

AJR Gloria and Heidi Horsley Transcript

0:00:01 - Annncr

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 Hi everybody, welcome to the Ask Julie Ryan Show.

0:00:47 - Julie

It's where we blend spirituality and practicality to help you live a life of purpose and joy. We have doctors Gloria and Heidi Horsley on the show with us today. Gloria is a licensed marriage and family therapist, clinical nurse specialist and the author of 10 books on grief and loss. She's also the co-founder of the Open to Hope Foundation and host of its award-winning TV show and podcast, offering healing and hope to those navigating life after loss. Her daughter, Heidi Horsley, is a licensed psychologist in private practice, the author of eight books and an adjunct professor at Columbia University. She specializes in counseling survivors of military loss and the families of firefighters who perished in the 9-11 World Trade Center attacks. She brings comfort and connection to those touched by unimaginable grief. Please remember to subscribe, leave a comment and share this episode with your family and friends. Now let's go talk with Gloria and Heidi. Gloria and Heidi, thank you so much for making time to join us today.

0:02:05 - Gloria

So awesome to see you again. We had so much fun in New York with you.

0:02:09 - Julie

Oh my gosh. And you've been on the show since then too, so you're a returning champion. And Heidi is obviously Gloria's daughter, yes, and so she's just as fabulous as her mother, which is why we thought we'd have them both on today. You both specialize in grief counseling. What's the biggest myth about grief that you wish people understood, and why is it damaging to those who don't understand it?

0:02:43 - Gloria

I think one of the biggest things for me is people who try. I think you know you can feel the way you got to get over it. Right, you got to get over it. It's been long enough. You know we've been patient for a year or whatever, sometimes even six months. You know you should be over it, she took mine.

0:03:03 - Heidi

That's exactly what I would say. I would say you know, we don't get over somebody, we learn to live without them. So, getting over it, getting over what I don't want to get over, my brother, I am who I am because he was in my life. So, yes, I agree with my mom, and there's timeframes. People think you should be at a certain place by a certain time and, you know, I sometimes think they want us to fast track it. Yeah, exactly.

0:03:29 - Julie

Where does that come from? Is there some standard that we've all read at some point, we're just not remembering? Why do you think? Is it because it makes them feel?

0:03:39 - Gloria

uncomfortable. I think that's a lot of people you know they don't want to be around. They want you to be the person you are Right, you know, and you never are again. That's the interesting part. You might even be a better person with time, but you're not going to be exactly the same. Life changes us, Thank goodness. Can you imagine how boring we'd be if we were all our high school or grade school selves?

0:04:04 - Heidi

Well, when you've had a death, things don't go back to normal. You create a new normal.

0:04:10 - Gloria

Yeah, and I love the point how he says create.

0:04:13 - Heidi

Yeah, and it can be a fabulous normal. I mean, initially it isn't, but eventually it can be. Your life isn't completely over. When someone dies, you sometimes feel like it is initially.

0:04:22 - Gloria

Yeah.

0:04:31 - Julie

But then you go in to reinvent yourself and transform yourself and, you know, get to a place of hope. I read a quote recently by Einstein and he said something like the measure of intelligence is the ability to change.

0:04:38 - Gloria

Ah, I love that.

0:04:39 - Julie

Yeah, me too, and I thought yeah, bingo, you know, we all, we're all changing, whether we're cognizant of it or not. You know, my God, what is it? Every seven years, we have all new cells in our bodies, or something like that. Yeah, yeah.

0:04:53 - Gloria

Yeah, so physically I think this is another point you're making cells in the body. One thing that I think people overlook is that it's a bio-psycho-social thing to grieve. It's your biology, it's your social, it's your mental, it's your spiritual. I mean, it's not just your brain. You can't people act like you can think your way through grief Right. Your body responds. Yeah, you know your life responds.

0:05:23 - Julie

Is there a normal amount of time or, in research, does it show that the average person grieves, you know, 2.7 months before they start feeling back to normal? Or is there any kind of statistics that have a range of what I'm using air quotes, what normal is for grieving?

0:05:53 - Gloria

You know widows. Now my husband died five years ago now going on five years and I happen to have been in the world of grief and loss before my son was killed 40 years ago, because I taught I was a clinical nurse specialist at the University of Rochester and I covered all of the surgical service and I used to teach about grief and loss and use Kupler-Ross's model and all that. I found out a lot in life that it wasn't exactly that way. But there is a lot of research about widows, more than there is about loss of a child, and one of the things that they talk about is four years, which is kind of interesting because there is some kind of pattern.

You know, I don't know if it's particularly helpful. You go to a therapist and they say everybody has their own trajectory. Well, there's no, you know, saying the first year can be really hard because you've got all these things you have to do. The second year you suddenly realize you start thawing out I want to call it and you realize it's hard. It's maybe even harder than the first year because you're not frozen in all these duties again.

0:06:57 - Heidi

Well, the firsts are over, the firsts are over and the second year reality sets in.

0:07:01 - Gloria

Yeah so there are some things that happen, reality sets. In the third year you start realizing this is going to be it. You know, this is going to be my life. In the fourth year you say, okay, what am I going to do with it? And I'm going on five years and I've kind of found that pattern. I feel a lot better five years later. I don't feel like I'm pushing myself as much and that kind of thing. But I will say you know, my son died 42 years ago at 17, an automobile accident and it's a tough go for bereaved parents. For eight years, I'd say.

