

# COURAGEOUS SOULS

Do We Plan Our Life Challenges Before Birth?



ROBERT SCHWARTZ



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BY ROBERT SCHWARTZ

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“The more we know about the meaning of life, the better we understand the important choices we must make. Robert Schwartz has done an excellent job of presenting the possible explanations of what we are doing here and why we are here. I highly recommend this book.”

—Dannion Brinkley, author of  
*Saved by the Light* and  
*The Secrets of the Light*

## A Note about This Document

Each story in *Courageous Souls* has the same format: a personal interview in which one particular life challenge is discussed, followed by one or more sessions with a medium or channel in which we learn why the life challenge was planned, followed by the author's commentary.

This document is a portion of Chapter 6, Death of a Loved One. It contains:

- The entire personal interview
- Portions of each of three sessions with mediums:
  - Speaking with the interviewee's "deceased" loved ones
  - Speaking with the interviewee's soul
  - The interviewee's pre-birth planning session in which the deaths were discussed
- A portion of the author's commentary

*Courageous Souls* intends to help people see the deeper spiritual purposes of their life challenges. We ask that you please forward this document to anyone who has experienced the death of a loved one, or more broadly, anyone who has an interest in the spiritual meaning of life.

In addition, you are welcome to print limited numbers of copies for acquaintances who have no computer access. Those readers may order the full book by calling Whispering Winds Press at 1-800-742-0148 or by asking their local bookstore to order it.

Please note, however, that the publisher has granted permission for this document to be shared in its entirety only; anyone who wishes to excerpt a portion should contact the publisher through the contact form at <http://www.courageoussouls.com/contact.htm>, by telephone, or by email at [info@courageoussouls.com](mailto:info@courageoussouls.com).

Lastly, page numbers in the Table of Contents correspond to the print book, not this document, and the order of certain elements of the print book has been altered for purposes of creating this PDF.

# Contents

Acknowledgments	xi
Prologue	1
Preface	3
Introduction	9
<i>Chapter 1</i> • Pre-birth Planning	19
<i>Chapter 2</i> • Physical Illness	33
Jon	34
Doris	59
<i>Chapter 3</i> • Parenting Handicapped Children	83
Jennifer	84
<i>Chapter 4</i> • Deafness and Blindness	105
Penelope	106
Bob	126
<i>Chapter 5</i> • Drug Addiction and Alcoholism	151
Sharon	152
Pat	176
<i>Chapter 6</i> • Death of a Loved One	207
Valerie	208
<i>Chapter 7</i> • Accidents	247
Jason	248
Christina	274

<i>Chapter 8 • Conclusion</i>	315
Epilogue	319
A Note to Readers and A Note to Mediums and Channels	321
Appendices	
A: Courageous Souls	325
B: Mediums and Channels	327

## *A Note to Readers*

IF THE STORIES IN *Courageous Souls* touch you, please let me know. And if you might like to share your story in my next book about the pre-birth planning of life challenges, please let me know that as well.

For all readers, which life challenges would you like to see addressed in the next book? What questions would you like answered? How can I make the next book more helpful to you?

I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached at the e-mail address at the bottom of this page. Please indicate if you would like to be added to the e-mail list or if you would like me to speak with your book club by teleconference.

## *A Note to Mediums and Channels*

I INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE in my ongoing study of pre-birth planning. If you might like to lend your talents to subsequent books in the *Courageous Souls* series, please contact me.

Robert Schwartz  
author@courageoussouls.com

## *Prologue*

ON FEBRUARY 25, 1969, Christina, a twenty-year-old administrative assistant in the department of political science at Pomona College in Claremont, California, went to the department's basement mailbox to pick up her employer's mail. As she touched a package in the mailbox a bomb detonated, hurling her across the room. Dust and soot filled the air; six-foot splinters of wood shot like arrows into the cement wall behind her. Flames from the explosion scorched Christina's face, leaving her temporarily blind. The blast severed two fingers from her right hand and ruptured both eardrums.

