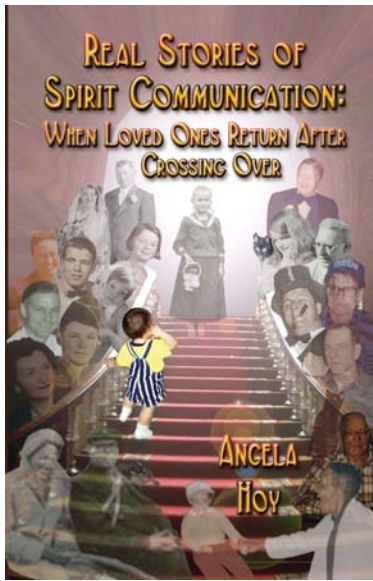


# REAL STORIES OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION: WHEN LOVED ONES RETURN AFTER CROSSING OVER



ANGELA  
HOY



This volume features real and extraordinary stories of spirit communication from ordinary people like you and me. The individuals who experienced these visits were always surprised and occasionally shocked when their departed loved ones crossed back over to deliver important messages, beautiful visions, loving words and even hugs from the "other side." Yes, there really is a wonderful life waiting for us after death! Our loved ones really are waiting on the "other side" for us, and they really do want to communicate with us, if only we knew how to listen!

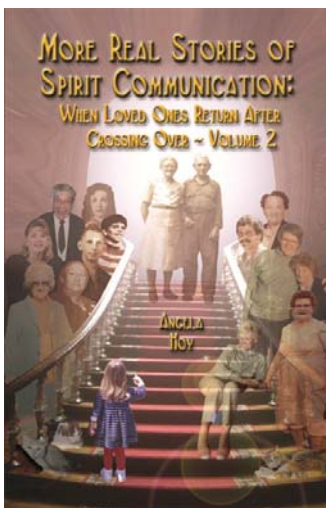
**REAL STORIES OF SPIRIT COMMUNICATION:  
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ISBN 1-59113-442-0

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Printed in the United States of America.

Booklocker.com, Inc.  
2004

Some names have been changed to protect individuals' privacy.



## **With Gratitude**

This book is dedicated to the loved ones of the contributors, those who have “crossed over” and then returned, giving us a glimpse of the world they now live in, and the world we will all live in, with them, someday. You will not only be inspired by the stories herein, but will also be enlightened about common occurrences that most people are afraid to talk about.

The photographs featured on the cover of this book are the actual pictures of loved ones appearing in our stories. See the following four pages for their names and corresponding chapter numbers.

I also dedicate this book to the contributors themselves, many of whom said that writing their stories helped them with their grief. They know they have helped other searching souls by doing so!

To my dad, David Jerome Phillips (see #5 on the following page), who died when I was five years old. He doesn't come around like he used to, but I think of him often and look forward to being in my daddy's arms again someday.

To our friend, Bob Freiday, who died while this book was being written. We'll miss the belly laughs, Bob, but we'll see you soon!

And to my aunt, Barbara Greathouse, who also died while this book was being written. Diabetes and strokes took many things from you, but nothing could ever diminish your sense of humor. Your courage is an inspiration to all who knew you.



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## Introduction

Angela Hoy

*"Mom, Mom, I saw him! I saw Daddy, Mom!"* (Chapter 23)

*"You must get in touch with your father."* (Chapter 12)

*"There stood Bruce, in the corner of the shower, staring at me."*  
(Chapter 16)

*"There, blocking the front door, stood Dad, dressed in his gray slacks, cream-colored, button down, short-sleeved shirt looking like he did in the pictures from the 1950s, not the 90s, when he died."* (Chapter 26)

*"Mommy, I see Jack!"* (Chapter 31)

*"I listened to him say how he never left my side for all these years, how every time I wondered if I were making the right decision, he would show me a sign. I listened to him say how peaceful it was on the other side..."* (Chapter 34)

