

Laurie explains how she held onto confining emotions throughout her life until her father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In her attempts at helping comfort him she learned Reiki and other energy modalities that open the door to not only helping him, but helping many others by telling their story in her classes and energy sessions.

Rising From The Cinders: Understanding your past so you can embrace your future

by Laurie A. Morrill

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LAURIE A. MORRILL

Understanding your past so you can
embrace your future

A MEMOIR

RISING
FROM THE
CINDERS

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Choosing My Parents

I remember life before I was born. Yes, before I entered this world! I was lying flat on my back on a firm hospital-like examining table, and everything in the room was bright. I even remember what I was wearing. The furniture in the room had definition, and everything was pure white and filled with light. It reminded me of a doctor's office. Everything was clean and sterile. A spiritual being was guiding me with his words and telling me it was "time" to choose my parents. I felt lovingly guided from the table by the angelic being accompanying me. This being seemed to speak to me telepathically.

I did not want to leave this wonderful feeling place. I experienced a tremendous acceptance, so much so that there was an unquestionable peace and calm surrounding me. I specifically remember asking to stay longer. I remember moving and listening intently as he guided me across the room to three separate monitors.

The monitors were white except for the viewing area, which I was able to look through. I remember taking my time and looking through each monitor methodically. I went from one to another and saw what "felt" best, and to which one I was drawn to the most. I remember what the individuals in the first monitor looked like because they were the couple I would eventually choose. I know I looked down through each monitor into similar family situations; however, I quickly forgot the others after I made my choice. These viewings I experienced were like being injected into a scene in my parent's lives that I could watch and feel. Each monitor viewing was getting a little glimpse of who they were, and what it was like to be around them.

As I looked down through the viewer from somewhere above, I saw my mother was wearing a beautiful yellow dress with a pill box hat and veil, and my dad was in a white tux and black tie. My mom was twirling in her yellow dress and my father was next to her. They were smiling and laughing. My dad looked so handsome in his tux. After seeing a picture many years later, I realized it was the same scene I had witnessed from above. The picture was taken a month after my parents eloped, and they were in my aunt and uncle's wedding. My dad's sister Diane was getting married, and I was conceived this same month, in July 1965.

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My mother was a very beautiful woman. She had a natural beauty that radiated from her at every age I had the privilege of knowing her. She was a brunette with natural dark, wavy hair, and she never wore makeup. My dad was very protective of her. She had a sweet, loving disposition in her convictions to nurture others in our family. Her smile lit up a room, and one of the most important things that meant everything to her was her close family ties. My dad wanted to protect her and shield her from the world he had grown to know through his life experiences.

I wasn't just choosing the family by sight; I also had to choose the lessons I wanted to learn here on earth. Each of the 3 monitors had different lessons that posed different challenges to be learned. I remember feeling like I had picked a difficult assignment and hoped I would be able to complete it. I knew from my current vantage point that I could learn the lessons, but shortly after birth I would be flying solo. I was told I would never be truly alone on the journey, although I would feel that way many times. I knew there would be pain involved many times over by the lessons I chose to learn, so I needed some coaxing to get started on my journey.

I quickly decided on the first couple. They were celebrating and happy. My guide allowed me to watch my life sped up and told what would happen throughout my life and the events that would take place. I tried so hard to remember, but all I remembered at the time was wanting to protect my parents. Later I would learn that one of my lessons was teaching them unconditional love. My assignment wouldn't be complete until the end of their lives.

I told my guide I wasn't ready, I needed more time, I wanted to stay in this state of grace, but how could there be pain when I was seeing so much happiness looking through the monitor? I think I wanted to stay longer because this dimension felt so good; there was so much freedom, acceptance and love surrounding me.

After I had chosen the people I would call my parents, it was time for me to go to them. That meant I would enter the world through my mother. Without even saying goodbye to the guide, the next thing I remember I was in a different place and was feeling a lot of pressure and couldn't breathe. It was a terrifying experience. I was stuck in a difficult cramped place, and I remember feeling my chest being squeezed. I felt like I was going to die, and I started to panic. There was so much pressure on my chest. I was trying to

escape, and I couldn't move my arms. I thought my life was over, and then came relief. I was born at 11:59pm, April 26, 1966.

