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Dancing with angels

Rev. Samuel Lee Oliver, MDiv, BCC

Throughout history, angels have been known to be guiding spirits. They have been called “Messengers of God.” Angels have been seen as encouraging souls whose purpose is to lead us through transformative events in our lives.

In my work with the dying, hospice patients call on these entities for a variety of reasons. Often, these guiding spirits are embraced so that a sense of comfort can be felt in the midst of despair. A dying patient and family members who believe in the presence of angels report feeling blessed by God.

Angels are extensions of God’s consciousness to most traditional religions. They come to us in various ways, shapes, sizes, and expressions. What a person believes to be true *is true* for that person. As a hospice spiritual counselor, it is vital to be sensitive to patients’ beliefs. This includes working with entities and expressions of spiritual guidance you cannot see apart from the inner vision of your own mind.

How can spiritual counselors and

caregivers bring an open presence of care to the dying as they sense dimensions of awareness beyond one’s own level?

Believe the patient

Spiritual creativity is often the only level of independence that a dying person has at the end of life. Unless a patient is suffering due to his or her beliefs, it is best to trust the inner guidance of a patient’s beliefs over what we as caregivers think should be the path into the soul. This requires tremendous surrender on everyone’s part.

Encourage inner exploration

If given enough time and a nonjudgmental attitude, dying patients feel more and more comfortable sharing their soul with those who care for them. This nonjudgmental sharing of lives creates a pathway into inner exploration whereby everyone’s soul is revealed. Here, a sense of safety is felt and the journey into the depths of one’s soul is encouraged.

Allow the patients to follow their own sense of guidance

When we trust in the Wisdom that

created our dying patients’ lives, we are trusting in the Wisdom that created all living things. Our ability to be “in tune” with our dying patients’ sense of guidance opens us to a kind of care that becomes highly intuitive. At this level of care, we are caring for more than a body; we are caring for a person’s soul.

When a patient begins to trust you as his or her caregiver, you become a midwife, a fellow soul, an angel on the person’s path of *dying into life*. As a patient is dying, he or she generally becomes more soulful or soul-filled. When a person has to let go of his or her identification with physical matter, what really matters is what is *not* matter. The relationship created between you and a patient in this transformative experience of dying connects us to the eternal realm. Here, we are invited to *dance with the angels*.

To dance with the angels means going beyond all appearances. As you pierce through the different layers of consciousness residing in us all, you will find a connection with dying patients, leading you to a special quality of attention that will never die. It is here that we are guided to the Creator of all experiences of spirit, moving our soul into the heart of God.