

## INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE: Don't Fade On Me

CHAPTER TWO: Back to Life/Back to Reality

CHAPTER THREE: How Did We Get Here?

CHAPTER FOUR: Storyteller

CHAPTER FIVE: Dead Duck

CHAPTER SIX: Avoidance The Great Panacea

CHAPTER SEVEN: Hard to Find a Friend

CHAPTER EIGHT: Procrasti-Nation

CHAPTER NINE: I Don't Wanna Know

CHAPTER TEN: Forgotten But Not Gone

CHAPTER ELEVEN: Dead From New York, It's Saturday Night

CHAPTER TWELVE: Picture Perfect

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Random Conversations

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: Christmas '94

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Busted

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: Time Waits For No One

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: Fired

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN: It's Not You, It's Me

FINAL WORD

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## CONVERSATIONS WITH MY DEAD ROCK STAR BEST FRIEND

*By Susan Daley  
Copyright 2016 Susan Daley  
All Rights Reserved*

*This ebook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This ebook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each recipient. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then please return to your favorite ebook retailer and purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the hard work of this author.*

## *DEDICATION*

*To my family and friends for all the encouragement through the years, without which this book would never have seen the light of day.*

*“Life it seems, will fade away  
Drifting further every day  
Getting lost within myself  
Nothing matters, no one else.”  
~‘Fade to Black’ Metallica*

## INTRODUCTION

Howie Epstein was my best friend for over 20 years. Nobody, with few exceptions, knows this. For a good period of that time I was living in Canada, and I'd only see him once a year when I went to LA, but we would talk on the phone at least once a week, and always, without fail, on Christmas.

When I lived in LA, 1982-1984, 1986, 1993-1998 we spoke every day, and saw each other regularly, well towards the end I spoke to him more than I saw him.

A lot of our conversations were mundane, how much news can there be when you're talking every day for hours? But they were still fascinating in that they lasted that long.

The subjects were varied; from his being abducted by aliens when he was 5 years old, driving his tricycle in the family driveway in the wee hours of the morning, to the friend from back home who came to visit him in LA, tripping on a loose stone in the pathway to the front door and saying 'nothing personal, you have homeowner's right? I'm going to have to sue you.' To the worst betrayal of all, but that one isn't going to be revealed by me.

When I moved back to Canada in 1998, I can't deny Howie's choice to spend more time in New Mexico didn't contribute to my decision to move back home, it definitely played a role. But we still kept in contact, not as much, but at least weekly at first.... our last conversation was in November of 2002, we spoke for over 2 hours, but as I didn't know it would be our last conversation, I can't recall what we talked about. That is a huge regret. He died 3 months later.

What you'll see in these pages really happened. Now, I'm sure my subconscious was a grand contributor; I was reeling from his death, it took me an awful lot of years to come to grips with it, I never had closure, I was back in Canada when it happened, nobody but his ex-girlfriend Carlene could know how to reach me, and she had her own problems.

I never revealed as much of myself to another human being. My inhibitions and insecurities melted away and I was able to tell him anything and everything. I bore my soul. I'd like to think he bore his, but, as you'll see, he kept a lot from me, most incredibly, the extent of his drug use. I wasn't there to see it, so I believed everything he told me on the phone. Everything was safe on the phone.

I started writing this just after his funeral in Milwaukee, I didn't stay for the burial, I left after the service – it was clear to me that this was a private event, only Milwaukeeans were welcome. I'm not saying his brothers were mean or uninviting, they were not, but they were keeping him close to home, understandably, after all, it was after he left home that the trouble began. I totally get that and I say, do what you gotta do to get through it.

I found these pages while trying to free up space on my laptop when I was transferring files to an external hard-drive. I started reading them and got lost in another time. I had stopped writing because there was a big secret that I was told would be revealed to the concerned party once

the funeral was over, I since found out it wasn't, it was integral to a lot of what I wrote, but it was not my secret to tell, so I just stopped writing, I didn't think I could continue without including that fact.

Time does provide perspective, and I found a way to get around it. I've read many things about Howie in the years since he died, I just wanted to add my experience to the narrative.

A lot of you are going to have a hard time believing I'm communicating with Howie in this book, but, I don't care. Maybe it was all in my head and that's how I processed the grief? It doesn't matter, I don't care.

Most of the content consists of relived conversations from when he was alive or memories of that time. My dear friend's spirit, who has obtained perspective and objectivity since his passing, interjects in attempt to help me gain closure I guess. He's still my best friend – none of my other dead friends are popping in to clear things up.