0:07:40 - Julie

Eight years Wow. I read Prince Harry's book. I think it's like A Prince and a Sparrow or An Heir and a Sparrow or something like that, whatever it's called, and I was struck when I read that book and it's really good.

I enjoyed it a lot. I did too and he talks about 10 years out. He's still thinking his mom's going to come back. And he's a grown man now and he's in the military or maybe even out of the military. At that point and he said that was the thing that amazed him the most was in his mind in the back of his mind, perhaps because he was a child when she died but he kept thinking she's going to come back, she's going to be back. This is like some undercover thing or there's more to the story that's going on here. Can you speak to that? Some what's?

0:08:36 - Gloria

that all about you? Look at people's background too, as far as grief and loss goes. I mean, what happened to him early on in life? Did he have people? Because before the age of seven you honestly think people are going to come back. You know you're not able to pattern that. Did something like that happen to him early on and he's replaying it? You know who knows? I mean people do respond differently, given what they have been through and how they go.

0:09:04 - Heidi

And I also don't know if he saw the body, but if children, if he's a child and he doesn't see it, you can think, well, maybe she was kidnapped, maybe she has amnesia. I mean, we work with 9-11 families for 10 years, people who lost firefighter fathers in the World Trade Center, and a lot of them did think, well, maybe they're wandering around, maybe they're still alive because they didn't see bodies. You know, the children felt like that. It was like magical thinking.

0:09:30 - Julie

So does that beg the question are funerals really a good thing, where they have the old fashioned wake and the body is displayed and all of that? My parents were of the mindset that yes, it was. And to take the little kids to the wake so that it would help them understand that this person was gone. And in all of that, what are your thoughts on the traditional funerals, because it seems like we're getting away from them. And it's more about the memorial service a month or six months later.

0:10:03 - Gloria

And unfortunately some of it is because of COVID.

I have a friend recently whose husband died a year and a half ago and they just had a celebration of life for him.

And you know that's hard because if you are able to have the funeral at the time and you can grieve for this person and go into that, I remember with my husband and my son I do the old traditional way our family does, where you know you see the body at the funeral home and that kind of thing.

And I find that when you're crying at the body yourself and people come up and see that person, they help you with your grief because they help you continue it on a level. You don't have to carry it all. They're carrying some of it for you. So as people stop by comment, they're carrying some of that grief for you and early on that's powerful. And we know from animal studies that if you have a dog die or a pet die and if you take the other pet to the body and they can see the body and smell it, they do not suffer as much as animals and they don't keep looking for that other animal. So I think there are some animal things that show that when we see the body, it says I've got to admit it, they are here.

0:11:31 - Heidi

I can't imagine, and it's nice to grieve in community. We're grieving together and if we wait a year or two, I mean you're not, your grief isn't as intense as it was initially, when you needed support.

0:11:43 - Gloria

Yeah, and you needed those people to be there and cry and hug you, and I love that your parents did that.

0:11:51 - Heidi

you know that they thought it was okay, because I think some parents are afraid to bring their children, afraid to show them the bodies, et cetera, and it's like it's a great thing. It's let them be part of the healing community too, and part of the grieving community.

0:12:05 - Gloria

However, I do know an experience where a child was forced to see the body and did not want to see the body. And I would not. If you have a child who wants, I would get their permission. I agree If you like to see your mom or your uncle, or you know we're going to go, it's safe, we'll be with you, but would you like to do that? If they say no, I agree with you, mom, don't force them to do it.

I totally agree with you, yeah, and it can be teenagers. They may not want to see the body, yeah, and they don't have to. Yeah, you know they're not going to get anything out of being forced to see a dead body. There's not.

0:12:53 - Julie

Right. My parents were born in the mid-1920s and that was just what you did and my family still does that. It's like yours. It's the big whole wake, with hour-long viewings and people lined up coming in the door and then the big funeral the next day in the church and then the procession to the cemetery and the service graveside and then a luncheon afterwards. Normally is just what my family's done and my brother. When my beloved grandmother died, my brother's best friend said to me you will really appreciate the people that come to help you through this and you will make the effort to help those you love get through it too, which I think really parallels what we're talking about with the traditional funeral and begs the question have traditions and religions known that since the beginning of time that there needs to be some kind of recognition or memorial or something done sooner than later?

0:13:57 - Gloria

And some ritual around it. So you know what you're going to do. I mean, I knew what I was going to do when my husband died and when my son died, because that's what we'd always done. You know for generations. So you know you're totally lost. But on that front you're not lost because you know what you're going to do.

0:14:19 - Julie

Yeah, good point. When you were working with the 9-11 families who'd lost a loved one, it was mostly firefighters, wasn't it, with whom you were working, and I know you do a lot of work with military families who've lost a loved one as well. What is something that you've discovered in your work with those families that they don't teach in the textbooks in your work with those families that they don't teach in the textbooks.

0:14:53 - Heidi

Let's see, well, a couple of things. Probably. One of them is that people that are in service industries like the military and firefighting they have big communities and they have a lot of support and they have a lot of ritual, and seeking outside help is not easy and not always welcome because they go. Peer-to-peer support is often how they get the most benefit and we have found through research that peer-to-peer support is very beneficial after a loss, being with like-minded people.