Christina planned this experience before she was born.  
And she knows why.

## Preface

IN MAY OF 2003, I was leading an unfulfilling life as a self-employed marketing and communications consultant. Although I enjoyed some of my work, I did not derive deep satisfaction from any of it. I often felt that if I were to fall off the face of the Earth, my clients would hardly notice; they would simply plug someone else into my role. More important, my life was not a unique expression *of my soul*. A spiritual but not a religious person, I longed to make a contribution to the world that would be “uniquely me,” but I had no idea what that might be.

I had exhausted the usual routes one explores to find meaning and purpose. I was lost and floundering. Then, an inspiration came to me: why not consult a medium? Although I had a strong belief in God, I had never (as far as I knew) directly experienced the metaphysical. I felt I had nothing to lose. I researched mediums and selected someone with whom I felt comfortable.

My session with the medium took place on May 7, 2003. I remember the exact date because on that day my life changed. I told the medium very little about myself, describing my circumstances only in the most general terms. She explained that each of us has spirit guides, nonphysical beings with whom we plan our lives prior to incarnation.

Through her I was able to speak with mine. They knew *everything* about me—not only what I had done but also what I had thought and felt. For example, they referred to a specific prayer I had said to God some five years earlier. At a particularly difficult time I had prayed, “*God, I can’t do this alone. Please send help.*” My guides told me that additional nonphysical assistance had been provided. “*Your prayer was answered,*” they said. I was astounded.

Eager to understand the suffering I had experienced, I asked my guides about the major challenges I had faced. They explained that I had planned these challenges before birth—not for the purpose of suffering, but for the growth that would result. I was shaken by this information. My conscious mind knew nothing of pre-birth planning, yet intuitively I sensed truth in their words.

Although I did not realize it at the time, my session with the medium triggered a profound spiritual awakening for me. I would later understand that this awakening was really a *remembering*—a remembering of who I am as an eternal soul and, more specifically, what I had planned to do on Earth.

For the next few weeks I continued with life as usual, although the information from my guides was constantly on my mind. I did not know what to do with it. One afternoon I took a break from work and went for a walk—and had an experience even more profound than my session with the medium. *I suddenly felt overwhelming, unconditional love for every person I saw!* No words can adequately convey the power of this love. It was of an intensity and depth I had never experienced and did not know was possible. For each person—the mother pushing her baby in a stroller, the cab driver waiting for a fare, the child playing at the corner, the barber cutting

hair behind the window of his barbershop—I felt pure, limitless love.

Though I had never before heard of such an experience, I knew intuitively what was happening: *I was in enhanced, immediate communion with my soul.* In effect my soul was saying to me, “*This love is who you are.*” I now believe my soul gifted me with this experience to facilitate the work I would soon begin.

I became obsessed with reading about spirituality and metaphysics. As I read I thought often about pre-birth planning. All my life I had viewed my challenges as nothing more than meaningless suffering and their occurrences as random and arbitrary. Had I known that I’d planned my challenges, I would have seen them rich with purpose. That knowledge alone would have greatly eased my suffering. Had I also known *why* I’d planned them, I could have consciously learned the lessons they offered. Feelings of fear, anger, resentment, blame, and self-pity would have been replaced by a focus on growth. Perhaps I might even have been grateful for the challenges.

During this period of intense study and inner exploration, I met a woman who is able to channel her soul and who agreed to let me speak with her soul about pre-birth planning. I had no knowledge of channeling and was taken aback when she went into a trance and another consciousness, one clearly distinct from hers, began to speak through her. I spoke with her soul for fifteen hours over the course of five meetings.

These conversations were thrilling. They verified and complemented my reading and study. Her soul told me in detail about her own pre-birth planning: the various challenges that had been discussed and the reasons some were selected. Here I had direct, specific confirmation

of a phenomenon of which very few people were aware. Because the pain in my life had made me extremely sensitive to—and intensely motivated to relieve—the suffering of others, I was excited by the potential healing an awareness of pre-birth planning could bring to people. I knew that the information I had discovered could lighten their suffering and imbue their challenges with new meaning and purpose. As a result I resolved to write a book about the subject and to share its significance with others.