Of course there's much left out – 20 odd years is a long time, I hope I picked the best moments to paint a picture.

I love him madly, I miss him desperately, but I still talk to him...

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Don't Fade On Me*

When I got back from the funeral of my rock star best friend I was exhausted, pissed off and spectacularly depressed. There was the fact that the funeral was in Milwaukee, that it was the coldest day on record, that the 'hosts' of this event had clearly decided his life went to hell once he left the bosom of his family in frigid Milwaukee, and that anybody he met post Milwaukee was part of the problem – there was the fact that after the horrible event, my plane home was delayed, I was stuck in this metal tube for 45 minutes while dumb and dumber tried to figure out how to take back the excess gas they just put in the plane, and finally there was Canada Customs, who seemed to be hell bent on making my night more miserable. Oh, and last but not least, there was the fact that my idiot best friend had OD'd!

I had barely opened the front door when my dog jumped me, he seemed way too happy to see me, had I been in possession of all my faculties I would've realized this excessive excitement had less to do with my return and more to do with keeping me out of my bedroom - he wasn't going to be successful, I was not in the mood for games.

I climbed the stairs anticipating the relief I would feel once my head hit the pillow. Upon entering my room, it was all too clear why he didn't want me in there, he had, yet again, destroyed my brand new pillows; their guts were strewn all over the room. I don't know what his fucking problem was, it's not like he had to go to Milwaukee!

I was too tired to be mad. I kicked off my shoes and fell onto my bed. I tried to process what had transpired since I woke up in this very bed, too early, this very morning. Probably not a good idea I thought, I had to report back to work the next day, I'd need more time to fully take in what I experienced. So, I pulled myself up to go brush my teeth and wash my face, "I hate you Howie" I said to my room.

All of a sudden the chimes hanging from the ceiling started tinkling. They got progressively louder, the very opposite of peaceful, it sounded like they were attacking the stagnant air. My dog scooted under the bed while I stood frozen.

After what seemed like an eternity, but was probably mere seconds, I did the normal things; I went around the area feeling for circulating air, none. Checked the windows and vents, no earthly reason for this, but they were still clanging, though the intensity had abated.

"Hey Howie, is that you?" I asked my room but don't know why, it just seemed like the thing to do. The volume again increased, so I said "Okay if it's you clang once, if it's not, clang twice" Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather; the chimes clanged once and stopped still.

I have to admit I found this a little unsettling. As much as I wanted it to be him, and the possibility of communicating with his spirit was beyond exciting, it was a ghost after all and that pretty much unnerved me.

Slowly the realization of what was happening became clearer, soon I was over the moon, I completely forgot how pissed off I was – if I could communicate with him, I could finally ask him

the questions I wasn't able to ask before he died...but then something dark came over me.  
"Was this a good thing?"

Of course, it was a great thing, what a fantastic opportunity, why wouldn't it be? I do remember one prevalent theme in my new age books; you have to protect yourself when you invite energies in, you have to make sure they're serving your highest good. It was imperative that I determine the trajectory of his soul once it left his body, because I know this can be tricky and I haven't exactly been on a lucky streak of late.

There are a lot of things you can do to protect yourself; ask Archangel Michael for a platinum dome of protection for example, essentially, you just have to make sure that the energy with which you're communicating is a benevolent one.

Another verification technique is to ask a question 3 times, apparently there's a cosmic rule; spirits can't lie three times - I don't know, maybe that's Beetlejuice, but I don't think so.

There was no reason to think Howie wasn't in heaven, or my idea of heaven, but the manner in which he died had to be considered. Technically, I suppose, it was suicide, well, suicide of the accidental variety. So, I thought about trick questions, like I could trick an all-seeing entity.

I decided I'd ask about the dogs, we had a pact; if anything happened to me, he'd take my English Staffordshire Terrier, Kudra, and if anything happened to him, I'd take care of his German Shepard, Dingo. My Kudra passed in June of 2000, Dingo, a week before Howie, (which I honestly believe hastened his demise.) I knew our dogs were in heaven because all good dogs go there, so, if he kept his promise, he was with them, and thus, was most definitely in heaven. But evil spirits could deceive; they're crafty like that.

I needed to talk to him, I reasoned that my dog was a good enough judge of character; he had emerged from under the bed and was sniffing the air and wagging his tail. If he wasn't having issues with the entity in the room, I shouldn't be either. I had to seize this opportunity, how incredible to be able to communicate with a dead person, a dead person who loves me?

