

*Believe in your eternal love connection...*

### ***Introduction***

I cannot begin to explain the unbearable grief that I felt after my husband's death. This unbearable grief came from the depths of my soul, it came in waves, it overwhelmed me, and it drained my spirit. In the beginning I fought hard to control it but it was uncontrollable. I fought hard to ignore it but it remained steadfast and uppermost in my thoughts both day and night. I was in deep despair. I was in the darkest and loneliest days of my life. All my life I had been strong and now I felt weak and vulnerable.

For months I lost my way, my bearings, and my direction in life. My identity had changed. I felt that I was walking alone in life. I knew God was by my side and Eddie was in my heart but it was hard to be alive. I kept telling Eddie that this was the hardest thing that I have ever had to do in my whole entire life. I told him I loved him, and that I needed him. I told him that a part of me died with him, and I didn't know how I would go on without him.

When I thought of myself I saw a huge hole in my chest where my heart should have been. I saw myself curl up into a small ball and drift off into space. That's what I wanted to do curl up and drift away. I tried desperately to control my grief but I was unable

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to, it controlled me. It would creep into my thoughts. I felt my loss from the moment I awoke until the moment I fell asleep. My only comfort came from my daughter who was also suffering this unbearable grief as well. She was close to her father and she loved him so very much. To this day she is the only one that understands. She was protective and concerned, she promised Eddie she would take care of me, she shared my grief, and her love for me is what kept me alive...

Grief has its physical signs as well. In my case I felt sick to my stomach. Even now when I think of our walk through the valley of the shadow of death I feel sick to my stomach. I'm not sure when or if this will end. When I think of his hospital stay I feel his pain and his anguish. I try not to think of it because it hurts too much.

As I look back, I realize how difficult the first two years after my husband's death were. In fact they have become a blur, a time in my life where nothing mattered, a period of the greatest sadness that I have ever known. I want you to know that this sadness is something that never completely leaves you. This great sadness remains with you hidden deep inside. As time passes you just learn to accept it. You accept the sadness in your heart, and you learn to

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cope. Our society doesn't like to talk about death and dying, our society believes that all you need is time to heal, when in fact you soon realize that this great sadness will remain with you until you are reunited with the one that you love so very much. I have learned to cherish this sadness as a part of our undying love for each other...time passes but our love remains...

When you have been married for as long as we were (35 years) it is extremely difficult to think of yourself as just "you;" for so many years we were "us". In the years that Eddie and I were married I guess you would say that we really weren't very social people. Oh, when we were young we had lots of friends but as we grew older we were happy just to be "us". We shared the same passions and being "us" was all that we needed. I have thought about meeting new people but for now I am content...I am still happy just to be "us"...

Although I know that according to our Earthly rules I am now a widow, which means I am now just "me"; when in fact in my heart I am still "us".

So, secretly I decided not to accept being just "me." I decided I wasn't going to accept society's new identity for me. Secretly I

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decided not to accept the title of widow. I chose to secretly rebel against certain societal rules of widowhood. I still wear my wedding ring proudly. I still use Mrs. Paula M. Ezop on any correspondence. I left my husband's name on our checking account. Yes, I realize that some people would say that I am in denial. But the truth is I really don't care what people think. What I do know is that even though society has given me a new identity. Even though society chooses to call me a widow, I do not think of myself in this way because I am still connected to him through our love. And, so I secretly carry out my rebellion against widowhood and all of the silly rules connected with it...

As I said before the first two years of my walk alone have become a blur. I thought at the time that my thinking was rational, and now I realize that it may not have been. Instead, when I look back I see that it was a time of gaining strength and perspective. It was a time when grief overwhelmed me, and I struggled to find my life again – our life again. Each day was a struggle of utter sadness and despair. But, I found my way. I found my way strengthened by his love. I like to believe that someday we will live in a world that will recognize and understand the spiritual connection that can be

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made and maintained beyond the veil. Someday mankind will realize and accept that Heaven and Earth exist together, and that our loved ones spirits still remain very much a part of our lives.