My enthusiasm for my new path was, however, tempered by the uncertainty of letting go of the old. Though unfulfilling, it was at least comfortable and familiar. Nevertheless, I was sustained—indeed, compelled to go forward—by the importance of the work, the opportunity finally to express myself in unique ways that would be of service to the world, and the certainty of knowing that came from directly experiencing my soul.

At first I thought the idea for the book had originated in this lifetime. In truth, however, I had simply remembered my own pre-birth planning. By working with several gifted mediums and channels, I discovered I had planned not only to write a book on this subject but also to interview at least one of the people whose stories appear on these pages. In all I had dozens of sessions with mediums and channels, during which I spoke with many wise beings in spirit about my challenges and about pre-birth planning in general. In this book I offer to you what they have taught me.

I now understand why I had planned certain challenges for myself: I wanted to take the journey those who read this book may also take. I, too, at times felt victimized by the universe and blamed others for the “bad” things that happened to me. I saw my challenges as pointless, empty suffering and doubted my worth when I did not rise to them in the way

I would have liked. But with my knowledge of pre-birth planning, I now realize that an entirely different perspective on life challenges is possible. In writing *Courageous Souls*, I set out to teach what I had most needed to learn.

It takes a great deal of courage to live the plans you made before you were born. My desire, my most fervent wish, is that you recognize the tremendous courage you show in every moment of every day when, with each breath, you reaffirm your decision to embrace and learn from your own challenges. Within that recognition, you will find your soul.

## CHAPTER 6



# *Death of a Loved One*

**O**F THE MANY CHALLENGES PROVIDED by life on Earth, death of a loved one is perhaps the most universal. Unless we die at a young age, it is likely we will lose someone we care about. The fact that virtually all of us share this experience suggests it offers profound opportunities for growth. Were it not so, we as souls would be less likely to seek lives on the physical plane.

Yet, death is much more prominent in some lives than in others. To understand why a soul might plan before birth to lose loved ones, I talked with Valerie Villars. Forty-two at the time of our conversation, Valerie had lost two people whom she loved dearly, including her only child, Dustin, who had passed away three months earlier. Valerie felt it would be healing for her to talk about her experiences, and she hoped to bring healing to others. I am grateful for her willingness to speak with me at such a difficult time.

The loss of not one but two people in Valerie's life, both unexpectedly and at relatively young ages, seemed to indicate that these deaths were part of her pre-birth plan. If so, why had Valerie chosen to experience *two* such losses? And why was one her only child?

## Valerie's Story

"I did everything with him," Valerie said of Dustin, her son by her first husband. She had since divorced and remarried. "We did Indian Guides together, all the baseball and the basketball. I remember one time when he was little and was going to try out for baseball. We drove up to the field. As soon as we got out of the car, we saw these little Mickey Mantles whizzing and hitting balls like—wham! Everybody was really, really good. Dustin and I walked over to the fence. We were standing there, watching. Dustin had never even had a glove on his hand. He said, 'It's okay, Mom. I want to try.' He ran out there, not knowing anything, with all these kids who look like Mickey Mantle. I was never so proud of that child! He had guts. To me, that was quintessential Dustin."

To Valerie, two other outstanding traits were Dustin's intellect and nonconformity. His intelligence shone in his work with computers and cars; once he even assembled an entire automobile engine on his own. His nonconformity was evident in the way he constantly, restlessly questioned the world. "It's like he always knew a better way," Valerie observed. "Many things he had a hard time dealing with in society because of the lack of common sense in the way things are set up."

Valerie never knew just how many friends Dustin had until more than 250 of them came to his wake. "One by one they all started coming forward," she recalled. "Like Judah came up and said, 'Your son was one of the smartest people I've ever met.' They just kept coming and telling me the same thing. All of his peer group looked up to him."

