

AJR - Deborah Shouse Transcript

0:00:01 - Anncr

Julie Ryan, noted psychic and medical intuitive, is ready to answer your personal questions, even those you never knew you could ask. For more than 25 years, as she developed and refined her intuitive skills, Julie used her knowledge as a successful inventor and businesswoman to help others. Now she wants to help you to grow, heal and get the answers you've been longing to hear. Do you have a question for someone who's transitioned? Do you have a medical issue? What about your pet's health or behavior? Perhaps you have a loved one who's close to death and you'd like to know what's happening? Are you on the path to fulfill your life's purpose, no matter where you are in the world? Take a journey to the other side and ask Julie Ryan.

0:00:44 - Julie

Hi everybody, welcome to the Ask Julie Ryan show. It's where we blend spirituality and practicality to help you live a life of purpose and joy. We have Deborah Shouse with us on the show today. Deborah is an author who calls herself an impossible dreamer, and she's figured out an interesting way to communicate with her deceased daughter's spirit. And she's figured out an interesting way to communicate with her deceased daughter's spirit. I'll be asking Debra about her technique, how it's helped with her grieving journey and if everyone can do the same. Please remember to subscribe, leave a comment and share this episode with your family and friends. Now let's go chat with Debra. Ms Debra, thank you for taking the time to join us today. I'm so delighted to have you on the show.

0:01:30 - Deborah

I am so excited to be here with you, Julie.

0:01:34 - Julie

Your latest book's called Letters from the Ungrateful Dead. What a provocative title. Why'd you come up with it? What's the story behind it?

0:01:45 - Deborah

Well, the story is my daughter, Hailey, who died three years ago from an overdose of fentanyl and meth, gave me that title after she died. So it wasn't meant to be a title particularly, but that was one of the ways she was describing herself in as we began writing letters to each other. So when she said that, it just totally stuck in my mind as really explaining her brilliance and complexity in a very unique way.

0:02:23 - Julie

So does that mean that she felt like she was ungrateful when she was alive or she's ungrateful now that she's in heaven? What's the gist underneath the title, do you think?

0:02:36 - Deborah

She said she was often a person who didn't count her blessings she wasn't that sort of person and that she felt that now she was dead, she might be considered part of the ungrateful dead.

0:02:50 - Julie

Interesting. I've never heard that term before. Sounds like a rock band. I hadn't either.

0:02:56 - Deborah

It's obviously a pun on the band and Hailey had, and has, a fabulous sense of humor.

0:03:03 - Julie

Yeah, yeah, versus. Those guys are the grateful dead, right, the ungrateful dead, which I thought that was. When I first read that, I just cracked up and I thought, boy, somebody's got a sense of humor here. You say that love is stronger than death. What do you mean by that?

0:03:24 - Deborah

Well, I know you've probably experienced this so many times. After my daughter suddenly died. It was really hard for me. We'd had a very complicated relationship. I loved her dearly and also we had to really work to stay connected with each other. She suffered with issues of mental health, with addiction. She had a lot of anger and I desperately wanted to stay connected with her. That was and I also one of the things. When I finally found a grief therapist, I said. When I finally found a grief therapist, I said I love my daughter so much but I felt like I couldn't express my love truly with her when she was alive because she was so suspicious of it. And my therapist said I will help you take down the wall with that love. So this project I mean just the idea of connecting with her was born from a desire to express that love that was really burning inside me for her.

0:04:36 - Julie

So tell us about your project. Tell us about what your initial thoughts were when you were advised to take some steps. Tell us about what those steps are and how it's all developed.

0:04:48 - Deborah

All right. So after my daughter died, suddenly I was just a mess. I appeared in many ways like a functioning individual and I was totally numb inside and once the day was over I would just, you know, weep and mourn. And it was a really heavy, heavy grief. And a friend of mine said after a couple months, you need a grief therapist. And I said I know, but I'm too sad to go find one. And my friend said I know somebody. She connected me to my therapist that I still have.

And on our second meeting, when my therapist learned I was a writer, she said well, you should write letters to Hailey. And I went okay, you know. And then she said and you should have Hailey write back. And my first thought was oh, maybe I need a new therapist. I didn't know what she was thinking, but I was a desperate woman. So the next morning I got up early and Jackie had told me just sit at your computer, write what you want to Hylee, and then close your eyes, quiet your mind and see what happens. So I did that. I poured out myself to Hylee and then I closed my eyes and quieted my mind and I heard her voice in my head and I wrote down everything she said and that was the beginning of our correspondence. And that was the beginning of our correspondence and it was an amazing connective healing experience for me and and for Hylee, I think, too what did she say?

0:06:35 - Julie

what was like, what were some of the first things that that you wrote and that she responded to, and what were her responses?

0:06:43 - Deborah

well, let me read you our very first correspondence. Dear Hylee, it's very strange to go all these days, weeks and months without talking to you. I don't like it. Even this Thanksgiving I missed you and all those sad, depressed, crying calls you usually make during this difficult season Love Mom calls you usually make during this difficult season. Love Mom, dear Mom, I'm glad you finally wrote Up here or wherever I am. They want you to think about a lot of spiritual stuff. I didn't do that when I was alive. Why would I start now? They have streaming, but all the shows are self-help stuff. No zombie movies at all, which is too bad. About Thanksgiving what a relief they don't have holidays here. Maybe they don't even have days. I wasn't listening when we had that orientation session. Please keep in touch. There are no Amazon or Etsy deliveries, so I never get any mail. Love Hylee.

0:07:43 - Julie

That's hilarious, oh my gosh.

0:07:46 - Deborah

And Julie. That was one of the things I was so missing from Hylee. She has a very snarky little sense of humor and was a big connecting point for us. Even when she was mad at me, I felt like I could always make her laugh, and so to have that humor show up like it did in that first letter was just amazing and I started just writing to her whenever I wanted to Did you do it several times a day?

0:08:16 - Julie

Did you do it once a day, once a week, once a month? What were you doing?