*"(Heaven is) nothing like you may begin to imagine, nor is it anything like you have been taught to believe it is."* (Chapter 28)

~~~~~

I was raised knowing there is life after death, but believing that most people end up in hell. So, from an early age, I feared God (which no child should have to do!). At the age of five, my father, David Jerome Phillips (see photo 5 on page vi), died. Shortly thereafter, he started coming to me in dreams. I, of course, thought these were just dreams. Nobody ever taught me that spirits may come back to help us, so it never occurred

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to me to take the dreams seriously or to even mention them to anybody, not even to my mother.

I'd been taught in church that communicating with spirits was "evil" and only "demons" would be encountered if you actively participated in that kind of nonsense. (And God have mercy on your soul if you ever touched a Ouija® Board!)

I bet many of you were raised the same way. Until recently, I was terrified of death and what might or might not be beyond. I mean, what if the Muslims were right? What if I was the wrong religion? What about the people in African tribes who live their entire lives without bibles or "proper" religious training? Did they all go to hell just because they were born far away from all the preachers in the world? What if the Jews were right and we Christians were all going to burn in hell? And who was this Buddha guy?

How could we possibly know if we're the one "right" religion, and why does every religion dictate that members of every other religion are going to hell? The older I got, the more I thought about this and realized, if God loves us more than we even love our own children (a love so strong I can't even fathom its intensity), he would never banish us, no matter what we did wrong, even if our parents or our society raised us under the "wrong" religion.

So, I created this book for people like me, people who are afraid of death or who fear, for whatever reason, they will never see their loved ones again after leaving this world. And, hopefully, by reading these words, you will learn more about how to either communicate with your loved ones who have already crossed over or to simply recognize when your loved ones are trying to communicate with you.

### **Subtle Signs**

Our loved ones often use subtle signs when trying to tell us they're visiting. Sometimes, these signs are so subtle that others think we're imagining them or putting too much emphasis on natural occurrences. For example, someone may

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see a blue butterfly in winter and believe it's a sign from their aunt, who loved blue butterflies. Another person may hear their recently departed spouse's favorite song on the radio played several times in one day. There are many people

who receive subtle signs from loved ones, and some of these signs are valid forms of communication. However, because these signs can be interpreted differently, this book focuses on more direct forms of spirit communication, such as voices and visions.

*Perhaps Heaven is the way we want it to be; whatever our heart desires.*

### **Ha Ha's in Heaven**

In some of the stories featured here, you'll notice that a loved one's sense of humor survives with vigor! Not only do quick-witted loved ones enjoy making us smile once again when they come to visit in spirit, but we even find that some people who were quite serious and stoic when here with us are much more laid back and happy there. Humor in Heaven is quite cunning, as many of you may already know.

### **Contact Can Be Frustrating**

While you're reading this, please know that different forms of spirit communication work for some people, but not for others. For example, I failed miserably at Automatic Writing (until I stopped trying so hard). I can easily see spirits in my mind's eye when meditating (more about that later), but I assumed for a long period of time that those spirits existed only in my imagination. So, I ignored my visions and tried methods that others used successfully—not realizing I had already discovered my “gift.” There are a variety of ways to contact your loved ones who have died. If something doesn't work for you, try something else. We all have different strengths and gifts. Repeatedly attempting something that is just not working

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*The thought that all communication from Heaven just stopped one day just doesn't make any sense, does it?*

for you, or something that you think should work because it's working for someone else, will only lead to frustration.

**Why Is It So Hard to Believe?**

I often hear negative words about my research and personal spiritual experiences from skeptics, strangers, friends, and even family. I find it disconcerting that the majority of people in the world believe in a supreme being and the afterlife, and they believe in the angelic and spiritual visits detailed in the Bible, the Koran, the Tanakh, and other historic texts, yet they scoff at the possibility of spiritual visits happening today.

All religions tell stories of spiritual visits from angels, departed loved ones, and even God himself. Yet, people who have not experienced their own visitation think it's impossible to receive communication from the other side in today's modern world. Why? Why would God turn his back on us and remain silent today when life experiences, exposure to other faiths, and even technology make it so hard to believe in Him sometimes? The thought that all communication from Heaven just *stopped* one day just doesn't make any sense, does it?

When I was a little girl and attending Confirmation classes at the United Church of Christ, I asked my minister, point blank, about those poor people in African tribes. How would they get to Heaven when nobody had ever taught them about Jesus? He answered, "Well, God expects everyone to understand that there is something greater than themselves and to believe in that Being."

But, I thought, he'd been preaching to us every single week for as long as I could remember that you have to believe that Jesus was the Son of God in order to get to Heaven! Now he



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was telling me that those African people just had to believe in “something.” Huh? What was going on here?

Even at such a young age, I understood that this minister, this messenger of God who I had been taught to respect and believe, had just contradicted the main message he’d been preaching to me and to other parishioners for years.

Why do some people who have returned in spirit describe valleys and meadows while others describe buildings and roads? Why do some people report being met by loved ones who passed before them, while others state they were met by Jesus, or another prominent soul from their own religious beliefs? Perhaps God wants to comfort us when our souls are abruptly sucked out of our bodies and brought back home. Perhaps Heaven is the way we want it to be; whatever our heart desires. This theory, which I believe to be true after my research and experiences, has answered a lot of questions I had about the variety of experiences people report from the afterlife. If Heaven is how you want it to be, it would be a glorious place for all of us. Imagine what you want Heaven to be like for you. I believe that what you just thought about is exactly what you will have when you die.

If you still doubt the existence of spiritual contact in the modern world, let me ask you this. Why, after thousands of years of direct contact with people on Earth, would God just abandon us? Why would God talk to shepherds, but not to me? Why would angels visit people 2,000 years ago, but not visit people now? What has changed? Nothing at all. Heaven hasn’t changed. We have.

If you believe in angels, why is it so hard to believe that angels still bring messages and protection to people today? If you believe that some biblical figures returned with messages for their families and others after their deaths, why is it so hard to believe that our loved ones who have crossed over don’t occasionally stop by for a visit as well?

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*Heaven hasn't  
changed. We  
have.*

As you'll read in the stories here, spiritual visits have not stopped. Visits from Heaven are as prevalent today as they've been throughout history. The only difference is that nobody talks about them anymore and, when someone does experience something they can't explain, they doubt themselves. Why? Because that's what society has taught us to do. Even people who don't doubt themselves, who know that what happened to them was special and spiritual and real, keep their mouths shut. Everyone's too afraid to be labeled a freak.

