

Allowing

By Holly Riley

*A portrait of forgiving and
letting life love you!*

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The thing that matters most is to be awake. Believing that we have to suffer a tragedy or pay some great price for enlightenment is a belief that has been passed down for far too long. Life doesn't have to be a big drama. I did the suffering route and I have good news, there is an easier way.

Here is my story from hard to easy, from horror to happy. My wish is for the reader to realize the short cut through their drama and be equipped to hop on a more joyous ride. Unless of course they prefer the roller coaster, which many people do. If that is your choice, I bet you get good at putting your hands up on the turns after you read this. In either case, here lies the story of the becoming. You will find a common thread (more like rope) that you can use to pull yourself toward your preciousness.

Chapter 1:
Sweet Death

When you start preparing for death you soon realize that you must look into your life now and come to face the truth of your self. Death is like a mirror in which the true meaning of life is reflected.

Sogyal Rinpoche

It was a tough day compared to the previous twenty-five in the hospital. Tough because the doctor came in and told my husband he'd better call the family. He wasn't sure I was going to make it too much longer. He sadly said, "If they want to see her, you better get them here." The doctor had done everything he knew to do. I had lost forty-five pounds on my already thin frame. I had been unable to eat food for over four months. My body wasn't working anymore. With the help of an IV tube connected in the vena cava near my heart, I was being fed a white concoction called TPN. Yet, I kept losing weight right along with my ambition. I had Crohn's disease and it was winning the fight. My colon was paper-thin and unable to digest water. It was the most painful, humiliating, and horrific thing that could happen to me. It was perfect.

My life up to this point included a great deal of study on the mechanics of consciousness. I wanted to know everything about reality, how it comes to be and how it goes away. I was equipped with the best toolbox known to God and man. I could meditate, chant, pray, evaluate, visualize, imagine, therapize, and process. I could use Reiki, kinesiology, color, sound therapy, and maintain a macrobiotic diet with the best of them. I had some brilliant teachers. I even went through some miracle homeopathic and chelation therapies, spending much of our savings. You name it—I did it. I knew all the most popular ways to understand, feel, and change reality. I had studied them for the last twenty-five years. I started at the age of ten.

I had many moments of total trust regarding my illness and where it was leading me. Even as I was going through the pain and suffering there were times that I felt connected to something larger than my failing body. I knew I was more than the experience I was having and this awareness comforted me greatly. I felt the part of me that mattered would always be safe even though my body might not pull through. There were many times when I became very present and aware and observed the whole thing like I was watching a movie, while another part of me was actually in the movie, resisting it. Part of me spent a lot of time observing the Holly show and had faith in the outcome even if it included the main character dying.

There were those other moments, too, when I could drop down into the deepest, densest place possible, immersed in hopeless despair. I could end up entirely stuck in a negative emotion or self-criticism that consumed me. The sorrow would take over my connection to anything other than resentment and grief. I was fascinated by my need to repeatedly explore the pain. It was seductive. When I felt strong, I often convinced myself I could safely visit this dark place for just a moment to see if the turmoil and negativity were still there. But it was a trap and I would get sucked into a mind that ended up wallowing in itself for hours if I wasn't careful. It was peculiar that I wanted to keep inspecting the negative feelings knowing they were dangerous ground, but I couldn't stop looking for them. It was like a drug my mind wanted more of and it would trick me into investigating. I had to watch out for the "failure conversation" that would sneak up on me as well. I could beat myself up real good for being sick, despite all the enlightenment work I had done! I got caught in that dialogue plenty.

I had to pay close attention to my mind and its wanderings or I could end up in the clutches of all kinds of dark thinking that would kidnap me into a whirlwind of suffering. Thankfully, I had some very sacred moments when I would instantly become self-aware and catch myself immersed in some crazy banter and be able to laugh at its

meaninglessness. There were times when my mind would have me dislike anyone who could use a bathroom without needing medication and a support team. Finding my insanity humorous helped. It was fascinating to observe the mind's need to make something or someone wrong and stir up trouble.

