and pleasure. The greatest gift I received besides my health, family and friends is knowing that there is more. Being able to address groups about my journey and share my vision, mission, goals and objectives is a blessing

The thousands of people I’ve met over the years since the crash have presented me with more questions than answers. People have asked me why I thought my life was spared while the others died. I am often asked, “Do you believe in God?” An almost

unanimous sentiment has been, “You have to write a book and tell your story.”

I have asked myself many of these same questions over the past twenty-nine years since that fateful May morning in 1970. Heaven only knows, I’ve had plenty of time to pause and reflect on why I was the only survivor. What does it all mean? Was I really chosen to spread a message of hope and faith to others or was my rescue and recovery merely a set of unique circumstances which just happened?

If I am supposed to share my messages, then “How?” “When?” and “Where?”

I had so many questions and so few answers.

When these thoughts flash across my mind, I often reflect on my first discussion with Dr. Inge in the nurse’s break room that afternoon in September, 1970. I can still hear his voice as if it happened yesterday.

“Doc, what am I supposed to do now?” I asked.

And the reply I hear in my mind today is as valid as it was that day

“George, you have a purpose. We all have a purpose. It’s up to you to find it. No one can do it for you. It probably won’t happen as a ‘lightning bolt from the sky’ but will come to you over time.”

(continued on page 6)

Nepenthe Resource Kit

Wings of Light Inc. has developed a resource kit for grieving families. This kit, called Nepenthe, consists of various books and videos selected to assist individuals through the grieving process.

You may sponsor a kit with a donation of \$150 to Wings of Light, Inc. As a sponsor, your name will be included in the kit to recognize your generous donation.

For more information on the kit or to sponsor a kit, contact Wings of Light, Inc., PMB 448, 16845 N. 29 Avenue, # 1, Phoenix, AZ 85053 or email awaaswings@aol.com.

Remembering Dad . . .

Everyone close to my father, Larry Beige, knew him as a skilled pilot with a passion for flying. But as his daughter, I am able to recall so many of his other qualities.

He was a great source of strength and wisdom to his family and friends. If you had a problem, my dad could offer helpful advise. Whenever I wasn't sure which road to take, I knew I could seek guidance from my father.

Known for his terrific sense of humor, my dad could always make friends and family laugh until they cried. And if he teased you, that was a sure sign he liked you.

Many looked to him as a role model. As a successful businessman, he proved that if you work hard and play fair, you can achieve your goals and live your dreams.

My dad taught me to try my hardest, stand up for what I believe, and not to give up in the face of adversity. And I know that I am the person I am today, in large part, because of his love and guidance. I will always miss him, but will continue to go on raising my own children, in hopes that I will be able to be as wonderful of a parent as he was.

Rebecca Naples



Larry Beige with his newly built Lancair ESP in Spruce Creek, Florida, in the winter of 1999-2000. Larry was killed May 9, 2000.

A Survivor's Search for Meaning

Continued from page 4

"If you want to bad enough," he continued, "you will find that purpose and turn what was negative into a positive. It's up to you."

Well, it is up to me, as it is up to everyone else to find their purpose in life. Every day brings each of us new challenges to learn and grow, accepting the changes around us as opportunities to find out more about ourselves and life!

. . . Excellence is the cornerstone of this process and involves my faith – knowing that all I am or will be is provided by a power greater than I. A holistic lifestyle, involving proper diet, exercise and imaging techniques also play a role in this process. The following poem captures the spirit and intent of my messages and, I hope, my life.

What Can I Do?

What can I do to make a real difference?
What can I do to know that we're right?
What can I do to help change where we're going?
What can I do to help us take flight?

Give it your all is one of the answers.
Hang in and fight may do some good too.
But what is the best thing we could all take part in?
What is the best thing we all can do?

Be honest and caring, and use what God gave us.
Keep growing and changing that's what we can do.
Be open to changes and help make them happen,
Look forwards not backwards is something else too.

Be helpful, not hurtful, build up, don't tear down.
Reach for the stars, keep our feet on the ground.
Be earnest and trusting, forgive and forget.
Love people and work, give more than you get.

Do some of these things and we'll make a difference.
Do some of these things and we'll know we are right.
Do some of these things and we'll change where we're going,
But do all of these things and watch us take flight.

For more information on *The Bridge Never Crossed* or guest speaker availability, visit www.georgeburk.com or contact: George Burk, P.O. Box 6392, Scottsdale, AZ 85261-6392 or 800-769-8568.