I'm one of those people. When I read about the hate mail some people receive after writing books that contradict organized religion, I almost wrote this book under a pen name. But what kind of message would that send to others like me, people who want to come forward with stories of love and healing from grief, but who are afraid of society's judgment?

If we keep discouraging those who have been blessed with visits from sharing their experiences, our doubts and judgments hurt everyone. Each telling of an angelic or spiritual visit brings hope to those who have not yet learned how to recognize visits from their own loved ones, and the lessons taught by our loved ones who have crossed over should be shared with as many people as possible. Spirits who come back with lessons to teach have so much wisdom to share! For our own comfort and happiness, we need to learn how to listen to them, and we need to learn how to share our stories without worrying about the opinions and judgments of others.

One night, shortly after my minister confirmed my suspicions that the church teaches you what they want you to hear, not necessarily what is right, I was on my knees in my bedroom, praying. I asked God, "Why don't you come down and see people anymore?"

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I immediately felt a presence so powerful in my bedroom that I started crying. I knew it was God, and I was terrified! My heart started beating so hard I could hear it in my chest. His presence faded as quickly as it had come, leaving me stunned and humbled. I was so terrified that I didn't immediately understand that he hadn't just stopped by for a visit, but he had also answered my question.

Years later, this memory is as fresh in my mind as if it had happened yesterday and, when I was older, I finally understood the true meaning of his message. When that small, insignificant 12-year-old little girl in Texas got down on her knees to ask God why he didn't come to visit people anymore, his answer was, quite clear.

"I do."

## My Story

Angela Hoy

When I was five years old, my father died of cancer. Shortly thereafter, I started dreaming about him. The dreams lasted well into my teenage years, when they, eventually, stopped. In the dreams, my father would always give me advice. While growing up and experiencing these dreams, I thought they were just dreams. Nobody had told me that spirits come to visit in dreams, so I never suspected they were anything more than my imagination.

Years later, I realized that the advice he gave me in my dreams was far more mature and contained more detailed information than my imagination was capable of producing at that age. Sadly, it was only after the dreams had stopped that I understood my father had come to tell me things he wasn't able to tell me in his lifetime, things I wasn't old enough to understand when I was only five. Now, however, rather than regret the misunderstanding, I cherish the fact that my father never left me.

I do still dream about my father on occasion, but now he doesn't speak. He just nods his head and smiles at me. I'd like to think that's his way of telling me he's proud of the woman I have become.

When my daughter started talking at the age of two, she occasionally mentioned odd things, such as the woman with the long blonde hair who liked to sit in her bedroom. Ali saw people we couldn't see, but nobody seemed to appear with any regularity. I believed her, but didn't know if the sightings were her imagination or not. I certainly didn't mention the occurrences to family members or friends, fearing they would treat her differently or even make her feel like they didn't believe her. I didn't spend a great deal of time pondering the occurrences and just accepted them as part of Ali's world. After

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all, many children have imaginary friends, right? But, Ali didn't play with hers or even talk to them. They just appeared to come and go, and they became a normal part of Ali's life; no different than one of us walking through her room.

When we moved to Maine four years ago, we purchased a home that was built in 1896. Strange things happened on occasion, and then Ali and, eventually, Frank (her younger brother) saw "ghosts." When I experienced my first spirit (I don't think they're "ghosts"); well, the only way to describe my reaction was utter shock, followed by panic. I was sitting in our office (most occurrences in our home seem to occur in Frank's room, the office, and the mudroom), talking on the phone with my mother. Richard was out running errands and the children were in school, so I was alone. Richard's office chair was turned away from me. I noticed, out of the corner of my eye, the chair moving back and forth, back and forth. The movements weren't small at all. The chair was turning left to right, in wide movements, but not all the way around. I thought Ali's cat, Blotch, was in the office with me. So, after hanging up the phone, and seeing the chair still moving, I leaned over and swung it around to pet the cat...and the chair was, you guessed it, empty. I started shaking and my eyes filled with tears and I said, out loud, "I can't see you, but I know you're there!" Then, I ran out of the room! I told Richard about it when he got home. He, of course, thought it was the wind (the windows were closed), but I knew I'd had a visitor. There was no wind, no earth movements, and no cat. There was just no other explanation for what I saw.

Prior to last month, Zach, our oldest son, had never seen anything he couldn't explain and was a firm skeptic. He plans to be major in engineering and his beliefs are grounded in math and science, Zach is very logical in his thinking and not religious or spiritual at all. In the past, if I talked about our visitors in front of Zach's teenage friends, he'd roll his eyes and turns red with shame. Well, he's a believer now! After years of

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disbelief, Zach saw Jonathan standing by the door in the mudroom, but that wasn't all. He also felt a cat rubbing against his leg one day and, when he reached down to pet it, discovered there wasn't anything there. That's a sensation Ali and I experience frequently.

Max's room is situated between the upstairs hallway, the master bedroom, Frank's room, and Zach's room, so it has four doors. Recently, Frank (age 11) walked from our room into Max's room and saw Richard leaving the room from the door on the opposite side. Frank then turned left, toward the hallway, and jumped when he saw Richard walking down the front stairs. Frank yelled, "Mom! I just saw Daddy going through Max's room, but then he was on the stairs!" Frank was shocked and excited, but not frightened at all.

Richard, my husband, is also a skeptic, but an open-minded one. He does believe there are things we don't understand and can't see in this world, but he requires concrete proof before he will accept anything as fact. It's actually comforting to have a skeptic in the family to keep us grounded when things get just a bit too weird. Richard has never seen anything, but has "felt" odd at times. He's asked me repeatedly if I was turning off his computer late at night and if I was leaving the closet door open. It wasn't me, nor was it the children because they were in bed. And, while each incident can easily be blamed on electricity and drafts, the occurrences are random and unexplainable. So, Richard is open to the possibility that somebody he can't see might be playing games with him. (In Chapter 5, Ali writes about how she has seen Jonathan sitting at Richard's computer.)

We were eating dinner recently with friends when they confided that their daughter had seen the spirit of a woman in our house when she had slept over with Ali one night. She said she was lying in bed in Ali's room when, through the bedroom door, she saw an elderly woman walking down the front stairs.

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Several years ago, when we lived in Texas, a young girl was kidnapped within a few miles of our home. It was the lead story on every news station and in every newspaper for several days. It was heartbreaking, and I couldn't get her out of my mind. I had three young children at that time, and I was just sick about the situation.

On my lunch hour one day, I was sitting in my car at a stoplight and, in my mind, but with my eyes still open, I saw the little girl's body lying at the base of a large drainage pipe. The vision was very disturbing. I was also disturbed by the fact that my imagination could conjure up something that gruesome when I was simply listening to the radio and thinking about which fast-food restaurant to stop at for lunch.

