

## AJR - William Peters Transcript

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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.

0:00:43 - 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 William Peters with us on the show today. William's a licensed psychotherapist and founder of the Shared Crossing Project. He's developed a series of programs for individuals and healthcare providers that focuses on creating a loving end-of-life experience for the patient and the family. In particular, I'll be asking William to define a shared death experience, also known as an SDE, how it differs from an NDE, and about his research on this topic. Please remember to subscribe, leave a comment and share this episode with your family and friends. Now let's go talk with William. William, welcome to the show. I'm so delighted to have you today. Thanks for making time for us.

0:01:43 - William

Good to be here, Julie.

0:01:43 - Julie

Thank you for having me you bet you say death isn't the end. What do you mean by that?

0:01:50 - William

Well, I mean, I think that, based on you know, my research and anybody really who's a serious researcher and end of life well, end of life, and there is a small field of afterlife studies as well. But those of us who look at this deeply, most of what we find suggests that there's a continuation of consciousness that survives human death. And what that actually is is hard to define, because what we track at the Shared Crossing Project in our research is what an experiencer a shared death experiencer that is, somebody who is at the bedside or has an experience at the time of a death of a loved one where they report I feel like I shared in the journey with my dying and departing loved one from their human existence into the initial stages of the afterlife. And what they report is remarkably similar in terms of they don't feel like they say, I saw my loved one, I saw them interacting with other known beings, perhaps deceased relatives, perhaps elevated spirit beings. There's a sense that from the shared death experience there's a pattern that has emerged that is familiar. We've studied it, other researchers have studied it and it suggests, as I say, that something survives human death. Call it consciousness, call it a soul, spirit, but there's not that many of us who do research in this seriously who don't just take a step back and go, wow, you can't be making this up, because we see it.

You know, I've now have over 400 deeply analyzed cases. My team is, you know, research team up from 13 of us from all over the world and we collect these cases and just look at each other and say, wow, this again, this again. Yeah, you know, and these happen in. You know, these are caregivers, loved ones. These experiences are happening in a way that they didn't know this was possible. Like when they reach out to us, it's more almost a reach, a call for help. Like I have this experience. They often compare it to the near-death experience. They'll

say my experience was just like a near-death experience, but I didn't have a brush with death. And they find us on the internet typically and then we interview them and it's like, yes, we know what you have.

0:04:37 - Julie

And every time I know you say okay, we can't make this stuff up.

0:04:41 - William

Well, that's I mean, that's what I probably, if you've heard me before I say publicly you can't make this up. Well, that's I mean, that's what I yeah, probably, if you've heard me before I say publicly you can't make this out Like. These people do not know when they reach out to us they're they're sheepish, like. So I read your website or I heard you here, or a friend told me about you and your team and and they write a little bit about it and I said I don't know if this is what you're looking for, but it was very moving to me and, you know, sometimes I'll say I feel like I'm a little crazy reaching out to you because if they have an interaction with, I should say, like more traditional, uninformed healthcare providers, the healthcare profession is just now getting educated and aware of these experiences and that's good news. I mean we have published, I'd say, in some of the main medical journals, the main one being the American Journal for Hospice and Palliative Medicine, and it was very well received, and a lot of the hospice, palliative healthcare providers, you know, reached out to us afterwards and just said thank you. Now I can bring this to our medical director, to our hospital, to the authorities and say this is documented, we see it here. We need to affirm families when these things happen, because it's really, it's really malpractice at this point If you don't say to experiencers, loved ones, caregivers, when they say to you it's like this is the most bizarre thing.

But I think I saw my mom, you know, after she died or at the time she died, talking to my deceased father. They were embracing and they were happy and then they turned around and looked at me and said thank you and ascended into the light. You know, you say that to most people. They're going to go. What is this person drinking or eating? Because this is not normal and the fact of the matter is we know they happen.

We don't know with what frequency, so we don't know how common it is, but I can tell you for the people that we work with and they come to us for training, because a lot of people will say I want that. I want that from when my husband dies. I want that when my parents die, I want that when my good friend dies, I want that experience. My good friend dies, I want that experience. We work with people. We have training programs that enable these. We're not 100% accurate, but we're about 90% accurate for some type of what we call shared crossing experience.

In other words, it may not be a shared death experience it's time of death but it'll be something like an after-death communication, a post-death communication, a significant post-death vision or visitation, and all those are deeply meaningful and transformative experiences and they deliver the same truth that the SDE, the shared death experience, delivers, and that is, oh my God, my deceased loved one is alive and well and happy, exactly. And that changes, you know, that changes grief, that changes your, that changes everything Really. It changes the way you see life, it changes the way you see death, changes the way you see your world and it allows a relationship with your departed loved one to continue, and that's kind of. I know that part of your work is that's where you pick up and you can talk to these people on the other side of the veil and continue that conversation and, as you know, that is incredibly meaningful for people.

0:08:21 - Julie

We've had Dr Chris Kerr from Buffalo Hospice he's the director and we've had him on the show and, as you know, he's done university-based research that shows that 90% of people at the end of their lives see the spirits of deceased loved ones and pets. And that's what I see in the

work that I do. I call it the 12 phases of transition, and I can scan anybody anywhere in the world and my graduates can too and we can tell how close to death somebody is. We can communicate with the patient who's dying. We can tell you who the family members are that are around them. I can describe what the animals look like that are around them. All of that and the family's going.

Yeah, that's my grandmother's cow, Bessie, when she was a kid, and this is Uncle Alfred and whoever. There's a woman with her hair that's white and it's in a bun in the back of her head and she has on this little sweater with pearl buttons. They said, oh, that's Grandma Annie. She has on this little sweater with pearl buttons. They said, oh, that's Grandma Annie. And so it's so comforting to the family when we can describe to them who those spirits are that are around them in addition to angels and in addition to these pet spirits that are there as well, and that's what your work and Chris Kerr's work validates. So I'm gonna say to you the same thing I said to him, which is I love it when science catches up with woo-woo, because woo-woo has been around a whole lot longer and it's been my experience, William, that when most families think, okay, grandma's hallucinating, grandma's not hallucinating, grandma's actually seeing and able to communicate with her deceased father, who's been dead for 90 years, and you know, and how comforting is that not only to grandma the patient, but also to the family.

