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- *Dealing with grief*
- *Growth of spirits on earth and in the afterlife*

Each of you, indeed everyone, is warmed by God's presence. We, who are your guides, serve to help open the heart's vision to that warmth, to that light, to that truth of what is love. We would like to focus your spirits at this time upon the issue of changes, changes in spirit form, changes in human form.

When you approach any changes that remove you from what you know and carry you toward what is unknown, there is always anxiety mixed with anticipation, and that mix may be joined by joy in anticipation or by fear. It has become so evident to many of you that change in human life is inseparable from the experience of love. When there is a change related intimately to your loving relationships to others, there is always uncertainty. There is always a feeling of concern, a feeling of insecurity, sometimes a feeling of loss. But human life is, as it must be, characterized by change.

The changes we refer to are not superficial changes, changes in weather or changes in the seasons. While they may have an important impact on individuals, the changes we refer to are inner changes, changes that take place within the self and within relationships to others, for those are the changes that afford the opportunity to experience what it means to be loving. The changes in the weather may of course have an impact on your life both positive and negative, but your relationship to the weather, as an example, is not a relationship of love.

We speak of changes that are felt, that are experienced because of loving relationships. Such relationships evolve, as you know. Two people can have a friendship, and yet all individuals evolve in their own particular pathways, and those changes have impacts on relationships.

You have lost some friends to whom you felt a strong connection of friendship, but this change that you experience can be seen beyond the recognition of loss. It can also be a recognition of growth. We often say that the life of spirit is a life of growth, and that growth takes place as the human evolves. Eventually the need for the physical body is no longer essential. It is the spirit that matters. When you experience losses of those you love, encountering your own grief is essential to your expanding ability to be loving, for loving is not just being compassionate. It is not just in feeling supportive of another. Loving also requires a willingness to let go, to allow the spirit of another to move forward unburdened by issues of the body.

Experiencing grief is, of course, a recognition of loss, but from that recognition ultimately comes a conviction that there is something that connects you to the one who has been transformed from human life to spirit life. That sense of connection is essential in the growth of your soul, for you continue to be aware of a reality that extends beyond what you see, feel, touch, or hear that there is life beyond human life. If there is such life,

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then you are recognizing what that band that connects you really is, the strength of spirit energy interacting with the spirit energy of others. That interaction helps to affirm the sacredness of the lives of everyone.

When you experience loss, it is perfectly natural to feel that loss profoundly, but let that loss move you to expand your awareness of the connection you have with others, for that connection to the one you have lost is no different than the connection between you and someone who is a stranger in your midst. You are the same. We speak of the oneness of spirit, but your outreach as a consequence of grief is strengthening your soul, is opening your heart vision. It is embracing all of humankind.

You can feel the presence of another who has joined us. The question was asked if you think of another, is that other present. And we can say yes, that is absolutely the case, but we can also assure you that even when you are not thinking of another, the souls of all others from the spiritual realm are with you. Your thinking of another is opening your heart's vision. It does not change what is there, but it is a sensitizing of your heart to what is always present.

When a spirit joins us, there are changes that take place. We often refer to these levels of change as planes of spiritual existence, but such a term is only used as a means of helping you understand in principle what is happening, for in truth, when we evolve from one plane of spiritual existence to another, we do not lose an awareness of the plane that we are progressing from. Quite the contrary, we bring a total awareness of that plane with us because we are strengthened by that awareness.

When a soul transitions from human to spiritual life, there is always a period of rest. There is always an adjustment of sorts. There is always a recognition of a change that is taking place. We do not measure such changes within the realm of duration or time. It is more a recognition of growth. The soul grows from rest and expands and becomes more loving. The soul becomes brighter. We could say the heart vision of the soul is expanded, and as that expansion takes place, there is a greater awareness of the plane that lies ahead. As that awareness grows, the soul is naturally drawn to that light, bringing all that it has on the journey.

When we see souls move from one plane of spiritual life to another, we are filled with a kind of rejoicing, for it is the objective of all souls that the reality of spiritual life continues to deepen, to broaden, and so we gain great pleasure from observing the growth of souls. There is no fear. There is no sense of loss. There is no sense of anxiety or foreboding. There is no sense of missing another soul who has evolved to another plane because that soul is always with us, and we are always aware of its presence.

You wonder about those whom you love who have transformed from human to spiritual life. All those you think of, all those you pray for, all whose memory you hold close are growing with great love and peace. They are evolving. Their heart vision is expanding. It is not a matter of how many years it takes for a spirit to arise from resting after the transition from human life. We don't measure in years or days or hours. It is

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about the expansion of light. Those whom you speak of are expanding. Their lights are growing. Their vision is widening. They are more loving. They are in the process of evolving into total love as are we. What we see is a light that gets brighter and consists of even more colors. We see an energy of spirit that grows, that broadens and deepens. We see a presence that becomes more loving.

The changes of spirit on our side are not marked in any specific way that you could describe as having accomplished A and B, you are now ready to accomplish C. No, the reality is that you are working on A and B and C all the time. You are growing in what it means to be loving. You are growing in what it means to become all love. You are growing in what it means to be supportive of other spirits. You are growing in your vision of the unity of all that is. It's not divided up into segments, but these planes of spiritual life can be identified in terms of the depth of love that is reflected. It is not a specific demarcation but a kind of growth of intensity.

It is much like your observation of dawn. You can set a line that determines when the sun rises and when it sets. You can stipulate various kinds of dusk, but those are matters of convenience, for the intensity of light is one that gradually increases. Even as you see the sun gradually rising above the horizon, if you are some distance away, that sun is either higher than horizon or has not yet risen, but the sun continues to change its position relative to the surface of the earth, for the earth is rotating, and that rotation is constant. It doesn't just suddenly get bright and suddenly get dark.

It is exactly the same with the changes of the soul. The heart vision becomes illuminated. That illumination is gradual, but it is steady. It is continuous, and there are souls who are in a different place on their plane just as human beings are in a different place on the surface of the earth, and therefore the vision of sunlight and darkness is different. The vision of God's presence from a different plane of spirit life is different from one plane to another, but the reality is that God's light is always there, and we in our lives are continuing to move toward that light just as you continue your journey drawn by God's light.

Change is essential to us because it is the natural growth of spirit, and in that same light, change in human life also belongs to the experience of growth that is so essential to you. We don't suggest that you rejoice at the loss of friends, but we do urge you to accept, to bring into your heart the loss, the grief, the despair, and allow that to nourish your heart's vision so that you may have a greater awareness of that connection which you have to all that is around you. Change, therefore, is the means of opening your heart vision just as the changes we experience open up our own heart vision.

As you encounter changes in your life, bring to it a sense that there is much to be gained that is really a blessing. Allow those feelings that you experience to be part of the change, but be confident that it is through change that you grow. It is through change from human life to spirit life that you grow. It is changing from one plane of spirit life to another that growth happens.

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Embrace change. Don't expect to ignore the impacts that may be felt from such change but embrace the process. Have faith that all that you experience involving change carries with it a clarity of your heart's vision. You are growing in your love. You are growing when you feel the presence of those whom you love who are with us. You are growing at all times in light and in love. You are becoming more loving. You are becoming more aware of God's light illuminating your individual pathways that are graced by change.

Be blessed in the changes you experience. Be blessed in the knowledge that your heart vision is opening, and you are surrounded by the loving presence of all those who have joined us in lives of the spirit.

Amen.