One week before Dustin's death, Valerie was sitting quietly by her living room window, lights off, as a gentle rain

fell outside. Dustin walked in and sat next to her. As he reached to turn on a lamp, Valerie told him, “No, Dust. I like natural light. Natural light is good.” Together, silently, they watched the raindrops run down the windowpane.

Dustin was nineteen when he died. He had come home on a Friday night and walked into Valerie’s bedroom, where they talked briefly and then hugged goodnight. “I love you,” Valerie told him. “I love you, too,” Dustin replied. To Valerie’s surprise, Dustin let her kiss him; he wasn’t usually a touchy-feely type of person.

In the morning Valerie drove across Lake Pontchartrain and into New Orleans. On her way home that evening, as the causeway once again lifted her above the water, “I looked to my left—pink clouds, a beautiful sunset,” she remembered. “Sometimes, I wonder if that wasn’t the exact moment Dustin died.”

When Valerie arrived home, her dog, Tessie, came running to greet her, just as she always did. “Hey Tessie, how are you doing?” Valerie asked, patting her on the head. The house was quiet; Valerie assumed Dustin was out. Then “I opened the door to Dustin’s room. He was lying on his bed with his feet on the floor, but like he had fallen back. He had both arms out to his sides, and his head was turned to the right. When you’re a parent, from the time you have the little baby—I don’t care how old they get—you’re always going into their room and checking to make sure they’re still breathing. It’s a mother thing. I walked over to him, and I could see he wasn’t breathing! I said, ‘Hey, Dust.’ No answer. I screamed it louder. ‘Hey, Dust!’ No answer. I kept screaming it louder and louder until it was echoing in the room. I picked up the dog and threw her over by Dustin to see what she would do. She didn’t even blink at him. He wasn’t there for her.

“I ran into the living room, saying to myself, *God no! This can't be happening! This is a nightmare! This isn't true!* I thought, If I'm really emphatic about this and I say it emphatically ...”

Just then Valerie saw her husband's headlights in the driveway. “*Dustin's not breathing!*” she shouted from the door. Her husband rushed inside and administered CPR. “*Come on, Dustin! Come on, man!*” he yelled as he pounded Dustin's chest. Meanwhile, Valerie called 911, then ran outside to wait for the ambulance. When the paramedics arrived, they seemed to Valerie to be moving in slow motion. She pushed them into the house, yelling, “*Hurry! Hurry!*”

Not long thereafter the paramedics told Valerie that Dustin was dead. The cause of death, they said, had been an accidental drug overdose.

“Dustin had just taken his exams in college, and he was happy,” Valerie said sadly. “He had gotten good grades. He had gone out to celebrate. He had just written me a beautiful letter for Mother's Day telling me how much he loved me. He'd never written one like that. You can't imagine what it's like to have your child there one day, and then all of a sudden they're gone.”

On the day of Dustin's wake, Vicki, Valerie's sister, came to Valerie's home with something important to share. “Valerie, Dustin came to me last night. I never felt that much joy and happiness in my life. He was brilliant. He was light. And he said, ‘Aunt Vicki, tell my mom I'm natural light.’ I'm sorry, Valerie. I don't know what that means.”

“I was so happy!” Valerie exclaimed. “It was Dustin's way of confirming through the person I trust more than anybody in the world that he was alive and well.”

Two nights later, Valerie suddenly awoke from a sound sleep. “At the moment I woke up, I lifted,” she said. “It

wasn't my body that lifted; it was me. At the moment I lifted, I felt the essence of my child. There was no time to it. I knew everything all at once. There was an energy. It was the most powerful thing I have ever felt! I was him, and he was me, and I knew everything about him in those few seconds. He was happy. I knew that. I could feel it."

Dustin's death was the second devastating loss in Valerie's life.

Twelve years earlier, Valerie had been working as a waitress and attending college. As classes let out one day, she decided to visit to her cousin Lorraine's husband, Brad, who worked near the school. On that day, Brad's friend D.C. was also visiting. Brad introduced them; Valerie thought nothing of it.