Because I don't see if you agree with me on this I think when we're going through the end of life with a loved one, it all makes us face our own mortality and we think, oh God, I'm going to be there one day too, and not that they're necessarily at that top of mind or they're cognizant of it at the time, but it happens. So what are some of the common denominators? Give us an idea of a shared death experience versus afterlife, and this is why I love the work that you're doing and why I wanted to have you on. What I found is that there's a lot of information about the afterlife. There's a lot of information about grieving, there's not much information about what's happening as somebody's dying. Then that's what you do, that's what I do, that's what Chris Kerr does. So tell us about some of those different experiences that people have reported to you and you cover in your research.

0:11:08 - William

So the most dominant feature in the shared death experience is encountering the departing loved one. 51% of our experiencers will say I saw my loved one at the moment of death in the afterlife, and that afterlife looks different to certain people. Sometimes it's just they see the person alive and well. They typically look younger, they look healthy. They often I think I kind of laugh there's kind of a bit of vanity as they cross over. It's like, oh, I'm going to put on my youngest, most you know, charming, beautiful self, and that's something we ask now, how do they look? They go oh, they look really healthy, like, really good, like you know. And for grandchildren who have the shared death experience, they'll say, wow, my grandmother was really beautiful when she was 20 and 30 years old. So there's the most common feature. The other features that we see are I think this is the most important one is just the feelings of sublime, feelings of love, of gratitude, of compassion, of generosity, of generosity. The best feelings that we know available in the human experience are expressed by our shared death experiencers in terms of it was like that, but more it was more real than real and beyond words, and there's also a sense of belonging, like they feel like, oh, when I was there I just felt like I was home, like this was my true home, and also a sense of knowledge or wisdom that gets transferred in this and the sense of like they'll come back. A really common expression is when I was there I felt like all my answers about everything were known to me, every question I had. I understood everything, like I understood the purpose of a human life, I understood where we're going, I understood why I'm in this human life, I understood human suffering. These are profound insights that the experiencer will bring back to their human life. So that's it, I think.

Another piece about the SDE that's important and what distinguishes it from other phenomena around end of life. You mentioned Chris Kerr's work and he calls them end of life dreams.

They're historically being called pre-death dreams and visions, but there's also post-death visions and visitations, various types of after-death communication, synchronicities throughout. What distinguishes the shared death experience from all those other phenomena is there's a journey motif Interesting. There's a movement that's observable and in the full variety of SDEs, most of them will have some indication of movement and it's typically ascension. And it's also typically movement towards light or through light, being guided by light bridges or to a light in the distance.

And you know for your listeners who are familiar with the near-death experience, the possible phenomena in the shared death experience are identical to that in the near death experience. So you're talking about the same landscape, if you will, the same landscape that a near death experiencer will encounter when they have a brush with death, or even Passover, if you want to say that way, into the next life or the next dimension. Passover, if you want to say that way, into the next life or the next dimension. That's what the near-death experiencer is observing and that's what the shared-death experiencer is observing as they watch their loved one die and depart and transition. So you know the same bells and whistles that you get in the NDE. You get, you know, change in the time-space continuum. You get heavenly realms, you get encounters with deceased relatives or elevated spirit beings, past life reviews. Eventually there's an encounter with a boundary or border where you realize your loved one is going on but you are not. And in that moment, right away, once you realize, oh, I'm not going any further, they're back in their human body, in the human realm.

And these are all pretty common across NDEs and SDEs, and there's a lot of other phenomena as well. But I think the affective state is one that is enduring, in the sense that even soon after they return they'll have like a frequency in their mind, body spirit, if you will, where they're just like on cloud nine for a while and regretting in some ways returning. So while they have gratitude for the experience, they'll also express a sense of wow, that was so incredible and so loving and so divine, whatever that superlatives that people find or come up with in terms of their vocabulary is often lacking, but you get the idea. So that's kind of the defining features of the SDE, and I think it's important to note also that the relationship, the bond between the dying and the experiencer seems to be the conduit that facilitates the shared death experience. So that doesn't mean you had a close loving relationship. It typically does.

But we have a lot of people that have this who say, gosh, I've been estranged from my mother or my father for a long time and then she came to me. But it speaks to the bond that was always there and there's healing involved. So you know, maybe one of the children is not estranged and they've been with caretaking the mom all through end of life and all of a sudden the long lost, you know prodigal son returns and he gets the SDE and the loyal, faithful son says why did he get it? And I did, you know? And we find that there's a healing effort if you would, for a lot of this.

And it seems, if you want to use simple interpretation, that if the person dying is the one that initiates the SDE, they don't seem to have the capacity to give it or to make contact with everyone. We do have multi-person SDEs, you know, with a few people having it they're not as common. I think they're more common than we know and there's a whole reason why that is. But we have at least 10 to 15% of our experiencers say there was another person who had something similar. It may not be the exact same experience in fact it typically isn't but it still would qualify as a show of death experience.

0:18:39 - Julie

I have an opinion about that, and that is when we're grieving we're in a low vibration because grief feels awful and spirit is a high vibration because it doesn't have the density of the body anymore.

So I always say, William, spirit doesn't communicate as easily on the I feel crappy channels because the vibration's too low. So perhaps the caregiver is in a deeper state of grief than the prodigal son and and it's easier for that mother spirit to communicate with the son. And what I find is that oftentimes it's during sleep because our brains rest and then our vibration level goes back to the factory preset spiritual level every night when we sleep and it's easier for them to communicate with somebody who's not in such deep grief. That's why I always tell people ask your mom, ask whoever your loved one is that's departed, ask them to visit you in your sleep. And then the other thing that I always say and you alluded to this earlier is that it's like the dreams in high def the colors are more vibrant, the senses are more heightened, the whatever, the music, the sounds, the feelings. It's like this super high def experience and it seems to me that that's what you've found in your research as well. You've found in your research as well.