The next day, they found the little girl's body lying in the opening of a drainage pipe. They suspected she had been murdered and put in a drain and that her body had traveled through the pipe to where it was discovered. The news showed footage of the drainage pipe. It was the pipe I'd seen in my mind. When I saw the pipe on TV, I got very upset and called my mother, frantically telling her what I'd experienced.

She asked, "Did you tell anybody at all about this?"

"No way! People would think I'm either sick or crazy," I replied.

She said that was good because she didn't want the police to think I had anything to do with the child's disappearance. I hadn't even thought about that possibility. I, of course, didn't tell anyone else about that until 2003, when something else strange and disturbing happened.

On February 1, 2003, Richard and I woke up and turned on the TV to watch cable news, as we always do on weekend mornings while reading the paper and drinking coffee. On Fox News, they were covering the space shuttle landing. I used to work in the aerospace industry and shuttle landings just aren't as exciting for me as they used to be. Just as I was about to

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change the channel on the remote, a voice in my left ear quite clearly and calmly said, "It's going to crash."

I felt completely foolish and wondered why my morbid mind was thinking such a terrible thing. I even said to myself, "Where did that come from?" I changed the channel. A few minutes later, Richard said, "I'm hungry. Let's go eat breakfast."

We went downstairs and, while I was cooking eggs, Richard was in the dining room watching television. I then heard him yell to me, "The space shuttle blew up!"

I ran to the dining room and was completely shocked and deeply upset. I started shaking and told Richard about the voice I heard in the bedroom. I then woke up the children to tell them what had happened (not about the voice in my ear, but about the shuttle exploding), went to the bedroom, started crying, and called my mother.

Mom suspected that I heard something on television in the background about it exploding and that my subconscious was playing tricks on me. I tried to explain to her that the shuttle wasn't yet missing when we were watching the coverage on Fox News while lying in bed. She didn't believe me. Our daughter, Ali, came into the bedroom and heard me telling my mother what happened. When I hung up, Ali hugged me and said, "There's nothing you could have done to stop it, Mom."

Ali, who was 12 years old at the time, and who had been seeing, hearing, and feeling things the rest of us could not understand for her entire life, knew instinctively that my reaction was due to guilt, and she knew exactly what to say to make me feel better.

I could no longer ignore the fact that something exists that is not part of our visible world. Did everybody have experiences like this, but just not talk about them? Did other people ignore these startling coincidences, visions, dreams, feelings, and voices and assume they were fiction, as I'd always done? One way or the other, I wanted to know the truth. So, I started the research that led to this book, but with an openly skeptic mind.



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I read numerous articles and bought dozens of books on psychic phenomena and spirit communication, written by a wide range of people, from scientists to self-proclaimed psychics and mediums to professional skeptics. During my research, some people (including my own family members!) accused me of dabbling in the occult. I ignored them and continued my studies. I researched everything from spirits to ghosts, mediums to psychics, Wicca to Islam, Judaism to Christianity, near death experiences, astral travel (which I was never successful with), meditation, chakras, and more. I learned about things I'd never even known existed and met people I thought were enlightened and others whom I thought were downright crazy. And, finally, in an attempt to establish communication with these spirits instead of just occasionally hearing and seeing them, Ali and I attended mediumship classes. Now, that was truly enlightening and a lot of fun!

The views I express here are the opinions I have formed after completing my research. Yes, my research is finished. I have collected enough proof, from my own research and experiences, to confirm that; yes, we do go on. There is a Heaven and it's only a breath away. And our loved ones do communicate with us. We just need to learn how to listen!

#### **Everyone is Intuitive**

Most people with psychic gifts claim that everyone has psychic abilities. For example, you've probably heard of women's intuition. Well, everyone is intuitive, not just women. Have you ever felt that your child or other loved one had been injured and learned later that they *were* really injured at the exact moment you became concerned a problem might have occurred? Have you ever been humming a tune, turned on the radio, and found it playing? Have you ever known who was on the phone when it started ringing or been thinking about someone only to have them call you, drop by, or run into you at the store a short time later? Have you ever known, in your mind, that a relative died

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before you actually learned they had died? How many times in your life have you experienced something that can't be explained and thought, *that was really odd?*

Just like some people must take piano lessons for years while others can play instantly by ear, psychic or intuitive abilities vary by person. Some people may experience simple déjà vu throughout their lives while others may have the ability to predict the future from the day they learn how to talk. Some people may be able to subtly pick up on the feelings of other people while others may experience the actual physical pains of those around them. And some children have imaginary friends who may, as you will read in this book, simply be deceased loved ones coming by for cherished visits.

~ ~ ~

On the very first night that my daughter, Ali, and I started mediumship classes, after a relaxation meditation, I saw people (spirits) standing behind the real people in the room with us. I, of course, thought these people were figments of my imagination. And, boy oh boy, was my imagination going nuts! One spirit fellow, in particular, was really funny. He was standing behind a woman named Suzie and waving an American Flag, a big one. I kept trying to ignore him. I mean, he wasn't really there, was he? He was just in my mind, right? He kept waving that darned flag and was looking me right in the eye and trying to get my attention. I didn't say a word. I knew nobody else could see him. It was kind of like when you have a song stuck in your head. You keep trying to forget about it, but it keeps playing through your mind, over and over again. Well, the flagman was just not going to go away, no matter how many times I told myself he wasn't real. He stood there behind Suzie, waving that flag, over and over again. He was pretty hard to ignore, but I kept pretending he wasn't there, because I truly believed he was not there.

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I, of course, kept my mouth shut and didn't tell anyone in the room about the flagman that night.

The next week, the group leader called on me specifically and asked if I felt, saw, or heard anything. I had recovered from my feelings of stupidity and shame and, knowing these people didn't really know me or any of my friends or family, or even my last name (thank goodness!), said, "Okay, this is gonna sound really stupid, but here goes."

I told them what I'd seen the week before, about the man standing behind Suzie, very insistently looking me in the eye and waving a large American flag. My face was burning in shame by the time I finished, and I hoped they'd all be very kind and not make me feel like more of a fool. Suzie, not at all fazed by my story, said it sounded like I was seeing her father. She said if he knew about the (Iraq) war going on, he'd be glued to his television (hence the flag). I was shocked and pleasantly surprised (though I still thought it had probably been my imagination). Then she said, "But he's still living."

Um, huh?! She then said he was very ill and, from what I understand of the conversation, I don't believe he was conscious at that time. I was too embarrassed to ask any questions.