0:15:21 - Gloria

And we were in New York I'm in New York right now and we had gone down to the theater and we passed one of the firehouses where they have a huge ritual wall for 9-11. And the door happened to be open to the firefighters and it was just such a joy to see how they don't forget, right yeah.

0:15:42 - Julie

So when somebody in the military passes and their family is left behind, they're not in the military anymore. So how do they find their peer groups when they're not involved in the military? Let's say they were living on a base. It's tough. How do they transition?

0:16:05 - Heidi

Well, the one organization that I would tell you about. My mom and I are both on the advisory board for TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors of Military Loss. This is an organization for people that have had someone in the military die. You don't have to be in the military to be in it, just the person that died had to be in it. So there's a lot of support there through TAPS. But you are right, they lose their entire community. They lose their home, they lose their base, they lose their. They have to leave in a certain amount of time.

0:16:34 - Gloria

Exactly.

0:16:35 - Heidi

It's big, it's a lot of change.

0:16:37 - Gloria

But one thing they do know when they sign up, because they know people who have died in their group. They know what the deal is. I mean it's not suddenly, you know I have to leave. They know if something happens to their spouse or you know whoever their dad or mom, that they are going to have to move, and they have moved a lot, a lot of them, so they're used to it. I mean it is part of the military but it is really tough. It is. And thank goodness for organizations like TAPS because they have summer programs for kids. They have support for the widows or widowers. Bonnie Carroll does it and it's a nonprofit that she runs.

0:17:22 - Heidi

Yeah, and so they can be involved with TAPS for the rest of their lives. Yeah, after Susan's died is it tapsorg or something.

0:17:30 - Julie

What's their website?

0:17:31 - Gloria

Tapsorg. And, by the way, you don't have to be active in the military to be in it. If your husband was in the military, or your spouse or your dad, and maybe he was out of the military for a couple of years, you can still get in touch with them and go into a camp for kids or get a widow support or whatever.

0:17:50 - Heidi

Even if it was a veteran that died, as long as they served at some point in the military.

0:17:54 - Julie

Yeah, gloria, you told me something one time and I asked you. I said is it, does it ever get easier as subsequent loved ones pass? Like was it harder when you lost your son than when you lost your husband? Please share with everybody what you told me. I thought it was so profound. It stayed with me ever since. You mentioned it.

0:18:20 - Gloria

Well, I said that having my son die was like going to Mount Everest without oxygen. I didn't know. I mean, I was teaching grief and loss and I knew the trip and because I taught to nurses in the surgical service at the university. But then I took it and you take it, it doesn't matter, you have the sign, respirations, you have all of the. You know you don't know if you're going to live. You know those first big losses. So it was going without oxygen and but I knew, but I made it.

And then when my husband passed away, what years later? How many years? 35, later, how many years, 35. I realized one thing I knew I would survive two things and I knew I could be happy again. And then I took the trip. But I took the trip knowing that I could be happy again and that I was going to live, because for those out there who have just had a big loss, you don't know if you can make it through it, and people don't. You know spouses will die within two years of their partner, so it's so important to take care of yourself physically and know that you can make it.

0:19:39 - Julie

Does that pertain to men and to women, to widows and widowers, or is it more common with? Men will die if they don't have a partner.

0:19:48 - Gloria

It's common with men, but it's a little more common with men, but it is also with women, you know.

0:19:55 - Julie

I always tease my husband because we live in the deep South and I always say, honey, if I get hit by a bus, there are going to be women lined up around the block, have to roll in hand, come and defeat you.

0:20:08 - Gloria

Well, reality is that the most men who reconnect do it within the first seven months. So I like to tell women you know you may have, if there's this great guy out there, you may have to help him through the grieving process a little bit. Yeah, yeah, when my mother died.

0:20:28 - Julie

She died four years before my dad. And he had this gal that sent him a card and he said she was in your mother's class and I got the most wonderful card from her. And he's going on and on and on. That's just like two months after my mom died. I'm thinking what is this woman? A poet, or what? And I said, well, dad, what did she say in her card? And he said she wrote so sorry, you are so looking for something there. And then they dated and got engaged. They ended up not getting married because he passed, but he she prolonged his life by at least four years. That's wonderful. And my siblings were idiots about it. They just they thought it was ridiculous that he should wait a year. And I said what's he waiting for? He's 75.

0:21:21 - Heidi

I know. So funny because the same story for my mom Very similar. We were like wait, it's really fast, why is it so fast? She's like why do I have to wait?

0:21:33 - Gloria

There is no time. I said you know where you're going to be. Where are you going to be in 15 years? And I said guess what? I think I know where I'm going to be. I'll be a hundred.

0:21:46 - Julie

Even though you look like you're 50. For those of you that are listening and not watching, she looks like she's 50. So but the thing about that is, why should we stop feeling joy and then going on with our lives because there's some kind of a standard that says you have to wait a?

0:22:08 - Heidi

year. Well, that's what my mom said. When my dad died, my mother made some very quick changes and she said you know, I've always heard that we should not do one thing for a year after a death.