Although I've read that when the spirit enters the body we are supposed to forget our past and where we came from, I didn't. And the older I got the more I remembered the details. The reason our thoughts are erased is so that we can focus on the task at hand, our life lessons. If we remembered where we came from, we might be obsessed with returning to that incredible, loving energy instead of living our lives to the fullest and learning all we came here to learn as well as teaching others.

Life is about learning the lessons we chose to learn, making connections with others, and then returning for a life review of what we learned, how we touched others, and eagerly seeing how well we may or may not have accomplished those opportunities. There are no right or wrong answers in life. There are just "choices," and with those decisions there are different lessons gifted to us. Like everybody, the spirit I was born with will once again return to "all that is" when I pass. But before that happens, I want to share the lessons that could possibly make your journey easier, lighter, and more hopeful, transforming your pain into something that expands your ability to love yourself. Our body is the only thing that fades in the dying process, like a skin that houses our beautiful soul, but the energy and lessons will live on forever. I am certain of that.

Special Gifts Along the Way

The McClure Miller VNA Respite House was a 20-bed facility that had originally been started as a place for AIDS patients to undergo treatment. As I drove there for the first visit, I thought about how I had no business working with the dying. My father's passing was my first experience with death, and by no means did I consider myself an expert of the dying process. I wasn't sure if this was the right fit for me, but I continued driving on to Williston that day.

Upon arriving, I was introduced to a man who drove from Rutland, Vermont twice a month to volunteer; his name was Norm Sevigny. He had been doing this type of volunteering for the last ten years and was on a first name basis with everyone at Respite House. Norm said he was a hugger, as he proceeded to lean forward and embrace me on the first day. This day was the start of a deep and lasting friendship that has been more of a soul connection and mentorship than a casual friendship. He is a Vietnam veteran who came home from war with guilt riddled nightmares created from the memories etched in his mind from his tour. He deafened them with cocaine and alcohol, until one day he hit rock bottom.

He looked up one night and asked God to take this burden that weighed on him so heavily, or he was going to end his own life. His energy was drained from trying to keep the memories at bay. He was left alone to cope with the aftermath of what he had seen, and he had reached his limit that day. Norm had been homeless for a time after returning from Vietnam and suffered from PTSD. He isolated himself while trying to cope with this burden, which was a dark, lonely place for him. He abused himself trying to forget and was unavailable to his family, without the tools he needed to heal.

That night, as all the memories came flooding back to him, he wept, seeing all the destruction and the people that had been destroyed in his path. He was exhausted trying to hold them at bay. However, after he asked God for help and as his emotions became overwhelming, one by one all these people that had died were put back together into wholeness in a loving presence that surrounded him. He felt euphoric as an overwhelming sense of love encompassed him. In his mind's eye, he could see the healing power God had to restore his life. He saw all these people being restored to wholeness in front

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of him, and they were smiling back at him. He felt a tightening around his chest as these men embraced him. They were no longer broken but made whole in front of him. Norm watched as God restored each one of them in his presence.

We are all here to learn lessons, and we all play a part in those lessons. Norm felt consumed by an overwhelming sense of love and a forgiveness that made all of them well again. God healed Norm as well as the pieces Norm felt he had destroyed. He didn't know what was happening, except that his prayer was being answered. His mind was being healed by the grace of God. He laid his head down, finally understanding that life is an illusion to help us learn lessons, and after watching this miracle he fell fast asleep. He was exhausted by this spiritual encounter and his emotional release of pent-up guilt. Sometimes God allows us to run out of options in solving our own problems, so that He has room to create miracles. It's when we give up that we are no longer restricting the grace He has for us, which we can receive more easily after we let the resistance go.

Norm was a fisherman and hunter growing up and knew a lot about the outdoors. His life was changed forever by what he was asked to do for his country after leaving his hometown. His life was affected by circumstances that were out of his control when he was sent to Vietnam, and although the tour was over the emotional grip was lasting. His life over there was about survival, protection, and destruction. He was commanded to and was doing the best he could to serve his country, but he was left in the aftermath trying to pick up the pieces to cope.