0:08:20 - Deborah

In the beginning I did it every day, whenever I wanted to, sometimes two or three times a day, and I did that for about six to eight months, and that's when I mean I was just doing it for therapy. But then, as I started sharing the letters with people, I started thinking, oh, maybe there's, you know, something in this that could be helpful to other people, because I was finding it so helpful.

0:08:54 - Julie

Wonderful. How did it make you feel the first time you were hearing her voice in your head and you knew enough to write it down? Did you question it? Did you think, oh my gosh, I'm losing my ever-loving mind? Or did you just know this was legit when you were hearing her voice in your head?

0:09:14 - Deborah

It's such a good question because I knew it. I knew it was highly and I didn't question it and it was really my first experience like that and it was such a relief. It was after I finished writing to her. I'd often feel drained or sad, you know, because it would bring up a lot of stuff, but it was also interesting having something concrete. So my partner, Ron, was doing such a good job trying to help me and that is not easy to do, to help a grieving parent is, you know, it's really difficult and to have something concrete to share with him and it bridged us together. So sometimes I couldn't, you know, I'd say I feel, I feel really sad, but I'm a very resilient person. So I seemed like I could, like, cook a meal, take a step. You know I seem pretty functional. But when he read what I was writing to Hylee, he got, went. Oh, this is how sad she is. That I couldn't express to him, but I could express it to Hylee.

0:10:29 - Julie

No, how beautiful. So some people will call this automatic writing. Have you, I'm sure, heard that term in the interim? And there are classes that people can take on automatic writing. There are classes that people can take on automatic writing and I know that there are some schools of thought that if you use pen and paper, that that's the best way to do it, versus typing on a computer, versus just I don't know what else are you going to do dictate into a phone or something like that, using technology? Have you tried other ways or have you always just used the computer to type it out?

0:11:09 - Deborah

Well, these days I'm so used I am freer to listen and to let my mind be open when I use the. I personally use the computer, and so I have been writing like that, just in my own writing, for years and it made sense, and I can also go faster. So I am used to when I sometimes write articles about people. When I write about people I can pretty much write down everything they say, if they're not a real fast talker, and so with Hailey I could write down everything she said,

and so that was a joy, because her words and the way she said them were really important to me to hear.

0:11:55 - Julie

And it sounds like that helped you understand and validate in your own mind that that was really her talking to you, instead of just your thoughts that that was really her talking to you instead of just your thoughts Exactly.

0:12:11 - Deborah

What's been interesting is when I've shared the letters. Hylee was a person, as you might have guessed from my very first little letter, who didn't show up for a lot of like. She didn't usually. She sometimes came to Thanksgiving, but not always. So not all my friends knew her well, but they knew of her. But when I first shared the letters with a few friends they said that's Hylee. They could tell her voice instantly and that's the way I had felt too. So she was there.

0:12:41 - Julie

And how has that helped you in your grief journey and how?

0:12:44 - Deborah

has that helped you in your grief journey, Julie? It has been an enormous help. One of the things that was hard for me and hard for Hailey is that we were alike and very different. So Hailey, throughout her life she had a lot of depression, a lot of issues. I was trying to help her. I was either codependent, optimistic, eternally hopeful or a combination of whatever language you want to use.

But that was often irritating to Hailey and there were times we could have a really good conversation, but it was random. So we had a lot of things we didn't really come to terms about each other and that's what happened during our post-death correspondence. We ask each other questions we had. You know, she had gotten married and she'd gotten mad at me before the wedding and switched the venue of the wedding to someplace else and that was very hurtful for me and we'd never gotten to talk about it. We were both too triggered. But in the middle of our correspondence I said sometime I'd like to talk about the wedding and she said I'm not ready yet, but yes, and we finally each told our story about the wedding and then there was understanding that we somehow couldn't achieve when we were both alive.

0:14:28 - Julie

Why do you think that is Because you were willing to look at it from a different perspective and certainly she was in heaven as well, or she is in heaven. What do you think Saul involved with that, with being able to kind of settle it with her being in spirit now and not in human form?

0:14:50 - Deborah

I think it was a combination. Throughout the last, I would say, four or five years of her life, I have been doing a much better job of accepting her as she was and having good boundaries, and that made a big difference. And after she died, I think she was not as defensive, she was not as plagued by panic and depression and all the emotions that had just been run through her when she was alive, and she came to a different perspective too. So we were both able to look at the other person and go, okay, I see why you might've wanted to do this. I understand your behavior more. It was an enormous gift to have that.

0:15:44 - Julie

I would imagine you've. You probably felt and I don't know if you. It'll be interesting to hear if you've actually pondered this somewhere you were less defended. You know you were. When she was alive. You were waiting for the next shoe to drop or you were waiting for the next sucker punch to be landed. You were waiting for the next sucker punch to be landed, and so

being in that heightened state of high alert all the time, if you will, it clouds our clarity. You have said it perfectly, Julie. Yeah, when we're in fight or flight, we lose clarity and we can't think straight and rightfully so. With everything that you'd gone on in dealing with an addict to learning to set the boundaries and learning to hold that line in those boundaries because they're master manipulators a lot of the time Tell us about that and how you came to that place where you were able to hold the boundaries, and how that helped in your relationship with her when she was alive and what it means today with her being in heaven.

0:16:55 - Deborah

It took me a long time to set really good boundaries and I had a lot of help, because I mean, part of it with Hailey is from the time she was 13,. She was self-harming part of the time and there was a period where she was talked about suicide and that is just a horrendous thing to be thinking of and so it was very hard for me. I mean, I had another therapist and she told me you know what to say when somebody talks about suicide, and it's very cold and rational and highly hated it. When I said that, what is it? It's to say, do you have a plan, you know, and what is your plan? And to, just, you know, ask questions. And I did that. But I was just so afraid that she might hurt herself and she doesn't like. I knew she didn't like when I was logical and rational and she was emotional. So but I finally my partner and a friend really helped me first set money boundaries.