I spent far too many precious hours looking for someone to blame for my predicament. The unlucky target was often my father. I spread it out a bit depending on my mood; alcohol and drugs were also a couple of the biggest contenders, not my use of them but everyone else's. I felt like they were my main competitors in life as they had gotten all the attention I had longed for from the people I loved. Alcohol and drugs had taken my family and many of my friends to some reality that didn't include me. I was angry about that! Too often I had a dialogue of blame going around and around in my head that reminded me of a pet gerbil running on one of those wheels that go in circles, forever, only to end up right where they started. Just like that gerbil, I was exhausted and going nowhere.

Trapped in my need to understand, I was haunted by the many faces of the question "Why me?" *Why was this happening to me? What was the point? What did I need to focus on? Was this a step to take me to my purpose? Was this a lesson that would help fulfill my dream of being a good person, an enlightened being? Could having a disease be the plan for me? And if so, whose plan was it? And why didn't they just tell me in person what the hell is going on here?* I wanted a face-to-face meeting with whoever was responsible! I was sure there had to be some mistake and we could clear it up quickly with a short visit!

I had been suffering consistently for a couple of years with colitis, horrible pain, and humiliation that eventually culminated into a nasty case of Crohn's disease. With matters continually growing worse and no answers showing up, at least none I wanted, I finally surrendered. I accepted that I was very sick and the outlook was grim. Up to that point I had been in denial and tried to overcome my misery with positive thinking. It was more like pretending to be positive. This is

pretty funny when you think about it because pretending actually verifies the realness of the thing you are denying. Pretending you're going to be fine means down deep you really don't believe it's true... otherwise you wouldn't need to pretend! So, I finally began to own where I found myself and acknowledge where I was. For the very first time, I told myself the truth and surrendered. The relief was palpable. On that Friday afternoon in the hospital, I decided to stop resisting. I quit fighting. I let go of needing to know anything. I began to die and the doctor knew it.

Pat, my husband of four short years, called my mother and two sisters to inform them of my condition. He didn't think to call Dad, assuming I wouldn't want him there. Pat wasn't just my dream come true, he was my confidant and very best friend. He was the one person in the world that I completely trusted. I knew he loved me, and that is a big deal coming from my lips. He was the only man I could say that about. It was a very tough time for him as he had recently lost his father and brother. These were the two most precious people in the world to him. He'd had enough death to deal with already and there he was, heartbroken and trying to hold a smile for me while digesting the prospect of raising our two young children alone. He had our boys to think about, Travis eight years old (who he'd adopted) and Drake, almost four. I can only imagine what was going through his heart and mind trying to figure out how they'd all get along without me. I could feel his despair and it was more painful to consider his sorrow and devastation than it was anticipating my own death.

Once the family began to show up for me, things got very interesting. My family is one for the books. At the age of fourteen I took my dad to court for child abuse and won. I was the youngest of three girls and it should have happened ten years earlier than it did. None of us were close to Dad, particularly my mom, who in her mind, had the most to forgive. My sisters were not average people: one had endured quite a heavy bout with addiction and the other had mastered the challenges of HIV. They were soldiers when it came to

survival, and they dropped everything to come and save me and help the Riley family handle whatever was next.

From the second she walked into the room, Mom was a tad busy blaming her self for everything that I was dealing with, so she was quite preoccupied that first day. Dad showed up unexpectedly and sparks started flying. Nobody would look into his eyes. I did; I was hungry to know who he had become. He hadn't had much to do with my personal life and zero to do with everyone else's. He was definitely the bad guy in our family movie. Patricia, the middle sister, had recently done some processing about our childhood, uncovering issues that she couldn't accept. At this particular time, she felt strong hatred for Dad and was very angry for what he had done to her, so add that to her love of confrontation as well as her uncanny wit, and there was no telling what was going to come out of her mouth next. Mom had not seen Dad at all since leaving him in Florida after seventeen years of marriage, so she was quite nervous and scattered. My oldest sister, Debbie, was the only calm one and focused all her attention on loving me; she accepted things for what they were, how weird it all was to witness! It was some gathering to be sure. But no matter what was going on in their minds, I was very grateful for their presence.

The family that had been separated, angered, and non-forgiving, was coming together for a visit. Patricia and mother tried to dodge Dad like you would a bullet. Debbie stayed pretty mellow all day. She was the peaceful hippie just quietly observing everyone. When they all showed up around the same time I loved watching them pretend that nothing uncomfortable was happening. It was like pretending there wasn't an elephant stepping on your foot. I started to perk up and wished for buttered popcorn to go with the family movies that were being performed live in my hospital room never knowing what would happen next. Honestly, it was nice to see everyone and especially nice to see them all together.