0:20:03 - William

Absolutely yeah. The words or the terms we hear more real than real, hyper alive colors that are fluorescent but deeper. They also speak to seeing the multidimensionality of beings, able to like inner structure, outer structure, you know, systems that are alive within the beings, if you will, which are not available to us here. So this is the multidimensionality of it.

0:20:37 - Julie

It's not just 3D, it's multi-D Right right and as a medical intuitive and energy healer and I'm an inventor of surgical devices we were talking about that before we started recording I'm like a human MRI, so I can scan anybody anywhere and I can see in my mind's eye inside their body. I can see broken bones, torn ligaments, cancer, viral infections, whatever, and then watch energetic healings happen. And that's that phenomenon that I turn on and off in a nanosecond. That I've developed over 30 years is something to what you just mentioned that people say that they see too when they get these visits. And I say there's a difference between dreams and visits. Visits are high-depth. Dreams are kind of. They're kind of cloudy and muddy and don't make a lot of sense. Visits are succinct. You know what's going on, you know what the information is. They're trying to convey all of that.

Furthermore, I do this exercise and I teach this, called the walk to heaven exercise. The walk to heaven exercise, and it's when people are very afraid to die because they've been raised in a religion or a culture that's, you know very hell and heaven and that kind of a thing, and so we do. I call it a dress rehearsal to what's going to happen when they actually pass and heaven looks to me like this big, brilliant yellow-white plasma wall and we go through it and it closes up. By the way, I've never seen St Peter outside of the pearly gates with a clipboard going okay, you're allowed in, no, you gotta go burn for eternity. But it's fascinating because when we do that exercise with people, when we come back from the walk to heaven, the fear is gone and usually they'll pass in a matter of a few days or a few hours. Had you run into any of that too in the research that you've conducted?

0:22:36 - William

Well, I mean, what you're saying makes sense to me in the sense that when we prepare people for end of life, we do take them through. I call them guided visualizations and you know, we, there's a whole landscape there and I've had multiple, you know, many dozens of shared death experiences. So I've I've I made this journey, and numerous times, and you know it's not like you know, signposts, but metaphorical signposts, feelings, sensations, certainly sounds, all of that we do prepare people for and what you're describing is what we see as well. Yeah, I don't think any of us who've done this, there's not a whole lot of disagreement. Now, if you come from different cultures, there's a different cultural interpretation, like I've always been interested in.

I even worked for a while with the Tibetan, some Tibetans who have a whole topology in their Dhammatola, which is, you know, tibetan book of the dead, and it guides people at the end of life, what to expect, what to see. But it's very culturally contextualized and it's beautiful, but Westerners wouldn't what to expect, what to see. But it's very culturally contextualized and and and it's beautiful, but Westerners wouldn't know what to make sense of that. You know these purple mandalas and you know this Deva and that Deva and you know um, but it works for them. And why? Why do they? Do those entities show up for them and not for us? I don't know. But everything else, in terms of the structure and the passage, it matches Mm-hmm, you know so.

0:24:15 - Julie

Well, I think that spirit it's been my experience that spirit's going to communicate with us in a way that we're going to understand it based on our life experiences. So, to your point, somebody that's coming from the Tibetan culture is going to be different than somebody you know growing up in like a Lutheran church or something, and they have an idea of what to expect that kind of thing. I would say angels. I'm a 12 years Catholic school girl. Angels look to me like they're depicted in the European artwork and statuary. You know big wings, they're tall, they're wearing a white gown, they're barefoot, they got a rope belt. Somebody growing up in an indigenous culture in the Amazon may see angel energy looking just like a purple blob. So it's all going to be predicated on what we've been exposed to in this lifetime. I want to back up a few steps. How does one go from being a psychologist into figuring out, okay, what happens when somebody's dying? What's the journey that you've been on and what was the catalyst that led you to even start researching this?

0:25:27 - William

Yeah, that's a great question. Yeah, certainly, when I'm, you know, in college, I'm not thinking I'm going to grow up and be a shared death experience researcher, especially when in my you know, in my youth, the term wasn't even known, right?

0:25:42 - Julie

So Well, it's a pretty new term, speaking of which I mean, I think NDE has been around a whole lot longer than SDE. Can we back up to that and tell us where that even originated and then go into what your journey was?

0:25:56 - William

Yes, so the near-death experience, you know, was really the term was known before Raymond Moody's 1975 book Life After Life, but he really popularized it, like he his that book, you know. Now I think I dare say 18 million copies all over the world, 30 some odd languages. For some reason that book really caught fire in our culture. And but with Raymond, you know, I, Raymond is a friend and colleague, you know, and and when we talk about this, he says that when he was giving talks around the world, frequently hands would come up and they'd say you know, I had the same experience you're talking about with the near-death experience, but I had it when my loved one died. And Raymond took note of this and in 2010, he wrote a book called Glimpses of Eternity and it was the first published book for the general public on the shared death experience. Now, the term had been, that term had been bantied about with other terms empathic death experience, death watch experience. Dr Yvonne Kaysan wrote a book that talked about death watch experiences. I mean it was part of her book on spiritual experiences. And so, and then, in as far back as 1865, the London Society for Psychical Research, they were aware of these experiences, but they called them at-death apparitions, and then one of their foremost researchers, sir William Barrett. A book was written on his work posthumously, you know, post his death in 1926, I believe and it was called Death Bed Visions and he had 57 accounts and most of those accounts were what we would call end of life visions or pre-death dreams and visions similar to what Christopher Kerr has been studying and other researchers as well. Kerr has been studying and other researchers as well. But 17 of

those 54 some odd deathbed visions were shared death experiences, but they didn't have a term for it, they just said this is an experiencer who, at the death of a loved one, reported this and more often than not the features in that early literature was that the dying excuse me, the surviving loved one would see the dying in the afterlife and often see encounters that that person was having life and often see encounters that that person was having like would sense, relatives or angels, and sometimes it's interesting to hear music, heavenly realm music from the heavenly realm. So but I have to say in my research I don't. We don't have many cases of heavenly music anymore, but anyway, but it could change. You know, we get the stuff in waves. So that's, that's really the main history of the shared death experience. So Raymond um did the his book in 2010.

