

On the morning of February 2, 2006, after four heart-wrenching years with cancer, my body had finally had enough and I went into a coma.

As my husband rushed me to the hospital, the world around me started to appear surreal and dreamlike, and I could feel myself slip further and further from consciousness.

The moment I arrived and the oncologist saw me, her face visibly filled with shock. “Your wife’s heart may still be beating,” she told Danny, “but she’s not really there. It’s too late to save her. Her organs have already shut down. Her tumours have grown to the size of lemons throughout her lymphatic system, from the base of her skull to below her abdomen. Her brain is filled with fluid, as are her lungs. And as you can see, her skin has developed lesions that are weeping with toxins. She won’t even make it through the night.”

I watched as Danny’s face filled with anguish, and I wanted to cry out to him, It’s okay, darling—I’m okay! Please don’t worry. Don’t listen to the doctor. I actually feel great! But I couldn’t. No words came out. No sound. Danny couldn’t hear me.

In this near-death state, I was more acutely aware of all that was going on around me than I’d ever been in a normal physical state. I wasn’t using my five biological senses, yet I was keenly taking everything in. It was as though another, completely different type of perception kicked in, and I seemed to encompass everything that was happening, as though I was slowly merging with it all. I felt no emotional attachment to my seemingly lifeless body as it lay there on the hospital bed. It didn’t feel as though it were mine. It looked far too small and insignificant to have housed what I was experiencing. I felt free, liberated, and magnificent. Every pain, ache, sadness, and sorrow was gone! I felt completely unencumbered. I couldn’t recall feeling this way before—not ever.

I continued to sense myself expanding farther and farther outward, drawing away from my physical surroundings. It was as though I were no longer restricted by the confines of space and time, and I continued to spread myself out to occupy a greater expanse of consciousness. I simultaneously experienced a sense of joy mixed with a generous sprinkling of jubilation and happiness.

I felt all my emotional attachments to my loved ones and my surroundings slowly fall away. What I can only describe as superb and glorious unconditional love surrounded me, wrapping me tight as I continued to let go. It didn’t feel as though I had physically gone somewhere else—it was more as though I’d awakened, perhaps finally being roused from a bad dream. My soul was finally realizing its true magnificence. And in doing so, it was expanding beyond my body and this physical world.

The feeling of complete, unconditional love was unlike anything I’d known before. It was totally indiscriminating, as if I didn’t have to do anything to deserve it, nor did I need to prove myself to earn it.

To my amazement, I became aware of the presence of my father, who’d died ten years earlier. Dad, you’re here. I can’t believe it! I wasn’t speaking those words, I was merely thinking them—in fact, it was more like feeling the emotions behind the words, as there was no other way of communicating in that realm other than through emotions.

I also recognized the essence of my best friend, Soni, who’d died of cancer three years prior. I seemed to know that they’d both been present with me long before I became aware of them, all through my illness.

I was aware of other beings around me. I didn’t recognize them, but I knew they loved me very much and were protecting me. I realized that they, too, had been with me all this time, surrounding me with love, even when I wasn’t conscious of it.

My heightened awareness and feelings of unconditional love in that expanded realm were indescribable, despite my best efforts to explain them.

The universe makes sense! I realized. I finally understand—I know why I have cancer! I was too caught up in the wonder of that moment to dwell on the cause, although I’d soon examine it more closely. I also seemed to comprehend why I’d come into this life in the first place—I knew my true purpose.

Why do I suddenly understand all this? I wanted to know. Who’s giving me this information? Is it God? Krishna? Buddha? Jesus?

And then I was overwhelmed by the realization that God isn’t a being, but a state of being . . . and I was now in that state of being.