



# The Gifts of Grief

BY TRACEY SULLIVAN

**T**HERE IS NO WAY TO KNOW how any individual will react to a loved one's passing. I came to understand this regarding my mother. In retrospect, my grief at her passing brought me significant realizations I would like to share. First, I experienced a beautiful process of reflecting on her life and our close relationship. Second, I came to appreciate breath—the sounds of the gift of life—and through an unusual experience, understood a message my mother was sending me at the end of her journey. Last, Reiki drumming connected me into beyond-form consciousness, where my mom stated that we are all part of the golden light; that where the breath of earth stops, the breath of light begins, and they are one.

My mother and I had a close relationship. While grieving, I found myself thinking about our lives together. She was my lifelong support through being a shy and insecure child, a teenager, an adult, and most powerful, being a mother myself. When I needed help with my children, my mom was always there, no matter where I was. This situation wasn't always easy for her because I was in the Air Force, so often, I was in a location requiring extensive travel to help me. I never felt I was inconveniencing her as she assisted me joyfully. What I felt from her was a love that was deep and unconditional.

She was my calm in a storm, my magic carpet on which I traveled the circumstances of my life. Rarely at first and then more frequently as the years went on, I would try to understand how I might feel when my mom was no longer walking this earth. How would this affect me? Never did I receive any insight when pondering this question. I just knew that it would be a turning point in my life, and I prayed that I could recover and accept her passing in the best way possible.

Years flew by, and still, she thrived... 60's, 70's, and 80 years old, 81, 82, 83. As the years passed, I became more aware of who this woman I called mom was. I reflected on how everyone seemed to love her. She was a devout Catholic who only gently and lovingly tried to get her children and grandchildren interested in the Catholic religion. She said, "It will give them something to believe in." I know that belief helped her through many trying times in her life.

One of the more trying times was nearly losing her husband, my father, to a rare form of meningitis that resulted from a wound suffered in Korea after stepping on a land mine. She always believed it was prayers to St. Jude that saved my father and allowed him to have children. One effect of the disease was the destruction of his pituitary gland, which is the trigger for all the body's other glands, including that which allows a man to conceive children. The physicians said he could never have children. My mom prayed and seven years later conceived my sister.

In my mom's home, the same home I grew up in, she had a second bed that she kept in her bedroom for when I would come to town. For several years before her passing, I began to listen to her breath at night. This listening was the start of my appreciation for our breath while here on earth. Sometimes she would snore, and sometimes her breath was as soft as a gentle wind. I captured this sound in my mind and heart, knowing that there would come a day when I would not hear this most beautiful sign of life—the breath of God. During the last days of her life, as she was in the hospital, I would come out every weekend and stay at her house so I could be with her for the weekend.

One morning as I sat in her living room drinking my coffee, I heard something fall in the kitchen. I walked in and saw that a plaque that my brother had given her years ago had fallen off the wall after being there for many years—happening in the morning's quiet with no one in that room. It landed near my charging cell phone, which prompted me to look at my messages, and I saw I had a missed call from my mom. I then picked up the plaque and read it. "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." I thought it was my mom trying to get my attention to call her and hurry to the hospital. Later I realized the message was to not focus on the number of breaths, but on all the love we shared in this life and let that be what takes your breath away!

Love is enough to take your breath away, for however long you have it. I was so fortunate to share this love with my mom for many years on this earth! I remember her last breath because I was sitting next to her, giving her Reiki with my left hand holding her left hand and my right hand

on her left shoulder. The family was there surrounding Mom. We were mostly silent. When the moment arrived for my mom to leave the earth plane, something brought me back to the awareness of her breath when it was her last breath taken in this beautiful, love-filled life, as she moved into a light-filled consciousness.

I began to think about how we all have a light within us, and how being human is what covers that light. Why do we lose sight of who we are, and how can we get back to knowing who we are? To me, the traditional way of looking at this concept is that when we are born, we have full knowledge of ourselves, and as “life” happens, we become blocked from ourselves. Through the experience of my mom’s death, the awareness that the opposite is the actual reality came to me—that we are born blocked from ourselves and “life” assists in the unblocking of who we are. Significant situations in our life, like the death of a loved one, can drastically shift us to shed volumes of light on ourselves—if we allow them to. Death is only one “life” circumstance that has this effect on those still here. A debilitating disease, an accident, or even the birth of a child are other “life” experiences.