I met Raymond in 2009 in person and he was giving a talk and I went to go hear him because I was interested. You know and I'll my this will make sense when you hear my story uh, that I'd near-death experience and I wanted to hear him talk about it. And then he interrupted, he kind of started his speech and said you know, I know you're all here because you want to. You know, hear me talk about the near-death experience. He says, but I'm not going to talk about that. I'm going to talk about another experience that is available to all of you. You don't need to have a brush with death. It's identical to the near-death experience. It is the shared death experience.

And then he went on to describe this experience and my jaw dropped because I had been a hospice worker and I I my life is, you know I'll go into in a second I'd had many uh experiences with persons dying and when he said this I was like what? So I went up to him afterwards and I, you know, said, asked him a lot of questions and I said you know, is anyone doing research. He goes no. And I said well, I feel like not only do I want to do research, I think I can help people have this experience. He goes. Well, we need it. Let me know if I can help. So that began our relationship.

0:30:56 - Julie

We've had him on the show and he's so cute. He's in his rocking chair when he talks and he's rocking back and forth and you know I'll ask him something and then he, and then he'll stop for a minute and he'll think and he's so wise and has so much knowledge in that brilliant brain of his and he's in his nineties now. Right, he's up there in age.

0:31:21 - William

He's up there, but I think he's late 70s. But you know, Raymond has looked like a wise man and everything that comes with wisdom for a long time, like, I think, in 50s. He looked like you know he was Somebody's grandpa. Yeah, grandpa, you know, he was the grandfather of the near-death experience and then the shared-death experience in his youth, if you will Right. So yeah, but yeah, he's doing well and you know, I mean he lives in Sarasota, so he just, you know, went through that period where there was those two hurricanes that went through the area and he's doing okay, good, good, that period where there was those two hurricanes that went through the area and that he's doing okay, so Good good, okay, back to you, give us.

0:32:11 - Julie

So you're in college. You're not thinking about studying people who are dying.

0:32:15 - William

Oh well, even before that. So I'll start out 17 years old, all right? Well, even before that. So I'll start out 17 years old. Uh, last year of high school, uh go up skiing with some friends and skiing down the mountain in lake Tahoe, California, and caught an edge, uh, going at pretty high speed and I had a high-speed wipeout, where my skis did not come off, unfortunately, and I crushed my low spine and I felt the crunch. And at the moment I felt the crunch in my spine. It was somersault. Everything went dark. And next thing I realized in the darkness was that I was

still there, I was observing darkness. There was no energy discernible in my body. In fact, it was at that point that I realized oh, there's always this hum of energy in my body and there was nothing. It was darkness, it was devoid of sound, it was silence. And then I started to feel a movement upwards, light started coming in from above and I saw my body on the ski slopes. I saw beautiful Lake Tahoe. I then looked to my left and saw San Francisco Bay, Colorado Rockies, continental North America. So you were really high up there.

Well, I was sailing away and I was completely comfortable enjoying it all. I was seeing a life review, everything I'd done in the first 17 years of my life, or at least the salient events of my life. And then I'm in this tunnel and I'm kind of looking through this opaque tunnel at a beautiful solar system, planets flying by. It was super enjoyable. But then I realized, as I looked up and noticed a pinprick of light, I realized, quite shockingly, I am dying and I've been here hundreds, if not thousands, of times before and I immediately started pleading with God, the light, saying I don't want to die, and I said I didn't complete what I came here to complete. Not knowing anything about what I was saying. I had the senses I don't want to do childhood again. I got to go back and get to my work and, like I said, these thoughts are coming out of me without any understanding for where they're coming from or what they mean. But I went into the light and it was very comfortable. I was just basking, undulating with the light, and I remember saying to God that light you know, actually I'm okay, I can stay here, you know I'm good. And then all of a sudden I felt a pushback on my body and I said, okay, well, thank you, thank you and he said make something of your life. And that's what I got into my being. It wasn't, you know, audible. It was what I was delivered to me as like a transmission telepathic. So I made it back into my body.

Unfortunately, I would live the next, you know, 30 plus years with debilitating, chronic pain from a severe spinal injury. But it didn't really. I mean, it slowed me down in a lot of ways. It changed my identity. I was very much an athlete with a healthy, adventuresome outlook, and I had to pare things back. I never ran again, never played any contact sports again. I swam and have been swimming ever since.

And then I really had an existential crisis about who I am. Who am I, what am I doing here, what is this life all about? And I was living with pain, severe pain. I couldn't sit, you know, for more than 15, 20 minutes, so that really curtailed how I got around the world. But strangely, I was committed to not let this injury slow me down. So I did end up working in Central and South America during two civil wars where death and dying was all around me in both, and primarily in Peru. I was in Guatemala too, but Peru was where I was really working with refugees and it was intense work and that moved me greatly, just being with death and dying in such a overwhelming way.

0:36:58 - Julie

How did you get down there? Was that like a program through your college or something?

0:37:03 - William

Well, I went to a Jesuit prep school and so the Jesuits had missions all over the world. But if you know the Jesuits, they're really about social justice, they're not. I mean, they're deep thinkers, they're very deep. They're the educators of the church, historically, right, right you know there's 30-some-odd universities.

In fact, my daughter, just 18-year-old daughter, just got accepted to Boston College, which she's oh, perfect, she's very excited, but that's one of their you know, better known, excellent, you know, education institutions for higher learning, education institutions for higher learning. But I went to Cal, Berkeley, undergraduate. But I called back to my theology teacher in high school, who I remained close to and told him I really feel called to work with people who are suffering, and because I was suffering and I just felt like I need to, I just felt called and so,



anyway, I started my work there and uh was ended up being on Central and South America for about three years, a few different countries, and I loved it, um, but I saw a lot and and and boy talk about uh being broken open, about what this world can dish out to people, um, you know, awards and all the rest of it. So I came back and I was fluent in Spanish and still am. But at that time I came back and I said I went to school in theology back at Berkeley and philosophy theology, to kind of figure things out. But I took a job in the tenderloin of San Francisco, which is Skid Row. They hired me because I was fluent in Spanish, and at that time there was this onslaught of migrants from Central and South America.