0:22:19 - Gloria

I've been telling people that and just heard it as the counselor.

0:22:23 - Heidi

Where's the research on that? Who made that up? Where does that even come from? She said, because for me, after your father's death, I need to make some significant changes right now.

0:22:33 - Gloria

I had a house in Carmel and I did not want to go down there anymore. It was more. My husband enjoyed it more than I did and I like, yeah, I want to sell that.

0:22:42 - Julie

Yep, and that was just a couple of months after he died and you guys as the kids, were thinking what she's lost her ever-loving mind.

0:22:49 - Heidi

Yes, she needs to wait for 12 months, and why, I don't know, is there?

0:22:54 - Julie

research that says that to wait for 12 months or it's just like an old wives tale.

0:22:58 - Heidi

I've been hearing professionals my entire life, including myself, say that when does it come from? I haven't seen any evidence-based research saying we've had a sample of this many people, and it's true.

0:23:09 - Gloria

And this is what happens to you if you sell houses before 12 months, if you get in a relationship before 12 months.

0:23:18 - Heidi

Well, you know, with widows, you're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't. You're either dating too early or too late, or not at all. I mean, it's whichever. You can't win.

0:23:26 - Gloria

No, absolutely. And people say, oh, you know it's fine being a widow. And then I hear my friends, because I have a partner. And I hear my friends say I want you to come over dinner, but we're not going to be like Sue, you know she's on her own and you know it's more fun to be as couples. And I'm like, yeah, right, you know it's a couple's world. I hate to say, but it's true. Yeah.

0:23:51 - Julie

I've heard from a couple of people who are in the in that same grief niche that you ladies are in, and they've told me that the Kubler-Ross model has been debunked. Do you have a thought?

0:24:04 - Heidi

about that either of you. Well, we're on the Kubler-Ross advisory board and we do have a thought about this, and we're very good friends with Ken Ross, Elizabeth's son, and we would say I think I can speak for my mom too. These stages are not set in stone. We don't go through nice neat stages, you know, and some of them tell everybody what the stages are Okay, denial, anger, bargaining um depression and acceptance. So some of us don't even go through some of the stages, some people aren't angry.

Yes, exactly, Everybody's not angry, and so you know, grief doesn't come in nice neat stages. That model was, for the most part, used for people that were dying, not for people that were grieving and she never meant for them to be set up like that Exactly.

0:25:01 - Gloria

And her son would say that. I mean, she wrote him her first book on death and dying, you know, saying, well, here's some of the things, but she didn't expect people to say, okay, because I've lined them up, that's what we're going to do you know, and Ken also said, that she had a lot more stages that were never published and the last one was Hope, and I loved that oh yeah, and your show's called Open to Hope.

0:25:19 - Julie

Yeah, yeah, I love that. Yeah, and your show's called Open to Hope, yeah, yeah, I love that.

0:25:23 - Gloria

You know what I'll have to say this the fact that people talk about the stages after all these years if they want to debunk it or whatever it's kind of cool that they're still talking about it. Yeah right.

0:25:35 - Julie

Any publicity is good publicity. That whole mindset, yeah, yeah, I thought that was an interesting statement and I've heard it from two people that are grief counselors.

0:25:46 - Heidi

Yeah, our grief comes in waves, not stages, and you know, sometimes we've got many emotions going on. It's very complicated. I mean, as you said, Julie, you can be going on in your life and still be in denial and searching for them years later. You can go back and forth between a lot of feelings.

0:26:05 - Gloria

Yeah, and different things trigger. We were talking to some people yesterday who talked about how the fact that a later grief triggered them to go back and relive an earlier grief you know that they hadn't felt like they hadn't dealt with.

0:26:22 - Julie

Yeah, so when Burt Reynolds died and he was married to Lonnie Anderson, the actress. Yes, I love it. I'm dating myself here, but you guys know who I'm talking about. He's awesome. I heard her in an interview say that she couldn't cry when he died. But she said after a couple of months had passed she got a whole bunch of really sad movies like Steel, magnolias and Terms of Endearment and things like that, and she said she just cried like for days on end watching these sad movies and it was almost like the tears that she was feeling in the movie uncorked the tears of grief that she had stuffed down. I thought that was really a profound statement. Have you run into that? I have, and I've run into it personally.

0:27:20 - Heidi

When my brother died, there were friends at the funeral that were grieving more than me, and one of them was struck by the fact that I wasn't grieving very much and she said as much. She said why am I sadder than you? And I said because I am so overwhelmed that I don't even want to get in touch with those feelings Because I don't know what's going to happen or if I can even stop them at that point. So yes, I think it is initially hard. What are your thoughts on that?

0:27:46 - Gloria

Yeah, I think so and I think we never know what will trigger us. And it's very surprising. I mean, Lonnie may see something now, years later, that will trigger it again. I mean you never know what will bring it back. But I love that because we shouldn't be afraid of that, because it takes us back to knowing them and who they are and loving them and we come out of it faster. You don't have to be afraid of staying in that grief. Like Heidi said, you're afraid initially that you won't be able to get out of it, but that's part of what happens with the grief and loss is you revisit it intensely and then you're feeling okay in a few minutes.

0:28:28 - Julie

Well and it seems to me that I'm hearing you say so, I'd like some clarification on this that it's really never too late to grieve, never.