I needed to find a way to bring happiness back into my life. For me, it is as if my life has now gone full circle. I find myself finding joy and happiness in doing things that we first did together when we were young. My passions for decorating and gardening have been reignited. My energy has returned, and my writing has found new direction. My writing is my new identity – not widowhood but being a writer is my new identity. I guess what I am trying to say is that you need to find your passion and that you will find your passion. You need to find what will bring joy and hope back into your life if you are to survive. Find your passion and you will find your new identity. Find your passion and you will find your direction in life.

In my heart I know that Eddie will always be with me. He hears my thoughts and he still shares my life with me. Oh, I know that he isn't here physically with me. No, he is with me spiritually - connected through our love. So, I feel that we do have a future together. I feel that this is what we were meant to do. We were

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meant to stay connected through our love. Maybe that is what we were here to learn in this lifetime.

I know that you know what I am talking about. You hear them in your mind. You speak to them with your mind. Thoughts come into your head when you need their help. There have been many instances where I have known for sure that he has helped me. Usually it is when I am trying to fix something around the house. I can hear him telling me which tools to use or how to go about fixing something. The same thing with the car, I can hear him tell me that it is time to get the oil changed and the tires rotated. He is still with me... Oh, I know that a lot of people would say that this is all in my head but I know that it isn't. I believe so strongly in their existence, and even though it can't be proved I know that they remain with us guiding us and helping us when we are in need. As I continue to walk alone I wonder what the future will hold.

I know that Eddie is still in my life but he is in the Heavenly world and I am in my physical body here on Earth. Could I ever remarry? Would anyone ever be able to take his place? These are all questions that go through my mind at times. In the thirty-five years that we were married we never discussed what the other person

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would do if one of us would die. The question of whether they would remarry was never a part of our conversations. My heart and intuition tell me that there will never be another man in my life. I am happy to stay connected through our love, and I look forward to the future with great anticipation of further spiritual growth and understanding of life beyond the veil.

The death of my husband tore apart my world. This book contains my innermost thoughts as I came to grips with his death. My writing helped me deal with my terrible loss. Chapters in this book were written at various times as I grieved. There is one recurring theme, and that is that we remain connected through our love. I call it the love connection. This love connection is what enabled me to survive after the death of my husband. As you read my words it is my hope that you too will be able to focus on your love connection as you struggle with your loss...

### ***My Story***

I am now sixty-eight years of age. Nine years have passed since the death of my husband. I can't believe it has been nine years. Some days it feels like yesterday, and other days it feels like forever. Each year as Spring approaches I begin to feel the approaching doom. You see my husband passed away on April 26, 2005 and the signs of Spring trigger the memory of those horrible days before his death. I don't think I will ever again look at the coming of Spring with happy anticipation. This is my story. It is a love story that now reaches beyond the veil.

I know that there are so many others whose stories are the same as mine. There are people who have lost their husbands, their wives, their sons and daughters, their brothers and sisters, and their friends. There are people who have been touched by the deaths of people they don't even know, yet they share in the tragedy of their deaths through their heartfelt love and compassion. The story that I tell is our universal story of undying love. These pages lay bare the heartfelt love that we all have for those we loved so deeply. Those who we loved and lost.

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I never thought for one moment that I would be without the love of my life, not at age fifty-nine. No not me, it could never happen to me. Even now, after all this time there are times that I mutter to myself in the early morning hours that I can't believe it. This wasn't supposed to be my life. You see, the possibility of my husband's death never even entered my mind. In my heart we were still the young bride and groom that entered that beautiful neighborhood church on our wedding day. We were so young and so in love. I still picture us standing in front of the candle-lit altar. The church was filled with the fragrance of flowers, we were young, and on the top of the world.