And then what happened was the AIDS epidemic broke out, and I was there right when these, you know, primarily gay men were having their lives just impoverished and they would end up you know, very successful, functional people, in the matter of weeks, months, ending up in Skid Row, and many of them had not even told their parents they were gay and they certainly weren't going to tell them they had AIDS and were dying. And so I ended up being in a very privileged position of being with a lot of gay men who were dying of AIDS. Well, that gave me an opportunity to be right up at bedside with people who were dying and didn't have very many people close to them. So this was my experience, and this is where I started having these experiences, but also because of my interest in this hearing from them. So, since I was a social worker and I had one of the biggest food banks in San Francisco at my disposal, a lot of these men would come in because they were living in communities of men who were dying of AIDS and they would need food, and so I would provide them food. I would hear the stories, I would help them through their grief counseling and grief counseling, anticipatory grief and post-death grief, like you know, I mean, as one individual said to me, I live in a burned out building with 12 men right now and we all know we're just waiting for our turn to die because they're all HIV positive. So that's where I heard about the original hearing of the shared death experiences and I had some myself there. That got me very interested.

Fast forwarding, I worked at Zen Hospice a few years later and it was there that I was privileged to be at the bedside of hundreds of people who were dying, because this was Laguna Honda Hospital, a public hospice mostly for people who were indigent, short on means, often alone, estranged from loved ones, and they would come to this publicly funded hospice to die. And for me and for others, this was an incredible opportunity. We were helping people do this last few days, weeks, months if they were lucky of life and we developed close relationships with these people and we helped them prepare to die and often have the shared death experience. Now I will say I did talk about this a bit at the Zen Hospice in San Francisco and people didn't know what to do with it. So I learned pretty quickly we don't talk about it.

And also that could have to do with the Buddhist perspective of things. Traditional Buddhism is kind, of note your phenomena, logical experience, but let it go. Remember, hold on to nothing, and you know. So everything's about letting go. But I wasn't a good Buddhist. I mean, I have a Buddhist practice. That's why I was there. I definitely love the practice, but I was like wait a minute, wait a minute, I'm not going to let this experience go. This is I just. I just crossed over with this man and I see that he, you know he lived a life on the streets of San Francisco and kind of a you know a failure because of his drug addictions what have you by Western assessment. But here he is being greeted by all his loved ones and they're embracing him and they're hugging him and they're saying we love you. You know you lived a hard life but a good life and welcome home. And I'm just like wow.

0:42:56 - Julie

Yeah. So, first of all, there's a special place in heaven for people like you. Thank you for doing that for all of those people at the end of their lives who didn't have any, and I'm totally serious, I mean, that's a, that's a calling. Good heavens for somebody to do that. Number one and number two it's been my experience too, William, in working with thousands of people at the

end of their lives, not in a hospice facility, but working with them through their families or with them directly.

Is that all and I've heard this from a bazillion spirits, all spirits, heart, pure love. Everybody goes to heaven. Every dog goes to heaven, every person goes to heaven. And when I talk to somebody and the maternal spirit that's closest to the person who's dying is always present, and it's been my experience they run the show from the spirit world. They bring in the angels, they bring in the other spirits. That's what my angelic attendance book is. Oh.

But I'll have people say to me I don't want my mom spirit or anything else at my bedside when I'm dying. She was the bitch from hell and I'll say that was a part she was playing in this lifetime. Your mom's spirit is pure love, the most awful person you can think of and in our generation it's probably Hitler comes to mind for a lot of people. And I say, look, Hitler's spirit is pure love. And people have a hard time with that.

But what I'm hearing you say is what's been my experience too is that all spirits are pure love, regardless of what we perceive were mistakes or awful behavior. And so I tell those people that say I don't want my mom there when I'm dying, I say, look, when you get to heaven, you can give her an Oscar and say, look, mom, that was a great performance. You know, you deserve the Academy Award for that, because most actors will tell you those were the most interesting parts that they played were of the villains and the bad guys. So, yeah, but God bless you for doing all that work, my goodness. Well, I thank, but God bless you for doing all that work, my goodness.

0:45:06 - William

Well, I thank you. You know, honestly, and I want to humbly respond by saying I felt it was just the greatest privilege to be with someone when they die, and I said that to your listeners. If you haven't had the opportunity to be with somebody when they die, you're missing out, because there is something that happens that opens up. There's just a whole experience there. Can you describe that to those that that you as a, as a medium and intuitive? Um, because there's a whole energetic process that happened here and and what happens is, you know, you are, you're at the bedside or nearby, and the first phenomena that we notice and I'm going to conflate, you know, put together both the research and my own experience, but let's speak in the first person so what I notice is, all of a sudden, there is a frequency shift in me and I'll feel a high pitch in my ears Like it's all of a sudden. You know, even talking about it, it happens to me right now and it usually goes bilateral. It usually goes starts on one side and eventually it'll connect to the other side. Don't know why that is, and sometimes there's a hushing sound like a shh, but all of this is frequency and I believe and I teach this that when there is someone dying, there is a whole process that is taking place from the other side and other side used across the veil, that veil is opening and it's like a gravitational force that is now basically saying we are going to take the soul, spirit from this being and you know if you're the experiencer, you know if I'm at bedside, I feel that. And now what happens is, if I allow myself to go into that vortex because it is a spiraling vortex if I allow myself to go into that, what I'm going to next notice is my three-dimensionality world is shifting and what that means is corners get rounded, walls can drop away. I look up and I don't even think I'm looking up up, just my mind. Now, my own soul, spirit, consciousness within my own being is not seeing the world through my eyes. I don't think I'm looking up. That essence of me is looking up and I realize, oh, I'm being pulled up, and that doesn't mean I'm moving out of my chair, but that part of myself that is consciousness is actually orientating upwards and in some cases is moving out of my body and most of the time, eventually it will detach my body much the way you described earlier, Julie, as in dream time. In dream time, we leave the human body, we go travel, we do all sorts of things. So it's not like this is a new experience, it's just that we're doing it in the light of day. Um, it can be at night, but you get the idea in the waking state. So, and now?

