

Thanks God!

A True Airplane Crash & Family Healing Journey

Chapter One Crash and Burn!

We all have had one of those days that we will never forget. This story is about one of those days for my family and myself. That day was over 3 decades ago on Christmas day, December 25th, 1984. I was 23 years old at the time and had made the trip from my home in Lake Tahoe, to celebrate Christmas with my parents in Southern California. I'll never forget my motto that following year,

“It's good to be alive in '85!”

My parents and I had just finished sharing gifts with each other in celebration of the birth of Christ, when my dad made an unexpected announcement,

“As part of our Christmas celebration, I have made arrangements for us to fly my new airplane to Catalina Island for lunch”.

“How cool!” I responded with a rush of excitement. Mom was silent with that deer in headlights look on her face.

Dad had recently received a used Cessna 310, twin-engine, four-seater airplane from one of his customers. The customer didn't have enough money to pay him for a stand by generator that Dad sold him. They worked a deal and Dad got the plane for payment in full. He was still in the process of getting his pilots license, and arranged for his flight instructor Ben to fly the plane down from Burbank where it was kept.

At that time my parents were planning on retiring. They had purchased a second home in Temecula California, and were

planning on making the permanent retirement transition that following year.

We drove down to the airport just in time to see my Dad's plane on final approach. What a sight! She was fast and graceful as she made her final banked turn towards the runway. We heard the powerful roar of her engines slowly idle back as the wheels chirped when she touched down.

Wow, my first ride in my Dad's new plane. I was extremely excited! I felt like a little kid at an amusement park. As the plane taxied towards us, I looked over at my Dad to see him with a huge ear-to-ear grin. Becoming a pilot and owning a plane was my Dad's main life long dream since his service in World War II days.

She was loud! Those twin engines sure made allot of noise even at idle speed. The plane came to a stop just in front of us. I looked over at my mom to see a very apprehensive look on her face. That expression on her face said more than words can say! Mom and I have always had a very strong intuitive connection with each other. The look on her face said, "*No Fraken way I'm getting on this airplane!*" I wish mom had spoken her truth that day!!!

It was a gorgeous cloudless sunny warm day. Not even a hint of wind, perfect flying weather! My dad stepped up to the plane and opened the passenger door and greeted Ben. It was so loud we all had to shout to one another to communicate. My Dad introduced my Mom and myself to Ben as we climbed aboard and sat on the back seat. Mom sat behind Ben on the left side, and I sat behind my Dad on the right side of the plane.

My Dad climbed in last and took the co-pilot seat as he closed the door behind him. The plane was really vibrating! Everything was in motion. The wings were gently flexing and the doors were rattling quite a bit. I remember feeling a bit claustrophobic and thinking to myself, "*How strange, I don't get claustrophobic*".

I then had a very uneasy queasy feeling in my stomach as a bead of sweat was dripping onto my brow.

We were all instructed to fasten our seat belts by Ben. I finished buckling my seat belt. "Click". I opened and closed the seat buckle a couple of times and distinctively remember putting my hands on the rear side window next to me.

I pushed on it a couple of times also. It was a fixed window with no mechanism to open. I thought to myself, why did I do that? Maybe to get some fresh air, "Ya that's it." I noticed for the first time that I was observing myself from a different mental vantage point.

We then started to move. The plane was very jerky and bouncy as we slowly turned to taxi to the runway. It was a small private airport with no traffic control tower.

Ben then asked my Dad, "Hey Bob do you want to do the take off?"

My dad eagerly said, "Ok!"

I then saw Ben take his hands off the steering wheel and cross his arms.

From that moment on everything seemed to happen in slow motion. My Dad was now in full control of this airplane.

The co-pilot's seat has all the controls and instruments, as does the pilot's seat. My Dad pulled the plane to a complete stop at the beginning of the runway.

My Dad and Ben looked all around and into the sky to see that we were clear for take off. Dad then spoke into the radio microphone and announced that Cessna 310 call numbers N5209A was taking off from Temecula runway zero niner zero.

Ben said. "Ok, it's all clear Bob, we are good to go!"

Dad then pushed the throttles forward and we started to roll. Wow, she sure accelerated quickly, as I could feel myself getting pushed back into my seat. About 100 feet down the runway the plane started swerving back and forth. My Dad was steering with his feet on the rudder pedals and I could tell he needed a bit more practice. My Dad always made me feel nervous when he was driving his car. Dad really liked to go fast, and has received more speeding tickets than anyone I have ever met to prove it. He must of really liked traffic school, because he was a regular. He could have been the instructor, since he knew the material so well.

The wheels were now screeching as the plane swerved from side to side. The faster we went the louder the tires screeched. I remember thinking to myself, "*This is not good!*" Just as I finished my thought, the tires broke free. We were flying! Wow, what a rush! We were climbing at a normal rate of ascent. I looked out the window to see our shadow on the ground really moving. This plane was fast!

We now were about seventy feet high and had been airborne for about twenty seconds. We then heard the sound that you never want to hear in an airplane! It was the sound of our right side engine sputtering and then stalling. The propeller was definitely not moving as fast as the port side prop. I could actually see the starboard prop slowing down, and then coming to a complete stop.

The plane was still climbing and you could definitely feel us decelerating. The next unwanted sound was even worse. It was the sound of the stall-warning beeper.

BEEP-BEEP-BEEP- BEEP-BEEP-BEEP- BEEP-BEEP-BEEP- BEEP-BEEP (This sound means that the plane no longer has enough airspeed for the wings to lift.)

Thinking to myself, "*OH MY GOD! This isn't good!*" I could see my Dad and Ben looking at each other in disbelief. I then saw Ben

reach for the throttle controls to make an adjustment. I remember thinking to myself, *"Push the steering wheel forward to get the nose down."*

Ben was now in control of the airplane. It looked like he was having difficulty getting the plane to respond. This all happened so fast! Yet everything was moving in slow motion. I could see Ben now getting the plane to turn.

Ben then said, "We are going to circle around and land." As the plane banked to the right, which was to my side of the plane, I could see straight down out the window directly at the ground.

The stall beeper was still beeping LOUDLY! BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP-BEEP!

We had really slowed down quite a bit. With all of the noise of the engine and beeping, an eerie quietness came over me. No one was talking, no one was shouting, no one was saying a thing. It felt like we had just flown into some kind of silent energy vortex.

Just then I could feel the plane start to sideslip and fall tail first as she was in the right banked turn. It was very obvious that we were not flying anymore. We were going down! We all knew it, yet no one said anything, no panic, no screaming, no yelling, no talking, just silence!

I could see out the window that we were over an undeveloped area of desert like terrain. I watched the ground come up fast. I was aware of what was happening, but felt frozen in time. The only thing I remember thinking was,
"Uh Oh!"

When the plane impacted the ground, I remember hearing all of the sounds coming back with a smashing loudness. It sounded and looked like an in car camera shot of a NASCAR rollover crash. The plane first hit on tip of the right wing, which induced a

violent rollover. It rolled sideways three times from wing to wing really fast and then came to an abrupt stop upside down on the plane's roof.

“Wow, I’m still alive!” Was my first thought! I then realized that I was hanging upside down with my seat belt still holding me in my seat. I could see flames coming in from where the front windshield used to be. Ben and my Dad where ON FIRE!

I then pulled at my seat buckle and released it. I fell directly on my head. This blow to the top of my head seemed to spark me to life. It felt like a slap in the face wake-up call. I looked forward to see that my Dad reaching for the airplane's door. When he pushed the door open, more flames came in and jumped right on him.

I then turned around on my knees and looked for another way out. I saw the little rear window. Without thought, I then punched the window with the palm of my right hand. I remember the plexiglass window just popping right out and seeing a nice open space with no flames. I don't recall anyone saying anything during this time, however my Mother later told me that from the moment of impact all she could hear was me saying,

“Get out! Get out! Get out!”

I then squeezed through this tight window on my hands and knees as fast as I could. My mother crawled out right behind me. Ben then crawled out behind my mother. The three of us were now out of the plane, which was almost totally engulfed in flames.

My Dad did not follow Ben out. So, I got back on my knees and crawled to look inside the window. I yelled “Dad, Dad!” Our eyes connected and I could see that he wasn't able to free himself from his position. His feet where caught up in the mangled mess of the cockpit floor. I crawled back inside the window and reached my hands out to grab his extended arms. I then grabbed his arms and pulled my Dad through the tiny little rear window. I remember it was a very tight fit, as my Dad was a heavysset man. He just

squeezed right through, with no extra room to spare. As I dragged my Dad over to my Mom and Ben, I was slapping at the flames still burning his shirt.

In hindsight, I think this was the only way he could have gotten out through that window. If he would have tried to crawl through, I believe that he would have gotten stuck. By reaching his arms up over his head he stretched and narrowed his shoulders and midsection which made him much more slender. This allowed his body to not get stuck in the window and be able to get pulled free of the burning wreckage.

Within a few seconds of us all getting out of the plane, the fire exploded and totally engulfed the entire fuselage. There was a huge black column of smoke rising up from this burning wreckage. I remember the smells of gasoline, burnt rubber, burnt hair, burnt flesh, and burning sage.

The skin on Dad's forehead, left ear, hands, and forearms was melted away. His skin was literally dripping off of his body, exposing a white milky gooey substance underneath his skin. Ben also had many serious burns. His hands and back were in the same condition as my Dad's.

Everything went silent again. The crackling and the popping from the fire seemed to stop. As I gazed at this burning wreckage, I remember thinking to myself that there is no possible way that we could be alive right now. It was the most surreal moment of my entire life. The four of us were standing next to a bonfire of smoke all alone in a huge expanse of undeveloped desert area.

I remember pinching myself, and feeling the twinge of pain from it. I then turned to my mom and pinched her also. She looked startled and said,

"What are you doing?"

I said, “Mom when we die, I thought we got Spiritual bodies that felt no pain”?