Many people who have experienced this type of phenomena believe that a person's soul can leave their body if it's ready, despite how long doctors and science are able keep that body alive. Now I, personally, don't think God makes people in comatose states wait for years to be happy and free while their families and doctors force food and oxygen into their broken bodies. While their bodies may continue to show life on those monitors, in reality, nobody's home.

While I was quite pleased that I'd seen something that could be verified, despite the affirmation, I was still skeptical. I believed that, in all likelihood, the flagman had only existed in my imagination and that the similarities were simply a coincidence.

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I had one burning question when I started studying mediumship that no book answered. Do mediums really see a flesh and blood person or is a transparent soul standing there? Or are they just seeing something in their mind? If the people I saw were real souls, then the latter is a better description. I could see the flagman standing there, making gestures, but I didn't have to look directly at him to see him. I knew, in my mind, what he looked like and what he was doing because I could see him with my eyes closed, too. I could also see directly through him because he didn't appear to be a concrete person. But, of course, I wasn't trying to see through him and I knew, instinctively, that if I stood up and waved my hands where he was standing, I'd not feel anything. But, again, I was too stunned and embarrassed at that moment to start formulating scientific theories about the matter this vision was created from.

What does it mean when a medium says 'I can see it in my mind's eye?' I've come up with what I hope will give you an idea of the meaning of "in my mind's eye." Seeing something in your mind's eye is like dreaming, but with your eyes open. You can see something or someone there and your eyes are open, but at the same time, you know they're not really appearing in any concrete form. It's like seeing something with your eyes closed, but opening your eyes and still seeing it.

For example, picture a school bell in your mind. Your eyes are still open as you're reading this, but you can still see that school bell in your mind. If you close your eyes, you can still see that school bell. Yes, it's as simple as that! That's how it is when you see spirits, and why it's so hard for beginners to determine if the visions are their imagination or not.

If you see a spirit, and if you're a skeptic like me, you then wonder if what you saw was real or not. In fact, all mediums occasionally question the validity of what they see, even veterans. Since the imagination can create something as detailed as, say, a man waving a flag, mediums seek confirmation of the people and things they see in order to separate their imagination from real visions. Confirmation from

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those around you is the only way to know if your visions are, indeed, real spirits or people.

Later in that same meeting, another person popped into my mind's eye. I saw a short, very thin, young woman standing behind Jacques. She was in a nurse's uniform and had dark hair. The primary things I noticed about her were the nurse's uniform, her brown hair, and the fact that she was so petite. Since my imagination had so quickly conjured up another very detailed vision, I started to consider the possibility that perhaps it wasn't my imagination after all. That thought excited me.

I decided to assume the young woman was real. "What now?" I thought. Then I wondered if seeing a nurse meant that Jacques was going to get sick. So, I didn't say anything.

After the meeting, I asked the group leader, "What do you do when you think a message is negative?" She said that our interpretation might be wrong. While there are certain specific things a person may see, feel, or hear that should not be shared, if a vision is not understood, it should be shared.

During the next meeting, while still not certain if the young woman I'd seen had been real or not, I told the group about the nurse behind Jacques. Jacques smiled and said the woman I saw was his daughter. The description was perfect, right down to the brown hair, petite size, and profession. Yes, she's a nurse!

Okay, I was on a roll! I thought, "I can really see dead people!" But, my excitement was instantly extinguished when Jacques said, "But, she's alive."

What? Again?!

The leader explained that, sometimes, intuitive people may feel and see the energies of loved ones who may be close to or even thinking about the people we're with.

Arrgh! I wanted to see spirits, not living people! I see people all the time! I wanted to see "beyond the veil!" (What I really wanted was proof that there really was life after death, and

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seeing absent but living people was *not* what I anticipated when I signed up for that mediumship class.)

Unfortunately, when receiving contact from the other side, you don't get to pick and choose what you see, hear, and feel. It just happens. But after several classes and a lot of meditation, I now know that's the way it's supposed to be.

Over the next few weeks, I kept seeing spirits, different ones during each class. Ali was having success, too, but much more than I was! She had numerous visions of places and occurrences that were confirmed by the other class members as being accurate. She could feel the emotions of those around her, describe someone's childhood home, know things about their past by touching something they owned (psychometry) and, yes, see spirits and even give brief messages to the people they came to visit. And, while Ali and I were stunned by the things we were seeing and learning, the veterans in the class didn't seem at all surprised by anything that happened.

After watching my fellow class members experience a variety of gifts like Ali's, I started trying to see, feel, taste, hear, and, in any way, sense emotions, words, feelings and actions—anything other than seeing spirits; spirits who wouldn't talk to me, even in my mind, no matter how many questions I asked them. I was frustrated that none of them interacted with me whatsoever, but just stood there, looking quite content. I grew so frustrated that I stopped looking for (and started ignoring) the spirits I was seeing. And that was easy since I only saw them after meditating anyway (except for one incident in a grocery store, but that one didn't talk to me either). I figured since that mediumship stuff wasn't working (because the spirits didn't do what I wanted them to do), I'd explore other forms of psychic ability, such as automatic writing and psychometry.

The problem was, no matter how hard I tried to turn off the mediumship part of my experiences (the spirits) and turn on some psychic abilities (being able to read the people around

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me), nothing worked. I still saw spirits, but they were always silent. I wasn't feeling, seeing, or hearing anything else when I tried to will myself to do so. Oh sure, I'd see images flashing in my mind, but almost none that I was capable of interpreting. I certainly couldn't tune into anybody and see anything about their future, nor could I tell them anything about their past.

One odd thing that did happen that I hadn't read about was the increase in occurrences of unexplainable things after you start meditating on a regular basis (I only did it weekly). I started to see flashes of floating lights at all hours of the day, whether meditating or not. A friend thought I was having small strokes and my mother told me to go to the doctor. My ophthalmologist gave me an odd look and said she'd never heard of the lights I described seeing, but didn't order any further tests. Class members said the lights were a classic description of orbs.

I started to see auras around people when I wasn't trying to see anything, and I even started to hear voices in quiet rooms when I was involved in everyday activities, such as cleaning house. (Richard, my dear, skeptically open-minded husband, said with a smile, "None of them tell you to kill me, do they?") I even wrote down what the voices were saying for a while, and they appeared to be bits and pieces of conversations, never complete sentences. I thought perhaps my mind was echoing what I'd heard from other people, television, and even the radio. After writing down their words for several days, I can tell you with certainty that they do not come from my daily experiences. Some words and terms were definitely not from anything I'd watched, heard, or experienced. One very specific medical term, which I'd never heard before, was so clear in my ear that I wrote it down and looked it up on the Internet. And it was a real medical term, but something I'd never heard or read about before.