Brad called Valerie later to say that he and D.C. had plans to go to a casino in a few days. Would she like to join them? "Sure, that would be great," she told Brad. When the appointed night came and her doorbell rang, Valerie opened the door to find only D.C. standing there. Although D.C. denied it, Brad had — at D.C.'s request — bowed out so they might have their first date.

Valerie and D.C. began to fall in love that night. "It did seem that I'd known him before," Valerie said wistfully. Their affection for each other grew quickly. "Every minute we spent together was romantic. Our relationship was very much in the moment because we didn't know when he'd get called offshore."

D.C. was a commercial diver who maintained the pipelines to oilrigs. The work is dangerous and physically taxing, so much so that most divers don't continue that kind of work beyond their forties. Often, they don't know when they'll receive their next assignment. "You have to set up your whole life around the fact that these

men could be gone a week or two months at a moment's notice," Valerie said.

"We started going out September 28," she recalled. "On February 17, D.C. proposed. We were in my condo, sitting on the bed, talking. There was a cardinal in the tree outside. D.C. said, 'They always travel in pairs. Just watch a minute, and you'll see the mate come.' And sure enough, we did. So, really quiet, he said, 'When are you going to marry me?' I said, 'As soon as you want me to marry you!' I was so excited!"

Less than an hour after he proposed, D.C. was called for a diving assignment. He and Valerie drove across the causeway to his apartment, where he packed his scuba gear. Johnny, D.C.'s friend and fellow diver, picked him up. "I can picture it like it was yesterday," said Valerie. "He got in the truck with Johnny. I stood in the street and waved. And that was the last time I ever saw him."

Two days later, as Valerie was waiting tables, she looked up and saw Brad and Lorraine. They pulled her into the restaurant's empty wine room. "Valerie, there's been a terrible accident," Brad told her. "D.C.'s dead."

*"No, he can't be dead!"* Valerie screamed. *"He just asked me to marry him!"*

Lorraine and Brad, who had not yet heard about the engagement, stared at each other in disbelief.

The next day Valerie received a letter from the diving company:

At approximately 1400 hours, first diver Dave Copeland descended to a depth of 285 feet. Over the loudspeaker he voiced the desire to come above.

The letter stated that a series of grunts was then heard and that Johnny was sent to investigate. When he arrived D.C. looked into his eyes for an instant, then pushed him away. Johnny would later say that he knew in that moment D.C. was going to die. Then D.C. pulled his helmet off.

“He wasn’t committing suicide,” Valerie explained. “He had been diving for fifteen years, so he was a pro. He knew something was terribly wrong.”

Valerie still isn’t sure what happened. She does know that about a week earlier, D.C. and Johnny had been watching a football game at Brad’s house. “When D.C. came over later that night,” Valerie remembered, “he had a huge knot on his forehead. I said, ‘What happened to you?’ He said, ‘I’m just so happy I met you. I was thanking Brad, and we were cutting up and butting heads.’ I suspect that when he butted his head—which ironically he did because he was so much in love with me—he had a hairline fracture or concussion that gave him incredible pressure when he went down there.”

The pain from D.C.’s death was so overwhelming that, for a short time, Valerie turned to alcohol to anesthetize herself. It took two years, she said, until she felt normal again.

“Before he died,” Valerie added, “we were sitting on the couch, and he looked at me and said, ‘I’m sorry it took me so long to find you. I promise I won’t take so long next time.’ I didn’t question it.

“He was my real love. They don’t walk through your front door every day. I lost my future, or so it seemed to me.”

## Valerie's Session with Deb DeBari

I was deeply touched by my conversation with Valerie. She had faced two very painful deaths with grace and strength, and she was willing to speak freely about those deaths in hope they would bring comfort and meaning to others in their grief.

In that search for meaning, and because the loss of a loved one is such a universal experience, I asked Valerie, and she kindly agreed, to allow me to explore her pre-birth plan with three mediums. One was Deb DeBari. Deb had already provided readings for several people who had shared their stories with me. They had found her to be sensitive, insightful, and remarkably accurate. I knew from those sessions that she is able to speak readily with “deceased” loved ones. She also hears her own spirit guides quite clearly. They work closely with Deb to provide her clients with wisdom and information about both the physical and nonphysical realms.