In that moment, I actually thought the four of us had died, and we were in our Spiritual bodies standing outside of ourselves. It reminded me of the scene at the end of the Star Wars Return Of The Jedi movie, where the Spirit light bodies of Obi One, Aniken, and Master Yoda came to visit Luke to say farewell.

When my Mom touched me, I knew that I was still alive. We all started speaking to each other asking if one another were OK. We were all in a state of shock!!!

I think we were in such disbelief that we were out of the plane and still alive. My Mom didn't have any injuries at all. The only injury I had was a triangle shaped burn on my upper left arm. The burn was minor. It was a perfect equilateral triangle about 2 inches big. It happened when I leaned against the plane for leverage when I pulled Dad out. My Dad and Ben had very serious burns, but they didn't seem to be in any pain due to the shock of the moment.

I'll never forget looking off into the distance and seeing the I-15 freeway. The cars were moving back and forth just like always. My realization was that life doesn't stop! It keeps going on and on. My life almost stopped and this world didn't miss a beat. In that moment, I felt like we all had just been the recipient of a **miracle!**

The four of us embraced each other the best we could as to not irritate any of the burn wounds. As we were embracing the first car pulled up. The car slide to a stop on the dusty ground, as the driver jumped out shouting, “Are you alright, are you alright?”

We were so happy to see him, and responded by saying, “Yes, but could you please make a call for an ambulance for us please?”

The driver said, “Of course!” as he drove off.

Other cars and people started to arrive at the crash site. Everyone that approached us had the look of amazement on their faces. They just could not believe that anyone could survive such a horrific crash and burn. One man approached us and said,

“I saw the whole thing. I was watching your plane during take off and heard your plane loose power. I am in total disbelief that anyone could have survived such a violent impact and fire, let alone four survivors. I just witnessed a **Christmas Day Miracle!**”

That seemed to be the consensus among the on looking witnesses. About twenty people had gathered around us in about five minutes. They all were in total amazement and disbelief, as they were all confirming amongst themselves that they had just witnessed a Christmas Day Miracle!

The four of us were definitely the recipients of a miracle!

It was then when we heard the sound of the siren from the approaching fire engine. We all had a sense of relief to see those red lights flashing.

The paramedics immediately went to work on my Dad and Ben. After a close inspection, they then wrapped the burn wounds in a sheet like material with saline solution. I could see the instant relief on both of their faces. My Dad actually had a smile on his face as he said, *“Ahhhh, that’s better!”*

The paramedics looked my Mom over and said smiling, “You must be the lucky one!” He then turned to me and checked my burn on my arm and said,

“It looks to me like a first degree burn, similar to a good sunburn.” He then rubbed on some burn cream and said, “This is a minor burn and it will heal on its own.”

I said, “Thanks, I appreciate that”.

Just about then the ambulance arrived. The paramedics and ambulance drivers quickly loaded us all into the ambulance. We gave our thanks and gratitude to the paramedics as the door was closed. The ambulance pulled away with the scream of the siren. Off to the hospital we raced.

We all had a sense of relief on our faces as we sped away. Amazingly, my Dad and Ben were not in very much pain. They both said that they could feel a mild stinging sensation. The saline wraps on their burns were acting like a temporary skin, which was providing them with some temporary comfort.

I began to feel claustrophobic and very anxious. The sound of the blaring siren was very unsettling to my nervous system. I needed to get out of that ambulance immediately!!! I could see that Dad, Mom, and Ben were in good hands. I told the driver that I was going to get out and go back to the house to get the car and meet them at the hospital.

Mom said, "Good idea, wait at the house for my phone call and I'll tell you which hospital we are at."

So as the ambulance approached the onramp to the freeway, I asked the driver to pull over. The ambulance pulled over and let me out at the freeway entrance.

Wow, I immediately felt relieved! My nausea and claustrophobia disappeared. I still could feel an intense amount of adrenaline flowing through my veins. I felt like I was in a euphoric state of heightened awareness. I felt a tingling and aliveness that I had never felt before. I was definitely in the "Zone" moment. This moment in time I will never forget. It was the beginning to one of the most profound days of my entire life!

I started the barefoot walk back to my parent's house, as I lost one of my shoes during the crash. The house was about a mile and a half away. Little Temecula sure has grown up a lot in these

passing years. That day I crossed at the stop light at the busiest intersection in town. Back then, that was the only stop light in all of Temecula. Temecula was previously a quiet little country town surrounded by twenty miles in each direction of undeveloped desert like land.

My parent's bought their perfect retirement home in the first subdivision of track homes in the Starlight Ridge of Temecula. My parent's house was located on Cosmic Drive.

As I was walking, I was still in a state of shock. This walking in bare feet was the best thing for me in that moment. I was able to process my thoughts and just begin to feel how grateful I was that my parents and myself were still alive. It was about then when I saw a huge cross on the side of a church just up the street from the intersection. I won't mention the denomination, because it just really doesn't matter.

I thought to myself, *"Perfect!,
I need to go to that church and give my thanks to God and my
Guardian Angels for our miracle!"*

It was around 1:00pm as I walked up to the front door of the church. I push on the door for it to open and it did not budge. I then gave it a good shake. To my amazement the door was locked. I pressed my hands and face against the glass to peer into the window on the door. Wow, the church was empty! I looked around me to see an empty parking lot also. The church felt like a ghost town. I knocked on the door several times in the hopes that someone would still be there to let me in. I knocked, and knocked, and knocked. I waited and waited and waited. No one was there!

I remember thinking to myself, *"Unbelievable, the church is closed on Christmas Day. There are only two special Christian celebration days of the year, and this is one of them. The church should be open today"*. But in defense of this particular church,

I'm sure they already held their worship services earlier in the morning.

So I started looking for another entrance around back. I thought there might be a janitor or someone that could let me in, so I could give my thanks to God. I walked around to the back of the church and saw another door. It looked like a door to an office area. I knocked again, and again, and still no one came to answer. The Church was empty! As I walked to the freeway side of the Church, I could see the huge cross that was built into the side of the Church. The cross was about 40 feet tall. This is what caught my eyes as I was walking to my parent's house.

At that moment I heard a voice inside me say, *"Hey! You don't need a building or another person to talk to God for you! You can talk to God anytime and anywhere right from inside of yourself!"*

Wow, this voice came through very clear and very distinctive. It seemed like my own thought, but it was different. It sat on me with such a presence that I heard it so very loud and clear. It's that gut feeling or inner voice that I think we all feel and hear from time to time. We just need to quiet our minds enough to listen!

Well, that day my eyes and ears were wide open. I still felt like I was enveloped inside of a silent protective energy vortex. That day was different for me. It was one of the most surreal days of my entire life. All of my senses were so alive! I could hear the many different types of birds chirping and chatting to each other. I could feel the gentle breeze as it wisped through the palm frawns!

I could feel the warmth of the sun on my skin! I could feel my breathing relaxed and a peacefulness within myself that I hadn't felt before. I had never felt so alive before in all of my life! In that moment, I then realized that I was so grateful to be alive! ☺

I sat down on the ground and rested my back against the base of this massive cross. I crossed my legs and then closed my eyes to say a prayer and give thanks to the Creator and said, “Dear G😊D, I am so very thankful and grateful for what you have just done for my family and me. Only you and our Guardian Angels could have kept us safe in such a violent crash and explosion!

I feel so very blessed that you were keeping an eye on us and kept us from sure death! I am so grateful that you are giving my parents, Ben, and myself a second chance at life. Thank you so much Grandma Mackinnon for teaching me about my Guardian Angels when I was six years old. You taught me that our Angels are with us always and are just waiting for us to talk to them! Thanks to you Grandma I am aware of their existence. Yet today is the first day that I am consciously speaking to them with the deepest gratitude I have ever felt. I have a new sense of aliveness now that I seem to have lost.

*Please continue to bless my Dad, Ben and give them the strength to heal from their burns. Thank you Jesus, for what you did for us on this huge cross, which I am leaning against. I accept you into my heart! I’m new to this Spiritual stuff, and I am now **asking** for your guidance and support in my life! I now believe that there is something to this invisible thing called Spirit. Oh, and by the way, Happy Birthday Jesus! You are so AWESOME!*

Thanks again G😊D, I love you with all my heart, mind & soul!!! In Jesus name I Pray!.”

I finished my prayer and opened my eyes. Wow, what a gorgeous day it was. The sky was so blue and the few clouds so white. Once again I must say, I never felt so alive or so very grateful in all of my life.

My next thought was to get back to the house so I could wait for my Mom’s phone call. It was about a mile and a half to my parent’s house. The barefoot walk and fresh air was probably the

best thing for me. Feeling the ground under my bare feet really seemed to reconnect me back to the present moment.

I was slowly coming down from the biggest adrenalin rush that I had ever experienced. I remember walking past the street sign, smiling and thinking to myself,

“How cosmic was that! Thanks again God!” I finished the last of the uphill walk as I made it back to my parent’s house on good old Cosmic Drive.

As I entered the house, I headed straight to the refrigerator. My nerves were shot and I needed a beer! I drank six beers and did a couple of shots of tequila in about ten minutes. As the alcohol buzz came over me, I felt a numbing out of my frayed nerve endings and emotions. I took a seat in the recliner and let out a huge sigh of relief. **“Ahhhhh!”**

Ten minutes later the phone rang. It was my Mom calling from the hospital. She sounded calm and in control. Mom said, “The ambulance has taken us to the Lake Elsinore hospital. Dad and Ben are in stable condition and being medicated for the pain from their burns. However, the hospital has no facilities to deal with such severe burns and was making arrangements to transfer them by ambulance to the Sherman Oaks Burn Center. The hospital was going to transfer them in two hours.”

“Mom, I’ll be there in about an in an hour.” I answered.

“See you then and I love you”, Mom said in her calm voice.