After weeks of attending classes and trying to do what I'd seen other people do (without success), while trying to ignore those

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visions of spirits who wouldn't talk to me anyway, I decided to, once again, study those people who I saw but who didn't respond to me. Maybe I had done it all wrong. Maybe a person or a book could help me communicate with these spirits. Maybe I'd been trying way too hard to force something to happen when I was just supposed to relax and watch it unfold? So, I decided to, once again, pay attention to the spirits in the room and to just let them be there. If they didn't want to talk to me, that was fine. Maybe no words or thoughts were needed.

In our next meeting, I saw a very rotund woman standing behind Jacques' wife, Linda. She was, again, quite large and wearing a long, white dress. She had gray hair, and the style led me to assume it was in a bun, but I couldn't see the back of her head. I remembered to ask her, in my mind, if she had a message or needed anything. She just smiled and nodded her head. She seemed quite friendly and tranquil. Even though I didn't know if she was real or not, for some reason, her presence made me feel warm and happy inside.

Then I saw a dog standing by Belinda, another group member. He was really fluffy, black and white, and a fairly medium-sized dog. He looked very soft.

After about 20 minutes, I finally got up the nerve to say something. After describing the woman in white, Linda said I was seeing her aunt, who had worn all white when she was helping people—all white because she was a nun. Her aunt had also come by for a visit when Linda had a reading by a medium the previous week. Linda keeps a picture of her aunt in her living room and they were very close when her aunt was still alive, and obviously still are.

The dog was Belinda's daughter's dog that had died the previous fall. After seeing two spirits in one night and receiving confirmation from my classmates, I was beyond excited! Seeing visions is one thing, but getting confirmation that you're not hallucinating is incredibly fulfilling. During our many meetings, I only saw one spirit that nobody could identify, that



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of a young boy. All the other spirits I saw were recognized by the class members they were standing behind.

## **Medium or Charlatan?**

Angela Hoy

Finding a medium is a tempting and comforting idea for those experiencing grief after the death of a loved one. While you may learn to meditate (some people don't need to meditate to see spirits) and experience things that may or may not be your imagination, it may still be tempting to try to find someone who can confirm or deny your experiences, or even open a clear channel of communication between you and your loved one.

You have no doubt read about the frauds in this line of business. How do you know if a medium's message is real or not? If you listen to a medium and approximately 85% of what they say can be applied to most people, chances are they are grasping at generalities. If most of what they say is very specific, and can't be applied to most people, then they may actually be getting real messages...but not always. Be wary of mediums who may have "plants" in their audience. (A plant is a friend or associate of the medium that sits in the audience and pretends to affirm everything the medium says.) Be wary of mediums who ask questions and get to know people in the audience before or even during readings. They are probably fishing for information. Also, be very wary of mediums who are extremely dramatic and theatrical and/or use elaborate props. This type of behavior and atmosphere is not necessary.

The only true way to know if a medium is giving a real message is if that message is for you or someone you know (not a stranger), and if that message is very specific and wouldn't be understood or recognized by the vast majority of people.

If a medium states they have your mother there (if you're of a certain age, it's easy to guess if your mother or a "Mother Figure" has passed over already), and that she had pains in her chest (lots of people die of heart problems!), or lists two or three different general ailments, or seems to make repeated

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and vague guesses as to the “messages” they’re receiving...well, that person is either a new medium, a poor medium, a good medium who’s having a bad day (it happens), or a fraud. If the medium can’t provide you with very specific information (without asking you any questions), they should be avoided. While it may be tempting to try to “help” the medium by providing information, don’t. You should never give a medium any assistance and only answer their questions with a yes or a no (when asked if you understand a message they have given you). Good mediums don’t ask for information; they provide it. And, good mediums don’t try to interpret the messages they receive; they simply give the information as it comes. If they truly are receiving messages from your loved one, they shouldn’t have to ask you any questions.

If you don’t understand a message that is given, it’s okay to say so. Sometimes, the spirit who is communicating with the medium can provide more detail, or can convey the message in a different way. Believe me, your loved one doesn’t want to bless you with a visit, only to leave you confused. So, it’s okay to say, “No, I don’t understand. Please provide more information.”

Should you ask the medium questions to relay to your loved one? Sure, but wait until it looks like the reading is coming to an end. And, don’t provide so much detail that the medium, should they be a fraud, can use to fool you into believing something that they’re creating. Instead of asking detailed questions that would only require general yes or no answers, ask general questions that require detailed answers. For example, instead of saying, “Dad, the police said you ran that stop sign and that’s why you were killed. Is that true?” Say, “Dad, tell me more about your death. I need to know what happened.” Again, if the medium can provide detailed information that can’t be recognized or understood by the vast majority of the population, your loved one may really be coming through for a loving chat.

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I once saw a medium give messages to a woman and her daughter from the woman's late husband and his mother. The medium not only knew the exact occupations of the father and his mother, and exactly what the family did as a memorial to the husband, but she also knew their names. Some people claim that the spirits themselves must be good communicators to get messages across clearly to mediums. Perhaps, but a medium should not pretend to know the message or interpret it in any way. The message should come straight from the departed loved one.

One night, Richard and I attended a service where a medium was speaking. She was communicating with the family of an elderly gentleman who used to wear his false teeth upside down as a joke. I considered that message very specific and certainly not something that would apply to 85% of the population. I was impressed, until Richard leaned over and whispered, "Could be a plant."

The medium approached me later and asked, "Have you recently given someone a haircut?" Richard and I looked at each other. His eyes were wide open and my jaw dropped. A comment like that also would not apply to most of the population, and it blew me away. You see, our baby, Max, had needed a haircut for quite sometime, but I just couldn't bring myself to cut his baby locks off. Finally, the week before we were sitting there, listening to that medium, I gave Max his first haircut. It was a very bittersweet moment for me because Max was transformed from a baby with wavy locks to a little boy with a bowl haircut. I didn't say anything to the medium, of course. I just shook my head yes to affirm that I did understand the message.

The medium continued and said my three grandmothers thought the haircut was "very sweet." Now, how many haircuts would be considered very sweet? That definitely would not apply to the majority of the population! She gave me, personally, more very specific messages, some that I could

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never confirm, along with some general things that I dismissed because they could be applied to just about anyone. But, the haircut message really shocked us both!