That was an issue between us and Hailey, I think. For Hailey she wanted me to prove I loved her and for her that meant give me things, give me things I ask for. And so there was no, it was never enough. I could never prove that to her. And when I finally just said, you know, set my boundaries as to what I could give her, there was a kerfuffle at first, and we both settled into it, and so when she died, I was so lucky because we had just. It was during COVID. We had just had an outing, it was pleasant, we had a good time. She wrote me an email afterwards telling me how much she appreciated me, which she had never done before, and so we were at that moment in harmony together. What a gift.

0:19:15 - Julie

A deep gift. Yes, what a gift. Had you lost a loved one before? Had you gone through grief with another loved one who had passed, perhaps a parent or a sibling or someone else? And if so, how does that compare with the grief that you experienced in losing a child?

0:19:37 - Deborah

Well, yes, I lost some friends and both my parents. My mom was living with dementia when she died, so I really got to stay connected with her. I was thinking about, I wrote about her in a book called Love in the Land of Dementia and I was chronicling her life and our journey together while she was alive, our journey together while she was alive, and that helped me during her process. My dad died suddenly. Both of those were hard, but not like Hailey's death, because even though there had been years where I was on high alert for Hailey to die I mean I don't know if you can ever prepare yourself, but these years of her life she had actually said to me she was looking forward to something. She had a boyfriend that she loved and she was thinking they were having a pretty good relationship, and so I did not know she was taking drugs. I mean, I knew she took prescription medicines and pot, but not fentanyl or meth. So I was totally surprised by her death.

0:20:57 - Julie

Oh, I bet I can't even imagine. Yeah, so when you're conversing with her now in spirit, do you find that it's a clearer communication all the way around with her, or do you find that you still have to kind of bob and weave to get information from her? Is it you ask her something or you say something and she responds in a succinct manner? Or is it more kind of a combination, perhaps, of your relationship when she was alive and something that's perhaps clear? I guess

my question is is it night and day? Is it white and black in the way that she responds and talks to you now?

0:21:46 - Deborah

I would say it's pink and purple. Hailey always likes to kind of be in control of a conversation, but she is so open now because she has nothing to prove. You know, she is at ease with herself, she's not battling any societal norms that she put on herself and through our conversations, our correspondence, she's started to understand how much I love her and take that in, and so it's much more comfortable. I mean it's comfortable even if she doesn't, she's not ready to answer me or she doesn't give me an exact answer. She's there for the conversation, she's not running away from it.

But she you know when, when she died, I was like desperate to know okay, how long has this been going on? How is she getting the money? I had many, many questions and I tried to find out. This was before we were writing to each other and I just couldn't and I just said let it go, this is not important. And so once I let that go, I think that was part of what opened me up more, to let go of all the need of the rational parts of this and concentrate on who Hylee and I each are as beings, you know as beings you know?

0:23:31 - Julie

Do you believe that when she answers you or she chooses not to answer a question that you have, that there's a bigger picture here, in that perhaps it's something that there's more work for you to do to be able to receive the answer? Do you believe that there's a bigger picture in the responses that she's giving you and the timeline in which she's giving them to you?

0:23:54 - Deborah

I love that question, Julie, and I hadn't really thought of it. So I'm glad you're asking me. I'm sure there is more work for me to do. All of us, you're not alone in that, girl, I know. I know and I'm really grateful that I am continuing my therapy, because there's just layers of things, you know, that are still embedded in me, layers of judgment that aren't necessarily my own, that are still there in me, and so I'm not going to answer your question in a very good way, except to say I'm going to think about that because it's a wonderful question and it makes a lot of sense to me and it just hadn't come into my mind.

0:24:42 - Julie

Yeah, I got it into my head when I was, you know, listening to you talk a minute ago. I was like, well, it's unfolding perfectly, as it always does, and there's going to be. There will be answers that you will receive and you'll be led to ask her questions about things that will and maybe you've already done this that will go way beyond your relationship with her. I can see you asking her questions about the universe and maybe how the earth was formed and how did human beings come to materialize, and all of those kinds of things that will go way beyond just the parameters in your human relationship from this lifetime. Have you gone into that yet with her? Have you explored any of that yet?

0:25:32 - Deborah

Not exactly, but one of the things I have noticed is Hailey is much more like I. Our roles have switched. I am the sad and depressed person now, and she is the person who's like I'm fine, nothing's bothering me, and that was a piece of advice she gave me early on when she said, mom, I just, I hated that you're so sad, you know. And she said remember, nothing matters. And so this wisdom that she, that's a big statement.

0:26:05 - Julie

Remember nothing matters. And so this wisdom, and she, that's a big statement. Remember nothing matters. Holy moly, what did you think when you heard her say that?

0:26:13 - Deborah

I was kind of astonished, because Hylee has always disliked anything that's positive or philosophical like that. You know, she just wouldn't put up with it, and now she's the person you know giving. I'm asking for her advice, you know, and she's giving me this advice and it's pretty wonderful and I think she adores it. I think she is very thrilled to be in that position.

0:26:47 - Julie

It's been my experience, debra, that the personality traits like especially the ones that we would consider to be negative I'm using air quotes for those of you that are listening Stay with the body when somebody dies, and all spirits are pure love, pure joy, and they're gonna answer us in a way, when we ask them questions, either like you're doing, through automatic writing, or whether they're talking through a medium like me, or somebody's communicating telepathically with a loved one, that they're going to give us information in a way that's going to let us know that it's really her, and I know that you've talked about that. Her sense of humor comes through. Are there other things that she's shown you or told you that you thought? As soon as you heard it, you thought this is absolutely coming from her, and I know that you knew that already, but it was just more confirmation, more confirmation, more confirmation as you continued to converse with her.