He witnessed horrible images constantly flooding his mind up until the night of his miracle. These horrible images were transformed in front of him. When he woke up the next morning, he felt the best he had ever felt in his life. He felt euphoric and grateful that God was listening to his misery. God had repaired the damage not only in him, but for the people that he affected. He also never experienced another urge or need to medicate himself with drugs or alcohol again. To this day, he is humbled and grateful as he speaks of this encounter that changed his life and perspective forever. He received the freedom he longed for and prayed for to save his life. He has spread love and well-being to others ever since, supporting other Vietnam veterans dealing with the same aftermath and others that share this bond and have served their country. God was now saving him. He gained knowledge from these difficult

experiences and eventually turned his life around. It was the love he learned to have for himself, after he saw how much God loved him that has been most healing.

Over the next several years, he shared bits and pieces of his road to recovery during our time volunteering together. For every challenge he faced, Norm met head-on; from being homeless and living in the woods, to suffering with PTSD, to encouraging other Vietnam vets on their own road to recovery. He was their buffer between fulfilling an obligation and fitting back into society as though everything should go back to normal.

He has been trying to make amends to the children he wasn't able to be there for as he was battling the demons upon his return home. He articulated all these times with heartfelt honesty in a soft-spoken, gentle way. Each lesson has brought him to where he is now: with a heart full of love for life and a desire to share his overflowing spirit with all those around him. He speaks of wanting to take the pain away from all relationships he affected after returning home, but he knows it is difficult to change the circumstances and even harder to explain to someone that didn't go through the same events. He understands that sometimes wounds are created by wounded people. His antidotes and revelations were shared with me using a poetic strength, mixed with his boyish jovial laugh. His voice commanded a spiritual intelligence as he spoke to me, and I listened intently with respect and love.

Norm was known at this Respite House for his love and generosity because he brought gifts for the nurses, friends, and patients each time he volunteered. His emotional intelligence encompassed patients and guests with empathy, compassion, and a sweetness in his conviction to brighten everyone's day. He had known enough darkness and now chose to spread light.

This icon at the Respite House brought lightness to the patients as well as the caretakers during their own difficult time. As Norm and I entered each room, he would enter first and tell the patients how I was there to sing and dance for them. I would just shake my head and smile at him as he laughed loudly at his cleverness to make me blush and raise my eyebrow to his humor. He and I had many profound spiritual conversations with patients as they talked about leaving this world and shared their fears, joys, and special memories. They spoke about the magical moments that had touched their lives, along with the disappointments, and regrets. They spoke of the relationships they had, and how they would always remember them. The days I drove to this loving place,

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I believed I was going to bring comfort to the dying, but many times these beautiful people brought much more joy to my life.

Norm explained to me early on in our friendship that he could see I had come to the Respite House to fill a void. He knew I was trying to fill myself up by volunteering due to the grief I was experiencing after losing my father. He went on to say I would be much more effective as a healer if I came from a place of self-love when sharing my energy work. He explained I shouldn't have an agenda but should stay open to all possibilities because all was well, and life was unfolding just as it needed to. "Hold a space of expectancy for God's miracles to happen, and have no agenda," he said, as he put an arm around me to reassure me that I could get there. God had lit a torch in his heart, and he was lighting the way for me to love myself. The gratitude I have for him in my life is far beyond words.

I wanted to help others, but in the beginning, I was looking for the results to see if I was making a difference. I needed to have faith and listen to the knowing inside myself, opening myself to be a channel for God's grace to flow through, and leave all the work to Him. Sometimes we don't know the impact we have on others, instead we must open our hearts and let go of the results. That conversation Norm and I had on that warm July day was profound. The awareness he brought into my life was priceless, and I started asking myself deep, spiritual, thought-provoking questions about why I was volunteering. In that moment, I wondered why I wasn't coming from a similar place as he was, and why I felt the need to be filled up. This was just one of the profound spiritual conversations he and I would have over the next several years.

From the first time I met him, and he hugged me, I could feel the state of love he was talking about. His energy was expansive and all-encompassing. He was warm and embracing towards everyone. He came from that place I didn't fully understand at the time yet, but I knew I wanted to experience one day and share it with the people in my life.

For a decade, I worked to get to this place he held effortlessly. This was the start of a whole new journey I would embark upon, as it opened my eyes to what it meant to fully love myself and accept the past I had been running from my whole life. This was a process that didn't happen overnight, but I made progress with each passing year faithfully, with each new relationship and person that touched my life. I hadn't fought in a war, but I had been battling

demons in my head that were having some of the same effects on me that his events had on him.