0:28:38 - Heidi

In fact that's exactly what we did the show on yesterday. The fact that it isn't because I know with sibling loss, I hear this a lot. Sometimes siblings lose siblings in a time in their life. I was 20. That was not a convenient time to have a brother die and nobody had had siblings die. I did not want to grieve in front of my friends, I did not want to be different. I really put my grief on the shelf for years because I was trying to be just a regular 20-year-old in this life and you know.

0:29:08 - Gloria

And then I went and revisited it later and we see that often you were saying on the show, one of the women who had put her, her sister, was murdered and she had put her grief on hold until

her half-brother also passed away and then she decided she needed to go back and look at the whole thing about her sister being murdered. And all that Because she said, I could not handle it at the time with all the publicity, but she had a trigger which was having the person who killed her sister get out of jail after years and years. Well, she actually had to go and revisit it. So she was saying that and she's written about it. She does essays.

0:29:53 - Heidi

Well, my mother probably doesn't remember this. I've never said this, so I'm going to say it right now. Uh-oh, we're going to soup. Gloria, I know this is going to be. When my father died, my mother was grieving and she looked at me and said I lost my son. My son died 17. I mean, she already knew that, but there was something about that moment and that intensity of that grief with my dad I don't remember that re-triggered that feeling that her 17-year-old son had died. It was really interesting.

0:30:26 - Gloria

It makes me sad. Right now I bet.

0:30:29 - Heidi

Wow, I went through this. Yeah, I can't believe I went through this.

0:30:32 - Julie

Well, and I think to both of your points. When you said Heidi, when you said that your friend said, well, I'm grieving more than you are, and Gloria, you're saying, I don't remember saying that. You were in action mode, right, right, and there's something special about being in action mode. To our discussion earlier about the ritual, you know what you need to do, you know you need to, you know make the arrangements. You know you need to meet with the funeral home, you need to meet with the priest or the pastor or the rabbi or whomever, and all of that, and that ritual really does help us get through those early days Exactly.

0:31:13 - Heidi

Definitely. And I love how, in the Jewish faith, they sit shiva for seven days and they have so many rituals around what they do because, like my mom said earlier, knowing okay, we know what we need to do, we know what the ritual looks like, so there is some structure even within our grief.

0:31:32 - Julie

Well, and aren't the bodies buried within 24 hours in the Jewish faith?

0:31:37 - Heidi

usually yes, and then they don't put the headstone on for, I think, a year. A year, an unveiling.

0:31:54 - Julie

Let's change directions for a minute. Or a firefighter or somebody who's a policeman, who dies, you know, in the line of duty, or even during COVID. How can they help themselves, process the grief when they feel guilty because they weren't able to be with that person? When they passed number one and number two, they didn't have the opportunity to properly say goodbye number one and number two, they didn't have the opportunity to properly say goodbye.

0:32:23 - Gloria

Well, with any sudden death you really don't have the opportunity to quote properly. Say which I love you is what most people wish. That final thing was I love you and you know. But the question is don't you think they knew that you loved them? They knew, and you have to

sometimes accept the fact that you weren't able to do it. But there are ways, like writing letters to them which is great.

0:32:55 - Heidi

And having them write it back, what do you think they would say back? Write what you think, write what you'd like them to say, write what you think they would say and write what you would like them to say that's a new one.

0:33:05 - Julie

Heidi, I haven't heard that one before. Yeah, yeah. So it's kind of like you're channeling your loved one's spirit and heaven of what they would say.

0:33:13 - Heidi

What they would say might be different than what you would like them to say.

0:33:17 - Gloria

all right, yeah, you might have fun and be surprised with all of it, and the more we here have great results with that. Actually, and when people get in depth with it and really start that automatic writing where you know, just write it, write whatever you want, do a lot of it. Don't just write that one letter, just keep going with it. What would you write?

0:33:37 - Heidi

what they say. And sometimes people say and this won't surprise you, jul, because you're in the psychic medium world we're having them write a letter back. But it's almost like they are writing a letter back. It's weird what's happening on the page and what we're reading, because we're thinking, wow, maybe they're here somehow.

0:33:56 - Julie

Wow, that's profound. What I find in doing this thousands of times is that they'll usually come in with things to make them laugh.

0:34:05 - Heidi

I love it.

0:34:06 - Julie

You know things that are funny, not necessarily life-changing advice, but hey, I really like that purple dress that you've been wearing your new purple dress. Or you need to get your oil changed and you know, and dad was a car mechanic before he passed in this lifetime and things like that, and they get them laughing fast, which I find interesting. Have you run across that?

0:34:33 - Gloria

Well, I think humor is really hugely important and I one of the things that I see with signs and connections is that people don't believe what they're having. I mean, it happens to you and you don't believe it. You know, and wonderful things happen. Accept it and don't worry about the naysayers. I don't know what you do about the naysayers, because they're you know if people talk about it when I was at the hospital university. There's so many people who have out-of-body, out-of-life experiences. They're just, you know, and connect with their loved ones and have wonderful things happen.