As the session began, D.C. immediately made contact with Deb. Though I had heard Deb speak with people in spirit, I again marveled at her ability to do so.

“I’m not the ex,” D.C. said to Deb, who repeated his words to us. “I still consider her my fiancée.” It was a sweet note on which to begin.

“I knew my life wasn’t going to be long,” D.C. continued. “I knew I wasn’t going to live to old age. I had some close calls [before the diving accident].”

“He’s showing me he had a contract,” Deb explained, referring to D.C.’s pre-birth agreements with other souls. “This accident was planned on the other side. He’s showing me a motorcycle. Did he ride a motorcycle?”

“Yes,” Valerie confirmed.

“He had a few close calls with that,” said Deb. “If that didn’t take him, something else was going to.”

“What actually happened?” Valerie asked with some urgency. She had wondered about D.C.’s death for a long time.

“I felt like my brain was going to explode,” D.C. replied. “This is the worst type of death. I had to stop this.” D.C. was confirming what his friend Johnny had told Valerie: he knew he was going to die and had taken action to end his life quickly.

“What was your lesson from this?” Valerie asked him.

“There are so many,” D.C. answered. “I was a daredevil. In some ways I did not have respect for life. I put my life on the line needlessly. A lot was carried over from past lives. I had lives as a soldier. So many times I had to put my life on the line for causes I didn’t believe in. There is also a lesson to appreciate love. I learned a lot and am still around you. I’m not going back [incarnating again] right away. There are certain lessons I want to learn before I go back. I want to be better equipped. I want to know my purpose. This [last] time, I didn’t know my purpose.”

D.C. was referring to the forgetfulness each of us experiences when we enter the Earth plane. As eternal beings, we are well aware of the purposes of our lives before we incarnate. When we are born and cross the veil between the physical and nonphysical, we forget—in some instances permanently, in some temporarily—the reasons why we came here. Life challenges often serve to remind us of our purpose.

“I want you to know that I still love you,” D.C. said to Valerie.

“I love you, too,” Valerie told him.

“I don’t want you ever to believe that I left because I didn’t

love you,” D.C. added. “I left because I do love you. I don’t want to use the past tense. It always continues.”

“Why is it so difficult?” Valerie asked softly. “Why can’t we just do all that on the other side?”

“On the other side,” Deb explained, “we don’t experience negative emotions like we do here. The negative emotions are—I don’t want to say not ‘allowed’—but we don’t feel them the way we do here.”

Deb was speaking of the absence of duality or opposites in the spiritual realm. We can experience ourselves as peace, joy, and love in spirit and on Earth, but only through an incarnation can we truly understand “lower vibration” feelings like anger and hatred. In that experience, however painful it might be, we birth the knowing of our true selves.

End excerpt from Valerie’s session with Deb. In the book, Dustin then appears and tells Valerie:

- What they planned before they were born
- How and why his life ended
- How he now views his life
- How he will attempt to contact Valerie

## Speaking with Valerie's Soul

Through Deb, both Dustin and D.C had confirmed that they were well and that their early physical deaths had been planned before they were born. I sensed that the experience of talking with them was healing for Valerie. She learned more about why their deaths had occurred and, more important, was able to convey her love to them. And they, in turn, conveyed their love to her.

To understand better why a soul would choose prior to incarnation to lose both a fiancé and a son, I asked medium Corbie Mitleid to channel Valerie's soul. I sought to learn more about Valerie's life blueprint and the deeper purpose of her life challenge. In addition, I was eager to hear the wisdom Valerie's soul would offer in regard to how and why souls plan incarnations in general.

Because our souls contain the consciousness of every personality they have ever incarnated, they sometimes express themselves as "we" when channeled, just as Valerie's soul does in the conversation that follows.

The channeling began with a few moments of silence as Corbie entered a trance. When I felt she was ready, I began with the fundamental question.

