

A heartfelt narrative with a glimpse into the human side of a medium's life and a struggle with her own grief. Readers are also provided with a grief journal to offer healing and comfort, whether they believe in the afterlife or not.

My Dad's In Heaven... Now What? My Life, My Gift, My Grief
By Lisa Notarino O'Connor & Tonia Boncek

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MY DAD'S IN HEAVEN

Now What?

MY LIFE, MY GIFT, MY GRIEF



LISA NOTARINO O'CONNOR AND
TONIANNE BONCEK

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PREFACE

I have been planning on writing a book for a long time. But obviously, I have an easier time communicating than I do writing. I never really thought about what my book would be about. Would it be about me being a medium? Would I share how I discovered I was a medium? What stories would I tell? What do they mean to my community? And then my dad got sick. At that point, my life turned sideways. When my dad got sick, the thought of the book was on hold. Obviously, the thought of writing a book and having any focus was not happening with all the chaos going on. My dad was terribly ill for over two and a half years with multiple myeloma, which is a type of cancer that affects a specific kind of white blood cells and multiplies uncontrollably. He was very sick! He had strokes, dementia, and he was blind. I really did not think about the book because my focus shifted to taking care of him, his every need, every doctor's appointment, every meal, every day, and so, you get it! I asked a friend of mine to go over to his house one day to record my dad's thoughts about my book. I am so glad she did. We never think our parents are going to die, right?

My dad was an old school Italian. He never really talked about me being a medium. He kind of joked about it. He called me *Oda Mae Brown*, from the movie *Ghost* because that is how he dealt with it, by making a joke. My dad had intuitive abilities, and he seemed spiritual, but he never talked about it. He would say things here and there like, “Hey, there was a little girl in the corner of the room.” and he had no dementia at the time, so he did see a spirit. But anyway, I asked my friend to go ask him to record a session way before my dad passed.

I loved that she recorded him because she knew I wanted to hear his voice. I was able to listen, and it was so cute to hear all the stories and how proud he was of me for my work as a medium. He was kind of wishy washy, he believed it, but he did not know how to explain it.

My dad had two sides to him about the situation of me being his daughter and being a medium. I guess my dad worried about what people thought, but he also understood it. It was a catch 22 for him. But when I listened to the recording, it made me think about the book again. Being a medium is tough throughout the grieving process. I think to myself, *I'm human, I'm grieving. I'm grieving badly.* So even though I'm the medium, I'm having human

experiences, and this is the hardest concept that nobody can understand. I'm struggling.

I am a very sensitive person. I am very caring and giving. I feel everybody's everything. But when I do a reading, Spirit puts a block on me, and I have no emotion. So, I'm almost like a doctor delivering a message. I have a job to do, I can't get involved, which sounds very crazy, but that's how it works. In my work, you are not supposed to have emotion for people's readings because you would not be able to read them. I find myself never having emotion beyond my work. I do not have emotion for the other day to day experiences of my life. I could watch a story; it could be the saddest story ever and I cannot cry. I feel like I'm jaded from that, and this lack of emotion has been taken away from me because of my gift. I must bring in the spirit's emotions and feel what other people and spirits feel, then I started to notice that I never really have my own emotions, and I don't like it. This has made my grieving process very difficult.

When my dad was very sick, I thought, *okay we are going to get through this*. I was prepared, so I grieved him as he was dying. I knew he was going to die. I knew he was that sick. Towards the end, I was very aware of the need to eventually get him into hospice. The day-to-day trauma and knowing all of

this got me to shed a tear, here and there, but it was not like I had that major meltdown or ever completely broke down. I have never had the hysterical emotional breakdown where you get to cry and let it all out. I never ever let it out!

After fourteen months, I stopped and thought, *wow, I still can't cry like I should.* My eyes well up sometimes, but it is not a good cry, and you need that to grieve. So that is the hardest part of this journey. Sitting with this difficult journey of grief got me to want to write again. I knew my dad wanted me to write my story. I started, then I stopped, wrote one paragraph here, one paragraph there and I never really knew what message I was supposed to put on paper. I would get stuck thinking, *what can I share with my readers? What would they learn from me?* I know how important it was to my dad to write the book and share our family story and I wanted to honor that for him. But the dynamic of the book somehow changed after he died, it just changed for me. I have been reading as a medium for seventeen years. I obviously know he is in heaven. He showed me heaven which you will read about later in this book. I talk to heaven all the time. It's what I do for a living. Knowing he is there is not the issue.