0:27:56 - Deborah

Her attitude. One of the things she wrote to me I always thought when I was married her dad was a lot like she was. He was a brilliant person but an addictive person with a lot of mood swings. And Hylee was a brilliant person and I always thought she followed him and kind of shunned me. You know as far as the way I looked at life, me, you know as far as the way I looked at life. And she said to me in one of her letters she said you know, I am starting to appreciate you, but I never wanted to be like you. I liked the dark side, I liked getting mad at people and feeling revengeful. She said that was really interesting to me and it's good to hear that you know to understand that about somebody.

0:28:55 - Julie

Yeah Well, and that goes along with my experience too, debra, in that we all come in to explore and experience different things in each lifetime. And certainly people come in and we think why in the name of God would somebody live a life of pain and depression and addiction and all of that stuff when they can, you know? Speaking of bands and music, you know, be happy, remember that song, be happy, and and so the other thing along those lines that I always talk to my clients when this arises, this topic arises, is think of an actor who's maybe super successful and has been in many, many, many movies. And when you hear them talk about a character that they play, who's maybe a dark character, you know somebody who's a bad guy or a bad gal, and you just think, oh, how could this person be playing somebody bad, who's a character? And yet they say it's the most fun for them because the characters are so nuanced.

And the one that comes to mind for me is Colin Firth, the actor, colin Firth, and he, my favorite movie, is Mary Poppins, the original Mary Poppins, and Julie Andrews is my favorite actress. So my, my man in my life, my husband and my son just laugh when they, you know when they think of that, I have gotten teased more than you could ever imagine, but it just is. It's my favorite movie. So when Colin Firth played in the Mary Poppins 2 movie and he played the bad guy, I was so heartbroken. I was like, oh, how can Colin Firth play a bad guy? Because he always plays Mr Darcy and parts that are wonderful. I think of him in Mamma Mia and all the other amazing movies that he's been in. And I heard him give an interview and he said oh, it's so much more fun to play the bad guys.

And so I always think that when spirit incarnates and they choose a life that we see as difficult or sometimes even horrific in heaven, when they get back to heaven they're like, oh, that was

so much fun, fun that I got to explore all those things. And I've also heard and I'd love your take on this that our loved ones in heaven and our spirit guides and our angels I've heard so many times that I've lost count, Deborah that there's no right or wrong, there's no good or bad in heaven. It's just an experience. So when somebody is going through a tough time, our guides and angels and all that in heaven are going oh, this is interesting, what's she going to create out of this? And they look at it with a sense of curiosity and wonder.

Now, certainly we have good and bad, right or wrong in our human existence, because if everything was just hunky-hunky all the time, we wouldn't have an incentive to create anything right. But when somebody creates something that we would imagine is, or we perceive as less than optimal in the spirit world, they're going hmm wonder how this is benefiting this person who's experiencing this and what are they going to create out of it? Do you have any thoughts on that? That's a lot.

0:32:17 - Deborah

That was a big no, I love that thinking and I think that streak of curiosity and darkness was an integral part of who Hailey was and she liked it. She didn't like the depression, but she liked her sense of risk and adventure and willingness to try things. And at one point we were talking about, you know, did she ever think she would be coming back to earth and, if so, what kind of person would she like to be? And she said well, I'd like to not be as depressed as I was in this life, but I'd also, you know, I wouldn't want to give up, like drugs and alcohol, but I wouldn't get so deep into them. She said I'd try them and then I'd make a triumphant recovery.

0:33:19 - Julie

The hero's journey right the hero's journey.

0:33:27 - Deborah

Right, that's right. Oh my god. So that was also very helpful to me to see that part of her that I mostly saw when she was alive as causing her pain. Um was, yes, causing her pain some, but not all time, and it was my desire to see her happy.

0:33:45 - Julie

In a way, I understood that was causing me pain in her behalf zillion times from spirit that will have a semblance of a script that will go on through multiple lifetimes, and so her having an addiction issue in this lifetime. Perhaps in a past life or many past lives, she was the mother of the father, of the friend, of the sibling, of the colleague, of the whatever, and she wanted to explore what it was to be the addict in this lifetime. The other thing that comes to mind with this too, Debra and I'm eager to hear your thoughts on this is did you come up with any new ways of thinking about what you could have done or not done to help her? Do you believe that there was anything that you could have done or not done to help her? Do you believe that there was anything that you could have done differently? I'm sure that you probably went through that in your grieving process, and perhaps you still are, but have you gotten any insights from her on that?

0:34:54 - Deborah

That's a beautiful question. I ask myself that question so many times. When she was alive, I bet, and I did a lot of work on forgiving myself for things that you know maybe I overreacted on. But yes, I do feel like I could have just taken her as she was and I think I probably might have done better if I weren't her mother. But there's a confusing thing for me about being someone's mother. She relied on me for a lot, and therefore I mean just practical things, and therefore I felt a huge sense of responsibility for her and I think because of that, I was her or for her.

0:36:17 - Julie

And on the other side of the coin, your spirit was experiencing and exploring that so it could expand in this lifetime. So you were exploring what it was like to be that empathetic mom and to be the mom that was being manipulated by an addict and the mom who finally said okay, I've had enough. And here's the line in the sand. And to experience taking that chance number one, getting to that number two and number three, having the courage to draw that line in the sand, having no idea how she was going to react and if she would just totally go away and you'd never see her again.

0:37:04 - Deborah

Exactly. There are many times I was very grateful that she didn't like to leave her house, because I have friends whose children have gotten mad and left and they don't know where they are. So Hylee has gotten mad and not answered her phone for days. But she wasn't a wanderer at all, and so that was problematic in its own way, but it was also. I usually knew about where she was, and that was something that made it a little easier to have that boundary. You just so beautifully described the difficulty of creating it.

0:37:45 - Julie

Do you find that you sleep better now, knowing that she's in heaven and you don't have to worry about her from a physical standpoint? Have you gotten to that place, or do you expect to ever get there?