We had waited for this moment since the evening Eddie asked me to marry him and I said, "Yes." What a magnificent and endearing memory. I can still hear him repeating our marriage vows, he was so emotional, tears filled his eyes as he pledged his love to me. It was a hot, rainy, summer day, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 1969 to be exact. Yes, if I close my eyes I can still see and feel the church. I can feel the love that we shared that day. Yes, if I close my eyes we are back in front of the altar saying, "I do." It was a day bursting with love. A wonderful day filled with joy, and a day of great

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beginnings. Eddie and I were beginning our lives together. We vowed to love each other in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, until death do us part.

"Until death do us part," now when I hear those words I smile and I think that those vows are all wrong because I still love my husband beyond death. I still love him. He is and will always be my husband throughout eternity. "Until death do us part," sounds final. This finality is an ending that even now I cannot bring my heart to accept.

Our marriage was a new beginning, and I feel that his death is also a new beginning not just for him but for "us." His death and new existence are a new beginning in "our" lives. I continue my spiritual journey here on Earth, and he continues his spiritual journey in Heaven. Believe me it has taken years of healing to allow me to look at his death in this way. Still even though I know this to be true there are days when my heart feels the pain all over again. There are days when grief washes over me and I lose all sense of reason. There are days that I cry out to heaven in loneliness and despair. But, those days are much fewer now. Is it acceptance of his death? Or is it the spiritual love connection that we have made? I believe

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that it is the spiritual love connection that we have made that allows me to accept my new existence.

It is our love that has connected us beyond the veil. It is this great love connection that makes my life bearable without him physically here on Earth.

We never thought about life ending. We never contemplated life apart. No, we never considered being without each other. In fact, I thought that we had forever together, or at least until we were eighty or ninety years of age. Now, when I look back I think how presumptuous of me. How naïve it was of us to presume that we had forever to be together. Common sense tells you that we all are going to die some day. That's it, some day – not today, not tomorrow, not on Sunday, or Monday, but some day we are all going to die. Was it presumptuous of me or was I somehow remembering another existence? Did I know that we do have an eternity together?

Yes, in my heart I felt that we had forever or at least until some day came into our lives, and that wouldn't happen for a very long time. Oh, how wrong I was. Eddie, my husband of thirty-five years (almost 36) passed away on April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2005. He was sixty years old. We were high school sweethearts, lovers, and best

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friends. He was my life and my heart's inspiration. A day doesn't go by that I don't think of him often. I still feel his love and he is still present in my life. We did everything together and we are doing this together. We are surviving together even though he is in a different world than I am. We are connecting through our love. Even though I can't see him I feel his presence and I know that he still exists. I know that he would never leave me because he loved me too much to ever leave me. In my heart I now know that we do indeed have forever. Not forever in our physical bodies but forever as spirits who are a part of the light, and surrounded by God's love.

When Eddie died I searched for a book that would help me deal with my loss. I wanted a book that would explain his existence. I wanted someone to tell me that he was all right. I needed to know more about the mystery of death and his new spiritual existence. I was lost without him. My heart was broken and I had lost my way. I never found a single book that would help me deal with his death in the way that I wanted to deal with his death. What I did find were books that explained the different stages of grief that I would go through. I found books that told me in time I would be able to move on. But, that isn't what I wanted to hear. How could I say good-bye

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to the man I had walked through life and death with? No, I wouldn't move on without him, I wanted to stay connected in some spiritual way, and I wanted to know that it was possible.

The world of spirit opened its doors to me during the darkest days of my life. I spoke to God throughout my husband's illness, through his death, and after his death when my grief consumed me. God was there when I needed him, he was there when I lost my bearings, and he was there when I questioned his wisdom. He never left my side.

Sharing my journey with you is not easy for me. But, this is something that I feel I must do. And, in my heart I know that you will benefit by hearing my words. I pray that my words will comfort you, and open your hearts to the love connection that exists for us all.

