

## INTRODUCTION

*“There is no death, only a change of worlds.”*

Native American Proverb

I have had the honor of meeting with hundreds of hospice patients over the past 15 years as a hospice social worker. They have opened a fascinating window of insight into the process of dying and have taught me much about what to expect when I am ready to make my journey. My fear of dying has lessened as I have listened to their experiences of dreams, visions and visitations. Fear of the unknown and therefore of dying is a natural impulse. After all, death is a mysterious frontier which is intensely personal and as far as we know, one which we must face alone. Or do we?



I no longer believe we die alone. As we are dying and at the time of death, I believe we are surrounded by loving beings, usually deceased relatives, who come to us to dispel fear and to gently usher us into the next world. This belief is based on the accounts of hundreds of dying persons who have shared their experiences of dreams, visions and visitations with me over the years.

My intention in writing this booklet is to offer comfort to those facing their own death or the death of a loved one. We all ponder the dying experience and would like reassurance that the person who has died is with loving beings and is at peace.

As we witness the death of our loved one, it is natural to wonder what our own death will be like and to hope that when we die, our death will be peaceful. Many people are optimistic that their spirit will live on, that they will be reunited with their loved ones and be in the presence of a supreme, loving being.

My hospice patients are my wise teachers. I am merely passing on the stories they have been gracious enough to share with me about the dreams, visions and visitations they have received in the weeks, days and hours before they died.

The dying person is often reluctant to share their extraordinary experiences with others, as they fear they will be thought to be “crazy.” When one sees things others cannot see, we often label the person as mentally ill and say that they are hallucinating. We attempt to explain away the visions by blaming them on pain medications, the disease process or mental instability. I have come to accept that mysteries exist which simply cannot be adequately explained in this physical reality.

All of the people who shared their stories with me were on hospice care, were of sound mind and within weeks, days or hours of death. Some were taking pain medication and some were not.

Although some of my patients were deeply religious and faithful to the church of their choice, others were indifferent or believed nothing in particular about God or an afterlife. People seemed to experience comforting visions regardless of religious and spiritual beliefs and preferences.

While some of my hospice patients have been totally at peace with dying, with no regrets and no fear, others have been troubled and remorseful about events in their lives and apprehensive about what death would bring. It has been my experience that those who are fearful find comfort and serenity through their visions and are able to find peace with dying and release their fears. They all find their way home through their own individual journey.