"Why did Valerie experience the loss of a fiancé and a child?" I asked.

"She has been through both before, handled badly. Both have to do with the world war," announced Valerie's soul.

Just as every person has a unique energy, so, too, do non-physical beings. As Valerie's soul began to speak through Corbie, I felt a sudden change in energy. In a way that was beyond the conventional five senses, I felt the presence, the life force, of Valerie's higher self. And having spoken at length with Corbie on several occasions, it was clear that the

tone, pacing, and inflection of her voice were now entirely different.

“She lost her fiancé in 1916,” continued Valerie’s soul. “There was a superstition that when you went back to the front [in World War I], you were not supposed to get engaged, because that was like putting a bull’s eye on your back. She and her fiancé thought they would be the exception. When the fiancé was killed, she lost her mind. She tried to throw herself out windows, refused to eat, and frankly became something of pity and scandal with her family, which, while not noble in the southern part of England, was certainly well connected. She succeeded in killing herself in 1920.

“She was born very shortly after, as many suicides are. She was born in the western area of the United States. She was of foreign extraction. She was married at eighteen and had a son shortly after. She was put into the internment camps in the United States [during World War II] because she was not sufficiently American. She lost track of her child, who had been taken from her. There was the constant, desolate hope that the child would be found alive. The child was killed before age twenty in an automobile accident, crossing the road while drunk.

“The fiancé, the son, and she have been playing out love and loss for some time. It is to be hoped and prayed that the personality [Valerie] understands now the transience of loss and that it is possible to go on with one’s life having loved, but then having put that aside until meeting [again] out of the body.”

I paused for a moment to take in everything that had been said. This wealth of information had been presented in a factual yet compassionate tone. There was no hint of judgment, simply the recognition that Valerie had been overwhelmed

by her losses in two past lives. Interestingly, her child in the World War II lifetime had died at approximately the same age as Dustin had in this lifetime. I wondered what might come next.

“Are you Valerie’s higher self?” I asked with great interest.

“Yes.”

“I want to clarify the previous lives. Was D.C. the fiancé who was killed in the war in 1916, and was Dustin the son who died when Valerie was interned?”

“Yes.”

“You mentioned that you want Valerie to understand the transience of loss. Why is it important for a personality to understand that?” Deliberately, I had inquired in a non-challenging tone. I wanted Valerie’s soul to know that my questions were intended to uncover meaning, not to suggest any perceived faultiness in the life plan.

End excerpt from *Speaking with Valerie’s Soul*. In the book, Valerie’s soul goes on to discuss:

- The differences between the soul and the personality
- How souls evolve
- Why Valerie’s life plan included losing two loved ones
- How Valerie’s soul hopes she will respond to these losses
- Valerie’s pre-birth planning with Dustin and D.C.
- How the soul guides the personality
- How physical death occurs.

## Staci's Supplemental Reading for Valerie

To offer as complete a picture as possible of the design for Valerie's life, I asked medium Staci Wells to access the pre-birth planning session in which D.C.'s and Dustin's early deaths had been discussed. Prior to the reading, I informed Staci that Dustin had died of an accidental drug overdose. As we began, I waited expectantly, quietly, as Staci's spirit guide opened the Akashic Records and presented her with the information we sought.

"She is doing the initial conversation with her spirit guide," Staci announced, "who I'm told has been her teacher and mentor on the spiritual plane for three lifetimes. He was husband and father to her in previous lifetimes. I hear them talking about themes Valerie has experienced. She has many interests on the soul level. She's very serious. She likes to take things systematically and orderly, but when she gets into physical embodiment, that's a big challenge to her.

**Valerie:** I have experienced many challenges staying focused. I often get pulled off balance by something that catches my attention. I focus on a particular issue, and then my life goes in a negative direction.

**Spirit Guide:** There shall be imbalances from time to time to cause you to shift your focus, yet also serving to lead you back to your center.