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### ***Our Love Story***

I want you to know, "us" (Eddie and me). I want you to know our love story. I want you to know that we were just ordinary people living an ordinary life, and how our lives changed overnight. I want to tell you about the love that we shared and continue to share. I'd like to take you back in time to when my husband and I first met. We both attended high school in the city of Chicago. It was the 60's. We were young and carefree. Although we lived blocks apart we had never met. Fate does have a way of entering your life. My best girlfriend in the whole world was dating Eddie's best friend. One evening they decided (unknown to either of us) that we should meet, and they arranged a blind date. Well, neither one of us knew that we were going on a date. We thought that we were going to a high school play with our friends. We didn't know that someone else would be there. Well, that is how I met the love of my life, on a blind date arranged by our two best friends.

Eddie was a half-year ahead of me and he graduated 6 months before I did. At that time the Vietnam War was in full swing. Two months after Eddie graduated he was drafted. Luck was on his side and he spent his Army career at Fort Bliss, Texas. He

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never had to go to Vietnam. I was in college back then, we corresponded and we spent his leaves together. Now as I look back I realize that we never grasped the danger of the situation. We never thought that death would enter our lives then, even though there was a war going on. When you are young you never think of the possibility of death. No we never grasped the danger of the situation, after all we were young and in love.

Eddie asked me to marry him, and of course my answer was, “yes!” We had a beautiful August wedding and we couldn’t have been happier.

I taught second grade and Eddie was in the printing trade. Two years later we bought our first home (a real fixer-upper). We were living the so called “American Dream.” Our daughter was born and we were happy!

Life went on, and soon we bought a new house in the suburbs. We did the usual things, parties, graduations, and vacations. You know the usual things that ordinary middle class people do. When you are young you think that you will live forever. We felt that way into our 50’s. That is until the death of our parents. It was their deaths that gave us an awareness of our mortality. But,

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you put that in the back of your mind. We were still young at heart and we had our health. How things change.

Our lives up until then had been normal. Both of us were blessed with good health... I thought. My husband was hospitalized for three weeks. He was in and out of intensive care, and transferred from hospital to hospital. He spent his last days in the cancer ward of one hospital, under hospice care. In this ward they were all too familiar with dying. Again, I prayed, we prayed, we promised, we asked for a miracle and my daughter and I never left his side. We were with him when he died and I still picture him as he took his final breath. That overwhelming sadness has never left my heart. I will always feel that gut wrenching pain as he was taken from us.

God said, “No” to our prayers for a miracle. Was it God’s will? Was my husband’s spirit ready to return to him? Do we as individuals make our own life and death decisions despite what others are praying for? These were all questions that I asked myself.

It’s strange how people react to you after the death of a spouse. They feel uncomfortable. They ignore you and the subject. They see the pain in your eyes, and they feel your loss even if they won’t talk about it. You do need to talk about it. I wanted our lives



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back again. I wanted those long Sunday afternoons together, the family dinners, the laughter and the tears. I wanted “us.” Everyone says that time heals. No, time leads to acceptance, and if acceptance is a form of healing then yes time heals. You learn to accept and to live with your loss. But, it is a loss, a terrible heart breaking loss that never goes away. The grief and sorrow have a way of sneaking up on you when you least anticipate it. Tears will stream down your face as the waves of sorrow come from the depths of your soul and overwhelm you. They overwhelm you with a force so strong that you feel the pain that you felt when you saw him take his last breath. Yes, that terrible moment frozen in time, when you saw the love of your life, the man you shared your heart and soul with depart from you in that one brief fleeting moment of time as your world stood still. Your world now changed forever, and ever, and ever. Oh, how you long to be with him.

Throughout our lives my husband and I confronted life together, and we always knew there were answers. Even in death I knew there was an answer. I would not say good-bye to him. I knew deep in my heart that his spirit was alive and well, and if he could be with me even after his earthly body was gone he would be.

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My life as I knew it was gone. The love of my life, my reason for living, my heart’s inspiration was gone. I wanted to curl up in a ball and drift off into space. I felt that like a wounded animal, and I wanted to crawl off somewhere and die. I found it hard to be around people who knew us. I suffered in silence as I went about the tasks of living. I know in my heart (as I have mentioned before) that this is the hardest thing that I have ever had to do. Yes, the hardest thing I have ever had to do is to continue on by myself without my partner’s physical presence.