To digress for a moment, I don't understand why the people who can talk to dead people on TV don't take the opportunity to get answers for themselves. Oh sure, it's real noble to use this gift to help others, but seriously, don't they have questions of their own?

Okay, to be fair, it seems they're 'approached,' so maybe they don't get to pick and choose with whom they communicate, but perhaps a little skill honing might afford them that ability? Well, I'm not like those folks on TV, colour me selfish, but take a number, I'll get to you when my questions are answered, or go find your own dead person.

Forget all the self-help books I thought, forget the new-age, airy fairy workshops, I've spent thousands of dollars on all of them, maybe tens of thousands, they all really say the same thing, and nobody actually follows through with the exercises for more than a week anyways, and if they do, everything is hunky dory for a little while, they get a false sense of security, and then wham! Revert back to their prior hell.

On the other hand, when you have access to a dead rock star best friend, or any dead best friend - actually, I don't know how close you have to be - anyways, when you have this access, it behooves you to take full advantage of their wider perspective and proximity to God, angels and other dead people - you'd be a fool not to – and I was no fool!

I stood up and started pacing around my room, kicking up fluffy pillow guts. I didn't know what to say or do, my mind was abuzz; I had questions, I had issues, I had no idea how to proceed.

'Okay, this is great, this is really great!' I said, "I guess the best thing to do is to stick with the already established system." Like we've been communicating this way forever. "Clang once for yes and twice for no, and, uh, I guess if it's a maybe or a grey area just stay silent? Wait, no, then I might just think you didn't hear me or you had to go pee or something – do you think you'll have to go pee?" I asked curiously. The chimes responded in the negative.

A surge of energy overtook my otherwise exhausted body, 'this is fascinating, this is amazing.' I thought. "Okay, we'll try the staying silent if it's a maybe for now, and if it doesn't work we can change it later - sound good?" The chimes clanged once.

"Woohoo, okay, where to start...I know...WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO YOU?" I screamed, I hadn't intended for it to start that way, because this was clearly not a yes or no question, and the silence rather confirmed this. But I couldn't help it.

"Goddammit, I know you can't answer that, but that's what I want to know more than anything...what happened after your phone was disconnected? Actually, how did you even get to this place at all? I mean Jesus, Howie, YOU'RE DEAD!!!"

Silence. Unendurable silence. "Oh am I ever going to be able to get the answers I need?" I asked helplessly as I plopped back down on my bed.

The chimes clanged once. "I AM?" I again screamed, in surprise this time. "Okay, then for now I'll try to think of what can be answered with a yes or no and will get me through the night...um.... are you in heaven?"

Silence, well, on the bright side, it wasn't a no. "Are you in hell?" Again silence, okay, that's something of a relief, but I'd have preferred a resounding NO!

"Are you okay?" I asked quietly. The chimes clanged once. "I don't understand why that doesn't make me feel better, do you?" The chimes clanged once.

"You understand that a part of me wants you to be suffering like I am right?" The chimes clanged once. Well, that's good. "But of course the part that loves you is elated to hear that you're okay"

Okay, what else? How can I not think of anything when there are a million things I want to know? Oh right, I forgot...I took a deep breath, braced myself and asked hopefully; "is my Kudra with you?"



The chimes clanged once. I was weeping now, a torrent of tears poured down my face. "Is she okay?" the chimes clanged once, loudly. "Does she know I have a new dog?" The chimes clanged once. "Does she like him?" The chimes clanged once.

"Does she know I loved her more than anything on the planet and that her death devastated me?" The chimes clanged once and I knew I could not go on anymore. I buried my face in my pillow and sobbed uncontrollably.

This was too much, it was overwhelming - immediately I felt the exhaustion I was trying to suppress, I was spent.

"I'm afraid that if I ask if we can pick this up tomorrow, same time, same place, you won't be here, that this is a one-time thing and I'll have blown the opportunity, and be relegated to a life of regret, despair and anguish, not unlike what I've got going on right now, but forever and ever in perpetuity - I mean really, who tells a spirit; 'look, I really need to talk to you, but can I have a wee rain check? I'm tired.' Surely the celestial powers would look upon me and say 'she is not worthy of this amazing opportunity' or worse, I'll wake up tomorrow..."

The chimes were clanging loudly and continuously.

"Oh my God, is that a yes? The celestial powers will deem me unworthy and..." The chimes were still clanging but now intermittently, so I didn't understand, "okay, we didn't cover more than two clangs, now you're just confusing me."