As the family settled down and directed their attention toward me, tensions began to subside. There was a letting go as

everyone came into this new moment together. An *allowing* began to fill the space and the energy seemed to change. They started being more generous with one another and kinder. There was a taste of forgiveness in the air. I found myself smiling as the past began to loosen its hold on my family. They tried to let it be, at least for now. Something shifted and a softening was occurring.

When death is in your face you begin to see how being angry with someone for making a mistake is a waste of a life. Compassion was replacing the anger and conflict. The presence of care seemed to melt whatever was in its place. The space went from heavy to light, from thick to open. A healing was occurring in our family that I had longed for forever. It was almost worth dying for. Almost.

I hadn't trusted Dad for a very long time, if ever. As far back as I could remember, I was always leery of giving him any opportunity to hurt me. I kept my distance emotionally even though we had started communicating again over the last few years after not speaking for several. The guard I had always kept up was crumbling as my energy to fight was slipping away. I wanted him close to me, feeling that somehow he could keep me safe and protect me from harm. I had wanted that for a long time from Dad but was never willing to admit it until then. I was vulnerable, and more than anything, I ached for someone to hold me and tell me everything would be all right.

| That night was a rough one for my body and me, but the thought of my family being together comforted me.

The next morning when Dad walked into the hospital, we were alone and I swear it felt like a mountain had moved into the room. He was a big being and I don't mean his just his physical size. With death knocking on my door, my perceptual field had now grown larger. I could feel the quality of energy in things and was aware of how people and spaces contained more than just what my eyes were seeing. I looked into my father and saw him without the cloud of our past. I became aware of his essence in a way. He was so different, like I hadn't

met him before. I couldn't believe it was the same guy. His shell was softer, more caring, and even scared. I hadn't experienced him like this. I was calmed by his presence and by the idea that I could finally stop hating him.

I was getting weaker and hope was dwindling. Family stayed with me throughout the day taking shifts. Dad came back that afternoon and just sat with me, quiet, humble, and huge. His energy was sturdy and I knew he was in the hospital about ten minutes before he entered my room. I felt him; it was like a psychic awareness, a peculiar and unmistakable connection. I think it had always been there but now I was acutely aware of it through some kind of transformation of my abilities. I figured it was partly due to the fact that I hadn't eaten food for four months. I had heard you could see through walls and hear people think with a long fast. I wasn't inhibited or distracted by body cravings at all and clarity rose to a new level. I was so present and connected that I could feel thoughts and sometimes I even thought I could see them.

I really appreciated being with Dad when he was quiet and vulnerable. He oozed an energy that was open and honoring. It was healing much more than our relationship. It was healing my heart to feel such love. It was peculiar to me at that time, why out of everyone in the family, my connection to him felt so strong, particularly after all the abuse from my childhood. I felt quieter inside with him there. He brought calm into the room. The past began to fade like a dream. It was good to be together, a healing of sorts, maybe a completion before I finished with my physical reality.

I had become better friends with life since facing death and had become friends with my pain as well. It was beyond anything I can describe and it took me somewhere I had never been. I did my best to follow where it led so I could look it straight in the eye. I was determined to experience it all with love. I had chosen not to use any pain medications, as I couldn't manage my mind with them. I needed my faculties right then, more than ever before. I wouldn't even take the sleeping pills. No matter what, it was important to me to have

clarity and be present for what was next particularly if it was death.

That afternoon, Patricia managed a “come to Jesus meeting” to coach me on the whole pain and intention situation. She was unafraid in a serene kind of way like she knew some truth I had yet to learn. She would smile her smarty-pants smile and ask me what I wanted out of this experience. “What do you want Holly?” she would sing. Always working to lasso my attention around what was possible and the fact that I was the only one in charge of directing my focus there. She was a hoot; she got very excited about operating the bedpan, and would perform a little victory dance anytime something other than blood appeared. She made me laugh in the midst of nearly bleeding to death.