As I heal or accept his death, I am beginning to understand the transformation from death to living in the light. You see our thinking is all wrong. Spiritual life is forever and our physical existence is but a brief moment in time, a brief moment in our eternal existence. Survival, strengthening of our spirit, and growing the light and love of God is all that is important. Although, even though I believe that this is true my spirit still dwells in my physical body, and the wound in my heart runs deep.

I think back to the hurried mornings of days past when my husband was alive and I realize now how we took those mornings for granted. I remember watching him shave, the sounds of his dresser

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drawer closing as he took out his socks and shirt for the day, and the sound of the garage door going up as he left for work. Our minds were filled with thoughts of the day, of work, of traffic, and of what we were going to have for dinner. We both went about our hurried morning and the house was filled with the sounds of our morning routine. Now, the house is eerily quiet except for me. Those mornings are now cherished memories known only to me, so many memories that I hold close to my heart. I pray to God that these memories will never fade because these are the things that keep him close to me.

It has been nine years since my husband died and still as I get ready for work my thoughts are only of him. I just can't get used to my aloneness, I just can't get used to my walk alone. In my mind it is still "us." After thirty-five years of marriage I can't begin to think of myself without thinking of him. There are some days where I still feel him so very close to me.

I find myself telling him out loud that I know that he is here, and that my wish at that moment is that I could see him. I pray to God to let me see him. But, all that I can do is to see him so very clearly in my mind's eye. He is no longer sick, in fact he looks like

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he did when he was young. Oh he was so strong and so very handsome. For a brief moment it is almost as if nothing has changed and then in an instant I am back to reality.

The house that I lived in after my husband's death was the house that we lived in together for 30 years, and everywhere I turned there was a memory. It was a large house for one person, three bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, a basement containing his workshop, and a yard filled with memories of barbeques, Fourth of July celebrations, and cool October nights together. This was the house that our daughter grew up in. This was the house that we enjoyed together. This was our home. This was "us." It became a place that at times was so very hard for me to be in and yet a place that I couldn't be without.

I spent my weekends taking care of that house – our house. I found that my husband taught me well – he tackled any and all jobs around our house with vigor and determination. When those jobs were left to me, faucets that needed to be fixed, loose boards on the fence to be nailed down, a furnace filter to be replaced, all the weekend projects of owning a home – I took on those jobs with the same vigor and determination that he did for this was the house that

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he loved and was so very proud of. This was our house, and somehow those projects brought us close together once again. I could hear his voice telling me what tool to use, and what drawer of his workbench it was in. And, for a brief moment we were “us.” I stayed in that house for five years. It took me that long to leave. I now live in a townhouse close to my daughter. I have been able to put that existence behind me, but it wasn’t an easy decision to make. It was a decision that I had to make to move on. I could no longer live in the past...

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### ***Reminders of my Aloneness***

After Eddie’s death, there were constant reminders of my aloneness. The harsh reality confronted me countless times a day in the smallest of ways, mundane things that previously I wouldn’t have given a second thought to became large psychological challenges in my day – as I walked alone. For instance, who would think that coming home from work, making dinner, and sitting down to eat at the kitchen table would be cause for a meltdown? I couldn’t bring myself to come home from work, make dinner, and sit down to eat at the kitchen table, it was just too sad to have a meal at the kitchen table without him. He loved to cook and he would always cook dinner for me. Sitting there alone would just be a cruel reminder of his absence. Also, who would think that cooking in the kitchen you cooked in for 30 years would cause emotional pain beyond comprehension? I avoided cooking for months. The kitchen was my husband’s domain. He was everywhere in our kitchen from his handwritten recipes to his favorite pan or spoon. Gradually, I overcame the sadness of cooking in his kitchen. It was probably out of necessity. However, I ate downstairs in the family room as I watched television. Eating there with the sound of the television