“I love you too Mom”, I said as we both hung up the phones.

Chapter Two Getting Back On The Horse!

I grabbed my car keys from the counter and headed for my van. I started the engine and pulled away from the curb. I was driving extra careful, since I had just slammed down a bunch of alcohol. As I write this, I realize back then I was definitely in denial of having a drinking problem!

As I came to the stop light just before the freeway onramp, I heard the inner voice inside of me say, *“Hey, you have a little extra time, the hospital is only fifteen minutes away. Your Dad and Ben are in good hands and aren’t supposed to be transferred for another 2 hours. Why don’t you drive over to the crash site and check it out!”*

I thought to myself, “Good idea!”

I drove past the freeway onramp and headed for the crash site, which was about a half mile away. The area around the small private airport was very undeveloped. This was a huge blessing because that whole area now has been built out. If the crash would of happened today, we would of ended up on top of one of the commercial buildings in the new industrial park.

There she was scattered all about a huge empty space of dessert. All I could make out was the tail section of what used to be my Dad’s airplane.

I parked the car near the wreckage. The remains of the plane were about one quarter mile past the end of the runway, and she was lying just on the edge of the river wash.

By then, all of the fire trucks, paramedics, and bystanders where all gone. This previously noisy excited place just about one hour ago has now gone completely silent.

Wow, what a mess, parts of the plane where everywhere. The engines where lying by themselves at least 100 feet away from each other. Everything was burned out, except for the tail section. The tail section was the only thing that let you know what the heck this mangled mess used to be. The ground was wet and a bit muddy from all of the water from the fire engine. There was a nasty burnt plastic and rubber smell hovering in the air. The sight and smell of this wreckage was very eerie. Looking at this mess I had to pinch myself again just to be sure that I am really still alive. Looking at this mess was very humbling for me. I realized that day, that only by the grace of God, the four of us where still alive!

I closed my eyes again and said another silent prayer,

“Thanks God and our Guardian Angels for giving us all a miracle on this Christmas day! I greatly appreciate all that you just did for all of us!”

These photos where taken by a NTSB agent who investigated the crash site.



Initial Point Of Impact



NTSB Investigator Brief Case



My lost shoe





Second engine was 100' away from the wreckage.



Cessna 310 working properly and still in one piece!



I spent about 15 minutes reflecting and checking out the crash. My thoughts were, "*Wow, it's good to be alive!*" I latter coined that statement and used it as my motto for the approaching New Year,

"It's good to be alive in '85!"

I got back in my car and headed for the freeway onramp. As I was passing the airport I notice a couple of guys getting their plane ready for a flight. Without a hesitation I turned the steering wheel quickly to the right guiding my car into the airport driveway. I felt like I was on autopilot.

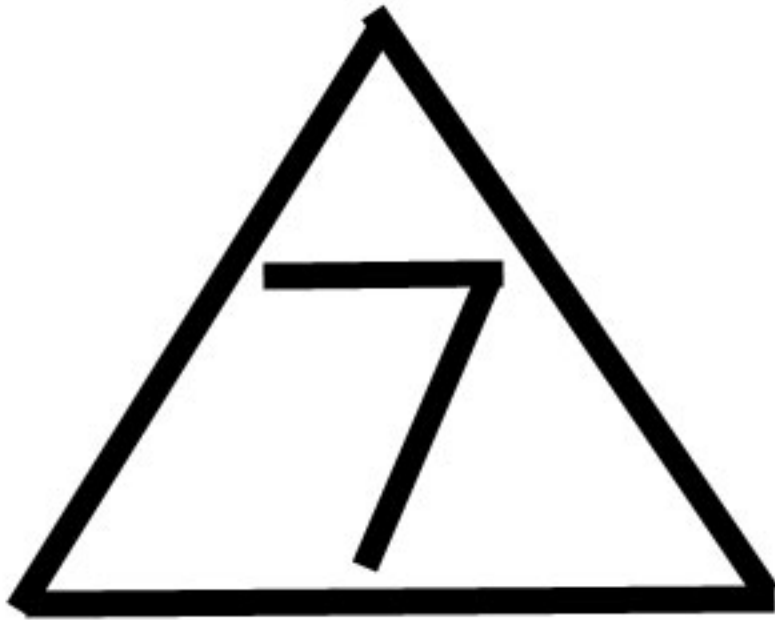
"*Why did I do that?*", was my thought?

I really need to get over to the hospital. The inner voice spoke again, "*You have time, park next to their truck!*"

As I parked, I felt a calm sense of peace come over me. I felt like I was at the right place at the right time, even though my rational thinking said I should be driving to the hospital. I hopped out of my van and started to walk over to the two older gentlemen that were preparing their plane. They both had to be in their mid to late 70's.

Something caught my eyes as I approached the plane. I noticed the parking stall number painted on the ground in front of their plane. It was the number seven inside of an equilateral triangle.

I felt a chill run up the back of my neck as I noticed this most powerful cosmic coincidence, or what I now call "Synchronicity". I immediately looked on my upper left arm to see the minor burn imprint of a perfect equilateral triangle from the planes fuselage. My mind instantly connected it with a book I had just finished reading for extra credit in an archeology class I was attending at the Junior College in Lake Tahoe. The book is called "The Lost Continent of Mu", written by James Churchward. Archeologist Churchward's hypothesis and work was based on two ancient Nacaal tablets, which he discovered in India in the early 1900's. He also did some interpretations from the 2500-year-old tablets discovered by William Niven in Mexico. From one of these ancient tablets, Churchward describes quite possibly human civilizations first set of religious symbols, the circle, triangle, and the square. The circle represented the Universe, the triangle represented Heaven, and the square represented the Earth.



I felt my whole body shiver as I realized what this symbol meant to me. It said to me “Seventh Heaven”. At that time I really didn’t know what it meant, but I knew deep down in the depths of my being that it was really good!

I realized that this plane crash survival miracle was definitely the working of our Guardian Angels. I was feeling an electric tingly feeling all over my body, as I knew I had entered the twilight zone during the crash, and realized that I was still there!

The next thing I heard was, “Hello there, can I help you?”

I looked up from the cosmic symbol on the ground to see a pair of friendly smiles from the two older gentlemen.

I responded with, “What a great looking plane you have! I was just driving by and thought I would stop and say hello.

Hi, I AM Doug.” The two men introduced themselves and asked,

“Nice to meet you Doug, would you like to go up with us?”

Without hesitation I responded with, “I’d love to, thank you so much for asking!”

My thought to myself was, *“What the heck did I just say? Oh my God, I really am not sure about this, but it feels like the right thing to do!”*

I approached the men and shook their hands. One man said, “Welcome aboard!” as he opened the door of the Cessna 182, which was a single engine four-seater plane.

I climbed in and sat in the middle of the backseat. I was definitely on autopilot, because I didn’t feel any anxiety or fear until I actually sat down. I sat directly in the middle of the back seat and used both seat belts in a criss cross fashion, since I didn’t want to have my body weight be uneven for the plane’s balance.

The two men were still finishing up the final pre-flight inspection of the plane, which allowed me a few minutes to think to myself. Then it hit me like a ton of bricks. I felt very anxious and afraid. I thought to myself, *“What the heck am I doing, I should be driving to the hospital right now. Not to mention I just survived a horrible plane crash!”* I felt a bead of sweat on my brow again, as there was no airflow in the cockpit. My mind was racing with fear and my body filled with anxiety!

Just then a calming came over me as I heard a very peaceful thought pop into my mind. It was the remembrance of what my Dad had always taught me growing up! He taught me to always get back on the horse after getting thrown off and riding again. In my case it wasn’t about horses as much as it was about motorcycles. I grew up on dirt bikes and experienced many crashes. My Dad was always there for me and encouraged me to brush the dirt off and get back on and ride once again.

Thanks Dad always encouraging my sporting adventures. He taught me so much about the value of earning my place in life. My Dad and Mom just didn't buy the things I wanted growing up. They taught me how to work and save for those things I wanted. My Dad told me at an early age that he would help me buy anything that I wanted. He said that he would match half of whatever the cost was. He said it was up to me to save the first half of the cost and he would then cover the second half.

At the age of ten, Dad and Mom then provided me with my first paying job. I was paid \$2 per hour to do the yard work. I was so excited to be able to work and save my money for the stuff I wanted to buy. We had a big yard with lots of hedges, bushes, ivy and grass to cut. I had an endless job with a time card. I took great pride in keeping the yard looking great. At times it was tough doing my job when my friends would come over and invite me to go play somewhere. I also had a paper route which I expanded and absorbed the route next to mine as well. At the age of fourteen I started to work for my parents business building stand by generators part time after school and full time during the summers.

I learned so much from my Dad about the manufacturing of stand by power generators, working with all sorts of tools, welding, electronics soldering, engine rebuilding, electrical wiring and janitorial duties. Most of all, I learned from my Dad how to use my common sense and to become an entrepreneur/salesman as he was.

I grew up as an only child and always heard from the other kids how spoiled I was, because of the cool stuff I always had. My Dad matched half on the following stuff. I had the cool new five speed bicycle (age 10), the great off road Honda 70 motorcycle (age 11), the cool Sydney Sabot sailboat (age 12), the really cool used 21' Macgregor sailboat (age 14), several new surfboards and snow skis (age 15), my first Honda XL125 on and off road motorcycle

for school to use with my drivers learner permit (age 15), the awesome first used car, a Ford Gran Torino (age 16).

The truth is my Dad taught me the value of money and how to be an entrepreneur at a very early age. He was a man filled with dreams. He dreamed dreams and taught me how to dream dreams as well. He always said, "If you can think it, you can do it!" His favorite saying was, "Go big or don't go!"

Just then the men started to climb into the plane. The first man said, "We are good to go!"

I responded with, "Thanks so much for taking me up with you, I really appreciate this!"

"Your welcome, we are happy to have you!" said the co- pilot as he closed the door.