I am a medium, but I'm also human. That is what everyone around me forgets. Hello, I'm actually a human, and I want my dad back! I want to go over to his house and bring him his coffee and his cruller. I want to make dinner for him. I want to take him for a ride and play our *John Fogarty* songs. There are all these things I want to do with him, and it breaks me. Then I have to sit in my chair and do a reading for someone else and I get frustrated. I look at people and I think, *I could talk to your dad all day, why is it that mine's in heaven and I can't talk to him?!* That's a hard concept and I cannot wrap my head around it. When I share this with people they say, "Well, why can't you?" Well, you can't! And for me, I can't! I'm sure there maybe is a medium that can talk to their own loved one in heaven, but I don't really think so. Where my dad is concerned, all I can go on is my experiences, and my beliefs are that I know he is in heaven. I know because I have been shown heaven which you will read about further in this book. There is another place that is better than this physical life and it is kind of mind boggling. When I sit still holding on to my grief over my dad, wondering if he is okay, I go on with my belief, the feeling in my gut and then I carry on.

I do make myself nuts over it sometimes when I reach my boiling point of not being able to see him or talk to him in spirit. You should hear the craziness that goes on at midnight when I'm lying in my bed. I have my dad's urn on the side of my bed. I look at it and I yell, "OH MY GOD! His physical body is in there. Where are you?!" To be clear, I know for sure he's in heaven, but I can't talk to him! I pray and pray and literally wave my hands in the air sometimes saying, "OH MY GOD, WHERE ARE YOU?" And then I pray to Blessed Mother Mary, I look at my pictures and I think *I know he's there!* The signs that he gives me are amazing. The signs are insane, and they are what I need to get by. But then I get a little jealous that I can read other people's spirits, and I can't talk to my dad!

So, this is a misunderstanding with mediums. My friends, family and clients think that I am *lucky* I am a medium because I get to sit with my dad and he is just there, where other people grieve loss and miss their loved one so much and will never see them again. They think I get to just *hang* with him all day, every day. I assure you, that is very far from the case. Grieving is actually awful for a medium!

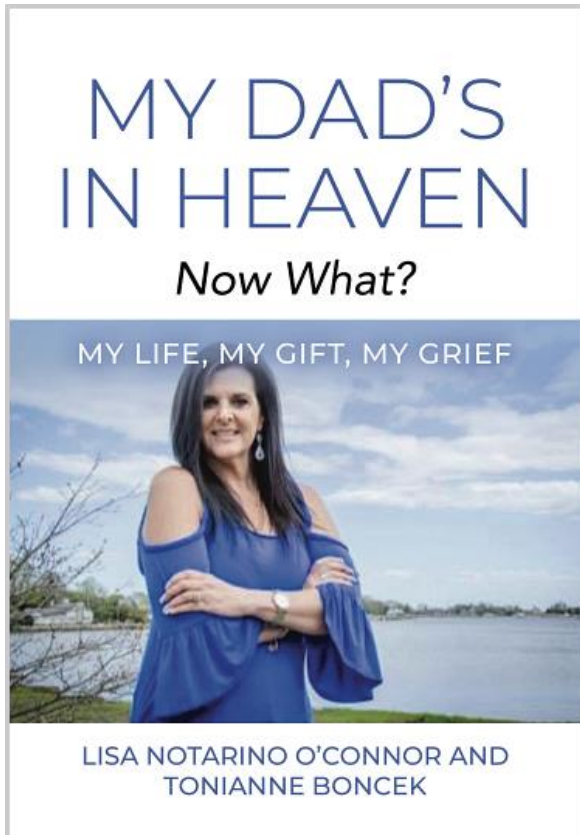
I read, basically, almost every day, with just two days off. I get pure joy reading for people and being

able to connect them with their loved ones. I get to see my clients smiling and clenching their hearts with the comfort of knowing their mom or dad is in heaven. But, oh my God, as much as I read, I am always looking to the right or left of Spirit to see if maybe my dad is there too. He's not! It is a very difficult concept for me. This has shifted my mind set on my gift. The concept of not being able to talk to him but being able to talk to everybody else and to help other people continues to blow my mind. My dad loved that I read, and that I am a medium. He was so proud that I was able to help people. But grieving and reading is difficult and changed my whole perception of my gift. However, my gift has greatly intensified, and my readings are much more powerful these days.

I am honored to be able to share my life, the discovery of my gift and my journey through grief as a medium. I am also blessed to share stories and words from my dear and beloved friends and clients. Along with this, my bereavement group has become a gift for all of us. Grieving is awful and it is your own journey. There are no rules for grieving. Do not let anyone persuade you any differently. At the end of this book, you will find a grief journal I put together with many ways I personally get through grief for the

Lisa Notarino O'Connor

loss of my dad every day. I hope these small practices can help you as they have helped me.



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