0:37:57 - Deborah

No, I have gotten to that place and it was ever get there. No, I have gotten to that place, and it was after she died. There was a friend of mine who had a daughter who was similar to Hailey and we would often talk about our daughters and I was talking to my friend whose daughter died before Hailey, and we talked about Hylee and we talked about there was a sense of relief in one way, that our daughters were dead. I mean, that sounds odd to say, but that we had always been waiting for the phone call in the middle of the night and as we were having that conversation I thought, well, wait, I got that phone call.

That's how I found out that Haley was dead. I got a phone call in the middle of the night and it was every bit as bad as I had imagined it in my mind. But, as you said, then there's, that is gone, that particular worry is gone and grief replaces it. But there is also a relief, and particularly after I started writing to her and hearing how she was doing that she's safe, she's safe, you know she's safe and she's a version of happy that suits her and she isn't as worried, anxious, knotted up as she was in everyday life.

0:39:36 - Julie

Well, and I know everybody goes through the phases of grief, whether they realize it or not, and I do a lot of work with helping parents heal, which is an organization that just is what it says it is. It helps parents who've lost a loved one, and everybody goes through that. Back to when you were talking about, when you first were able to communicate with her through your writing. You were asking a lot of factual questions like what about this, what about that? And I've experienced that a lot with clients, especially when they've lost a child, you know what happened, especially when there's a mystery behind it. You know somebody's child dies at college and they don't have any information, nobody's forthcoming with any information about anything, and so they want to know what's going on.

And the thing that I've heard consistently from these children in heaven and you know the kid can be 50, but they're still always going to be our child right is don't get caught up in the details, it doesn't matter, and you alluded to that earlier in that. What did she say? It's, what was that? Nothing matters, nothing matters, yeah, nothing matters. Say more about that. Tell us more about what you've experienced with her when she was alive, now that she's in

heaven. And then thirdly, as you've been communicating with her, that nothing matters. That's a huge. That's like a write it down and post it someplace where you see it every day. I did that.

0:41:17 - Deborah

Yeah, where'd you put it? I put it in my office where I could see it. Well, there's a big contrast in what you just asked me and I thank you for pointing it out. When she was alive, everything mattered, all the details mattered. She got to a point where she couldn't drive and so I was one of her transports.

We had several people who helped her and everything mattered, like she needs meds, she needs this, she needs that, and it was never like let me make a list and I'll get it to you and can get it in the next couple of days. It was now. It was always emergency now. So there was a sense of heightened urgency when she was alive and there was a sense of if I don't have this, you know I'm going to fall apart or something big is going to happen. So to have Hailey looking at me, reading what I'm saying and wanting to calm me down, saying this doesn't matter, nothing matters, mom and several times she said it to me and I said it back to her is kind of a miracle. And when she says it, you know, if one of my friends said it I might think okay, you know, I'm listening, but it's not a big. Oh my gosh With Hailey. It was like a huge revelation that she would be able to say that and that I heard it from her in the current spot of wisdom that she was in, in the current spot of wisdom that she was in.

You know, I remember very distinctly when Hylee was 13 and we were having a big fight about something. I went out to the outside to kind of calm myself down and a voice came into my head and said she is your teacher. And that was it that helped me so much. She has been my teacher ever since that day, probably before then, throughout my whole life, getting me to a place when I was married to her dad. He could have been my teacher. But you can leave a husband, but you cannot leave. In my view, I would not leave my child. So there was my child, difficult as can be. I had to learn from her and I am still learning from her, but it's not so difficult now.

0:43:51 - Julie

Yeah, I'm thinking. If I was in your shoes, I would have thought well, can't I just have like?

Cinderella or Mary Poppins or Stone White or somebody who was like a Disney princess that was just so sweet and thankful and grateful for the you know, the specks of peanuts on the floor that I could feed my little mice that were running around the kitchen or something. Yeah, you're probably thinking, yeah, thanks a lot here that you sent me this teacher with that kind of a situation. And I think too that when our spirits are in heaven, when our loved ones are in spirit form in heaven and I use heaven as in non-physical that's what a good Catholic girl calls non-physical right While we're at the Catholic schools and I think that it's a situation where I truly believe that spirit has access to all intelligence, infinite intelligence, on any topic. And we do too, because we're spirits attached to a body. It's learning to connect into that and then, more importantly, believe what the information is that we receive. That's where we, you know, really get stymied. I think that's where we get our blocks.

People talk about I've got to clear my blocks. Well, your block is take action on the information you're getting, as long as it feels neutral or good. That's the bottom line. But it takes courage to be able to do that, and then the more we do it, then the more we realize okay, well, this really did work. And so for her to have access to any information that she wants. What does that mean to you? About nothing matters. How has that affected your life since she's been gone, and in what kind of ways? Can you give us some examples?

0:45:52 - Deborah

Yes. So when Hylee said that, it stopped me and it got my attention and what I took from it at that time was that I was worrying too much about everything. I was sad and I was worrying and I didn't want to make myself stop being sad. I really gave myself permission to feel my emotions and I'm grateful that I had the time and inclination to do that. But I didn't want to be worrying about things. I wanted to be more in touch with my intuition and not be analyzing it when it appeared. And that really helped me. It helped me listen more.

I mean, just hearing Hylee's voice and listening to her voice helped me understand that I didn't have to wait for two or three days before acting on what I was pretty sure was intuition. I could just do it and it'd be okay. And it gave me more of a sense of freedom, I would say, and I also released some of the judgments I had about myself as a mom that you know maybe I had over. As I said, I had overreacted on things. I, just with you know I, a belief system of mine is we are on our perfect paths and we are doing our best at all moments. So I believe that, but I can't always accept that about myself and, as Hylee pointed out, I couldn't always accept that about her. So she pointed that out to me post-death and I thought she had a very good point with it.

