

## INTRODUCTION

There are innumerable books about grief. We look through them for a few words—any words—to find some comfort. You will surely find some calming phrases in this book, even if only a few, because of the very fact that you are looking for them. Although some answers will be suggested, most of the questions that will be raised will have to remain open, because each person must develop or grow one's own answer.

Perhaps you are expecting to find information about “stages of grief” in these pages. As far as I've experienced, which has been considerable in my stay on the planet, there are no actual stages, levels, or hierarchies in a grief experience. Many of us believe such organization would be helpful and indeed it can be in certain ways. However, the concept of *unfoldment* is closest to my experience of grief, in the way a flower appears as a bud and then opens up, revealing itself in all its glories, and continuing to unfold in other directions until eventually vanishing from sight. If we were able to examine the flower's progress at a submolecular level we would not see a delineation of a process in stages, but entire world-systems interacting in ways that show that energy does not die but relocates, demonstrating that nothing ever stops moving, which ultimately means that life never ends.

The Great Truth is that everyone and everything is growing, and growing never stops. This also means that we are continually growing out of ourselves and our world.

Can we outgrow our grief? Or asked in another way, can we grow out of our grief? It's been said that certain aspects of grief will stay with us for the rest of our life, changing only in quantity and quality, hopefully diminished. Finding temporary comfort is one thing; but can grief from bereavements be *permanently* healed, especially the major ones? This and many other questions will be explored from different perspectives, as informed by my own bereavement and mediumistic experiences.

### Rather than outgrow our grief, can we grow out of our grief?

These experiences have led me to an essential personal understanding that grief is a form of energy that I can feel and which can also be transformed—or grown—into new and higher-vibrating feelings of spiritual evolution. The most crucial aspect about this growth is that the transformation does not happen as a matter of course, as in the way Nature changes from one season to the next. Nature changes without any conscious awareness, but the transformation of grief *doesn't happen naturally*. Human grief can only transform *supranaturally*—above and beyond Nature. Nature does not choose this kind of transformation for us; we must choose it for ourselves. This might very well be one of the many uncomfortable, counter-intuitive ideas that rest waiting in the pages ahead.

Spiritual growth seldom feels comfortable. This means that the discomfort is actually the evidence of such growth.

Readers of the first book, *The Risen—Dialogues of Love, Grief & Survival Beyond Death* will likely understand if I refer to it as dense with information and veiled mysteries, often in frustrating ways. It was meant for those more experienced in matters of mediumship, and less so for beginners. This current book is meant for everyone, no matter how experienced in grief or mediumship one may be. Any bereavement is a beginning and so is always a starting over, a new experience.

More than a few readers have expressed the wish that the first book could have been simpler. Many also shared that it reveals itself differently with each reading, releasing information and stimulating ideas almost as if personally customized for the one accessing it. This is actually true, because it *was* designed to be that way. This same intention has been woven into this current book.

Tim, one of the Risen contributors to *The Risen Dialogues, etc.*, once mysteriously remarked that it was meant for the future, which is never present but seemingly always unfolding before us. A reader wrote to me about this, commenting, “It simply is true, that it was written for the future. With each new reading it will be just a bit different to us, we will notice new things and we will understand it better and perhaps more deeply. In order for that growth to happen, we need to be challenged—that’s just life.” This book now in your hands will also be challenging.

I personally take Tim’s comment to mean that if we’re truly in the present we wouldn’t need a book. It’s those of us who live mostly in the future of hope and also the memories of the past that could benefit from a book of the present. This is such a book.

When one is in deep grief, the present is all there is—and that is the hardest place to be. A loved one’s transition brings up many memories of the past and worries about the future, but we don’t need comfort from the *when’s* as much as we need it *now*. This book is not meant to cure grief, but to serve as some kind of companion for the present, while raising your spirits a bit more as your life continues on—to become Risen on Earth, even if only a little.

At some level, we *do* want our experience of grief and bereavement to somehow change. What we are each ultimately looking for is a new vibration, a vibration of peace. We also want to weep and mourn more deeply and fully, and yet simultaneously achieve an even profounder peaceful feeling that all is well. So this book is also for those who want to change their relationship to grief in a way that is deepening and expanding—which is the transformation—and to be able to contain the grief while being the container, until it’s no longer needed.

### What we are each ultimately looking for is a vibration of peace.

Grief is hard and so this book wasn’t easy—yet I *so* wanted it to be simple. It took almost eight years to find the best language of the spirit for *The Risen Dialogues*. Ideas and information that were presented in it are also found throughout this one, and I pray that time and experience have enabled me to reintroduce certain challenging Risen concepts in more accessible and less stressful language. Yet it will be very helpful to keep in mind that, like grief, parts of this book will be clear and other parts mystifying. Don’t think you have to force yourself through any difficult parts. Be easy on yourself. Remember—take what you need and leave the rest. As Lily Tomlin once said, “Why do we always talk about trying harder, but no one ever talks about trying softer?”

While writing this introduction I realized that in spite of any such intentions toward simplicity, living is inconceivably complex in our world. Simplicity often becomes meaningless where grief is concerned. I very much doubt I have to tell this to anyone who has experienced it. I know this because I have personally experienced seven transitions in the past 18 months, and am witnessing the end of an eighth as I’m now writing. Each transition has been a new journey for me, containing contradictory struggles of arrival and departure, joy and sorrow, progress and standstill, honesty and avoidance, understanding and confusion.

Yet dare it be suggested that this complexity of grief *isn’t* necessary? Can grief somehow become simpler? Do some of us even *want* it to be simpler? I can ask so many questions and yet find few

answers, so I wonder if I need to ask fewer questions to begin with—which is yet another question. Perhaps this is where the harsh complexity ends and the balm of simplicity begins, by first allowing oneself to become calmer and quieter.

From my many years of involvements with the Risen it's become clear that my beliefs about grief *must* get calmer and quieter or else I will become stuck in the static of a fear-based way of living, which is an inversion of Life. This inversion is the attempt to reverse Life or to stop it—neither of which is possible, although one could pretend otherwise. The way we allow the experience of grief to unfold will either be in support of more Life or not. Either way, the unfolding never ends and must go on. Eventually we will have to learn to keep up with it.