I remember closing my eyes and asking my Guardian Angels for some more of their protection. I knew deep down that this was the best thing for me to do right now, because when we face our fears they always disappear. I didn't want to be afraid of flying, so it's a real blessing to deal with this potential obstacle immediately. This time it wasn't my Dad putting me back on the horse, it was my Guardian Angels.

The pilot pushed open his side vent window and loudly spoke, "Clear prop!"

His co-pilot responded with, "The prop is clear!" "Contact", the pilot said as the engine began to turn over.

After a couple quick revolutions the engine roared to life. For a small engine, it sure made a lot of noise. The plane now was alive. She was vibrating and a bit jumpy, just like a racehorse getting saddled up.

I felt a big surge of adrenalin pump through my veins. I felt more like excitement than fear. I remember thinking to myself, *"If God wanted me to die in a plane crash, I would already be dead!"*

The plane taxied towards the runway. We were the only plane at the airport that was getting ready to fly. As the plane came to a full stop at the beginning of the runway I thought to myself, *"Wow, I am really going to do this!"*

The pilot announced on his radio that we were taking off. The engine roared to life like the Lion of Judah. I felt myself being pressed back into the seat as we quickly accelerated. Within twenty seconds I was airborne once again. What a rush!

As we climbed to altitude, we flew right by our crash site. Wow, what a mess! You could see plane parts scattered all about. The core of the wreckage was a burnt out big black spot on the ground. I pointed the crash site out to the pilots as we flew by. I leaned forward and told them that I was in that downed plane, and that all four of us survived the crash just about an hour ago. I'll never forget their reaction as I leaned back into my seat. Both men slowly turned their heads at the same time and looked at me. The look in their eyes was that of disbelief. They looked at me as if they were looking at a ghost.

The copilot said, "Someone sure was looking out for you!" I smiled and responded, "Yes, I know!"

The copilot shook his head and smiled, as we were still climbing in a banked turn. Once at cruising altitude these guys took turns flying the plane.

The pilot asked me, "Do you object to some fancy flying?"

I said, "No, not at all, go for it!" I think they both forgot what kind of plane this was. It was a Cessna 182, a small lightly powered plane that was designed for

easy point to point flying. These guys thought they were flying in a Pitts Special acrobatic stunt plane, due to the maneuvers they were attempting.

These pilots were taking turns with the stick doing nosedives with extreme pullouts, very hard banked turns, and radical climbs. These extreme thrill seeking maneuvers were definitely testing the planes structural integrity. These maneuvers were also definitely testing my nerves and fear factor level. Halfway through this flying circus of a horse ride, I began to laugh to myself. My Guardian Angels definitely have a great sense of humor. Instead of helping me just overcoming a potential fear of flying, they actually inspired me in experiencing the thrill of soaring with the eagles.

My fear disappeared and a sense of adventure filled the gap. It was an awesome amusement park roller coaster plane flight. The fun and excitement lasted for about 45 minutes. I could tell that these two older thrill seekers had their fill as we turned on to final approach for our landing. I felt a cringing tightness come over my body as the plane settled into its committed descent. These guys were masterful pilots as the plane came to a perfect landing. "Chirp.... Chirp...", the wheels said as we safely touched down. As we taxied back to the planes parking stall, I thanked the gentlemen for such a thrilling plane flight. I shared with them the details of the crash and told them that I was now headed to the hospital to see my parents. The plane came to a stop at the Seventh Heaven parking stall. I shook both of their hands and said, "Goodbye", as I climbed out.

To this day that was the most exhilarating plane ride that I have ever had that landed on its wheels. Thanks to my Guardian Angels, the fear of flying never had a chance to manifest inside of me. *"Thanks Angels for getting me back on the horse as quickly as you did. I am so grateful for you!"* was my thought as I got back to my car and started heading to the Lake Elsinore hospital to meet my parents and Ben.

Chapter Three

The Burn Center

It was a fifteen-minute drive to the Lake Elsinore hospital. I parked and headed to the emergency main lobby. Two and a half hours had elapsed since the crash and I felt the tightness and anxiety re-enter my being. I did not know what to expect!

I walked into the lobby and saw my mom sitting in the waiting area. She jumped up and greeted me with one of the biggest hugs I have ever felt from her. It was one of those good to be alive hugs.

"Hi Mom, how's Dad and Ben?" I eagerly asked.

"They are OK! and in stable condition. Dad and Ben not feeling any pain due to the temporary skin bandaging and pain medication." She answered.

"That's great, can I see them?", I asked.

"I just spoke to the doctor and he told me the nurses were getting them ready for the ambulance transfer. We can see them as they are being loaded for their transfer to the Sherman Oaks Burn Center." Mom responded.

A little while later, two ambulances pulled up without the sirens. They were for my dad and Ben. I felt a sense of being in the flow as I arrived in perfect timing from my slight detour at the airport. Then a small team of nurses and a doctor rolled dad and Ben out on gurneys to the ambulances. Dad and Ben did not seem to be experiencing any pain. All I remember seeing was a great big smile on my dad's face. It was another one of those good to be alive smiles!

"Hey Dad, how are you doing?" I asked.

“I’m doing pretty good now that I’m on some really great pain medication, I have zero pain.” Dad replied.

I then asked, “Ben, how are you doing?” Ben’s response was not as optimistic, “I’m OK considering the how badly burned I am.”

The doctor overheard my questions and interjected and said, “There’s not much we can do for such severe burn victims here, so we are transferring your dad and Ben to the Sherman Oaks Burn Center. It is probably the best burn center in the world and they will give these two the best possible chance of healing they can get!”

“Wow, that’s awesome! Thanks Doctor we really appreciate all that you are doing for them!” I gratefully said.

I gave my Dad a very gentle hug as I could sense a slight grimace from his being as I touched him. The nurses and attendants then loaded them into the ambulance. As the door closed, the siren and lights came alive as the ambulances pulled away.

My Mom and I stood silently as the ambulances drove out of sight. We embraced each other again and said to each other that everything is going to be all right.

We got the directions to the Burn Center from one of the nurses and started the hour and a half drive. Mom was very quiet during the drive and seemed to still be in shock. It was a very surreal drive; everything seemed to be without sound. I was still in the twilight zone. Mom and I did voice our concerns and support for each other, as we knew Dad and Ben were heading to the best burn center in the world.

It was a strange feeling seeing life go on as usual. The traffic was heavy as usual and the cars were all racing. My whole family could be dead and the world didn’t even blink an eye for us. I have never felt so small and insignificant in all of my life.

In traumatic times like these you get to see who and what really matters in your life.

We anxiously arrived at the hospital. We parked the car up on the hospital's roof parking lot. My first impression of the Sherman Oaks Burn Center is that it was very clean and the workers seemed to have lots of enthusiasm. It felt very healing and I knew deep down inside that Dad and Ben were at the right facility. Mom and I went directly to the main lobby reception area and spoke to the greeting receptionist. She told us that Dad and Ben would be transferred to their rooms after they had their burns examined by the Doctor.

After about an hour of waiting, the receptionist told us that we could see them now. We then walked down the hall and found Dad's and Ben's rooms. Dad's face lit up when he saw us.

"Hi guys, how are you feeling?" I asked.

"We are both on morphine and really don't have much pain." Dad responded. Mom and I gave him a very gentle hug.

Ben smiled and said, "Hello, I'm happy that you two didn't get injured."

"Thanks Ben, so are we!" Mom replied.

Just then Doctor Grossman entered the room. He greeted us and then explained to us what was going to take place. Dr. Grossman told us that Dad and Ben are going into surgery tomorrow morning for their skin graft operations. He said that both Dad and Ben had third degree burns that covered about 15 percent of each of their bodies. Dad's burns were located on his whole forehead, right ear, hands, forearms and shoulders. Ben's burns were located mostly on his back and shoulders.

Dr. Grossman is world famous for being the best burn surgeon on the planet. He goes by Doctor G. Doctor G was very confident

and reassuring that everything would turn out just fine. Doctor G explained to us all that during the skin graphing procedure, he would be taking the top layers of skin off of the tops of both thighs to provide the donor skin for the graphs. The burned skin areas will be thoroughly cleaned and prepared to apply the donor thigh skin over the burned areas. The whole procedure takes a few hours and with a little healing time you both will be as good as new. Doctor G was very professional and very personable. He told dad and Ben to get some rest and he would see them first thing in the morning.

“Thanks Dr. G for all concern and help, we all really appreciate it!” Mom said with the glistening of a tear in her eye, as Dr. G left the room.

Mom and I looked at Dad and Ben and could see the morphine really kicking in on them.

Mom and I were exhausted as well. We decided to grab a bite to eat at the hospital cafeteria. The cafeteria was serving a great turkey dinner in celebration of Christmas. We were pleasantly surprised as to how good the meal actually was. After dinner we then headed to the Burbank house for the night. Fortunately, for me I was in between jobs and on a school break so I had this time to be with my family during the upcoming healing recovery time.

The morning came very quickly and Mom and I awoke at 5:00am. We wanted to see dad and Ben before the operations that were scheduled to take place at 7:00am. We arrived at the hospital just as the sun was rising. What a beautiful sight. The early morning light made for a gorgeous sunrise. It's amazing how much more attention you have to the little things in life when tragedy strikes. I felt very awake and eager to give moral support to Dad and Ben.

As we entered their room, a nurse was just finishing up with getting my dad's vital signs. Dad lit up when he saw us,

“Hi guys”, he said with a very optimistic tone. “It’s so good to see you! Wow, it sure is good to still be alive!” with an anxious smile.

I could tell that Dad was a little nervous about the mornings skin graphing.

“Hi Ben!” Mom and I said.

“Good morning” Ben replied as he introduced us to his wife who was sitting by his side. Ben and his wife also seemed nervous, as they didn’t really say much.