0:35:14 - Heidi

Yeah, and my dad was always joking around because we would find signs from my brother occasionally and he was always laughing about it, going, oh, is this true? You know, a little bit skeptical. Well, now we have very obvious overt signs from my father hugely all the time. Like

what? Well, I'll be walking down the street and all of a sudden this giant poster right across from where I live says Phil, new York City. My dad's name was Phil and so we always think he's laughing. He's doing it. Of course he is. I'm going to plant lots of signs, I mean, and they're big, obvious signs Like we just went to Portugal and the minute we walk into the hotel my father's initials are PH. Over the front door and this is not the name of the hotel in giant letters is PH.

0:36:01 - Julie

And we started laughing. We said, okay, dad, we see you. So that's how you know it's a sign is because it's that first thought that comes into your head, okay, and then when you start to question it, that's your brain kicking in and going I don't know about that, but it's that first thing. And you either know it like you saw the P-H and you're like, okay, dad, good job on that, or you see the Phil, new York and you knew, boy, that was your first thought. Or you get the goosebumps or you get chills same thing. Or you get like a gut feeling, like, oh, sign from my dad. It doesn't matter when anybody thinks or says like that 107-year-old woman, you know, listen to what they have to say and then just do what you want, believe what you want.

0:36:45 - Gloria

Yeah, you know, right now I've had something happen. A few days ago I got a fortune cookie and it said something good's going to happen to you this week and I knew what it was. I knew I was going to sell my house. I've been trying to sell my condo for a couple of years. Okay, so Heidi just bought a condo here in New York and I'm selling my condo and now she's going to take some of the furniture and some of the lighting fixtures and things and I'm like I should have trusted that you were going to have me do it, phil, when it worked out. Perfect, the best way, yeah.

0:37:24 - Julie

You know, so so they were just waiting for you to buy that, condo, heidi.

0:37:28 - Heidi

Exactly, the timing was perfect.

0:37:31 - Julie

It isn't that true about everything.

0:37:33 - Heidi

You know, when my mom's like, oh yeah, I'm selling my condo, I don't know what to do with my lights and I'm like what I need lights. Don't call 1-800-JUNK. Call 1-800-HEIDI.

0:37:47 - Julie

And those are some special lights you've got in there because I've been there. They're amazing.

0:37:51 - Gloria

No, and sometimes I think people work in a big way. Sometimes maybe you have, you know, you've been struggling, you've been trying to do something, trying, trying, and maybe you have to wait for the big one.

0:38:04 - Heidi

You know where it's all going to work out in a big way you know I say sometimes with my brother I have my whole life and now my dad. You know, I need you right now. I need your energy. Come in and help me out, just give me energy.

0:38:21 - Julie

And you know I lean on their energy sometimes if I'm really struggling Exactly and I find too, with everything in our lives, we have an idea of how, what we want and how it's going to happen. Yes, and it's limited, based on our human frame of reference, and we're here to have the adventure with the unimaginable. Yes, well, we can't imagine something if we don't know anything about it. But if we look at most of the big things in our lives, we'll get to the end result that we wanted. Perhaps it's through a circuitous path and most of the time, if not all of the time, to your point, with this example of Gloria you selling your condo and Heidi you being able to use some of the furniture. To your point, with this example of Gloria you selling your condo and Heidi you being able to use some of the furniture and the light fixtures. You can look back at that and say, oh, that's why I haven't been able to sell it, because I needed to wait till Heidi bought her condo.

0:39:14 - Heidi

I love this because she kept saying I can't sell this condo and it's beautiful. I want to sell it. That's great, I love that, yeah.

0:39:21 - Julie

So it's a circuitous route, and when we just put out there what we want and then we let spirit handle it, it's like flowing downstream, you know, instead of swimming upstream and having it be a slog the whole way, and most of the time it will unfold in a way. It's been my experience anyways, in my own life. It will unfold in a way that I hadn't thought of, but it's way better than what I had imagined, because my frame of reference is so limited. Exactly, yeah, interesting. Is it possible to talk about grief without making others feel uncomfortable?

0:40:22 - Gloria

things the kids used to say. They had an A paper in college or in high school. Heather in high school and her sisters were in college when Scotty died and they said all you have to do to get an A paper is write the Scotty Deaf paper because it was such a heart-wrenching thing for the professors to read. Oh my gosh so you know you can, you know you can decide what you want to do with your grief and loss. When do you bring it up, when do you not?

0:40:46 - Heidi

bring it and there's. I often look at the person in front of me and think do I want to go there right now? Who is this person in front of me? Are they going to be feel supported? Are they going to try to take care of me? Know, it's kind of an assessment you're constantly making if you want to disclose.

0:41:00 - Gloria

But I will say, when you first have the loss, people at the supermarket are going to run the other way. Right, because when they're shopping, that's what's on their mind, and if you see them across the vegetable counter, they may turn their head and push their cart the other way. Yeah, and that's just the way it is.

0:41:18 - Heidi

Well, when my brother died, a lot of people ran away from my family because they didn't know what to say and it was too painful for them and my parents got little dogs and you know, these puppies brought people towards the family instead of away from the family because people could go and talk about the dogs.

0:41:36 - Gloria

Oh, interesting.

0:41:37 - Heidi

Not that you should get a dog. Not everybody should get a dog. I love mine, but you know there are a lot of words.