"The scene is changing now. I see her in discussion with D.C." Staci paused to listen to their conversation. "There's a strong desire on Valerie's part to link up with him again romantically in physical life. I hear him saying,

**D.C.:** I'm not good for you. My plans are to be in physical embodiment for a short time. I would leave you.

“She was willing to have him in her life for whatever time they had together. She wanted him that much. There is also discussion here about how it will serve her purpose to experience this. They discuss that they will make plans [together after incarnating], even to the point of discussing children.

**D.C.:** But you're going to be so disappointed.

**Valerie:** If it means having you in my life for a short time, that's all right. It will serve my challenge to find myself again, the challenge to find inner harmony and balance after all of that. Your presence in my life would be a gift to me.

“He agrees to do this, even knowing that eventually his life will bring her sorrow because of his passing. I see him reaching out to her and stroking her face with one of his hands. He is so full of love for her, but also full of compassion for what she will go through. But he understands the role he will serve for her. His agreement about passing on early was already made with somebody else before he sat down with Valerie to be part of planning her life.

“I will go on to Dustin now.”

End excerpt from Staci's Supplemental Reading for Valerie. In the remainder of the reading, Staci accesses information about and actual dialogue from Valerie's pre-birth planning session with Dustin. Readers learn:

- 
- What Dustin planned in regard to his own death
  - Why he made those plans
  - What he is doing now on the other side

## Commentary

We who are immortal cannot know death, but we can create the illusion of it on the physical plane. This illusion is not part of our lives in the nonphysical realm, where we are ever aware of both our eternality and our unity with all souls. When in spirit, Valerie knows always that Dustin and D.C. are one with her, as she is one with them. She could not perceive herself as truly separate from them. As souls who have shared other incarnations, their love is deep, the bonds of their hearts inseverable. In spirit, Dustin and D.C. would forever be but a thought away.

And so they remain. As an angel in a previous story told us, the nonphysical dimensions are but a hair's breadth from us, overlapping and encompassing the physical. Valerie's perceived separation from Dustin and D.C., a seemingly immense gulf that she once felt powerless to bridge, is in truth her own creation as an infinite being. Who but the most powerful of souls could conjure an illusion that appears real to its very creator? By forgetting that she planned before birth to immerse herself in an illusion of her own design, Valerie may now recall—and thus know more profoundly—what it means to be limitless. As she reaches across the veil, whether through a medium or the “lifting” when her consciousness melded with her son's, she remembers that separation is illusory. Contained within that memory is yet another: the memory of self as an eternal, powerful soul. By remembering herself as such, Valerie comes to know deeply, experientially, who she really is.

While enveloped in perceived separation from her loved ones, Valerie also experiences and thus comes to know herself as trust and faith. In the preceding story, Pat planned before incarnation to live decades of alcoholism in order

to feel the complete separation from God that would ultimately recreate his spiritual connection. Like Pat, Valerie now touches other dimensions through an inner knowing, a knowing birthed and deepened by pain. If Dustin and D.C. did not appear to be absent, what would it mean for Valerie to trust that they are ever present? If they did not seem to be deceased, what would it mean for Valerie to have faith that their lives are endless? Of doubt is truly meaningful trust born; in uncertainty is real faith created. Only in these circumstances are contrast stark and choice significant. Each time she chooses to pierce the veil and feel the love that Dustin and D.C. continue to send to her, Valerie takes another step toward understanding the illusion, the transience, of physical death. To understand the illusion of loss while in body is to understand in an expanded way the impossibility of loss in spirit. We are never without our loved ones, and they are never without us. When her lifetime is complete, Valerie, having felt apparent loss and seeming impermanence to her very core, will return to spirit and share with Dustin and D.C. a new and more profound appreciation for the permanence of their lives and love.

End excerpt from commentary. In the book, the commentary goes on to discuss:

- How losing a loved one may help us grow in empathy and compassion
- Regaining centeredness and balance after the death of a loved one
- How self-love may blossom in the face of loss
- The importance of non-judgment
- The value and power of the mourning process
- The healing gift of crying
- What our “deceased” loved ones would like us to know

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