Now, what happens here is a whole host of of phenomena is available. You can, if you're you know, if know, if the transition is slower, you can actually see your body and that of your loved one down below, as what's typically called an auto body experience. For most people, though, they actually go right into this next dimension, and it may at first be dark, but, or it can be searing with light and like, in other words, it can be anything in this light, complete darkness, but a sense of presence is around. Eventually, the lights will come on and you'll see, and then you're in this realm, this hyper alive realm, and at this point, thinking kind of stops for people, and if you do start thinking, you're going to be back in your body. So don't think, just receive, just turn it off and allow yourself to be drawn in.

I think one of the sadder experiences I have is when somebody comes to me and says, oh, I had all of that. And then I started thinking and I was back in my body oh, there you have it. So one of the reasons we teach this shared death experience and how to have it is so that when you see these initial phenomena, you basically go oh and let go, just oh, and lean in. Whatever that means to you, do not skip a beat, don't do anything in the realm of resistance. So that's kind of what that is at the spiritual level. So then you're in there and then all the phenomena are possible. You don't really get more than three, four, five phenomena.

If you're lucky, we do have full-blown SDEs, but that's more in the magnitude of, you know, 5% to 10% of the people will, you know, ascend towards the light. See the deceased relatives, embrace deceased relatives, you know, have a conversation with their departing loved one. See a conductor Now. So I'll bring in an important piece here. So there is a conductor in some of these experiences.

The conductor is what I identified as this presence in the transition that seems to have the role of managing the transition. Now, you mentioned that that role is commonly taken up by a maternal mother of search. Fine, we see a variety of entities take up this role and sometimes this presence doesn't want to be known to the experiencer, but it's often deliberate, purposeful acts, like it has a job. Some people will say it's really serious. Others describe there's various different types. There's males, there's females. They're typically larger but they do have often have a human presence to them. Sometimes it's just a force with no human form, it they. But the experiencer will say I know that force was there for my mom and was calling her home. I could feel it, you know, but they don't?

they don't say it look like this out of the other thing. So um, so yeah, so that conductor is huge and, and in some cases the conductor will make itself known and say I'm here for your mom, I'm here for your dad. You see, she's alive and well. I've got her from here. You've loved her well on your side, I'll take it from here. You know that's more rare, but it does happen, and so those are the things that you can see and experience. So you know, obviously, as I'm explaining this, it's like who would want to have this?

0:52:26 - Julie

So as I perceive it, William, the spirit exits through the top of the head, hangs on as the person's dying, looks like a speech bubble or a cartoon caption bubble, and then the mother spirit shows up. The angels show up other relatives and friends from lots of lifetimes, in different period dress, like you know. I may see somebody in a miniskirt and go-go boots from the 60s and I may see somebody, like you'd see at a Renaissance fair, chewing on a turkey leg. You know kind of dress. So that's, I think that's from all past lifetimes. But to your point about the vortex, about phase six of my 12 phases of transition, there are extra angels that show up and they're on either side of the spirit bubble and then their wings start to move about phase nine and it's this slow, rhythmic, reminds me of a giant owl. If you've ever seen a documentary on a giant owl, they're silent, they're rhythmic, but you can almost feel the drag that they're creating. So that's what, in my perception, that's what forms the vortex, and you were talking about this upward pull. I use the analogy of like driving through the car wash. At the end, when

they turn the dryer on it, it's sucking all the water off your car. It's sucking all the water off your car, and so that's what the spirit goes through as it detaches from the body completely when they're transitioning.

Now, when I was writing *Angelic Attendance*, I was led to just look up owl wing vortex. Come to find out there's this thing called the wingtip vortex, which is an aeronautical engineering thing. It's a phenomenon. There's hundreds of thousands of articles and pictures online about it, and it creates the lift. So every plane, every jet, every kite, every bird has this wingtip vortex that causes the lift. And I thought, oh, for heaven's sakes, I'm watching these angel's wings create this phenomenon that I can feel, I can see, I can hear to your point, you can hear the hum, and it's a thing that's a real thing in aeronautical engineering. And I thought, okay, cool. So, anyways, that's been my experience and I think we're cool. So, anyways, that's what's. That's been my experience, and I think we're talking about the same thing, just a different perspective. How does somebody go into the afterlife with a loved one and trust that they're going to come back?

0:54:56 - William

That's a great question. That's often. That's often a fear for loved ones is like I want to come back, I want to live my life, but that's. You know. We've trained hundreds and hundreds of people. No one has ever not come back. It's a fear, but it's not a legitimate fear. You know, people just don't die as caregivers. You know it just doesn't happen. But these experiences are strong. There's no doubt about it. They can be, you know, some of them are more mild, but when we have a full-blown shared death experience, people will come back transformed and like what was that?

0:55:40 - Julie

Absolutely. Why are medical professionals so reluctant to discuss death?

0:55:46 - William

Well, our medical director is Dr Monica Williams and she's an ER physician and she wrote a book it's *Okay to Die*. And she wrote it because in the ER or these emergency department positions, as we all know, when someone comes in there, a patient in critical care, the goal is to keep them alive at all costs. And the truth be known, Dr Williams has always said we are trained to keep people alive. Death is the enemy. We are doing everything we can to avoid death. Death is a sign of failure. Everything we can to avoid death, death is a sign of failure. So that's the current that end-of-life awareness exists in in the medical setting, if you will. Now, as we know, hospice and palliative care are relatively new movements since really the 70s and 80s. You know, I think some of the big proponents of this were obviously, you know, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. She definitely said, hey, we need to take on death and accept it as a part of human life, the only thing we know will happen in human life. And then palliative care has, you know, Ira Biok. You know she really brought palliative care medicine to the forefront. He doesn't practice anymore, but you know. So this movement is happening and it continues to happen. So, and people are doing advanced care directives with more frequency than historically. So the movement to become more conscious about death and know that it will happen to everyone, you know, including yourself that is happening, but it's very slow. It is very slow.