Mediums, even good ones, have their bad days. Some days they get every message right, and sometimes either the spirits aren't conveying their messages in a way the medium can understand, or the medium just isn't hearing or seeing them clearly.

Several months after our first professional medium experience, I took Ali to that church, and the same medium was there. I was very excited because she had delivered so many very specific messages to people the previous time. However, I was gravely disappointed when she repeatedly "missed" throughout the evening. In fact, if I hadn't seen her at work before, I'd have thought she was a fraud. That's how bad it was. She read Ali and me and the only thing that she may have come close on was talking about the spirit that Ali frequently sees in our house, Jonathan. But, it may or may not have been him. She batted zero with me. I didn't recognize and could not confirm anything that she said to me that evening.

Of all the psychic phenomena I've studied, contact with departed loved ones holds the most sincere interest for me. My experiences and research has led me to seek out other people who have been spontaneously contacted by their loved ones in spirit. The people whose stories appear here are not practicing psychics or mediums. They are ordinary people like you and me who were not actively seeking contact with the spirit world, but who were pleasantly surprised (and, of course, occasionally frightened) when the contact occurred. Here are their stories.



## **Our Stories**





## 1. Daddy's Favorite Song

Sandy Williams Driver

**M**y daddy loved country music. He used to tell me stories about his family gathering around their old Zenith® radio back in the early 1930s and listening to the latest bluegrass tunes each Saturday night on the live Grand Ole Opry® radio broadcast.

The late 1940s brought the haunting voice over the airways of the man my daddy always proclaimed to be the *best country music singer of all times*, Hank Williams. The legendary performer was no relation to my father, Dalton Williams (see photos 8, 9 and 18 on page vi), even though both men were tall and thin.

As a child, I often sat beside Daddy as he listened with a hint of a smile to one of the many Hank Williams records he owned. I remember watching the small black circle spin on the turntable and listening respectfully to the enduring voice tinged with a slow, southern drawl and a touch of static.

Over the years, Daddy replaced his LPs with 8 track tapes and then, a little later, with small cassette tapes. He always bought every Hank Williams selection he could find. In the mid-1990s, my sister bought a CD player for Dad. He liked it immensely and, of course, the first CD he bought was *Hank Williams Greatest Hits*.

He thought it was grand that he could push a button and immediately hear a specific song anywhere on the disk. Daddy loved all the songs recorded by Hank Williams, including *Your Cheatin' Heart* and *Kaw-Liga*, but his favorite tune was *Hey Good Lookin'*, which was number 13 on the CD. He would sit and listen to it over and over again.

A few weeks after my daddy died on May 28, 1999 from cancer, my mother brought a trunk full of boxes over to my house. She had kept a few of Dad's personal belongings, but had decided to give me some of my father's memorabilia.

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*At exactly midnight,  
my husband and I  
were abruptly  
awakened by the  
blaring sound of our  
stereo in the living  
room.*

We sat down on the floor of my den and began sifting through the memories of Daddy's life. In the bottom of a large box, underneath a stack of neatly pressed handkerchiefs, I found an old, faded, and yellowed newspaper article dated 1953. It was clipped from a tabloid in Montgomery, Alabama and told the distressing news of the death of the beloved country music singer, Hank Williams, at the young age of 29.

Mother had no idea where Daddy had gotten the newspaper. Because he thought it was important enough to keep, I folded it carefully and placed it in my scrapbook for future generations to read.

In another box, I found the *Hank Williams Greatest Hits* CD my dad had listened to so many times. I smiled and asked Mom why she didn't want to keep it for herself.

"That CD player stopped working months before your daddy died and I haven't gotten around to buying another one," she told me. I had no idea their CD player was broken and thought it was sad that Daddy didn't get to listen to his favorite CD during the weeks before his death.

After Mom left, I put everything back in the boxes and left them in the den. It was getting late and my breaking heart just couldn't hold up to opening another container of reminders of Daddy that day.

I went to bed around 10:00 p.m. and fell into a deep sleep. At exactly midnight, my husband and I were abruptly awakened by the blaring sound of our stereo in the living room. We jumped out of bed and raced down the hall expecting to see one of our young sons up on a stool messing with the knobs on our sound system, which was on the top shelf of our entertainment center.

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The darkness of the living room greeted us and sent us racing to find the light switch. The bright glow revealed no playful children, just an empty room. My husband rushed over to the stereo and reached up to turn the power off, when I stopped him.

A chill ran down my spine as I pointed to the open CD case lying on a middle shelf of the entertainment center. I picked it up and gasped aloud when I closed it to reveal the title *Hank Williams Greatest Hits*. I stared, open-mouthed at my husband as number 13, *Hey Good Lookin'*, started to play over again.

The children had been awakened by the loud music also, and stumbled into the living room with sleep filled eyes. "What's going on?" they asked.

I really had no idea how to answer their question. I knew, as the last person to go to bed that night, that Daddy's CD had been left packed inside a box, downstairs in the den. Two hours later, it was in the living room, in the CD player, and set to play a specific song repeatedly.

My husband gave me a warm smile before kneeling in front of the children. "It's just your Paw Paw listening to his favorite song."

Today, three years later, I still have the Hank Williams CD sitting beside my stereo. I carefully take it out of the case and play it in its entirety at least once or twice a month. I always stop on number 13 and play it a couple of extra times just for Daddy.

*Sandy Williams Driver lives in Albertville, Alabama with her husband, Tim, and their three children, Josh (16), Jake (14), and Katie (12). She writes a parenting column, Tots and Teens, for The Sand Mountain Reporter, in Albertville, Alabama, and her short stories have been included in numerous publications including Mothering, Parenting with Spirit, Home Cooking, Your Family, ByronChild, and Australian Family magazine.*

## 2. Unspoken Last Words ARE Heard!

Suzanne T. Jackson

**W**hen Hurricane Hugo reared its windy head in our inland community, that event seemed minor compared to the emotional blow our high school had been hit with. It was 1989, and I was a blooming 15-year-old girl. My friends and I were so excited about going to a bigger school with bigger people and bigger prospects. Out with the old and in with the new became our new motto. But as children can continue their unrelenting ways, even in their teens, most of the old that would be forgotten would include most of the kids we had been friends with since kindergarten.

Too young to have a driver's license, most of us continued to endure the yellow-diesel guzzler. No one wanted to ride the bus in high school, so having your own car, or at least knowing someone who had his or her own wheels, was the only way to be seen in the school parking lot without embarrassment. The first week of school was the time when we were all getting situated in our routines of who was going to remain our friends throughout the next three years. I made the conscience decision to exclude any and all of my past friends that lived on the "other side of the tracks." It was popularity and name brand all the way for me. One guy in particular, Cliff, who I had known since the second grade, and probably someone I had been a girlfriend to at one time or another, made an attempt to pass over to the cool side with me.

During an afternoon bus ride home, Cliff tried talking to me. That didn't seem strange to him. After all, he had known me since I had pigtails and crooked teeth. In an out of character response, I completely ignored any conversation with Cliff. He was, in my head, from the "other side of the tracks."