0:41:43 - Gloria

But it was funny because Heather was in high school and we would go to sports events with her and she would have her, we'd have the dog and they could, her friends could come up and talk about the dog.

0:41:55 - Julie

Oh, great suggestion on that. I hear so often from people that say, right, when my husband passed, people were supportive, I got lots of casseroles, lots of lasagna, lots of flowers and notes and things like that, and then it all went away after a week or so and then it was just like radio silence. What can we do for those we love who've experienced a loss down the road after the initial funeral memorial service, whatever has happened, to let them know that we're there for them?

0:42:40 - Gloria

Well, I think people need to be a little more proactive and not just say if you need me, call me or what do you need?

Yeah, or what do you need? Because people don't know what they need at the time and it might be hey, would you go to a movie with me? Hey, would you go for a walk with me? I like to walk, I'd love to have somebody to walk with me. You know, it would be great, Just inviting people to do things, to go to dinner, to go. And I would say to people who are bereaved say yes. You make a decision to say yes to whatever. You might be surprised Maybe you don't like to bowl or never thought you would be a bowler or play.

You can offer to take kids. If somebody's had a spouse, buyer or whatever a family member, you can offer to take them shopping, you know, for the holidays or whatever. I love to go with, you know, kids shopping. Can I take your daughter out? Just do some creative stuff. Think of some fun things to do for people and it's great for you and great for them. But it's also good for you to reach out. If you go to Compassionate Friends or Soaring Spirits, which is for widows, or if you go to Helping Parents Heal, find out when their meetings are and go and take a cookie or a crack, or reach out to them, bake something and show up with it yourself.

0:44:25 - Julie

You were talking about bowling and what just came into my mind is I know a woman who was widowed and she joined a bowling league, much to her dismay. She never bowled in her life and she got sucked into it and the team she joined was they called themselves Babes with Balls.

0:44:43 - Heidi

I love that. That is classic, that's such a great quote.

0:44:47 - Julie

That was great. Yeah, absolutely. What do you suggest when people say they feel guilty about smiling and feeling joy? They feel like they're being disrespectful or not honoring their loved one who's passed. How can they overcome that, or do they need to overcome that?

0:45:10 - Gloria

I think you laugh spontaneously finally. At first there's some weird humor I found. You know you laugh with your family over weird things that are kind of strange, but that just natural laugh. I remember Phil, my husband was after Scott died I opened the New York Times and there was a picture of him in the New York Times and I started to laugh because he didn't tell me. I

opened the New York Times and there was a picture of him in the New York Times and I started to laugh because he didn't tell me he was going to have a picture and I started to laugh and I remember it must have been six weeks. I remember the tinkle of my own laughter and it surprised me. So it will come. You have to find. You know it will come. But you, you know, you have to find the joy again and it will appear.

0:46:01 - Heidi

And I always say that the laughter and the joy represents my brother and father's life. Right, good point. Sadness represent their death. So I'm honoring them by being in joy and laughter, even though that's intellectually, you realize that. But people always say, well, they'd want us to be happy again. We know that intellectually, but sometimes our heart takes a while to catch up with our heads.

0:46:26 - Gloria

So initially, it was hard. I remember this will date me, but Tootsie was the movie that was on at the time and it was very funny and we heard our friends told us it was very funny. So Phil and I decided to go to Tootsie. I think it was a couple of months. And did we go to our local theater? No, we went 30 miles away to another theater so nobody would know us. They wouldn't see you laughing. Yeah, exactly, and you wouldn't be judged. Exactly, wow.

And you're damned if you do and damned if you don't. Yeah.

0:46:59 - Heidi

That's why peer support groups are so amazing Because it's okay, you can finally laugh and people aren't looking at you and judging you.

0:47:09 - Julie

Can grief be a spiritual awakening of sorts?

0:47:14 - Heidi

I think so definitely, and I think it is. I mean, when you look at post-traumatic growth and how people grow profoundly after traumatic losses, you see that one of the ways they grow is to become often more spiritual.

0:47:27 - Gloria

More in touch, because your heart is touched in a way that you never thought and you start contemplating. There is life and death.

0:47:35 - Heidi

Exactly, and you think, where is Scott and my dad? I mean they can't have just vanished. I mean I can feel their energy, they're still around. Yeah.

0:47:43 - Gloria

So what's going on here? Yeah, questioning and looking.

0:47:48 - Julie

It makes us face our own mortality too that, oh Lord, have mercy, we're going to be there one day too, absolutely.

0:47:58 - Heidi

I was like, if a 17-year-old can die and my cousin died, if they can die at 17, I can die. Anybody can die. You know, it was a real more. You know, like you said, your mortality is really put into question when you have a death.

0:48:09 - Gloria

You know, I think our family is a lot more forgiving of each other and the girls and three daughters and my husband and I just think we all realized after Scott died that it's fragile, absolutely, yeah.

0:48:25 - Julie

Yeah. Of all of the hundreds of interviews that you've done on the Open to Hope shows that you do. Are there stories that really stand out, that you remember, that completely shifted your perspective in a way that maybe you hadn't thought of?

0:48:47 - Gloria

before. Well, I'm close to having Phil die only five years ago and we went right through his death with the shows and I learned so much from the people we interviewed. And particularly there was a guy who made a difference to me, who we had on, who said yeah, you know, my wife died after. Yeah, you know, my wife died after. He was, you know, fairly young and is about 35. And he said when my wife died, I, you know, decided that I leave my two kids with my mother-in-law and go out on a camping trip by myself. This is like six weeks.

