



Of the many challenges provided by life on Earth, death of a loved one is perhaps the most universal. Unless we die at a young age, it is likely we will lose someone we care about. The fact that virtually all of us share this experience suggests it offers profound opportunities for growth. Were it not so, we as souls would be less likely to seek lives on the physical plane.

Yet, death is much more prominent in some lives than in others. To understand why a soul might plan before birth to lose loved ones, I talked with Valerie. Forty-two at the time of our conversation, Valerie had lost two people whom she loved dearly, including her only child.

The loss of not one but two people in Valerie's life, both unexpectedly and at relatively young ages, seemed to indicate that these deaths were part of her pre-birth plan. If so, why had Valerie chosen to experience two such losses? And why was one her only child?

And so begins Valerie's story in *Your Souls Plan*. Three mediums provided insight into Valerie's life blueprint: through Staci Wells, we listened to the conversation in Valerie's pre-birth planning session; through Deb Debari, we spoke with Valerie's two "deceased" loved ones, who told us about their life plans and how they meshed with Valerie's; and through Corbie Mitleid, I was able to speak directly with Valerie's soul, who told me what had been planned and why.

In addition to discussing Valerie's life plan with her soul, I explored other topics of interest. In the following excerpt, Valerie's soul comments on the distinction between the soul and the human personality:

"The personality is created by the soul, the higher self," Valerie's soul added. "The personality is the illusion that is required on Earth in this space-time to learn the lessons. For without a body and without time, there are lessons that cannot be learned."

"My understanding of the personality," I said, "is that it consists of a permanent, eternal core that survives death and reunites with the soul after death, as well as certain temporary traits that exist only during the lifetime."

"That is accurate."

"So, when a personality dies in a particular lifetime—say, when Valerie dies in this lifetime—then her permanent core will be reunited with you?"

"At this point it is not separate. Do not consider reuniting, for that betokens a separation. There is never any separation. What the personality feels [after death], when it feels as one with God and higher self, is simply the brushing away of cobwebs that obscure its view, but it does not mean that it has not been connected."

This idea, which I had heard in other conversations with Spirit, was reassuring to me. Nevertheless, I still felt some discomfort over the depth of Valerie's suffering. It was difficult for me to comprehend its necessity, even after what Valerie's soul just said.

"How does the soul grow as a result of physical incarnations?" I asked.

"Earth or other physical places can sometimes give lessons that cannot be done without a body, without physical needs, and without a physical interaction. Let us go to the example of hunger and thirst in two personalities. If the emotions of greed and fear are uppermost, then the one who has food and drink prevents the other from getting, or steals the little that they have. When the emotion is that of generosity, of service, of universal love and the understanding that the situation is transient, then benevolent emotions can reach out and assist the other personality, and the soul is advanced.

"All discuss before incarnation what is to be done. Is it too much? Things are altered, decisions are changed, until an imprint is decided on . . ."

Later in our conversation, this exchange takes place:

"If one wants to learn unconditional love and comes down where one is judged, that is a motivational life," answered Valerie's soul. "The difference is between motivation and inspiration. Most personalities learn by motivation. From the way the Earth is constructed, negatives for millennia have been most of the way personalities learn. Now that you are moving forward, time is speeding up, and vibrations are higher, inspirational conduct may be of more service."

"In some instances, I've heard references to specific energies being placed by the soul in the personality. Is this part of the way in which personalities are constructed?"

"Yes."

"In Valerie's case, what were these?"

"Given to her were particular intelligence, curiosity, fortitude, and the willingness to move beyond pain."

"How does the soul create a quality like fortitude?"

"Ask God how He creates a flower. There is no quantitative or qualitative that can be explained."

I then asked how much of what happens in a person's life is planned before birth.

"There is not just one way to do it. Certain souls at their level of growth need things completely planned. As a soul is older, it is more willing to leave many doors open for choice. You would not expect a soul going through its first incarnation on Earth to be able to leave as much to chance as a soul who has done this many, many times. Not all souls are equal in advancement. Not all methodologies for creating personalities and karma are the same."