

I AM NOT AFRAID TO DIE

By: Jeffrey W. Pompeo, Esq.

When I was in high school, I wrote a book report on a book called “On Death and Dying” by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, MD, a psychiatrist who had researched the subject by interviewing terminally ill patients. At the time, it was considered revolutionary to do so and much of the medical community rejected her work.

At the time, my grandmother was living with our family and I wanted to know how to respond when she asked me: “Am I dying?”

Recently, I decided to re-read the book. I wanted to revisit the five stages of death Dr. Kubler-Ross had identified: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Although I do not have a terminal illness or incurable disease, I can now say that I am not afraid to die. The purpose of this article is to explain the reasons why I feel that way.

HEAVEN

When I was in Catholic grammar school, I learned that when we die, we go to heaven, purgatory or hell and that heaven is a beautiful place that is peaceful and free of pain. I hope to experience heaven some day.

Based on that description, I am not afraid to die.

LOVED ONES

I have also learned that when we die, we are reunited with our loved ones who have died before us. I hope to be reunited with my mother, father, grandparents and other loved ones when I die.

A friend of my aunt who was facing a medical crisis said to my aunt, in my presence: “If I die, I’ll be with my deceased husband and if I live, I’ll be with you. In either case, I win.”

In the Foreword to the book “Life After Life” by Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., Eben Alexander, M.D. wrote: “[T]here is nothing to fear about the physical death of the body, because it is not the end of the soul or of the soul’s connectedness with beloved soul mates.”

Based on the foregoing, I am not afraid to die.

BLESSINGS

I take the expression “Count Your Blessings” literally. Every day -- sometimes several times per day -- I thank God, one by one, for the blessings I have received.

Many times I recite them out loud.

When I die, I hope to meet God so I can thank him, face to face, for the blessings I have received.

For that reason, I am not afraid to die.

SIGNS

I am fascinated by the “signs” that people receive from their deceased loved ones.

I have received many signs.

(1) When I was 19 years old, I drove one night from North Jersey to the Jersey shore in South Jersey to meet friends. On my way home at 2:00 a.m., I started to fall asleep at the wheel and as I started to drive off the road, I heard a loud buzzing sound inside my car. It startled me and woke me up, as I steered the car back on the road.

I was not aware of anything inside my car that could make that sound. I have always believed it was my deceased grandmother looking after me and keeping me safe.

(2) A few years ago, on a Sunday morning, my ex-girlfriend and I were driving to a Catholic Church that we had not been to before. Suddenly, a pickup truck on a side street to our right, made a left turn across our lane. I jammed on my brakes; the car behind me did the same, and to avoid hitting me, that car swerved to the right of my car. I somehow avoided hitting the pickup truck and the car behind me somehow avoided hitting my car.

I looked up and saw the street sign: we were at the corner of River Road and Ida Drive. My deceased mother’s name is Ida. I believe it was her looking after us and keeping us safe.

(3) A few years ago, I had surgery to remove 4 large stones, described by the doctor as the size of golf balls, from my bladder. After the second surgery and a biopsy that followed, I was sent home with instructions to “drink a lot of water,” which I did.

I later learned that because the procedure unexpectedly caused the organs around my bladder to swell, I was not able to eliminate the water and was going into shock. I was rushed back to the hospital in the back seat of a police car with the sirens blaring.

For 48 hours after arriving home, I was not able to comfortably sit or lay down without pain. Finally, my condition improved and I was able to sit at my kitchen table, when I noticed a red cardinal sitting in a shrub in the back of the yard.

In a spiritual sense, it is widely believed that when a cardinal appears in your yard, it’s a visitor from heaven delivering a message from God.

Suddenly, that cardinal, plus 2 other cardinals, flew toward my kitchen window and directly at me; made a quick left turn along the back of the house and disappeared.

I accepted this spiritual experience as three of my deceased loved ones delivering a message that I was not alone and was on my way to recovering.

(4) As my friend Ray held the aluminum ladder I was standing on, I inserted a light bulb in a ceiling fixture that had just been replaced in my house after a devastating flood. Ray kept warning me to be careful with what I touched.

At one point, we heard a noise in the hallway outside the room. When we went to investigate, we found that a small device used to measure humidity levels (called a "hygrometer") had moved from the top of a dehumidifier, where it had rested for many months, to the ground about 10 feet away.

There was no one else in the house. The hygrometer could not have moved except by spiritual intervention. Ray and I shook our heads in disbelief. To this day, we continue to do so.

I took the experience to be a warning sign from a deceased loved one to be careful when working with electricity.

(5) I am extremely curious to know how our deceased loved ones are able to send us signs. Are they limited in the number of signs they can send? How are they able to deliver the sign? How do they know what is going on in our life to send a sign that is so relevant?

I now believe that the expression "they will always be with you," which is said to people when someone dies, means something more powerful than "they will always be with you *in your heart*." It means that their spirit will actually be in the same room with you and they will watch over you.

Because I hope to satisfy my intense fascination with spiritual signs, and because I want to send some myself, I am not afraid to die.

CONCLUSION

Because I hope to experience heaven some day . . . because I hope to be reunited with my parents and loved ones . . . because I hope to meet God so I can thank him, face to face, for the blessings I have received . . . and because I want to learn how our deceased loved ones are able to send signs to us, I am not afraid to die.

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