And he said I went out on a camping trip and I decided that I needed to date and be in a relationship. And I came back and I told people I was going to date and he said I'm now in a relationship. It had been a couple of years with a woman I met then gave me permission to get into a very early relationship and to be with a guy who golfed. I was a golfer and it's not the person I'm with now and we golfed every single day for every day for probably seven months. His wife had died a couple of days after Phil and that guy on the show gave me permission to do that. I love that, Heidi?

0:50:20 - Julie

how about you? Is there?

0:50:22 - Heidi

something that stands out. You've had so many amazing guests. I guess Craig Scott's sister, Rachel, was killed in Columbine and Craig was in the school at the time. They were in high school together and they had had a fight before she died the night before she died. Because we're siblings sibling relationships are complicated and he didn't know she was going to die. They were fighting over the car and he was very angry and enraged and it was ruining his life, his anger at himself. A year later, yes, a year later. And so he went to his pastor at himself. A year later, yes, a year later. And so he went to his pastor and his pastor said Craig, forgiveness is like setting a prisoner free and finding out that prisoner is you. And I think I really realized the power of forgiveness and how important that is in a relationship, especially when you had sudden losses and maybe unfinished business.

0:51:14 - Gloria

And he and his dad went out and started a whole foundation about bullying because he felt that the guy who had a combine had been bullied, so made lemonade out of lemons.

0:51:29 - Heidi

Exactly, they took their pain and made purpose out of it, like you said, and lemonade out of lemons.

0:51:36 - Gloria

Yeah.

0:51:37 - Julie

Amazing. Why do we incarnate and made purpose out of it, like you said, and lemonade out of lemons? Yeah, amazing, why do we incarnate Last?

0:51:42 - Gloria
question for both of you Say that again.

0:51:44 - Julie
Why do we incarnate? Oh?

0:51:49 - Heidi
why did we come back?

0:51:54 - Julie
Why are we living the human adventure as?

0:51:55 - Gloria
spirits attached to a body. I'm not sure I know why.

0:51:58 - Heidi
Do you know why, heidi? I guess there's lessons we're supposed to be learning and once we've mastered them, then we go on to learn new lessons. I always, when things adversity happens, I always step back and say wait a minute, what am I supposed to be learning right now? Yeah, I do. What am I supposed to be?

0:52:15 - Gloria
What is it? What is it? What is it? What's going to happen here? There's a message in this, there's something in this and I'm not. Sometimes I can't get close to it and I'm wondering why this is happening to me. Yes, and I don't know. I don't know. I do believe in a universal world. I believe that the I am is learning more with each of our lives.

0:52:46 - Heidi
I agree, I love that. And on another note when I come back the next time, I'm going to be a famous singer, so remember that, because you're amazing Somewhere where you are, julie Ryan.

0:53:04 - Julie
All right, well, will we see you at the Music Center, on Broadway or at the opera?

0:53:12 - Heidi
Or all of the above. I'll be a pop singer like Alicia Keys. There you go.

0:53:16 - Gloria
Okay, actually, I'm hoping to live. I figure, if I live to be 100, I won't have to reincarnate again. I just want to be the I am.

0:53:26 - Julie
Oh honey, you're going to. I think you'll make probably 120 or 130. Well, for all is done.

0:53:34 - Gloria
Is that a prediction? Can I quote you Well?

0:53:37 - Julie
I've been on the streets of Manhattan with you at 11 o'clock at night in the cold weather and you're just like an energizer bunny. She is.

0:53:48 - Heidi

Her fiance said Heidi, I can't keep up with your mom. And I said news alert, news alert, frank, nobody can.

0:53:55 - Julie

No, but that's because you find joy in every situation. Yes, when we're waiting for an Uber and you know we're looking at the cars to see is this the one, is this the one, is that the one? And then the guys on the other side of the street we finally figure out he's waiting for us because he keeps saying he's here, we're not seeing you.

Heidi, we were laughing our heads off. Oh, my goodness, it was so fun. You both are so extraordinary and I'm just so delighted to have you in my life, and you've just brought so many wonderful new thoughts and new ideas and new ways of looking at things into my zeitgeist, my own personal life, that I am eternally grateful to both of you. How can people learn more about you and your work? It start off with yeah. How can people learn more about you and your work?

0:55:33 - Gloria

OpenToHope.com. We're there, everything's there. We're on Instagram. We're on social media. We're on YouTube. We've got our television show. They can watch it if they're in the New York metropolitan area.

0:55:46 - Heidi

We're on Channel 34 in all five boroughs on Sunday night at nine, but OpenToHope.com is the best and fastest and easiest way to find us.

0:55:55 - Julie

Okay, all righty. Well, everybody, lots for you to think about here with these two amazing ladies, and they're sending you love from New York City and I'm sending you love from Sweet Home, Alabama. We'll see you next time. Bye, everybody.

0:56:13 - Heidi

Bye, Julie, you're amazing also. Thank you.

0:56:16 - AnnCR

Thanks for joining us. 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.

0:56:30 - 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.