Still, people are extremely reticent even to discuss death in any serious way that would allow them to get prepared. That being said, you know my book. You know, at *Heaven's Door*, what shared journeys to the afterlife teach about dying well and living better, is, you know, has been a consistent seller since it came out and is growing, which is, you know. It's only been out a couple of years but it's now in eight languages. You know I was told by the publisher in Israel that it's, you know, was a bestseller there, and so you know this is happening around the world, and it's not just it's anywhere. Where there's modern culture, there's going to be resistance to death. So but-

0:58:45 - Julie

Do you think that some of the being so afraid of death is dying off with the older people, those generations that are dying? I seem to notice that the zeitgeist is changing. I think the work you're doing, the work that I'm doing, the work that others are doing in this space, is changing the zeitgeist, where people aren't as afraid and they're more interested in the spiritual nature instead of the hell and damnation thing that you and I were taught, you know, back when we were in school, as were people of our generation and our parents and our grandparents and further back from there.

0:59:24 - William

Yeah, I would say this In my experience it's the baby boomer women who are educated. The same generation of women who brought consciousness to birthing are doing the same consciousness raising for end of life, and they're doing it in big ways. So I mean, you see this advent of death, doulas, which is this whole field of lovely people who are coming in to serve as guides and companions and helpers and educators at end of life, and it's a beautiful role that they play and they really help families. We have a lot of doulas that take our trainings at the Shared Crossing Project because they want to know, you know, what they would call the spiritual aspects of end of life, which I think is what you know we are most known for. But the truth of the matter is we help with everything. I mean we have a concierge practice where you come and you, you know you work with Dr Monica Williams and myself. You get all your medical attention, we'll tell you where you're on the map of life. We'll bring your family together. We'll say this is what it's likely to look like. How do you want to be with each step, let's get everybody in here and here's the spiritual preparation so that you can enable a shared death experience for those who want that.

So there and there's demand for this, there are people that want this and that's really new. That is really new when we get a call from someone who says you know, someone's got, you know so-and-so's got a diagnosis of cancer. We want to get ready. And I have family members that want to do all this preparation for my mom's death, get ready, and I have family members that want to do all this preparation for my mom's death. Can you help us? You know, yes, we can. So I think you're right. I think that this older generation you know which is called, you know, the greatest generation, or I think it's more appropriately called the silent generation. I don't think they talked about things as well, because a lot of what they experienced was really hard. You know. You talk about the Great Depression, you talk about World War II, you talk about Korean War. All of this stuff was really really hard to experience and difficult to process and, I don't think, a lot of trauma, to put it lightly. So, yes, we are changing, conversations are happening.

1:02:00 - Julie

But you'll hear me say we still have a ways to go. A couple more questions as we're winding down here. Number one you live in California and that's a state that does the death with dignity pill or whatever end of life pill. Where somebody right now with a terminal illness can make the decision to end their life, and I think they've got to have a couple of doctors sign off on it. And I believe you'll know better than I is that 11 or 13 states now have approved that, Don't you know? Dr Kevorkian's in heaven going. Okay, guys, you know I've been working on this my whole career. So there's that, and I believe that more and more states will allow that as we go forward.

And it's my opinion, based on doing this for a long time with many, many people, that we all decide when we go, where we go, how we go, who's with us or not. When we go, the circumstances are that surround our passing. So if that's actually the case, is all death something that we choose, whether we take a pill or not? That's point number one. Point number two is when somebody decides that to end their life that way, let's say they have a

terminal illness Does that change the shared death experience. Have you looked at that yet? Has that come up in your research?

1:03:18 - William

I should say I'm an advocate for medical aid in dying for those cases where it's very painful. Painful, you know, if you have like a glioblastoma, you know stage four metastatic, it is a painful brain, you know, cancer death, I mean these are really painful and painful for the person dying and painful for people to watch, loved ones to watch. So I mean there's a whole host of other ones. I just worked with a husband and wife where the husband was diagnosed with ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. It is an awful end of life to his wife. I don't want to go the full course of this disease. I want to exercise my right for medical aid in dying in California, and so you know I they're in the Bay Area. I flew up to that to visit with them and work with them on two occasions Well, one occasion actually, and then I went to visit with her afterwards as well, after he died, and so we trained them in how to have the shared death experience, and the wife had it and his sister, who was also present, she had it.

Now one of the other sisters there were three at bedside, two had it, one did not um, and, and so what I like about metal glade and dying and once again, I'm not an advocate to say everyone should do it. I'm saying for those people who want to do it, it is an option to you, it's you know? I see none of this fear about when you use terminology about suicide. I find that to be very disrespectful. You know euthanasia Well, yes, but we have to change our relationship to that whole. What death means for us, and what we hear over and over again, is people want to have agency at the end of life, and that's a very reasonable request. It doesn't? You know? You're not really losing anything if you die a few weeks or months before and you're just throwing up on chemo or you're on a respirator. Let's be clear about this. The quality of life is not very high. It's actually typically awful. So, with that being said, we do train people, as I did with this couple I just shared with you, and I love it because we have a pretty high success rate in giving people this experience. I mean, in this one case we just did.

You know they don't mind me using their name, it was Paul and his wife Beth, and then Paul's sister Ann. You know, Beth said she felt his spirit leave the body. She felt his joy and peace. She thought, oh my God, this is beautiful. He's at peace now. The sister who was also bedside saw him as a younger man with, you know, kind of she said kind of this afro, and he was dancing and he was out of his pain body and he was greeting deceased relatives that she didn't recognize but knew that they were familiar in some way and that he was home and he was experiencing love. And she just wept as she told the story. So these are the experiences. I feel like, if we take time to prepare, we can actually choreograph end of life, as you know, given the circumstances, as opposed to fighting for every last breath as your chemo takes out your body or your you know, your lung disease, you know, has you suffering with shortage of breath and and the pain that comes with shortage of breath and all that.