A short time later, four nurses came into the room to wheel dad and Ben into the operating rooms. It was show time for the two wounded pilots. Mom and I gave dad a kiss and told him how much we loved him as he was being rolled away.

The burn center sure had a confident and competent staff. Everyone was so polite and professional. Mom and I had a real comfortable feeling about the care and attention that dad and Ben were getting.

Mom and I had time for another cafeteria meal and found magazines to read while we waited with Ben’s wife in the waiting area. About four hours later, Dr. G came into the waiting area and said, “I have good news! Both operations went as well as expected. The graphs all seemed to bond well and Ben and your dad are in the recovery area. They will be back in their separate rooms shortly for you to visit with once their meds wear off.”

“Thank you so much Dr. G we all really appreciate your help”, mom gleamed. The Doctor smiled and winked as he left the waiting room.

About thirty minutes later a nurse came and told us that we could now see dad in his own recovery room. Wow, this was the cleanest hospital room I had ever seen was my first thought as we entered the room.

“Hi Dad”, I said as I could see him all wrapped up in bandages. Dad didn’t speak; he just raised and arm to acknowledge our presence. I could tell he was still a bit under the influence of the sedatives. Mom and I hung out with dad all day and watched him come in and out of his nappy state.

Chapter Four

It's Your Choice?

The next morning Mom and I were at Dad's side. He had a rough nights sleep. This morning he was extremely wide-awake and getting his IV morphine drip. Dad told us that everywhere on his body were screaming at him, except for his lower legs and feet. He was really in bad shape, and that the morphine was not taking his pain away.

My dad was very strong mentally and has endured several other intense surgeries. He had three previous heart attacks, and I think his last triple bypass heart surgery five years prior was his last big test of pain endurance. I could tell that this experience was pushing him into a new level of pain threshold endurance. My Dad was the toughest man I have ever met! I could tell that he was in intense pain, yet he didn't complain much about it.

He basically was in a state of constant pain. The complete tops of his thighs had been skinned surgically to provide the donor skin for his hands, arms, shoulders, and forehead.

That morning I was most fortunate to hear what Dr. G said to my Dad about where he stood in his healing process.

"Welcome back! I see you have come back from the land of sedation. How are you feeling Bob?" the Doctor energetically asked.

Dad responded, "My whole body is in pain from head to toe!"

"The pain that you are experiencing is normal, and we will be giving you as much morphine as possible to make it less intense. The pain lets us know that we are still alive and to take it easy while the body heals itself." The Doc said with a grin.

He continued saying, “I have come to you this morning to let you know how the rest of the healing process works! It’s time for you to intentionally connect with your Inner Spirit you that is always connected to our Creator, God, Higher Self, Great Spirit, or whatever label you choose to call it. It’s not the label or belief system that matters. It just matters that you intentionally reconnect to the simplicity of your true Spirit nature of simply being in the moment.

The healing comes from this reconnection to the Source of all creation. We are always connected to it. It’s just our mind’s that keeps us separate from our true nature. Our true nature has access to the unlimited, abundant land of healing and every imaginable miracle.

Our ego minds avoid this present moment by constantly focusing and fretting on the future or the past. These thoughts of separation from this Creator Source are what keep us from healing any circumstance or challenging situation. Now, just focus on each breath and stay in the moment. Being in the moment is where we heal and find the peace that we are looking for. When we reconnect with this part of ourselves, the most amazing coincidences start to happen. Or, maybe these mysterious synchronicities are always happening to us and we just aren’t aware of it because we aren’t looking for them and just don’t notice.

I see miracles everyday and know they are not coming from me but from the Source of all creation. You now have one of the most important decisions in your life to make. You can heal in TWO WEEKS, SIX MONTHS OR NEVER! The choice is yours, and only yours!

My Dad responded with a very positive decision,
“I choose the TWO WEEK healing plan Doc!”

“Excellent! You just need to quiet your mind and wholeheartedly ask the Creator for the healing and you will receive it!” exclaimed Dr. G. “The nurses and I will keep a constant check on your skin graphs to check for infection. You are on the road to recovery and are looking good! Please don’t hesitate to call on me if you have any questions.” Dr. G said with a big smile.

“Thank you so much for all of your help Doctor G, I really appreciate it!” Dad responded as Dr. G left the room.

“How inspiring, I really like that guy!” Dad sounded.

“Wow, he really sounds like he knows how this whole healing process works!” Mom said.

Up until this very moment, my Dad was never really a religious man or even a man on a Spiritual path. He was just your everyday kind of person that was just basically concerned with making ends meet for himself and his family. His character was full of integrity, honesty and a big heart.

This day was a huge turning point for my Dad. I saw him with a huge decision to make. Was he going to buy into this invisible Creator force thing or not? I guess that is possibly what this world’s challenge all boils down to! What an amazing mystery! Maybe it's what we are destined to do and figure out?

My Dad taught me about having common sense. I am so grateful for that! One thing that I do know for sure is that I have common sense. Another thing I know for sure is that common sense is not common in this world!

My Dad was a very successful salesman and entrepreneur. He was a sales representative for many technology companies. He was involved mostly in the computer industry for many years. I remember when I was a kid he took me to one of the companies that he was a sales rep for. I was shown the inside of the computer room. It was a huge room filled with batteries and

vacuum tubes. That was back in the early 70's. That whole room could now fit inside this laptop computer that I am now writing on.

My Dad saw through the dogmatic hypocritical song and dance show of some of the religious institutions. He never spoke negatively or made judgements about the religious world, he just chose not to participate. He was a man of common sense, very intellectual, brilliant, very well read, and always had a really interesting story to tell. He was smart enough to learn from anyone he would meet. In this case he knew deep down that Dr. G knew what he was talking about and trusted him fully.

Dr. G told him to reconnect with our Creator and ask for the healing of his body. Deep down my Dad believed in God, but just didn't put much trust or faith in religion. My Dad just refused to give his power away to the religious salespeople of the day.

It was just the three of us now, and my Dad asked us all to close our eyes and said a prayer to God. My Dad said,

"Dear God, I know I'm not one of your dedicated church goers, but I am someone who believes that you created me and everything. I really need your help now. Thanks for bringing me to the care of Dr. G. I believe that the good Dr. G is helping you do your work and knows what he is talking about. I am just going to be grateful for my healing and know that I am in your good hands. Thanks again for saving my family and Ben from the plane crash! Dear God I am choosing the two week healing plan with your help please!" Amen!

I was actually blown away! It was the first time I ever heard my dad say a prayer other than at Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner.

Chapter Five

Enduring The Pain

It was on the second day after my dad's surgery when Dr. G came in for his daily morning visit. The nurse was removing the bandages for the Doctor's observation.

"Hi Bob, how are you today?" Dr. G said with a smile.

"I'm Ok, except for all of this pain? Can you please give me more morphine?" Dad pleaded.

"I wish I could. You are getting the maximum dosage now!" Dr. G replied. Dr. G then proceeded to inspect the healing skin graphs. So far everything looks great and healing as expected. I was totally blown away when the nurse removed the bandage covering my Dad's left ear. It looked completely normal with no signs of burning at all, other than being just a little red. After the crash, I remember my Dad's left ear being all melted together into a fused blob of cauliflowered flesh. Wow, to me that was a miracle! It now looked like a perfectly brand new ear.

One by one the bandages were gently removed by the nurse. I could see my Dad grimace with pain as she slowly removed the gauzes from the mending skin graphs. I am very empathic and could feel the pain as well as I watched the bandages get pulled free from Dad's healing wounds.

The Doctor closely inspected each healing area. My Dad's forehead, ear, shoulders, and arms all passed the daily inspection. The nurse then proceeded to remove the last bandages on my Dad's forearms and hands. The right forearm and hand looked great. It wasn't until the bandage on my Dad's left hand was removed when we all heard Dr. G say,

"Uh Oh!"

We all knew that hearing “Uh Oh” was not a good thing.

The room went silent with everyone’s anxious eyes and ears fixed on Dr. G. “Well, it seems that everything is healing just fine, except for the backside of your left hand. I see that an infection has begun which will prevent the skin graft from bonding and healing. The good news is that we have enough left over donor skin to redo the graft on your hand. The bad news is that we have maxed you out on your pain meds and will not be able to fully sedate you for the procedure.”

Dr. G said winching.

“What does that mean that you cannot sedate me, how else can you do the skin graft?” asked my Dad.

“Well Bob, I don’t think you are going to like this, but what we have to do is to debride or scrap off all of the infected scabbed skin from the back of your hand to prepare it for the last piece of donor skin that we have from you. It’s really going to hurt and you are definitely going to need all of the internal strength that you can summon.” Dr. G exclaimed,

“Are you sure about not being able to sedate me during this procedure?” Dad questioned.

“Yes, I think that you are at the borderline of being overdosed by morphine now! I don’t want to take that chance, since we could possibly overdose you to the point of no return. But, I can give you something to look forward to once your procedure is finished. I will allow the nurse to give your IV an extra shot of morphine that will at least give you a good nap when we are done.” Dr. G said with a smile.

“Well then, let’s do what we have to do Doc. I’m ready when you are!” Dad said with a sense of determination.

“Ok, that’s the attitude! I’ll let the OR know and the nurses will come and get you shortly”, was an enthusiastically responding Dr. G as he left the room.

Wow, Dad had a deer in headlights look on his face as my Mom went to his side to give him a hug. I was next with a big hug for Dad. I could sense more strength coming into his body, as Dad wasn’t so tender with his embrace.

A small team of nurses came and wheeled dad back to the OR. Mom and I hung out in the hospital’s waiting area. I remember feeling really proud of my Dad for his get it done attitude. He always faced adversity head on as long as I can remember. I could tell he was really in pain, yet he disguised it very well. He wasn’t one to complain much.

