

# Hurry Up and Wait: Dealing With the Process of Dying

by Lynne Olson

Death is a lot like the military: hurry up and wait. As a medium I have seen plenty of death in various stages. Death itself is a fairly simple matter not to be feared, but all the waiting around is rough.

Western medicine does an excellent job at acute care, and holistic medicine provides equally valid healing for chronic conditions and getting to the causes of illness. But what do we do when acute illnesses become chronic and equally untreatable from Western or holistic viewpoints? We wait.

Recently I visited a man who has been an employee in a family business as long

as I can remember. "Jim" will be 90 in three months.

Throat cancer has spread into his lungs. A decade past his initial diagnosis, and 19 surgeries later, he has hit the end of the road, on this plane at least.

Waiting for a body to shut down is painful. It is often uncomfortable for the person dying and agonizing for watching family and friends, but there are steps that can take the edge off.

Hospice programs such as those provided by Swedish Medical Center take care of the nuts and bolts of limited mobility and pain control. Raised toilet seats, bath benches, walkers, and wheel chairs are often covered by insurance. Most are available at medical supply stores. Ease the discomfort of pressure sores by using egg crate foam bed toppers and the quaintly named ass doughnut in a favorite chair.

Bringing food to families in crisis is a time honored tradition. If chewing is an issue, why not bring ready-to-eat liquid meals? Many commercially prepared liquid meals contain lots of sugar, which is hard on already

struggling immune systems.

Recipes for liquid meals to feed people with broken jaws offer many ideas you can customize to taste. Your kitchen, a food processor, airtight containers and a freezer are all you need. Small servings are best, as people on liquid diets don't eat much at once, but do eat often. Ice cube trays make excellent two or three bite servings. As long as your recipient has freezer space and a microwave, presto, mealtime has instantly become a lot more pleasant for all concerned.

As my mother was dying of cancer, she found comfort and control in planning her final resting place, funeral service, and desired mortuary. Not everyone in my family understood why it made her feel better, but it was something she could do while waiting. When she died, I blessed her many times over for planning ahead so we knew exactly what she wanted. It relieved tremendous strain on our family. At the time of her death we were so frazzled we couldn't agree on a tombstone, let alone the complex

issues of her burial.

Our society doesn't give us much guidance on how to handle death, and although various faith traditions can certainly offer comfort and hope, in the end we all pretty much end up as I did that sunny afternoon in Jim's living room, mutely waiting, wondering how the final chapter will be written. Such silence gets painful fast.

In Jim's case I resorted to family pictures, starting with his wedding picture. He and his late wife married at ages 21 and 19 respectively. I teased Jim that the only thing about him that hadn't changed between 21 and 89 was his hair. He shot back, "At least I still have it!"

Humor helps a lot, as does remembering good times. Pictures, music, and books all assist in bring those experiences to mind. Unfortunately personal CD players, tape decks, and other electronics tend to walk away in nursing homes and hospitals. Reading aloud from a favorite or light hearted book is a huge gift in itself and only requires your time and effort. Photo albums can also travel to

and from a public facility with you.

Be matter of fact. If someone needs you to grab an elbow, just do it. Dancing around unpleasant realities such as a person lacking bowel control only deepens embarrassment. If help is needed in cleaning up an adult, go about it with the same dispatch you would in changing a baby diaper. It is like laundry, not a favorite chore, but something that has to be done. White vinegar thrown in with the wash removes the scent of human waste.