0:47:57 - Julie

So it's like thanks, honey. Well, and I think you bring up a really good point, and one I've heard bazillions of times from Spirit, which is we can't get anything wrong. Yes, it's an experience, it's just an exploration, and we all and I'd love to hear if this resonates with you, Debra we all have things that we want to accomplish and perhaps we get there in a completely different way, Like we take some circuitous route, but we get the same outcome and we think, oh well, if I would have done it that way, maybe it would have been easier or quicker or whatever. But no, it's always perfect how it unfolds, even in the tough times, which is really hard to stay in that mindset when you're going through something horrific like what you've experienced, not just with her death, but when she was alive too. It sounds like how old was she when she passed? She was 47.

0:49:02 - Deborah

Oh, so you'd had a long time. I had a long time. I was lucky. You know I was lucky. I had her so long and she was surprised she lived as long as she did. She hadn't intended to live that long but she also told me intended to live that long. But she also told me it takes a lot of work to commit suicide and she didn't want to go through all that work and secondary she didn't want to make me and her sister sad but that was second to the gumption it took to actually commit the suicide Did she say any more about that, why it takes a lot of work to die by suicide.

She didn't say that much, but she said many. She had thought of it any times, which I knew, but when it came down to it, she never took, you know, a big next step.

0:49:58 - Julie

Yeah, interesting. I also have the mindset too that and I've heard so many times from Spirit, countless times that we all decide where we go, when we go, how we go, who's with us or not when we go and what the circumstances are that surround our passing, and so my logical mind goes to well, if that's the case, is it feasible that all deaths are a form of suicide? If we're choosing when we go, how, where all of those different variables in our exit plan and when we execute it, is death really all of it a form of suicide? Is death really all of it a form of suicide? And I think it really takes that stigma off of suicide, because I find that so many families who have a loved one who die by suicide, who has died by suicide, there's so much shame and they feel like they've got a scarlet letter on their forehead, kind of a thing. Did you go through any of that with her dying from addiction-related issues?

0:51:08 - Deborah

I thought about it. Because I thought about well, am I going to tell people what happened? And I thought I have to because I don't want to be ashamed of it. I mean, it's part of who Hylee was and it's such an important thing to talk about.

Early on, when Hylee was 13 and 14 and was having a lot of mental health issues and I felt like all the people she was going to school with were perfect kids and so she had to go to a psychiatric ward for a week because she tried to commit suicide when she was young and one of the kids' mothers. And again I thought this is an amazing kid who is kind of a friend of Hailey's, perfect in every way. The mom was seen, perfect in every way. And she said, well, how's Hailey? What's wrong? And so my mind went well, I can just say, oh, she's got a bad cold.

But I somehow decided to tell her the truth and that was a big lesson for me, because she said, well, my daughters had issues like that too. And I went oh, people don't talk about it, you know we're hiding it. And I thought it's so important I've, you know, when my mom had dementia, I wanted to talk about that that has been part of my life's work is to try to be open and vulnerable to the things that maybe aren't the way I wish they were, but that are real in my life, and I'm really glad I did that with Haile as well, because it helped me understand I was not alone and people all over that were going through the same thing, but in those days particularly, we weren't talking about it as much.

0:53:10 - Julie

Well, it's obvious that you came in to be a caregiver in this lifetime. My goodness, girl, goodness, yeah, I want to talk about the Alzheimer's for a minute and then I want to circle back to how parents that are in the same situation with you, who've lost a child or another loved one, and they're really having a tough time with the grieving pointers from you about how perhaps this technique can help them. But is your mom, your mom's, in heaven now too, yes, or is she still alive? No, she passed on. Has your daughter talked about that? She's with your mom or she's seen your mom? Has that come in at all, have you?

0:53:53 - Deborah

asked her. No, I haven't asked her, but my daughter has described the neighborhood that she is in. My daughter has described the neighborhood that she is in because I wondered if she, her dad, has passed on. So I wondered if she had seen her dad and she said I might have seen him passing by. But I think we're in different neighborhoods. As one of former drug addicts although she says well, they're not like drug addicts who, you know, have wanted to give up drugs, we're all still very interested in the drugs here. But that is the neighborhood and she's very happy with this neighborhood. So I don't think my mom is there. My mom would not like that neighborhood.

0:54:44 - Julie

Well, that goes along with what I've heard from many, many, many spirits over the years, which is they just with a thought can materialize whatever it is they want to explore in heaven. I've never heard a spirit say that they're exploring, continuing, or exploring drugs in particular as something. But again, if there's no right or no wrong, no good or no bad in the spirit world, how fascinating is that.

0:55:14 - Deborah

Oh, it is fascinating, yes, yes, interesting, and my daughter has and had the ability when she wants to. She's extremely charismatic and can make friends instantly and she likes a downtrodden person that perhaps she can help, or she likes a person who is more wicked than she is, is more wicked than she is. What do you mean by wicked? I mean more on the outer

bounds of life, more of a risk taker. You know that sort of person is very attractive to her. So this is she's written some about. You know where she is and who she's seen.

0:56:04 - Julie

And she's very fascinated by it. All interesting, that would be so interesting. The person that came into my head was Charlie Manson. Charles Manson was I don't know why he came in. That's random when she's with wicked people and I think of wicked, as we would consider somebody like that to be so evil. You know, in their human form, but interesting Wow. Have you tried to communicate with her or are you communicating with her in any other ways? Are you communicating with her just during the day, telepathically with thoughts, or are you only using the correspondence with the computer?

0:56:44 - Deborah

I am mostly using the correspondence with the computer. I have talked to her some when I've been on walks, but she is not really an outdoors person and so I usually don't get an answer. So I can talk to her, but it's not two ways where, like with my dad, who was a swimming person I talk to my dad sometimes when I'm swimming, I talk to my mom sometimes when I'm doing something she liked. But Hylee is more likely to answer me if I'm just writing.

0:57:23 - Julie

Do you think that's because of where your vibration is when you're doing that and you're able to receive better in those situations when you're focusing on her or your mom or your dad? Or do you think it has to do with it's more of a situation with their spirit in heaven being able to send the information to you utilizing whatever that frequency is to send it?