During my growing up years he taught me the saying, “IT IS, WHAT IT IS!” I am so fortunate to have learned this! This simple statement is a part of my everyday life now. This statement always reminds me to accept whatever it is, take responsibility, don’t look around to blame someone, and just step up and deal with it! I’ve recently realized that this statement is also a statement of non- judgment. It doesn’t put the label of good or bad on a particular perception. Everything is perfect and is simply just being what it is!

Dad was so determined to heal! I could see and sense his whole being completely committed to his healing process. I could see that he was stepping up and going to deal with this new challenge. Throughout my Dad’s life I can remember many times where his determination and sheer will power came shining through.

One time in particular was nine years after this hospital experience when Mom and Dad came to visit me for Christmas. I was living at Lake Tahoe at that time, and my folks just loved to come and visit.

After dinner on the first night out with my parents, my Dad asked for the tour of all of the big jackpot cars sitting atop the slot machines carousels.

My Dad then said, "Your mother and I are in need of a new car and thought while we were visiting you, we would just win one!"

I said almost laughing, "Ya just a car, why not megabucks Dad?" Dad responded, "We don't need megabucks, we just need a new car!"

I then proceeded to take Dad and Mom to all of the casinos, to show them all of the jackpot cars available. There was a Mercedes, there was a Grand Cherokee, there was a Corvette, and there was a Lincoln Mark VIII. I asked my Dad which one he wanted and he said that he and Mom would discuss it and let me know in the morning.

"Dad are you going to gamble tonight?" I curiously asked.

"No, not tonight, I'll come back tomorrow and get it!" he casually replied.

The next day I was working on the carburetor on my 1977 Chevy van, when my Dad came out of the house to tell me he was going to get his car.

"Is Mom going with you?" I asked.

"No, she isn't feeling well. I'm going by myself." Dad replied.

"Good luck Dad!" I said as he walked to his car.

Dad smiled and waved as he drove to the casinos. I remember as I was growing up Dad always seemed to be able to hit jackpots. For many years Dad and Mom would take me on boating trips to Lake Mead, Nevada. It seemed that every time Dad got gas at a Nevada gas station, he always played his loose change in the slot

machine. He always just played for a couple of minutes and walked out with his pockets full.

Dad wasn't someone who was compelled to gamble. He just seemed to want to get rid of his loose change now and then. Dad taught me to always bet on myself, as he taught me how to become an entrepreneur.

Well, you probably can guess what happens next! A couple of hours later my Dad returns from his visit to the casinos. I was just finishing installing the new rebuilt carburetor for my van.

"Hi Dad, how'd ya do? I eagerly asked.

With a poker face, dad just handed me a Polaroid photo. It was a picture of some guy shaking my Dad's hand. He was shaking his hand in front of a row of slot machines. I could see at the corner of the photo the back end of a maroon colored car.

Yep, Dad did it again, another slot machine jackpot. He won the 1994 Lincoln Mark VIII on seventy-five cents! His will power always shined through for him. Everything that he set his will power to, he accomplished. This is the same demonstration of will power, that I saw him tap into during this burn healing experience.

Here's the slot manager of the Horizon Casino congratulating Dad.





Mom and Dad in front of their new Lincoln Mark XIII

During that time, I went to visit Ben to check in on him. Ben's skin graphs didn't get infected and he was healing. However, Ben's attitude was not like my Dad's. Ben had a dark cloud hovering over him. I could see that he wasn't on the two-week healing plan like my Dad! He had a sad and defeated attitude.

It looked like he was on the six-month healing plan. I tried to engage Ben, but he seemed like he would rather rest and have me leave him alone, which I did.

I returned to wait with Mom and keep her company. We were so grateful that Dad was getting such conscientious care. We could tell by the way this burn center was being run, that it was probably one of the best burn centers around.

Dad was brought back in just over an hour by the same team of nurses. I could tell that Dad had been crying. His eyes were all bloodshot and his eye sockets were very moist. I distinctly remember this, since I've never seen my Dad cry.

Mom and I quickly came to Dad's side and we both gave him great big hugs. That's when the nurse said,

"Ok Bob, now I have for you what the Doctor promised, an extra nice shot of morphine."

Dad lit up like a little kid. He had the biggest grin when she said that. The nurse injected the syringe into my Dad's IV, and I could see the morphine taking immediate effect. Dad's eyes started to close as he drifted off into a relaxed peaceful nappy state.

Doctor G came by to peek in on Dad, just after he fell asleep and said to my Mom and myself,

"Oh good, he is getting some rest. Well, he definitely deserves it after what he just went through. I feel compelled to come by and share with you how this procedure went. Bob is a very brave man. It's not very often that I have to have someone go through what

he just went through. He never complained once!
I had to scrape the backside of his hand and fingers raw to remove the infected skin. I used a local anesthesia, but it think it didn't help much. It was probably the most painful experience he has ever had to endure. It was a solid hour of what most would consider sheer torture."

Your Dad just said, "I'm ready Doc, do what you need to do!"

Bob just kept his attention focused on a spot on the wall and let us clean his hand in preparation for the new skin graft. Your Dad's confidence and strength flowed into every one in the room and put us all at ease. You both I'm sure are well aware of his inner strength and are very proud of him!"

"Yes we are, and thank you so much for letting us know what he just went through! We really appreciate once again everything that you and your staff are doing for him!" Mom said with a huge grateful smile.

Dad was sound asleep, so mom and I left the hospital and went out for a nice dinner. It was really great to get some real food. Being around the hospital so much we were getting tired of the hospital's cafeteria's food.

On our way back to Mom and Dad's Burbank house, we decided to go rent a movie. I'll never forget the movie! It was Starman. Wow, what a coincidence.

I really connected to the scene where Starman pulled Jenny out of the burning car and walked through the flames. Every time I see that scene it gives me chills as I recall my own flame experience.

Chapter Six

NDE

(Near Death Experience)

The next day Mom and I arrived early to visit Dad. Whoa, I'll never forget that day as long as I live. I have never seen my Dad so bright eyed, awake and alive. It was the first time that I recall my Dad so eager to talk with me.

"Morning honey", Mom said as she gave him a kiss on his cheek.

"You look great Dad, you really look alive this morning!"
I remarked as I kissed his other cheek. Mom and I both took our usual chairs and pulled them up for another days visit.

Dad was very eager to speak.

"I had an interesting night!"

"Wow, what happened?" Mom asked.

Dad looked right into my eyes and said,
"Son, I know you have been looking into the spiritual thing and I hope you can help me with this."

"What happened?" I eagerly asked.

As you know after the procedure yesterday, the nurse came in and gave me that shot of morphine that Dr. G promised. It sure did the trick. It immediately took away all of my pain. I was able to relax and get some good rest.

Last evening after dinner I was feeling a lot better, I dosed off and went to sleep. The next thing I remember was that I was floating over my body and looking down at myself. I saw myself sound asleep.

I looked around and could see the whole room. I then headed down the hallway, made a couple of turns and then went out the front entrance. I don't remember pushing the door open. I seemed to be floating silently. I floated up over the hospital and stopped to look down at it.

Mom and I looked at each other with a stunned look on our faces. I was totally engaged in this conversation and heard my own mind start to race with questions. I was almost in a state of disbelief, but my open mind wanted to know if this was real or imagined.

I then probed dad and asked,
"Dad, did you see the roof of the hospital?"

Dad quickly said, "YES!"
"What did the roof look like?" I asked with an inquisitive tone.

"Well, the hospital doesn't have a roof, it has a parking lot on top of the building!" Dad quickly answered.

"Can you describe the parking lot in more detail dad?" I inquired.

"Yes, I saw one of the parking lot light posts that had a red trash barrel next to it". Dad replied.

Whoa, I was totally blown away. Dad had no way of knowing that!
"What happened next?" Mom asked.

Dad answered. "I have never felt so free. It was the most at home peaceful, pain free feeling I have ever felt. I was still me with all of my normal thoughts and thinking process. I looked back at the hospital when I heard someone calling my name really loud!"

"Bob, Bob, Bob" a nurse shouted!

"Then like a lightning bolt of a jolt, I was back in my body. I looked around and saw a whole bunch of nurses and a Doctor all

scurrying around me. They had just started CPR. Apparently my pulse stopped and I was a code blue.” Dad said with a curious expression.

A nurse jokingly said, “Welcome back Bob, how was your trip?”

“What just happened nurse, did I die?” Dad asked.

“Well, your heart stopped and you just flat lined! When your heart stopped the monitor signaled the nurse’s station with a code blue. You must not have been very far away, because you came back the moment I called your name!” The nurse responded.

“Did you call my name three times?” Dad asked.

“Yes, I did!” said the nurse.

“It felt so good to be out of my body, I’m kind of surprised I came back!” Dad said.

“Well, your work in this world must not be finished, welcome back Bob!” The nurse replied.

“Ya, I’m not ready to go just yet! Thanks everyone for your help! I really appreciate you all!” Dad exclaimed, as Mom and I looked at each other in amazement.

Dad then asked me, “Well son what do you think?”

“Sorry Dad, I really don’t know much about that. I’ve heard about near death experiences, but I think your story takes the cake so far! I think you know more about the after life than anyone else in the room right now. Dad you just got a glimpse behind the curtain. How cool was that! I’m just very happy to still be speaking with you! I love you so much Dad!” I answered, as I kissed him on his cheek.

Mom then came over to Dad and gave him a great big hug with tears in her eyes and said, "I so glad that you didn't leave us yet!"

Shortly after hearing about Dad's near death experience, Doctor G came in for his morning rounds and said,

"Hi Bob, I heard you had a very interesting night!"

"Yes Doc, I sure did! Hey Doc, what do you know about near death experiences?" Dad asked.

"Well, when you've been around a hospital as long as I have, you sure get to experience all sorts of interesting things! I'm not so sure about what's waiting for us on the other side, but one thing I do know is that there is something to the other side!" answered Doctor G.

