

August 15, 2022

Stephy's Place Reflection by Kevin Keelen

### ***Kelly's Tear***

Among other things, our break in July generously gave me the opportunity to read the book, ***Signs***, by Laura Lynne Jackson. Signs from the other side are something we very often discuss in our support groups. Talking about signs was something unexpected and amazingly helpful to all of us in our 9-11 support group all those years ago and still is. Throughout my life, I have had my own personal share of incredible signs. I often tell people that I have a most unique opportunity in facilitating support groups because I get to hear about miracles every day.

Since there was some beautiful weather in the beginning of July (remember?), I spent a lot of time outside reading, and as I did so, I kept noticing signs coming to me in real time while I was reading about them in the book. I was bombarded by butterflies, awed by eagles, buzzed by dragonflies, dumbfounded by dimes... I'm not kidding. As I read, - sign after sign kept showing up. I both enjoyed this book and was inspired by it.

I would like to strongly encourage you to read ***Signs***, so let me tickle your curiosity with some wonderful quotes from the book. I will end this reflection with the story of the most amazing sign I have ever received, and it took place this very week some twenty two years ago.

#### **From "*Signs*," by Laura Lynne Jackson:**

"Our loved ones on the Other Side send us signs designed to make us think of them. They do so to remind us that they are still connected to us in very real and powerful ways. The love that bound us here on earth continues to connect us after we've crossed. The interests we shared, the joys we had in common, the memories that make us laugh – these are all part of the ongoing and everlasting connection between us and the Other Side." p. 68

"Everyone's journey is different. Some people are more skeptical than others and need more affirmations. Some feel the love and support right away and quickly learn how to tap into the mystical power of signs and use them to bring change and meaning to their lives." p. 7

“Numerical sequences are another common sign. Consecutive numbers, birth dates, street addresses, telephone numbers, numbers that add up to a meaningful total- these can all be considered attempts by the Other Side to get our attention... these numbers often appear on electronic devices such as clocks, cell phones, and TVs, and sometimes also on license plates. This makes it easier for the Other Side to put meaningful numbers in front of us and alert us to the sign they are sending.” p. 64

“You don’t need me,” I told him. “You’re already communicating with your son. He came through just to validate your experiences. But you are already connecting with him all the time.” p. 10

“Think about that! These two boys who crossed got together on the Other Side and led their mothers to each other, as a way to help them heal. What a powerful demonstration of the continuing presence and guidance of our loved ones who cross! And what a powerful testament to the interconnectedness of our paths here on earth.” p. 34

“No matter how many signs we get, the sense of physical loss is always there.” p. 57

“They have a special talent for letting us hear the song we need to hear exactly when we need to hear it.” p. 64

Signs have a certain synchronicity – a ‘meaningful coincidence,’ the occurrence of events that seem to have no casual relationship to each other, yet also seem to be meaningfully related.” p. 64

“Things that are out of place, or out of season, or otherwise unusual in their timing or appearance are good candidates to be signs.’ p. 65

“Our unconscious minds and our bodies will often alert us to these signs before our rational mind perceives them. We may have a physical reaction – a feeling of awe, wonder, or maybe chills running down our spine. We may experience a burst of emotion, a rush of joy, a reflexive smile or laugh.” p. 65

“If something happens that strikes you as totally odds-defying...” p. 65

### ***Kelly's Tear***

When my sister Kelly died by suicide on Aug. 13, 2000, I felt tremendous guilt that I could have done more, should have done something, to help her, to save her. I felt responsible. I was angry with her for doing what she did, but these feelings began to pass quickly, thank God.

I felt I needed to immediately forgive her, as I had no concept of understanding the pain she must have been bearing so unbearably. As I tried to move toward coming to some kind of understanding about what she did and why, I quickly decided that I was not ever going to judge her. She was finally at peace.

On the day of her funeral, I wanted to precede the rest of the family to see her and the way she was prepared. I wanted to make sure she looked okay, that there was nothing that would upset my mother or the rest of the family. The funeral director escorted me to her casket so that I could have some private time with her. I walked to the coffin holding my breath. I expected the

worse, only to find my sister appearing to be peacefully sleeping. I remembered how much she hated being the focus of attention. Flowers surrounded her, her dress was quite pretty, but it was all so freaking tragic and crushingly sad. I got close to her to ask her to give us all strength and to help me out as I prepared to eulogize her and celebrate her funeral. As I looked down, I could not believe what I was seeing. In her left eye I saw a bit of a glimmer. Now, I was pretty distraught and upset, but I had regained my composure and looked more closely as I watched a tear form in her eye. I noticed it build up and then begin to roll down her left cheek. The funeral director was the only other person there. He said, "What's that?" He leaned over and looked closely. He was quiet and seemed perplexed. He said, "I don't know where that came from." He took out his hanky to wipe it away, but I grabbed it from him and said, "Let me do that please, I know what it is." That was all I said as I gently wiped that tear from my dear sister's cheek. I wish I had kept the hanky, but I gave it back.

I knelt in a pew for a few minutes as my family waited outside the church. I was blown away. I thanked Kelly for her incredible sign. I knew in my innermost being that this was her way of saying she was sorry. It was her way of sending me confirmation that she was with God. It was her way of sending me the strength and inspiration I would need to get through this ordeal and help others in the process. It was quite a gift. My sister breached the barrier between this side and the next. I did not tell anybody about this sign until months later. It was a special gift from Kelly to me. Four years later, when we were planning the funeral for my nephew Jimmy with the same funeral director, I asked him if he remembered. He looked like a man who had just seen a ghost as he nodded his head in agreement.

On the day all this happened, the day before Kelly's funeral, my family gathered to pray in my brother's backyard, and while we were praying, for some reason I blurted out: "Kelly wants me to say something for her... She is so sorry. She is so very sorry." I began to cry and sat back down. We were all in tears at this point and I thought to myself, "*Wow, I don't know where that came from, but I had to say it.*"

The following day, when I saw that tear, I knew that she had been communicating all along.

And she still does.

This one's for her. Thank you Kelly Ann! Love you forever!