I could tell that my icy reaction to Cliff was hurtful. My rejection showed on his face with embarrassment and confusion, I wanted to tell him how sorry I was and be pals with

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him again, but I couldn't. I was too afraid that I wouldn't be accepted if I interacted with one of "those" kids.

Another bus-riding sufferer was Stephanie. She was tall and thin with baby soft blonde hair and a personality that could light up a room. Stephanie was a girl from the right side of the tracks, so everybody wanted to be friends with her. To my advantage, Stephanie and I had been friends as long as Cliff and I had known each other.

Going into the second week of our high school saga, one afternoon, all the kids noticed that Stephanie and Cliff weren't on the bus. Some kids started saying that Cliff had gotten his license late last week and he was driving home today. Instantly, that allotted Cliff with cool points. He would be one that we could potentially catch a ride with. But that didn't explain where Stephanie was. She hadn't missed the bus in years, if ever.

Suddenly, some kids started yelling and carrying on saying they saw Stephanie in Cliff's car, and that they were just ahead of us. What!? How could that be? A cool kid riding in a car with a not-so-cool kid? Without any explanation, we knew that Stephanie was just using Cliff so she could look even cooler by avoiding a tortuous bus ride home.

For the next five minutes, most all of bus number 361's occupants continued to discuss the freshest gossip. Suddenly, Cliff's car hurled by us with a loud roar. Clearly his "new" wheels had no muffler. Loss of cool points—yet Stephanie's reputation remained unaffected. Some kids hung out the bus windows, cheering Cliff. Up ahead, you could see Stephanie standing up through the sunroof, waving her hands.

We envied Stephanie's advantage of getting home faster than us. Where she would be home in only 10 minutes, we still had 30 minutes to go.

I was going home with a friend of mine that day. Her bus stop was located by her father's convenient store. In my selfish ways, all I could think about was getting free gum, drinks, or chips. As we stepped off the bus, two ambulances went roaring by us. My stomach began to cramp; something it always did

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whenever an ambulance went by. In my typical consoling way, I thought, I hope it's just for a pregnant woman who can't get to the hospital.

My friend and I proceeded with our afternoon, talking about who was cool, cute, and in style, and predicting who would end up being whose girlfriend this year. Her mother came home within the hour. Maybe, at this point, we were trying to ignore the anxiety she was obviously displaying, as if wanting to tell us something. When my friend's older brother came home a few minutes later, it happened. They sat us down, side by side on the couch, and told us there had been an accident. Being young and naïve, we'd never really experienced any "accidents" before. So, being prepared was not something we would be able to pretend.

Who? Where? When? How? We both thought it, but couldn't ask. Then there it was; Stephanie and Cliff had been in a car accident and neither one of them survived the crash. My friend didn't take the news well and began to weep loudly. I just sat there in silence. I've always been the type of person to not get all worked up about something I hadn't actually seen.

The week finished with sadness and silence throughout the halls of our school. This time was supposed to be fresh and new, vibrant and memorable, but not memorable in this way. My parents allowed me to attend the viewing of Stephanie and Cliff; both in separate parts of town, but they didn't allow me to attend either funeral. My parents knew that this emotional blow was an overload to my mind.

Two days after both teens were buried, news of Hurricane Hugo's approach began to prepare our town for something that had never happened in its history. Some people left their homes, others boarded up windows. Most all of us collected tubs and milk jugs of water. Pantries were stocked with extra food and batteries, candles, and matches. Not knowing what to expect, we toughed it though. I slept through most of the ordeal, only to wake up long enough to move downstairs.

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As the days passed, the mourning numbness I'd experienced for Stephanie and Cliff began to fade. Overwhelming guilt began to sit on my shoulders like a metaphysical monkey. How

*"I just wanted to tell you goodbye one last time and tell you that I forgive you."*

could I have been so mean to Cliff? Why did I have to be so hurtful to him when I had no idea how long he was going to be here? I became depressed, saddened by my shallow ways. Nothing seemed to help shake my feeling of just wanting to tell Cliff goodbye one more time. I should have said it to him that last day he rode the bus. I missed him.

After three days of no power, our water supply went dry and we packed up and went to my grandparents' house down the road. That night, as I was trying to go to sleep, I still felt guilt that was untouchable. But, when I finally went to sleep, something occurred that I had never experienced before. When I awoke, I was crying hysterically. My mother was at my side, comforting me. She knew I had been upset over my young friends' short lives, but she didn't realize that my tears weren't of heartbreak, but of relief.

During my slumber, I began an incredible dream. I was suddenly walking down a hallway at my school. Crowds and crowds of people were all over the place. Walking through the sea of students seemed almost impossible, but through the crowd emerged a face I recognized. A friend of mine came up to me with a look of sheer excitement. She seemed almost too happy to speak.

"Cliff is here! Cliff is here! He wants to talk to you!"

For reasons only dreams can explain, I was escorted deeper within the crowd of people. Conscientiously, I knew Cliff was dead, but it seemed odd to question my friend's persistence. And there he was. Cliff was standing in the middle of a crowd that seemed to avoid a one-foot radius around him. He was wearing a tie-dyed t-shirt; they had become the staple part of

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his outfits. He looked melancholy, but a little bit anxious. And then he spoke.

“I just wanted to tell you goodbye one last time and tell you that I forgive you.”

In the dream, I didn't talk back, but I do remember being overjoyed by being able to have that one last time to tell my friend goodbye. And then, just as I had been escorted into the crowd, I was being escorted out of the crowd. Someone was comforting me as I continued down a hall that became less populated. That was when I woke up with tears of relief and content.

Fourteen years later, I still recall that event, dream, visit as if I had it just last night.

*Suzanne T. Jackson is a mother of two boys and a wife to “the perfect man.” A college graduate from Lenoir-Rhyne College in North Carolina, Suzanne has been writing since she was 14 years old. Although she has had other experiences with friends passing away and visitors in her dreams, the visit from Cliff has always affected her more deeply than the others. For more information about Suzanne and her writing services, please visit her website at [http://www.geocities.com/lrcbsn\\_01/usingtherightwords.html](http://www.geocities.com/lrcbsn_01/usingtherightwords.html).*



## **About Angela Hoy**

Angela Hoy is the author of eight non-fiction titles. She and her husband, Richard, are the owners of WritersWeekly.com (a site that publishes free paying markets and job listings for writers) and Booklocker.com (a publisher of print and electronic books).

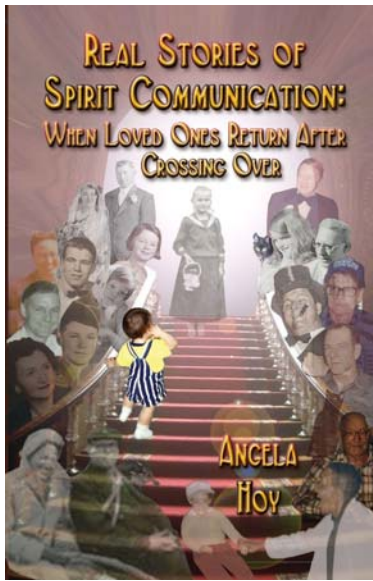
Angela and Richard live on the Penobscot River in Bangor, Maine with their four children, Zach, Ali, Frank and Max.

Neither Angela nor her daughter are experienced (and certainly not practicing!) mediums and are not pursuing that line of work. If you wish to contact a licensed medium, please contact the National Spiritualist Association of Churches at <http://www.nsac.org/churches> or the Worldwide Directory of Spiritualist Churches at <http://www.lighthousespiritualcentre.ca/Churchdirectory.html>.



## **Do You Have a Story to Share?**

If you'd like to contribute to Angela's next book in this series,  
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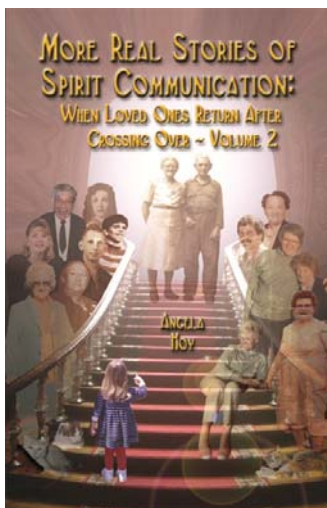
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