Looking back, I am so grateful I continued my drive to Williston that day instead of giving into the fear I felt with each mile I drove towards my destination. This wisdom would help me maneuver other choices in my future that would help me decide if I would choose to love myself or sacrifice my happiness for what others wanted. I knew on some level that if I didn't first learn this important lesson Norm explained to me I would never be able to find that balance with a partner or be able to help my clients as much as I wanted to, or to live a peaceful life. A relationship is never about sacrificing yourself; it's about blending, compromising, and helping each other achieve the individual goals you both have. It's a selfless endeavor to gently push against each other as you both rise into all of who you both are. There is a give and take, an intimate dance so to speak, that allows a deep fulfillment when it exists. You cannot love yourself more than your partner, and you cannot love yourself less than your partner, you must always strive for what is best for the both of you.

Bringing Norm into my life at this exact moment was one of God's ways to extend His grace to me. It all began with that simple, heartfelt prayer to help me help my dad as I drove through the orchard many months before. The events that have unfolded in my life since -- from the other people I've met, to the clients I've been able to help along the way, and the experiences that have happened to them -- are so much more than I had asked for. Sometimes the smallest stones make the biggest ripple. He opened the way for me to meet people that would open my eyes and start the healing process within myself. I had only asked God to be able to help my dad, and He was using me to help many more. The intricate details were not fully realized until I looked back and understood the extent of His vast resources, using all His children in ways they never thought possible.

It's been like unwrapping the most significant gift yet, as I look back at all the events that needed to happen, good and bad for me, to appreciate my life. And how we all factor into the lessons we learn and teach each other by the part we play, until, ultimately, we will return to the unconditional loving presence from which we came. I wrote this poem during my volunteering at the Respite House. Each time I would go there and visit I would enter the same rooms. They might have new patients, pictures, and family members, but the message

was always the same: extending love, kindness, and compassion to those in need.

Trumpets of Love

The rooms have frequent visitors that stay but only for a short time
These rooms are decorated differently for each trip when I arrive
With different cards and family pictures that are embraced with
much love
Different spirits on their journey
I am there to see them rise above

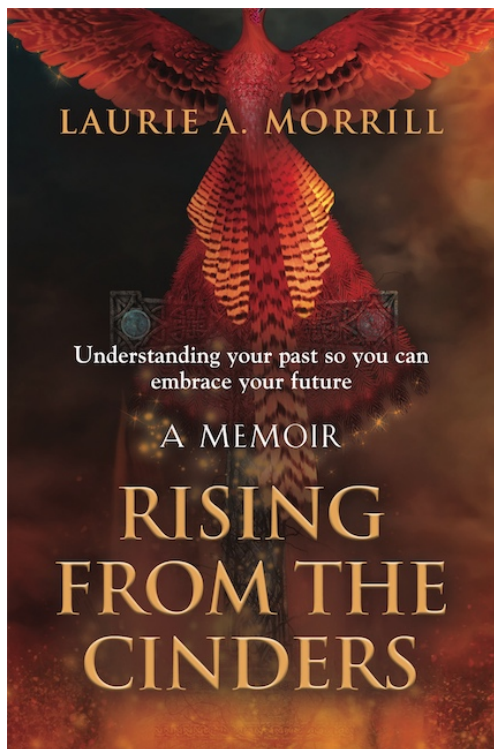
Beautiful spirits dancing in all shapes and sizes
They are on a journey that although they make alone,
They touch many souls along the way, that have helped them
brave the day

As I lay my hands upon their head, their tension seems to lessen
They sink into the comfort that they get with each session
The energy that is shared is of love, respect, and compassion

The journey that they soon will be taking will be led with a
Trumpet procession
Wings embracing the brilliance of their spirits as they reach for
their destination....high above with all the lessons they have
gathered

But this is not the end, for with each visit I continue to make,
I hear their spirits with gratitude they do make,
For all the souls they touched along the way, will remember them
each day

No matter if there are new pictures hung upon the wall, and a new
name upon the door,
These rooms will always hold the history of the ones that came
before



Laurie explains how she held onto confining emotions throughout her life until her father was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. In her attempts at helping comfort him she learned Reiki and other energy modalities that open the door to not only helping him, but helping many others by telling their story in her classes and energy sessions.

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