0:57:50 - Deborah

That's a very good question With Hailey. I think that has worked so well. I haven't tried hard to communicate with her in another way and I might, but I felt I haven't needed to, so I felt content with my communications with the dead people I want to communicate with are.

0:58:21 - Julie

Yeah, what I'm getting from that, Deborah, is you're raising your vibration to the level of spirit is what I teach. And once you're connected into that spirit's frequency, then they can communicate. So it's easier. They're always communicating with us. It's usually on the receiver end, on our human perspective end, so you're so used to that. It's like driving a car. You just are like, okay, well, I'm going to talk to my daughter and I'm just going to type something out. And the same thing with your dad. You're thinking of your dad while you're swimming, and so you're in that high vibration and he can connect with you. That's really interesting. Have you connected with your dad and your mom much like you do with your daughter? I connect, and you tried typing with them, I guess. Have you tried typing up questions with them?

0:59:17 - Deborah

No, I really haven't. My mom I felt very complete with when she passed on. My father died suddenly when I was far away from him and he had a great death. He was playing a game of pool by himself, which he loved to do after dinner, and he died and we all assumed he was winning the game. Yeah, and knowing my dad, he was a person who wouldn't have wanted to be caretaken at all and he died where I couldn't get to him at all and I think that was a plan that he had for that. So I feel very comfortable with it. So with them, I just I connect with them. I reach out to them when I feel like either you know my grandchildren, I want them to know something that they would love about the grandchildren, or I feel like I need wisdom or advice or something like that. But highly has been more of a I'm less compulsive now was a compulsion for I would say those months. That was a very healing compulsion.

1:00:39 - Julie

Yeah, I do a lot of work with families who have a loved one that is dealing with dementia either dementia itself and or Alzheimer's and it's been my experience, Deborah, that we can communicate with any spirit, regardless of whether it's attached to a body or not. So oftentimes I'll have clients say can you talk to my mom? You know who's in a memory care facility. A lot of the times it's maybe far, far away, you know in a different state or sometimes even a different country, and we can get information for them and from them. Did you have that kind of a relationship with your mom when she had dementia? Did you know anything about this telepathic communication, either through the computer or just using your brain or other techniques, when she was still?

1:01:35 - Deborah

alive. Well, my goal with my mom was to stay connected with her in whatever way worked, and I wrote about this is the story behind love in the land of dementia. Is that journey and what happened with my mom was our mode of connection changed. Mode of connection changed. So my mom, you know, we'd always talked and my mom had been a lovely and very judgmental person and as her dementia grew deeper she became more playful and we connected through eye contact and gestures and laughter and eye gazing and it was amazing, I was closer to my mom during her late phase of dementia, spiritually and emotionally than I had been able to get when she was alive. And the reason is because when she was a young girl 14, her mother died suddenly and I once asked her Mom, I think I was a pretty good kid but I never felt like you loved me. Why was that? She said when my mother died, I knew she loved me and it was a terrible loss. I never wanted you to feel that loss.

Oh for heaven's sakes, Wow I know, but it was an important thing for me to hear and I was able to understand her and forgive her. And so when we, when she moved into the late phases of dementia where she couldn't talk to me, we had that beautiful soul connection that I still treasure.

1:03:33 - Julie

My goodness, you're like this caregiver philosopher. These are big, life-altering statements that you've been handed by your mother and your daughter at least, and perhaps others that have these huge implications, not only in your life, but for everybody that hears them. Thank you, god, that you decided to be a writer in this last month. Thank goodness, all right Along those lines. What advice or what guidance can you give to somebody who's lost a child or lost a loved one, who's in deep grief? And how do they start with this? Is there something that you can offer to them to help them at least take that first step? And how do they know that it's really their loved one whose spirit is coming through with the answers?

1:04:38 - Deborah

well, I can just share my own experience, which is that I followed my grief therapist advice and I wrote down what I wanted to write down, which I highly recommend in whatever form. If you like to handwrite or you know, just write, and it's no worries about spelling, punctuation, anything, it's just you're just rapid writing and then to quiet the mind and just hear anything that comes into your mind without judging it, and write it down and see what it means to you. And the thing that was so healing about that is then I had something to look at. I had something to read and reread from me to know about myself and from my daughter to know about her. I had something to share with my partner so he could know about us, and with other people, and it was a bridge out of isolation.

I felt like grieving was very isolating because you do feel like this is enormous and I don't want to burden the people I love with the enormity of these feelings. But having a letter and of course it helped me that Hailey had a great sense of humor having these letters to share helped me stay connected with the people around me who were eager to help me and that was

a great gift and I also think, if you don't like to write, talking about the person and telling their story and that was you know, that's one thing that happened with my mom when she was living with dementia. I was writing about not just our relationship but her story too, and that was helpful because, again, I could share that with people and they were connected with my mom and I wasn't by myself trying to stay connected. So I think all those ways that we can share what's going on with us with other people for me have been really helpful.

1:07:01 - Julie

I've got a few more questions as we're winding down here, so I'm trying to figure out which ones to ask just in the time that we have remaining together today. First is with the other books that you've written on other topics, do you believe that you were channeling that book? Did you have times in those books where you wrote something and you didn't really remember writing it and then you went back and read it and you thought, oh, this is pretty good. It's not like it took a lot of thought, it just was in the flow. Authors talk about being in the flow. Did you experience that?

1:07:40 - Deborah

I have experienced that quite a bit while I've been writing and I do think there is a creative flow that anybody can experience. You know where you just open yourself and you don't judge what you're doing, because you have plenty of time to come back and judge later. And one interesting thing is the two books I've written about dementia Love in the Land of Dementia and Connecting in the Land of Dementia, which is a series of activities you can do based on arts and imagination so that family members have a lovely way to stay connected. I had just finished that book and Ron and I were in Paris and we were sitting in the Sacred Heart Church there. We love to go into sacred buildings and just have a prayer, so we were having a prayer and my message from that prayer was you are a messenger. That was my message, you are a messenger. And I thought, okay, I mean okay.