I couldn't help but ask, "What kind of stuff Doc?"

"Well, sometimes patients here don't survive their injuries and pass on here at the hospital. On occasion, some nurses and myself have experienced some unexplainable odd occurrences right after their passing. The only explanation I can think of is that their soul just hasn't left yet or is in its process of leaving." The Doc said shirking his shoulders.

"Wow, I guess there's more to life than meets the eye Doc!" I commented.

"Oh yes, there most definitely is! It's good to still have you with us Bob! Your burns are healing very nicely, I don't see any signs of infection with your hand or anywhere else. It looks like you are well on your road to recovery! Keep up your great mental attitude Bob, it's definitely working! However, I am going to ease you way back from the morphine." The Doc said as he was leaving Dad's room.

"Thanks so much Doc, I really appreciate you!" Dad remarked.

"Us too!" Mom added with a huge smile.

Mom and I spent several hours just hanging out with Dad that day and were especially grateful to still have him around. Dad was a trooper through the two weeks that he was in the burn center. The worst of the pain and procedures were over for Dad. He made steady progress every day as his wounds healed without any further complications.

When Mom and I left that day we went up to the roof parking area to get the car. I'll never forget looking over and seeing the red trash can up against the light post. As we drove away I could not stop thinking about my Dad's encounter with the twilight zone. I feel like I entered the twilight zone as well throughout this whole ordeal.

Mom and I visited Dad everyday that he was at the Burn Center. Dad's pain subsided each day as his wounds healed. Ben was also on the road to recovery. Both Dad and Ben were released from the hospital on the same day two weeks after their admittance. Wow, what a relief to see both Dad and Ben being sent home. We all expressed our gratitude to the amazing Doctor Grossman and his staff as we left the hospital!

About one month after the crash Dad received a phone call from the NTSB. They told him that the crash report was final and that they had determined the cause of the crash. The cause of the crash was due to carburetor contamination, which caused the starboard side engine to run out of gas and stall.

Chapter Seven

Coincidence?

One year later, all of Dad's skin grafts healed very nicely to the point that you couldn't even tell that he had been burned. Dad decided to retire shortly after this experience, so Mom and Dad packed up the Burbank house put it up for sale and made their permanent retirement move to the Temecula house.

It was almost one full year after my Dad's release from the burn center, that he awoke one day with a huge feeling of gratitude. He was deeply moved by a very overwhelming urge to express it. On that random day, Dad decided to go visit the Sherman Oaks Burn Center and share his appreciation and gratitude with the very gifted Dr. Grossman.

This is one of my Dad's stories that is forever imprinted in my brain. When my Dad told this story to me, I'll never forget the look of awe and bewilderment in his eyes. It was the same look that he had when he told me about his near death experience.

"Son, I have a very interesting experience to share with you!" Dad said.

"As you know, it's been almost one year after the plane crash. Well, I felt the need to go pay Doctor G a visit and thank him again for all of his help.

I drove over to the Burn Center parked and went inside to visit with him.

I spoke to the reception nurse and told her that I would like to see Doctor G. She told me that he was just finishing up his morning rounds and to take a seat in the waiting area. About twenty minutes later Doctor G came out to greet me.

“Hi Doc!” Dad exclaimed with a huge grin.

“Hi Bob!” Doctor G responded as they shook hands.

“I just stopped by to let you know how grateful I am for you! It’s been one year and I thought I’d stop by to show you how great my burns healed and how normal I look. Thank you so much!” Dad said.

“Wow Bob, you are so welcome! You look great! I’m so pleased with your healing.....What an interesting coincidence that you came by this morning....” The Doctor said with a smirk.

“What do you mean Doc?” Dad asked.

“Do you remember the Doctor from the Lake Elsinore hospital that referred you to us?” Doc G said.

“Oh yes, he told me that they didn’t have the proper facility to deal with my burns and sent me here. He said you are the best burn surgeon around, and he was definitely right!” Dad replied.

“Thanks and Well, he is here. Over the weekend he and his son were in a boating accident. Their boat exploded and caught fire. The Doctor wrapped his boy in a towel and ran through the flames. The little boy is fine and just received a couple of minor burns on the back of his legs. However, the Doctor was not so lucky. He received major burns on his upper body and his whole face. His face was literally burned away.

I just did his skin grafts and the operation went very well. I just came from his room to give him the healing pep talk that I gave you. I told him about his healing options, that he can heal in TWO WEEKS, SIX MONTHS, OR NEVER!

Well, unfortunately he is choosing NEVER!. He is VERY despondent. He isn’t receptive to any of his family’s support or my encouragement. He told me that if he didn’t have a face, he didn’t want to live! Could you please go in and see him?” asked Dr. G.

“Yes of course Doc! Let’s go!” Dad eagerly replied. Dr. G then escorted Dad down the hallway to visit the despondent Doctor.

“Hey Doctor, I have someone here to see you!” Dr. G announced.

“Hi Doc, remember me?” Dad said.

The Doctor shook his head with a, “No”

“Ya, last year, Christmas day, plane crash. The ambulance brought the pilot Ben and myself to see you at the Lake Elsinore Hospital and you sent us here. Now do you remember?” Dad asked.

The Doctor perked up in his bed, sat up and said, “Yes, yes I do!”

The Doctor was all bandaged up and looked like a mummy. The only thing you could see was his eyes and his lips.

Dad made his way to the doctors bedside and held out his arms and said, “Do you remember how badly burned I was? My hands, arms, shoulders, side of face, ear and forehead were all burned very badly. Look at me now! I bet you can’t even tell that I was burned!”

The Doctor came to life. He really looked Dad over from head to toe. My Dad looked normal after his burns healed. Dad then said,

“Well Doctor, I understand that you just heard the healing speech about reconnecting with our Creator and asking for the healing. Well, I can assure you that the two-week plan works just fine. I chose the two-week plan and asked the Creator for the healing, and look how I turned out. I’m sure it will work for you as well. Doctor, you can heal in TWO WEEKS, SIX MONTHS, OR NEVER!

The choice is yours and only yours!”

The Doctor smiled, nodded his head and said, "Thank you!"

Dad shared this story with me on Christmas day, one full year after our crash. Dad was a changed man! For the first time that I could ever remember, he was at peace. He no longer was in the mad dash to jump on his hamster wheel. He started to smell the roses, peaches, and grapevines in his backyard. He even bought a statue of St. Francis of Assisi that he put in Mom's rose garden. He still didn't go to church, but I witnessed him on a few occasions just sitting and staring at that statue. I especially remember feeling the peace that emanated from Dad when he was in his gratitude zone. It was a great thing to see him slow down and connect with his Invisible Source of strength.

Not to be negative here, but Dad was a workaholic and an alcoholic prior to this plane crash. He was always on the go. When he wasn't on the go he was drinking his beloved scotch, angry and yelling at someone about something.

Blessings in disguise sure come in some interesting packages. Well this plane crash package was definitely the worst thing that has ever happened to my family, yet its end result turned out to be the best thing that could of happened. Sometimes we all need a wake up call to remind us what is most important to us.

I am so grateful to have common sense. I thank my Dad for instilling it in me. I feel so fortunate to see a common thread through every tragedy, hurricane, tornado, earthquake, disease, hospitalization, accident, divorce, and death of a friend or loved one. The common denominator is that everyone starts talking to the Invisible Source of us all. They either blame the Creator, cry out, "Why me God?", or begin to ask for the strength to heal and overcome this new challenge.

I got it! The Invisible Source of us all just wants us to communicate with the deeper part of ourselves that is always connected to everything and everyone. Hopefully we learn to

express our love, gratitude and appreciation for everything that we have.

It seems to be a very simple request! So, since the plane crash I have been having a daily conversation with the Invisible part of myself that is connected to everyone and everything. I am so grateful for all that I have and all that I have experienced.

I am most grateful for the supposed bad things that have happened to me. The bad things have all turned out to be my greatest teachers. I have learned my biggest lessons from my most painful experiences. At those times, I remember really talking with the Invisible to get the strength I needed and still need. I never feel like I am alone. I always seem to find the jewel of wisdom in every learning situation. I always have the Invisible Source of my strength living inside of my being only a thought away.

The following Christmas, Dad told me that he had visited the boat fire Doctor. The Doctor made a full recovery, and had a huge ear-to-ear grin when he saw my Dad. His face looked normal and the Doctor told my Dad how grateful and inspired he was to see him that day in the Sherman Oaks Burn Center. The Doctor told Dad that he decided to take the TWO-WEEK healing plan as he did.

That same year Dad completed his pilot's courses and training. He received his pilot's license and purchased another plane. This time he bought a single engine plane. It was a Cessna Turbo Centurion II. He spent the next fifteen years exploring the wild blue yonder with his buddy Bruce.

I only flew once with Dad and Bruce. Dad did great, and we flew for about an hour and a half. However, he still had that take off swerve thing going on. I never have felt comfortable flying in small planes. To me small airplanes feel like being in a tiny rowboat in a stormy choppy sea.



Dad and his buddy Bruce.



Dad got back on his new horse at the relocated Temecula airport.

Chapter Eight

Twenty Years Later

I awoke to one of those phone calls that you don't ever want to get. It was my Mom's voice. I could tell before she said anything that something really bad just happened. Mom's tear filled voice spoke and said,

"Your Dad died last night!

"Oh No!" I said as I felt a tidal wave of emotion hit me.

Mom said as her voice cracked,

"He died in his sleep without any pain from natural causes! I woke up to hear silence. Usually I can hear your Dad breathing. He was lying motionless next to me. When I touched him I felt his body was cold. I then knew he had died. I immediately called the paramedics. Thank God they arrived so quickly.

I was a wreck and really needed someone to help me. Shortly after the paramedics, police, and a fire truck arrived, the house was buzzing with people all asking questions and scurrying all about. They took Dad away and now everyone has left. I feel so alone."