There was silence - I caught a vibe, "oh, was that a 'shut the hell up?'" I asked; the chimes clanged once.

"Okay, Okay, so, is it possible that I process what I can tonight, and we talk again tomorrow?" The chimes clanged once.

"Aw Jeeze Howie, the thing is, I don't trust you, you really suck at keeping appointments." Not a sound. Well, that wasn't a yes or no question, it wasn't a question at all, but I was wrung out, I didn't possess the wherewithal to form every question so as to require a yes or no answer. I realized I had no choice.

"I really must get some sleep, I'll have to trust that you'll be here tomorrow night, because if you're not, I'll go mad." I was still afraid, afraid he wouldn't show up, or worse, that I was imagining all this.

"Until tomorrow then Howie, I wish you goodnight" The chimes fell silent.

I got up off the bed and started to disrobe, I got my top off and immediately clutched it to my chest. "Hey, no peeking, you can't watch me undress you hear me?" Silence. Well, I wasn't sure if he had left or not, where would he go? But, I went into the closet and changed in the dark anyways, I guess I thought a spirit couldn't see in the dark? I'd do that a lot over the next few weeks.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Back to Life/Back to Reality*

Despite my imperforate exhaustion, sleep did not meet me at the pillow; it tried, it made a valiant effort, but only succeeded intermittently through the night, snatching moments between memories being played out in my overwrought mind. My life with Howie was flashing behind my eyes.

I vividly remember the first time I met him; I was 23, he was 29, it was my birthday. I had celebrated with friends the night before so I couldn't guilt them into doing something on my actual birthday. I was jumping out of my skin; I had too much energy and nowhere to spend it. I put on a highly inappropriate grey suede mini dress, inappropriate because it was the middle of the afternoon and I was at home where I lived with a bunch of unrelated people, 98% of whom were male. But it was Hollywood and I was 23, and back then I had a great body.

I had forgotten about this house, it was home to the oddest cast of characters; there was the patriarch, Walter, who bought it back in his glory days. I don't remember what he did for a living, what bought this house, but he suffered a reversal of fortunes and was unwilling to give up the trappings of his prior success, so to keep the wolf from the door, he rented out every room and guest house on the property.

In the main house was Michael, I think that was his name; mid-thirties, handsome enough, I don't remember what he did either, but I do know he was the father of the granddaughter of a famous actor from the silent film era.

There was Frank, he was a waiter/actor, everything about him was stereotypical. He worked at Sonny Bono's restaurant in West Hollywood.

There was another guy with whom I shared a bathroom, I don't remember much about him except that he was about my age and we'd smoke the occasional joint together.

In the basement was the most incongruous couple, Phil and Debra. I think Debra was an accountant at a studio, I do know she hated everyone, probably life itself. Phil was a musician, not the kind that makes a living at it, so he was home a lot; he was Howie's friend.

I went out to the pool area and came upon Phil and Howie playing guitar. I don't know what Howie thought when he first saw me; impossibly high heels, (and I'm 5'8" barefoot,) the aforementioned mini dress, lots of long wavy red (dyed) hair – I must've looked the sight. I do remember feeling optimistic at the sight of a new face, and somehow managed to convince these guys to give up their plans for the day and accompany me to Barney's Beanery for a game of pool.

We had a great time; Howie became a regular visitor at the house and eventually would call me to hang out, as opposed to Phil, who had a hard time getting out anyways. Besides, I had a friend, Lori, who worked in the porn industry – this Howie found intriguing.

Lori worked for a company that paid for its G rated movies by making XXX's. They so wanted to be legit. They were the predecessors to Vivid Video, where she would end up working in later years selling foreign rights to porn films.

Traci Lords was part of the 'stable,' as were myriad other Hollywood 'hotties.' Howie would date one, Savannah, who made the rounds of rock stars until she met an unfortunate end, but that was long after Howie. Anyhow, I'm sure this was one of the reasons Howie found hanging with me interesting.

One day he came by Lori's as I was being fitted with a mermaid's outfit, it needed testing for the company's upcoming film 'Talk Dirty To Me Part 3' which was a take off on 'Splash,' it has since been removed from the shelves as it featured an under-age Traci Lords.

The script called for the mermaid to float listlessly at the bottom of the pool, so Lori asked me to try it out in her pool – I saw Howie approaching 'Hey Howie' I waved from the pool.

"What are you doing?" He asked, bemused.

<https://www.deadrockstarbestfriend.com>

(Pages 1-13 show above.)

Copyright © 2016 Susan Daley  
All rights reserved.