Patricia brilliantly helped me go to the place where I could see that what was happening was not *me*. At least it was not all of me. I was bigger than the experience I was having. With her coaching, I had moments where I could move from being trapped inside the situation to moments of actually viewing it from outside of myself. I was able to observe a bigger snapshot of the world around me. It was a shift in my awareness, a transfer from my viewpoint of being stuck in the pain, the hospital bed, or my body to a viewpoint which included everything around me. It was a relief as it softened the point of my focus to a larger view like a wide angle camera lens could do. Everything in my perspective received equal attention. Nothing grabbed or pulled me away from anything else. It’s difficult to describe yet it helped me relax and assisted me in navigating through my pain.

Much like me, Patricia had embraced the work of being present and responsible for her entire life. By “responsible,” I mean we did our best to not blame anyone else for where we found ourselves, ever. We weren’t always successful, at least not right away, and we were continually discovering more comprehensive levels of responsibility. Eager to be free of the pain that accompanies blame we never gave up. (If you blame someone for what you’re experiencing, then you have to wait

for them to change so your life can get better. This can be a long, long wait, a lifetime for some and for others not even this is long enough). We had to be source of our feelings at a very early age. We learned the hard way that good feelings weren't going to come from anybody outside of us. It was either create being happy or get over the idea of its existence. We did our best to muster up joy in the midst of an abusive environment. We had to figure out how to own our power because the alternative was to suffer victimhood. So, Patricia refused to offer me pity. She knew this would only pile more drama on top of drama and solidify my unwanted reality even further. Every chance she got, she'd kick my ass so I could look myself right in the eye without any blame, pretending, or whining. Regardless of what was happening, she helped me stay present. When pain would rush my body like birth labor without the baby, she would say, "Look at the pain, listen to it, and be with it. Stay present with it and it will begin to dissolve. Don't resist it. Own it, be it, feel it." She would coach me with questions to keep me in the moment, "What color is it, how big is it, how much water would it hold, and where exactly is it?" She would hold my hand and guide me. It was as though she was feeling the pain with me. She'd say, "Don't resist it. Let it be. Breathe it in and accept it like you ordered it for dinner."

Allowing the pain to be and accepting it without denial or resistance was a big step toward transforming both the pain and me.

My pain grew more frequent over the next twenty four hours and I got darn good at managing it. It wasn't so bad. I let go of hating it, or hating anything for that matter. It became obvious that resisting anything, even for a moment, only made it worse. I had become pretty good friends with all of it, and you know, it was the most compassionate and kind experience of caring for myself that I had ever known. I used the pain to become more connected to my Self. I was there for me. It was a sweet love. I was calm and trusting. Truth was present.

I decided to be there for the party, even if it included me dying. I wanted to experience it with all of me present, ready and trusting. So, I did my best to catch my mind whenever it moved toward wallowing in anything other than the moment I was in. I was getting to know who I was on a very deep level and was positive it wasn't just the person lying in bed. I was watching myself from a very loving place. I felt how inclusive of everyone and everything my world really was and it soothed me. I was much more than what was happening in my hospital room. Whenever I had a pain, I brought in that part of me that was *more* than my body, to be *with* my body. I was connected. It was like being plugged into the master energy or grid that connects all of us. This allowed me to be there for myself in a way that I had always wished others to be. I was comforted on more than just a physical level. It was complete, and there was nothing missing for me. I wanted my family to have this experience and know this feeling. I wished for them and all people on the planet to have this love because it makes everything okay. No matter what happens, it's actually okay. I knew this viscerally.

I got much worse. The doctor told my family he wanted to take another look at my colon and scope it. I didn't know it at the time because I was medicated for the procedure, but the doctor had taken Pat, my husband, into the scope room and showed him my colon tissue. It was paper-thin and the majority of my intestines resembled raw hamburger. He told Pat that if the colon ruptured during the procedure there was a slim-to-none chance I'd survive. I had little to zero of my immune system left to fight infection as a result of being on large doses of prednisone, a synthetic steroid, for more than a year.

Emotionally, my husband prepared for the worst. The doctor asked Pat to please pick a colostomy bag for me (there were several choices of design) because if I didn't improve in the next forty-eight hours they'd have to remove most of my colon. This was a horrible moment for him given that I had previously warned him I would die before allowing someone to take part of my body out or strap a feces-catching receptacle to

my abdomen. I had instructed him many times that he'd better stand by me on my firm decision to never have my colon removed. Now, he was the only one who could authorize the surgery—the doctor knew I wouldn't. He had two evils to choose from. What a burden. Pat didn't tell me until years later that he'd gone into the procedure room and was horrified by what he saw and how heartbroken he was leaving the hospital that night, fairly certain he would lose the wife that he fell in love with. Even then, I could feel the weight and the pain that he carried through that time, alone.