1:08:47 - Julie

I like it, and you're a messenger in your writing, and you're a messenger in lots of other ways. Today, certainly, you've given us some amazing golden nuggets that are messages from the divine as far as I'm concerned, because I believe we're all a fractal of the divine anyway, whether we're in human form or the spirit attached to our bodies, or whether we're in spirit form in heaven, and I think, too, that the work that you're doing is so profound to help not only yourself heal, but help other people heal as well. I got to ask you this one question, though. This just cracked me up when I read this about you you say you have an MBA, but you only use it in emergencies. What do you mean by that? I laughed out loud when I read that. I thought, oh my gosh, that's hilarious.

1:09:41 - Deborah

Well, when I got married young, at 19, and so my husband was then in the Army during the Vietnam War, and when he got out he got to go to college on the GI Bill, and we both did and we were both in business. So we both went to school and we got a business degree and an MBA. But I am not an MBA person, I am a writer, you know, and so I have that there, and we used it because we were opening nursing homes and we needed to borrow money. So there's that very rational side of myself. That's there. But there came a time where I just said hello. I have proved to whoever my mom, my dad that I can do a business. I don't want to. I want to write, and I liberated myself. So if an emergency comes up, I can sort of be there, but it doesn't happen that often.

1:10:39 - Julie

And the emergency may be that you need to put that alphabet soup in those letters at the end of your name to give you credibility for whatever it is you want to do. Okay, that makes total sense. What, if anything, has changed in your view of spirituality in general and what happens

to us after we die bodily die. Has that changed? Has that been enhanced or lessened? Has there been a change at all in?

1:11:15 - Deborah

that the change started because I got to be with my mom when she died and I didn't die before Hylee, or did she? Yes, she died before Hylee, and I saw that it was, like you said, a choice. I saw she was ready and, though I was very sad, there was a comfort to that and I let go a lot of my fears about dying. And with Hailey, what really helped me. I was frustrated that I wasn't able to be there. I was frustrated that I wasn't able to be there when Hailey was cremated.

She was taken away to the coroner's office because it was a drug-related death and I wanted to go sit with her. You know her body. They wouldn't let me. They wouldn't let me near her when she was being. I wasn't able to be around her at all after she died and I felt very disconnected about that. But then when she talked to me about it, she said don't worry, I don't even remember that evening there wasn't any pain. I was just, you know, in my house and then I was up here and you know there was, don't worry about it, and I didn't. And so I think it's an increasing comfort in life and death and whatever middles between them, and also a gratitude that, no matter where you are on the physical plane, you can stay connected if you really want to in some way, and that has been magnificent for me, that feeling of connection.

1:13:06 - Julie

How beautiful is that, my goodness? Last question why do we incarnate To try again?

1:13:15 - Deborah

Oh okay, good answer. No, I just I love that idea of you know, and that's a simple answer but maybe to explore, to be different. Hearing Haile talk about how you know, what would she like to be, she said I don't want to be the typical success, I'm not interested in that, but I might like to have more money than I had this time and maybe I'd like to be a fashion designer or a dominatrix or I don't know. So I love the idea of exploring the possibilities of what it is to be alive on the earth and then maybe what it is to not be alive on the earth and to be in pure spirit form.

1:14:10 - Julie

Yeah, she does have that wild child narrative going on. It sounds like for her next life too. I think, so, my goodness, that's really interesting. I don't know that I've heard it expressed quite in that manner before from any spirit with whom I've spoken, but how, how fabulous it is to have that perspective from her. You know how wonderful.

1:14:39 - Deborah

I love that part of her that she's looking. You know she's looking for the sparkle in things.

1:14:46 - Julie

Yeah, I really appreciate that, well, I and everybody that reads your books and that gets to hear you, are so grateful that you do have that positive perspective in your life and in how you choose to live, even though your daughter gave you a hard time about it. My goodness, how you're leading by example and helping so many people that have access to this information. I, for one, am grateful and, on behalf of humanity and anybody that's ever going to grieve, anybody, I thank you on their behalf because, my goodness, the work that you're doing, I believe, is really profound. So thank you for that.

1:15:32 - Deborah

Well, thank you, Julie. It's just been an honor to be with you and I love the questions you ask, and you expanded my feeling and thinking with your questions and I'm so happy that we got to

be together and I got to experience you in your glory, because your work is so beautiful and I'm so grateful for it.

1:15:55 - Julie

Oh, thank you. How can people learn more about you and find your books and find the other things that you're doing?

1:16:02 - Deborah

Yes, well, my website is very simple. It's Deborah Shouse writes W-R-I-T-E-S dot com. Deborah Shouse writes. So my books are on there. I have some events coming up those are on there. This interview will be on there at some point when I get it, and the books are, of course. They're on Amazon, they're on bookshop.org. If people like to buy from independent bookstores, that's a good way to do it, and I'm delighted to hear from anybody. I mean, part of what I love is connecting with people who are going through this, and so my email is on there, and if you feel inspired to reach out to me, please do.

1:16:46 - Julie

I welcome it, okay, and we'll put all of that in the show notes. I'd love that, all righty. Okay, everybody. That's it for today. Lots to think about from this conversation, sending you lots of love from Sweet Home, Alabama, and from Missouri to where Debra is. We'll see you next time. Thanks for joining us.

1:17:08 - Ann cr

Be sure to follow Julie on Instagram and YouTube at AskJulieRyan, and like her on Facebook at AskJulieRyan. To schedule an appointment or submit a question, please visit AskJulieRyan.com.

1:17:21 - Disclaimer

This show is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be medical, psychological, financial or legal advice. Please contact a licensed professional. The Ask Julie Ryan Show, Julie Ryan and all parties involved in producing, recording and distributing it assume no responsibility for listeners' actions based on any information heard on this or any Ask Julie Ryan shows or podcasts.