On the other side, the dead wait, too. They wait for release from the hatreds and fears that bind them to this plane. They wait for loved ones still living to join them in the hereafter. They wait as guides and angels teach them what they need to know before taking their next steps in heaven. They hang around their beloved living a great deal, sometimes guiding or protecting, often just enjoying watching them go about their daily lives. My great-aunt shows up while I am driving, my grandmother as I cook with her pots and

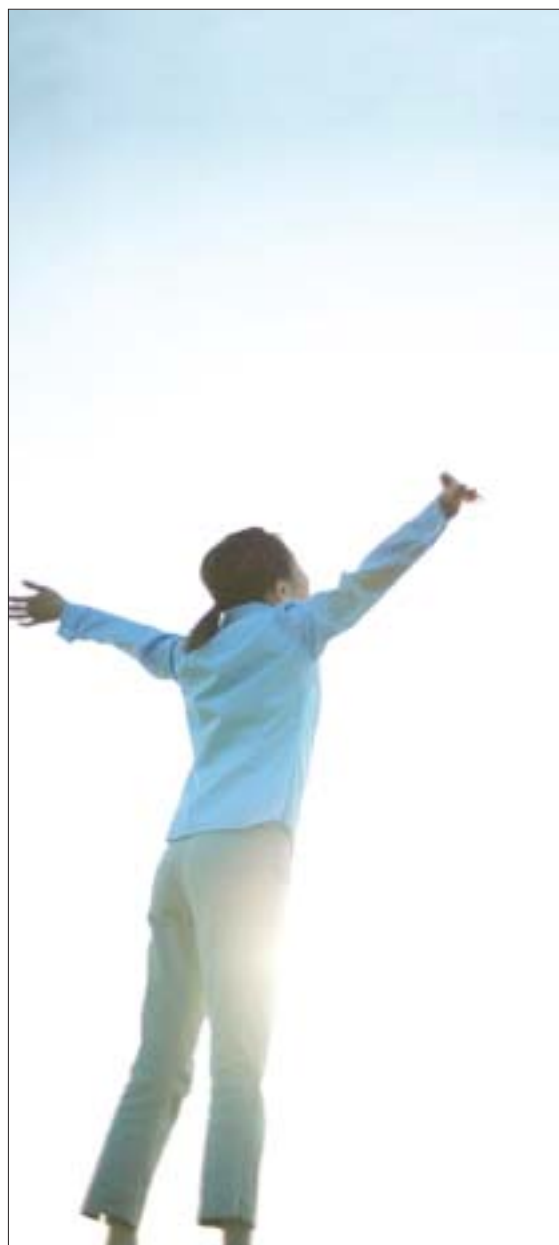
pans. The late loved ones of many of my clients do similar things, shaped by the relationships they had with their living when they to were alive on earth.


Forgiveness is *the* tool we have here and now to release our late loved ones from fear, hatred, and regret. Many dead come through asking forgiveness for past hurtful or abusive actions they committed during their lives.

Forgiveness is a priceless gift that allows them to move more fully into the presence of the divine. Those they hurt are the only ones who can bestow this gift. We each hold the difference between agony and peace for late family and friends. Use forgiveness with compassion and generosity as someday each of us will in turn, wait.

*Lynne Olson is a medical intuitive and medium who staffs regional Northwest psychic and alternative health fairs. Private readings are available at the rate of \$75 per hour. Contact Lynne at [angelzhands@yahoo.com](mailto:angelzhands@yahoo.com) for more information or to schedule a reading.*

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**St. Germain's DreamWalker Death Transition School** was created to train DreamWalker Death facilitators – those who feel a calling to be guides to those near death – both loved ones and clients. This fascinating and captivating training in the art of DreamWalking has the capacity to change your life by showing you how you can live your daily life in an expanded way. Simply, this expanded mode can bring tremendous joy, knowing and movement every day you are doing Dreamwalking work. It can be life-transforming. Students experience an actual Dreamwalk during the school.

**DreamWalker School will be held in Bellevue this summer. 3 full days, August 23-24-25 · Register at [www.crimsoncircle.com](http://www.crimsoncircle.com)**

Go to Shaumbra University, Dreamwalker Death Transitions. Scroll down to the Bellevue, WA school. The teacher is Carol Huntley Cohen, Snohomish County and she is assisted by Tamzan Johnson, Island County. Details/Information follows registration.

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