I believe it's more difficult for someone who loves you to watch you slowly die, than it is to suffer and die yourself.

That night everyone left around 9:00 P.M. I sent them all home and told them I was fine, even though I knew I wasn't. I started meditating like I always did when it was time to sleep, totally unaware of the “Friday she loses her body parts conversation” Pat had just had with the doctor. I did my regular routine of praying, meditating, and staying present with the pain. I never quite slept due to the buzz from the prednisone, the beeps from the monitors, and the tick-tick chooooooooooweeeeeee of the feeding machine. Quieting my mind and being present with my breath was about as good as it got for me. But this night, something happened, something that changed my life, forever.

I died.

I had an “NDE” (near-death experience) or whatever you want to call it; in the end, it's all semantics, the vibration and the fabric of words. Essentially, I left. Gone. Split. As I watched the whole thing from a bird's-eye view, it was beyond belief.

I'd gotten my shot of prednisone every eight hours. If it was even ten minutes late, my body would go into freak-out mode with my mind close behind. Contractions, pain, sweat; I will spare you all the gory details. It hurt, badly. One little bubble moving through my colon felt worse than my idea of

giving birth to triplets all at once. I had to breathe and feel, breathe and feel, until the bubble had traveled all the way through. I had to use every bit of me that I could muster. It was the most blessed and painful experience I have ever had.

Anyway, the nurse was already thirty minutes late for my 2:30 A.M. shot. That night, more than once, it was like Mr. Toad's Wild Ride (from *The Wind in the Willows*)—I never knew what was waiting for me around the next dark corner! So far, I had managed to white-knuckle through it. My body was so covered in pools of sweat that I could pat my hand on my stomach and the moisture would splash about two inches into the air. I had been doing every mantra, prayer, breathing and sound exercise that I knew of, in order to not bug the nurse again. She was busy and they were short-staffed that night, which meant she had more than her share of patients to handle. These attendants were all angels... seriously. So I did my best to not flip out. But on prednisone, this is no trivial task. It was common to seize any opportunity to blame, yell, or cry when the steroids grabbed a hold of my emotions. Somehow, I didn't do any of these things. I stayed as still and as present as possible, immersed in the pain. I was acutely aware, more so than previous pain episodes.

When the nurse arrived forty-five minutes behind schedule, I had already become so intensely one with the pain, that it was surreal. She said she didn't have time to check my vitals and would have to return later because a patient down the hall was in serious trouble and needed her immediate attention. She quickly injected the prednisone into my feeding tube and headed off to her next emergency. Right at the door, she stopped, turned around and looked at me inquisitively, "Are you okay?" She knew something wasn't right. Of course, I said, "I am fine, you go take care of your chores." Within minutes my body did something very weird. It was like it had shut down and stopped fighting. I was fully alert, and became very sad. In my heart I knew that I couldn't do this anymore, and neither could my body. I was exhausted, having had little or no sleep for so very long. My heart ached for what my husband and children were going through. I could feel the

weight of their pain and worry as it took its toll. It had been a two-year nightmare, in and out of the hospital. I was so tired of what I was doing to everyone else. Really, I was okay with dying now. I felt like it would be the nicest thing I could do for my family. I rationalized that Pat could find a wonderful new wife since he was a great man; that the boys could quit worrying about their sick mother, and that everyone could all get on with their lives again. I believed and trusted that Pat would be a good father to Travis and Drake, and love them with all his heart.

I closed my eyes and felt death.

I thought about God and what really happens when we die. I guess you could call it praying. I didn't really pray to a God, it was more like I prayed to "All That Is." To that thing that I knew was bigger than me or at least that I had felt so many times before, and been comforted by, throughout my entire life. Some call it the Higher Self, or awareness, or divine spirit. Some call it the Sacred with No Name. I believe you can call it anything you want to, as long as you call it. I wanted to feel that connection, so I prayed for it with all my being. I surrendered. Not just a little. It was total submission.