We are born, and our Spirit takes physical form, and we experience our first need that goes unmet. With each unmet need, we open slightly to our true self, and with each successive unmet need, just a little more of ourselves illuminates until eventually, we can see who we are. It is those occurrences that affect us most profoundly, bringing us closer to the light of who we are if we allow it.

When viewing spiritual growth from this perspective, we can see all life events as bringing us closer to the light of who we are versus disconnecting us from who we are. We have the choice of how we interpret life. The knowledge of who we are is within us and always has been, and our life path or the choices we make will eventually bring us to the light of who we are.

To me, what Reiki energy ultimately does is assist us as we go through seeing our light. So, the suffering we feel at times is the transformation to light. When we take that suffering away by artificial means, our journey home to the light becomes stalled. Many of us are walking through our lives in a stalled sort of pattern of which we are often unaware!

On July 20, 2018, my mom passed. After about seven months, I found that I viewed this significant “life event” as a seed syllable in my life. In Buddhism and Hinduism, the term *bija* is used for mystical “seed syllables” contained within mantras, such as the word *om*. These seeds do not have precise meanings but are thought to carry connections to spiritual principles.<sup>1</sup> My awareness of this process began during a Reiki drumming session with Arthur Baird, while at the ICRT Reiki Retreat in Sedona, AZ, in September 2018.

I signed up for a half-hour session with Arthur. We talked about what I hoped to get from the session, and he suggested that I set the intention to connect with my mother while holding no expectations, just being open. I agreed. It started with Arthur moving around me, beating the drum and chanting Reiki symbols. For a good portion of the time, I merely knew of the effect the sound of the drum had on my physical body. I felt my cells separate and then connect back together again.

At what felt like the end of the session, I noticed myself going through an entrance that seemed to go into the earth. As I entered what I perceived to be the earth, in front of me was golden light, and from it stepped my mother. She was wearing a golden shirt and jeans, and she appeared to be doing some work. I looked into her luminescent eyes, and I asked, “What are you doing HERE?” and she responded, “I’m working; this is the source of your light. We are all here.”

As she spoke those words, from that light stepped Jesus, also wearing a golden shirt and jeans. As I was looking, I knew my mom and Jesus came from this light that is the light of all oneness. They stepped from the light into form to convey a message to me—that we are all a part of this tremendous golden light of eternity. Where the breath of earth stops, the breath of light begins, and they are one.

The message was powerful for me, but that was only the beginning. Two weeks later, William Rand announced that he had received Holy Fire® III energy while teaching a Reiki class on Mt. Kurama, Japan. Concepts William Rand and Colleen Benelli spoke about—“Brothers and Sisters of the Light,” and the “Formless Realm”—had been revealed to me during my Reiki drumming session with Arthur as I experienced the energy and concepts described in Holy Fire® III.<sup>2</sup> I believe my mom was showing me the reality of what I was about to learn of Holy Fire® III, and I also believe this knowledge will come to us in the way that is best suited to our belief system or spiritual practice.

My mom was a devout Catholic her entire life, but now she was coming from beyond that belief system, from a place she couldn’t access while walking this earth. That place was elusive because it was so close, she could not see it; it was within her all the time. That is what her message was to me and so mine to you. The pain of grief can be a portal to the “Formless Realm,” creating form again within us. It is the power of the Higher Consciousness of the Holy Fire. I believe that when those closest to us pass over, there is the possibility of that person’s Spirit to join with the “Brothers and Sisters of the Light” and connect with us through our grief. It is the connection between the Formless Realm and the Realm of Form. I received this explanation during a Holy Fire® Experience. For me, the

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pain of grief was a precursor to the opening and illumination of my Spirit and its connection to that golden light to which we eventually all return.

The close relationship my mother and I shared continues, for, through my grief process, I have felt her presence in different ways since she entered back into the Formless Realm. I feel blessed that Reiki, through my drumming session and the Holy Fire® III energy, brought me closer to the light I am. We are all a part of the golden light of eternity, and while still here, we should remember—“Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.” Embrace all significant situations in your life so that through any pain or grief, you illuminate who you are through the gifts of grief. ✨



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### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> “Bijā.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, October 29, 2019. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bijā>.
- <sup>2</sup> William Lee Rand, *Usui/Holy Fire III Reiki Master Manual*, (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, May 2019 Revision), 58.