

PAYMENT FOR PASSAGE



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INTRODUCTION

Is there truly a majestic existence where our spirits soar when we die? Why do we suffer while here on earth? What happens in the spirit world when human suffering takes place? Does the spirit realm know? Do they care? These are the questions I asked myself after a terrible crime, ugly in every aspect, destroyed the person of love and light in my life.

My answers came as I began to write a book about the short life of my amazing daughter. Joann was a natural healer, bringing courage and love to everyone she met. I searched my heart for the right words to describe her personal journey with clarity for the reader, and this required that I once again embrace our shared spiritual beliefs. Attempting to regain faith, I encountered the powerful energy available when seeking spiritual answers to hard questions. Omnipotent joy overflowed into my soul as I absorbed truth, expressed admiration for someone who touched me deeply, and attempted to communicate with honor.

Joann was that special someone in my life who knew me better than anyone else. She knew who I was and loved me. She validated my dreams and saw me as a blessing in her life. Without warning and with no parting words, she suddenly disappeared.

After burying my daughter, I came to realize that the way I handled loss would carve out my soul's destiny in powerful ways I could not have dreamed possible. Following this agonizing loss, I was aware of the temptation to live superficially to protect my open heart from further hurt. Eventually I came to the understanding that if my spirit was buried beneath layers of fear and pretension, it would not feel welcomed or at home in my body. I heard the phrase *going home* at Joann's funeral. The earthly perception is that the deceased human then connects with and exists in the heavenly realms of eternal joy and love. What I did not realize that day was I did not have to die to experience those same heavenly states.

Overwhelmed with unrelenting grief and regret after Joann's death, I fixated on what I could have done to prevent so much pain. In my attempt to keep her memory alive with a book, I was forced to refocus. The title came to me immediately, but I struggled with the content. I had no idea what was true in my life anymore after losing all faith. I was the soul missing in action, not my daughter.

After staring at a blank computer screen for days, I cried, "I give up. Joann, please help me!"

To my amazement, I began typing the following words under the title:

Mom, just start typing with no reasoning, no judgment, and no expectations. If you write the book with faith and no plan of what the book should say, you will learn the meaning of your life. You will have all the encouragement, wisdom, and guidance you need as you find this meaning for yourself. If a company publishes your book and keeps my memory alive, that is wonderful, but the first intent of this book must be your own healing. As your love for yourself grows during your healing, your truths will ripple into the lives of others in many ways. The book may be one of them.

Each chapter begins with a personal prayer from Joann's journal that I found on her

kitchen table. Her words gave me great comfort as I packed her cherished possessions to return home without her. After I typed her journal entry that I chose for Chapter Eight, I understood the meaning of the title for this book. I realized the greatest payment for life's passage.

Joann's Journal

I have released it all to you, angels. I walk through my fear with your guidance, knowing your truth will protect me, your love and wisdom will guide me, your strength will sustain me. I am free to love—I am free to be—I am free to dance and play. I am no longer weighted down with unnecessary burdens. I am free to be me, I am free to be real, and I am free to be whole. I am home.

I was suddenly catapulted into a journey of profound truth, inner peace, and eternal love. *Home* is defined as a place of origin. *Feeling at home* is defined as being in harmony with our surroundings. Joann transcended to a reality beyond what is perceptible by our senses while here on earth. Those words assured me that my passage throughout this lifetime is leading me home to the essence of who I truly am. I began my journey home.

Each new truth became a powerful tool for my spiritual toolbox, a necessary device for accomplishing my task ahead. Divine intent and focus revealed this to me:

- It is more important how I experienced what I did than placing the value on the act itself;
- It is important to put my focus on what I saw and believed rather than what I was told;
- It is more important to appreciate how each wound transformed me instead of dwelling just on how much I hurt;
- It is more important to realize living authentically as myself carries me further than desiring the approval of others;
- It is important to know the belief that I can accomplish what I want leads to success more than just wishing and hoping;
- It is important to know there is an interwoven loving spirit in everything;
- It is important to know I am to live without judgment or preconceived ideas of what "should be" instead of trying to figure everything out;
- It is important to know all I need to make positive life choices is my own permission rather than imposing bondage on myself by seeking approval from others.

As I slowly incorporated these new ways of living into my life, I began to feel more comfortable in my own skin and celebrate my spirit. This process has begun to serve as an example for others, leading them to themselves as well. Searching for answers is an innate drive within each of us, but answers to my questions brought me no lasting peace—just more questions. It took years to quiet my mind, as you will see in this book. I had to exhaust my list before solving the mystery of living my authentic life in peace.

Anyone who cares deeply and searches for truth passionately can be wounded on earth. Yet we can soar—even through grief, fear, and anger. There are losses that shake the very soul and challenge us to advance spiritually and persevere.

Certainly the sudden loss of Joann was that for me. I walked through each process with a sense that this loss would be what eventually revealed my true nature and thrust me

along my divine path of opportunities and rewards. Surviving this heart-breaking experience with trust in life's process provided a passage for wisdom to emerge and divine energy to flow within me. All that we are each seeking is our own acceptance and approval. I know this is true and not just a lofty theory because it is the actual story of my life.

It is my hope that my son Cayce will see this book as a tribute to his ever-present way of grounding me. He sustained me in a time I thought I was watching myself go insane. His observations gave meaning to empty moments of madness and grief. He continues to strengthen and support me through challenging times. I was invited to ride with a group of scouts achieving their biking badge under his supervision. After several weeks of training, I completed a long bike ride.

As I struggled up the last climb, I felt a hand in the middle of my back as Cayce said, "I'll help you the rest of the way."

In that moment I regained hope to finish the climb as Cayce supported me with one hand, steered his own bike with the other, and peddled for both of us. It was as if life itself was speaking to me in that moment through his letting me know that no matter how steep the challenges in my life, I would not be alone.

Janie Wells, 2010