"Mom, I'll catch a flight from Maui to LAX today and be with you as soon as possible!" I said as I held back my emotions.

Mom said, "Great, I'm so happy to hear that! I'll see you soon! I love you!" "I love you too Mom! See you soon!" I said as I hung up the phone.

I immediately broke down into tears. I could feel the deepest sadness rise to the surface. I couldn't hold it back and allowed the tears to flow. I let out tears that have been waiting to be released for many years. I was surprised to feel the sense of relief after my good long cry.

Mom then called Deana, a dear family friend who was so kind to immediately come over and be with mom and give her love and support. Deana is an angel in disguise and has always been there for my family. Thanks Deana we are so grateful for you!

I arrived at Mom and Dad's house later that evening about 12 hours after hearing about the bad news. Mom was so pleased to see me, as I could tell from the extra long embrace she gave me. Mom seemed to have gathered her strength and was handling this new challenge amazingly well.

Coincidentally, it was Christmas Eve December 24th, 2004. It was twenty years after our fateful airplane crash. That night Mom could not sleep in her bed and slept in the guest room. So, I slept that night in my parent's bed. I slept on my Dad's side and remember having one of the most peaceful nights rest I could remember.

Fortunately for my Dad and myself we had worked through the usual father and son issues, and healed our alcohol related dysfunctional relationship. I felt relieved knowing that I had said and expressed to him everything I needed to before he died. All I could say now is in my night's prayer was,

"Dear Dad, I am so grateful for having you as my Dad! You have taught me so much and I am really am going to miss you! I love you so much! Thanks God for giving Dad and myself the extra twenty years so we could work through our personal issues and heal our relationship! God, thank you for blessing my Dad's soul and please allow him to rest in peace! In Jesus name I pray!"

I awoke early the next morning on Christmas, December 25th, 2004. Twenty years to the day after my family's plane crash in Temecula, California.

I was twenty-three years old at that time. I remember sitting on the edge of my Dad's bed at the age of forty-three, reflecting back

on that fateful day. I felt an overwhelming urge from within to begin writing this story atop my Dad's bedside nightstand.

Writing this story has been a great help for me in going through my own grieving process. I have come full circle with my own healing process and need to let this go now.

It was a different kind of Christmas that year. It was quite somber and subdued. Fortunately, Mom and Dad had already opened their gifts the evening before Dad died. Mom said dad wasn't feeling good that day and she thought it would cheer him up if she opened their presents a little early. I had sent them presents from Maui, as I was not going to be with them.

I was happy to hear that Dad did get to exchange gifts for his last Christmas. Mom must have sensed on some level that he was getting ready to leave this world. I am so glad that they made it beyond their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Mom and Dad went through so many trying times together. It's a blessing to me to see and experience the love that they had for each other.

Christmas day was a great day for Mom, Deana and myself. We all shared our favorite stories about my Dad, "The Bobber". Dad lived a great action filled life. He was an entrepreneur and an explorer. He loved learning, reading, fishing, camping, flying, and mostly loved my Mom and me. He taught me so much, mostly how to face the fear of the unknown and just go for it.

After the Christmas weekend, it was time for me to make the necessary funeral arrangements. Dad had wanted to be cremated and his ashes to be spread out in the waters off of Maui from my sailboat Catrux.

Mom didn't want to go to the funeral home and preferred that I make the plans. I agreed and made the calls. I found a funeral home that made the cremation plans and was told I could be with Dad to say goodbye if I wanted to. I agreed and was given the directions to the crematory.

On the day of Dad's cremation it was raining extremely hard. It was a torrential downpour kind of rain. I'll never forget watching the windshield wipers on full speed and still not keeping up with the rain.

On the drive to the crematory I was feeling anxious and unsettled about the thought of seeing Dad's lifeless body. I arrived in an industrial park in the town of Perris California.

After I parked, I remember asking God for the strength to do what I had to do. I then entered the building. A really nice gentleman who was all by himself at the crematory greeted me. I'll never forget the peace that came over me from the moment I entered the facility. I remember feeling surprised to the amount of peace that I felt. It was definitely an answered prayer.

The gentleman introduced himself and made some small talk. He could sense that I was ready to do what I had to do, so he asked,

"Are you ready to see your Dad?"

"Yes! I Am!" I responded.

He walked me from the office area back into the shop area. I could hear the roar of the cremation furnace. My first impression was that I could feel the heat and it felt good. It was a cold rainy day and the warmth coming from the furnace helped make me feel comfortable.

I remember flashing back on something I always remember my Dad asking me when every we were camping,

"Son, are you warm enough?"

I smiled to myself and thought, *"Thanks Dad, Yes I am warm enough!"*

Then I saw my Dad's box. I noticed a few drips of rainwater

landing on it from a leak in the skylight. It was still raining very hard!

The gentleman then asked, "Would you like to see your Dad?"

"Yes, I would!" I answered.

The fellow then removed the lid from the box and I could see Dad. He was wearing his boxer shorts and looked like he was still sleeping. His eyes were closed and his head was tilted back with his mouth wide open. His expression was peaceful. It looked like he just let out a big sigh of relief.

I then touched my Dad's face and gave him a kiss on his forehead. His skin was very cold and clammy. I remember closing my eyes and thinking,

"Thanks Dad for everything, you have been the best Dad a son could ever want. I love you so much and I am going to miss you! God, please bless his soul and grant him peace! In Jesus name I pray!"

I remember the tears rolling down my cheeks when I opened my eyes. I looked over to the gentleman and nodded that I was finished.

The fellow then closed Dad's box and opened the furnace doors. I could see the pilot light flames burning blue. Dad was then put into the crematory furnace. The gentleman then looked at me with a very compassionate smile and hit the button.

The furnace roared to life as he escorted me back into the office area. I expressed my gratitude to this man for being such a gentle soul in assisting my family with this process. We shook hands and said goodbye. I then left to run through the downpour back to the car.

Wow, it sure was raining hard. The sky was solid gray with no clearing in sight. As I was driving away, I felt a very strong inner urging to pull over and have a moment of silence for my Dad. I pulled over about a couple of blocks away and turned into a cul-de-sac where I parked looking directly at the crematory. I was about one hundred yards away and could see my Dad's smoke rising up into the grayness.

The windshield wipers were still on full and could hardly keep the windshield clear. I turned off the engine and the wipers came to a quick squeaky halt. It was a very surreal moment. I could hear the vigorous slamming of the rain on the cars rooftop and see the distant rising smoke through an out of focus- blurred windshield.

I then closed my eyes and began to say another prayer for Dad. I was in prayer and expressing my gratitude to Dad for about two minutes when that little small voice inside me said,

“Open your eyes!”

I distinctly remember having my own inner conversation with the voice. I answered the little voice inside my head and said,

“No, I’m not opening my eyes until I have finished saying my prayer.” Then I heard it again,

“Open your eyes!”

“No, not yet, I need to finish this prayer”, I responded again. I remember how strange it was to be having this inner dialogue during such an important moment of prayer. I was thinking from one side of my brain, that it would really be rude to flake out on one of the biggest prayer sessions of my life and open my eyes before I was finished.

Then I heard it again,

“Open your eyes!”

It was even louder and more forceful.

Wow, I was actually observing myself talking with myself.

I thought that I was losing my mind? What was the other voice, was it mine or what? I decided to obey this request and quickly finished my prayer with a profound, Thank you Jesus!

I opened my eyes and noticed the rain had stopped. I could see a clear patch of blue and some colors coming through the rain soaked windshield.

Whoa, It was the biggest rainbow I had ever seen before. And living in Hawaii, I sure have seen some amazing rainbows. This one was huge! It was a full arc going from one side of the valley to the other. I quickly jumped out of the car and was in total amazement. The crematory building was directly in the middle of this enormous arch. It was the most electric, vibrant rainbow I had ever seen.

Then I noticed once again my Dad's smoke rising up out of the little building. I immediately broke down into tears. These tears were of pure joy. I could feel deep down in the core of my being that this was my Heavenly Father's way of letting me know that all is well. On top of this huge rainbow were three white birds soaring in a gentle circular pattern. Beams of light glistened on this bow and lit these birds up as white as white can be. It was the most amazing sight I have ever seen in all of my life. They looked like Seagulls soaring gracefully through the top of this enormous rainbow.

In that moment, I flashed back on my childhood and remembered reading about Jonathan Livingston Seagull. I knew in that moment that my Dad was free from the grips of this world. His soul was soaring free as the birds and letting me know that everything is A-OK!

"Rest In Peace Dad!" I love you so much!

The rainbow lasted for about one minute! The colors faded and the gray clouds once again filled in the blue. The rain resumed and I jumped back into the car thinking to myself,

“Whoa, how cool was that! Was that a coincidence or a Godinstance?”

Thank you so much Father! I love you with all of my heart!

In Loving Memory of

Bob or "The Bobber"

5-2-1928 ~ 12-24-2004



Dad lived out his lifelong dream to fly and fish!

Family Memorial Service Was held on
January 14, 2005

At
Maui, Hawaii

This is the poem that Dad wanted me to read at his memorial service.

High Flight

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth, and danced the skies on laughter's silvered wings.

Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
of sun split clouds. And done a hundred things you have not dreamed of.

Wheeled and soared and swung
high in the sunlit silence. Hovering there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue,
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace. Where never lark, or even eagle flew.

And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
the high un-trespassed sanctity of space.

Put out my hand, and touched the face of God!

Poem By: John Gillespie Magee Jr.

After Dad's memorial service, Mom and I then sailed Cat Trax out to Maalaea Bay to release Dad's ashes with Mother Maui. Rest in peace Dad! Thanks for being the best Dad a son could ever want! I love you and look forward to seeing you again someday!

Love your son, Maui Doug



<https://www.bitchute.com/video/rbfB9Qvc3PHQ/>

Thanks God!

A True Airplane Crash & Family Healing Journey

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