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"Providing Comfort To Families"

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Chapters

turning the pages through grief

Fingerprints

by Paulette LeBlanc



Even though the person we love has died, we can likely find evidence of them in our lives without having to try too hard. At first, glancing around at their clothing or knick-knacks may be painful, as we are flooded by tender memories of who they were. Eventually we may find ourselves searching out those things and putting them on display. It's an amazing commentary on our ability to adapt, when the very things we could not bear to look at have become comforting.

When my parents both died (relatively closely together) I found myself with boxes upon boxes of their things. My mother collected so many things from yard sales and second hand clothing stores that my father often joked about how his closet space had gone from half to roughly a few inches over the years. He would often tell me that he had had to create a path to the bed in order to get in and go to sleep at night. While these stories had become hilarious at family

gatherings around the dinner table, now I was left with what amounted to a pile of painful memories. As it was too agonizing to tackle at first, I found that I had to put the boxes in my garage for quite a while as I worked through the grief of losing both my parents so closely together.

If you find yourself overwhelmed by having to sort through your loved ones things, it's perfectly all right to set aside the things which do not need immediate sorting. I recommend keeping those things out of sight until you find that you're ready to handle it, as you do

not want the mere sight of the boxes, which still need to be gone through, to become overwhelming or painful. Right now the fingerprints left behind may tug at your heart in a manner that doesn't do much in the way of comfort or peace, but in time you may find yourself searching out those fingerprints. For me, the moment came inexplicably and without reason. I was doing



"Some day we will look back on these false memories and laugh!"

continued...

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The risk of love is loss, and the price of loss is grief—but the pain of grief is only a shadow when compared with the pain of never risking love.

— Hilary Stanton Zunin

...continued from front

laundry, when suddenly one of the boxes caught my eye and I found myself pulling open the flaps to get a look at the things my mother couldn't live without and things which impeded my father's trip to bed each night. Soon I was laughing through my tears as I could hear her explanations of why she'd needed each thing, and see my father looking at me and rolling his eyes in retreat.

Though it may be difficult to imagine now, there will likely come a day, when the fingerprints left behind by your loved one add to, rather than take away from your life.

Thankfully I was able to unload most of the boxes my

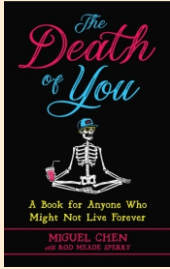
“
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parents left behind to more needy people. While I did keep some things I found myself especially attached to, I choose to find my mother in my daughter's laugh, or expressions. I see my father in my son's ability to adore his wife. I see evidence of their fingerprints all over my life from physical things they've given me, to things I've inherited, such as a sense of humor or the love of music. When we are ready, if we dare to look, we are likely to find our loved ones fingerprints all over the walls of our lives. After the season of overwhelming grief has taken its leave, it will be safe to examine the evidence of the satisfying relationship we shared with those we now grieve. Please remember to be kind to yourself during this season.

**The Death of You:
A Book for Anyone
Who Might Not
Live Forever**

By Miguel Chen and
Ron Meade Sperry

A yoga teacher, punk rock bassist, and Buddhist teaches from experience on how approaching death and grief with a little more compassion and a little less fear will make for a better life—and a better death, too.



bookmark

DEATH. Even the word itself probably makes you a little uncomfortable. Just look at it, sitting there, demanding to be acknowledged. It might even make you a lot uncomfortable.

We spend so much time trying to deny death, going on about our lives as if we and our loved ones are immune to it. Then, one day, its truth becomes undeniable. *The Death of You* doesn't flinch in looking into this vital, urgent matter. Join Miguel for a wild ride where we get real about death—and even have a few laughs at its expense.

If you might someday die—or if you know someone who will—this book is for you. If you're afraid of dying, this book is for you. If you're excited about the Great Unknown, this book is for you. In plainspoken, kind, and encouraging language, Miguel will show you how to transform your relationship with death—and in doing so, you'll get to know your life in a whole new way. Today is the perfect day to start. Don't wait—you're not gonna live forever.

Epilogue

SO WHAT?



by Susie Moore, Life Coach
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The other day, I mistakenly thought, *Heck, why not check out my YouTube channel's comments section for once?*

And there it was. One of the meanest comments I've ever seen. I was seething. Fuming. Red in the face mad.

I called my friend and mentor, Jane, in a rushed huff, and before she even had a chance to say hi, I charged in. There was a pause. Silence. Was Jane there? "Hello?" I asked, uncertain. "Yeah, Susie. I'm here. So what?" So what?

So whaaaattt?

There it was. Two words — and one of the best questions I've ever been asked. Because—truly—so what? Man, that took the wind outta my seething sails. I mean, the drama flew out of the conversation like air from a popped balloon. Her casual question was so disorienting because it was the best possible response in the world. I had to laugh. So *what*.

There's an almost ancient wisdom to this two-word question—"So

what?"—when you think about it, and there are a million ways to apply it.

Now let me ask you: What are some situations that you can reply to with a "So what?"

Magic unfolds in life when we don't attach pressure, meaning, and weight to things that don't matter as much as we work ourselves up to believe they do. There's tremendous freedom, levity, and joy in allowing things to be just as they are and not trying to make them even a wink different. What can you accept as is? What can lose your scornful eye? What can you—dare I say it—actually love and accept about yourself and your life instead?

Be careful how much you do this — you might become the happiest and freest person you know.

I get it. Your day, circumstances, and life right now probably aren't perfect. But the truth is, they probably never will be because perfect doesn't quite exist.

And so *what*? Not everything needs to perfect to still be wonderful.

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The purpose of this newsletter is to share thoughts and insights from a variety of sources on how to live richly and meaningfully through all of life's chapters.
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