Then it happened. I started ascending through the hospital ceiling of my room. I went to the next floor above, eyes wide open, one more floor, and then, oh my God! The stars were in front of my face and the evening breeze filled my senses. I could actually taste the air. It was alive as it touched my face and caressed my hair. It was pure heaven compared to the air inside the hospital. Joy filled my soul and my entire body was smiling. I was floating. It was quiet, serene, and still. Then I realized I was lying in something... I put my hands down by my side to feel what it could be. I felt short hairs like on a knuckle. Then I felt what seemed like a finger, and when I felt what was on my other side, I touched another finger. It took a minute but I finally realized I was resting in two hands—two very large hands that were holding me. I slowly craned my neck to see who was there, and it was Jesus holding

me. I am not kidding... me, not religious, never been a big Jesus fan, wasn't even sure if I knew what he looked like except from old pictures on my grandmother's wall, but I was sure this was him. I am talking blue eyes of pure love. The bluest and most clear eyes I had ever looked in. The love was so vast and complete it saturated me with sensations for which I don't have the words to describe. The feelings were not of this world. My body, mind, and spirit were filled with a peace that vibrated in connection with all life, all love, and a certainty of goodness. He never spoke to me out loud, but we did speak. He held me in his loving energy and let me bathe in it for as long as I wanted. It seemed like an eternity yet in looking back it all happened so quickly. It was rich and complete with no desire left unfulfilled. After a while, he asked me if I would like to stay or go. Keep living my life on Earth or leave now with him. Because of this incredible experience of pure love, I had to seriously consider the latter. There was no pain—only joy, completion, and the overwhelming feeling of perfection in his presence.

Returning to my life on Earth had a very different energy. Not a bad one, but very different. It had a flavor of responsibility with it. I knew that going back meant more “doing” and more activity, while staying with Him had an essence of simply “being.” It was like going out dancing versus going out to simply merge and float. I was given this huge space in which to contemplate my options for what seemed like a very long time. I truly did not know which one I wanted, so I waited—to know. There wasn't one second of any pressure. It was totally my call.

I expanded my awareness outward to explore. I observed and felt everything around me. It was like taking a long drink of water when you are thirsty. Every sensation brought me more peace and more connection to a sacredness that permeated everything. I noticed the softness of the light, the endless space surrounding us, the high and low tones singing in my ears, the quality of the energy flowing and embracing me, the grace of the being holding me, and I felt the harmony of all these things. It was amazing and perfect. I knew

this was the truth of all beings. This knowing, this energy, this gracefulness, is the larger part of who we really are. This more inclusive sense of being was a more honest and accurate experience than the pointed encased sensations I had when totally focused in my body. This connection, this love, and the vastness is what we are all made of. I had come home.

I just wanted to stay there awhile. Then one of us (I say one of us because Jesus and I were connected with no separation) thought of my two boys and a life size impression of Travis and Drake appeared right in front of me. The moment I saw them, I knew my answer. My heart became even fuller as I gazed upon their faces. I experienced a rush of love that is wordless. I felt honor and appreciation for them in a way I had never fathomed possible as though our relationships were planned long ago and we were keeping our promise. I had a sense of the dance being human was and how it differed from the ease and flow of where I was viewing from. I felt the plight of our planet, not that it was bad, just that it was intense and swirling, and that people had very little knowing of what was real—and what wasn't. It was as though I had a peek through Christ's eyes.

My heart was overflowing. I didn't need to say anything. Christ knew the moment I knew... I had to go back. Then we shared a sensation, an awareness of sorts that my world was about to change. A comforting certainty filled the space. Then Jesus gently covered my entire body with his breath, from my head to my toes, being very gentle and thorough. He then placed me back in my bed and left me snuggled sweetly and happily in my new world.

I knew what was coming and it was good. I slept for the first time in a very long while.

Someday, when all is gone and the body is finished carrying you within the Earth lesson, the angel inside you returns to the spiritual place called Home. When that occurs, you will find no organization or religion there—only the love of family, one for another. We have seen you there, at Home, over and over and over and over. We know your face, and not the one you think you have now. We are aware of you when you sing your name in light to us—and you wonder who came to see whom?

*From the Kryon Channeling given in Israel,
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