1:07:32 - Julie

So there's my response to that yeah, no, no, I agree with you, and it's been my experience too, that everybody goes through what I call the 12 phases of transition, where they're surrounded by angels and loved ones, and all of that regardless of if they die instantly in the case of a homicide or suicide, or their death and dying processes over a very prolonged period of time. So I agree with you on that Last question why do we incarnate?

1:08:06 - William

You know I really I have a view about this, but I think when we choose, I think we choose to be here giving ourselves an experience, but also giving the divine, our own divinity, an experience of itself in a different, challenging environment. And I know that may sound a little opaque, but hopefully your listeners are spiritually sophisticated to know what I mean by that. I mean it's really, if you truncate, that it's the divine of which we participate, having an opportunity to

experience it itself in new and challenging ways and see what emerges. But you know it's a stress test to the highest degree. The human experience is hard for most humans. I mean, we have a difficult time in our entertainment culture owning the fact of how much suffering takes place here. It's a ton, and it doesn't make a difference if you've got resources or not. You know it really. It's like this life can be hard and and so we incarnate.

And I and I will say that, um, that a lot of people I work with, me included, who have this view, will often say I can't believe I signed up for this. You know I. You know I don't live in that place, but I say it enough, and my closest friends will say it too. It's like wow. And I do think there's kind of an elevated state while we're in this pre-life, pre-incarnation state, where we really rev ourselves up and we say I'm going to take it on, I'm going to learn something, I'm going to take it on, I'm going to learn something, I'm going to go help my family, I'm going to, you know, engage in this human experience with all my integrity and grow and experience and become a better, more whole, more awakened being because of that. But when you get here and you land on the battlefields of the human experience, you're like I can't believe I underestimated this, volunteered for this.

Yeah, I volunteered for this, I mean. So you see me playing both sides here. It's yes, and I think we need to have compassion for ourselves. Or maybe we're just really courageous by nature and we get here and we get overwhelmed, but we make it through. You know so. But that's my response.

1:11:01 - Julie

Thank you for mentioning that about the divine. I always say we're a fractal of the divine, everybody's a fractal of the divine and most people don't talk about that, but I agree with you what you just mentioned as far as having the human experience as a fractal of the divine, and that's when we create and it expands our spirit, our soul. I use those words interchangeably. My goodness, you are more extraordinary than I even thought you were before I got to talk to you in person.

I've been following your work for a while now, and for all of the knowledge and the peace and the comfort and the you know just understanding that you're helping to facilitate through this research that you're doing, because we're all taught to be critical thinkers I mean, for God's sakes, you were especially being taught by Jesuits. You were taught to be a critical thinker and as a Catholic girl, I know what that means, and so I think that we're all looking for proof-based information, and it just gives it credibility when we're talking about stuff that people have known since the beginning of time. And as we become more well-educated and more proof-based, we need people like you that are willing to do their research and say, yeah, what people have seen since the beginning of time really is happening.

1:12:40 - William

Here's what the research shows yeah, I appreciate you saying it like that, because this is something we know. Um, you know, all the great wisdom traditions have some sense of continuation of something beyond human death, and whether it's heaven or deva realms or the realm of ancestors, they all, indigenous people, all have the realm of ancestors. I mean, use that loosely but for us moderns, and even the Catholic church, this afterlife is completely undefined. And so the skeptics in of us will say, well, maybe this just made up stuff from folklore, you know, and? But it's not, and and there's a reason why we have it. Uh, this belief system, and there's a reason why we have it, this belief system, and, yes, I'm happy to, I have been called dragged at times to continue with the research and I'm glad that you know people like you are joining.

you know we're all part of this movement, you know of awakening to who we truly are and where we head after this life.

And it's a beautiful. It's a beautiful journey we're all on. Like I say, it's hard. In my experience, from what I've learned, this is the hardest part. And then we go back to where we came from or that place in the spirit realm and we get our just reward. And I do think a human life, when lived properly, is a contribution to all that is and I mean that all that is, because all that is is divinity.

1:14:23 - Julie

I agree. I agree. Beautifully said so, William. How can people learn more about you and your work?

1:14:29 - William

Well. So I have a website. Our organization is [sharedcrossing.com](http://sharedcrossing.com). There you'll find all sorts of resources about these experiences. You'll also I encourage you to look at what we call our story library, where people can hear shared death experiences.

We constantly curate this library and so they'll be changing. So if you go this month, you'll two months from now there'll be new stories up there and those are very inspiring, and these are from our library of three to 400 cases that we've videotaped and then we edit and we share them for you all. Also, if you're interested in our trainings, they're listed there. Right now we don't have a lot of trainings. We're taking a break from our trainings because we're doing the first feature length film documentary, and if you're interested in getting involved with that and learning more about that, there's information on our website there. And then, finally, my book *At Heaven's Door what Shared Journeys to the Afterlife Teach About Dying Well and Living Better* is available anywhere books are sold, because my publisher is Simon Schuster, and so they're ubiquitous, and that will give you really the 28 stories that I assess, that I analyze, that I really show you the different configurations of the shared experience.

1:15:59 - Julie

Terrific, and we'll put all of that in the show notes too. Thank you All righty everybody. We've given you a lot to think about. Let's chew on here. Thank you for joining us. Thanks, William, for taking the time to join us, and we're sending you lots of love from Sweet Home, Alabama, and from California, too, where William is. We'll see you next time.

1:16:21 - Annncr

Thanks for joining us Be sure to follow Julie on Instagram and YouTube at [AskJulieRyan](https://www.instagram.com/AskJulieRyan), and like her on Facebook at [AskJulieRyan](https://www.facebook.com/AskJulieRyan). To schedule an appointment or submit a question, please visit [AskJulieRyan.com](http://AskJulieRyan.com).

1:16:36 - Disclaimer

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