

Laurie-Ann Weis MA BCET

Hi, I am Laurie-Ann, and I have a confession to make: I never planned on being a writer. But certain events in my life compelled me to share my experiences and connect with others who've had similar changes in their lives and who seek companionship, whether with encouraging words from a nearby friend or through a comforting conversation with an E-mail buddy. My hope is that my books and website become useful tools in time of need so each day becomes a smoother ride. There are so many ups and downs during widowhood that I felt like I was on an E-ride at Disneyland and needed to buckle my seatbelt.

I grew up in Southern California and lived the typical beach-crazed life with an ear for the Beatles, Beach Boys and the Rolling Stones. Although I struggled through school, I managed to earn a B.A. in Child Development, a Masters in Human Behavior (Psychology), a California Teaching Credential and become Board-Certified as an Educational Therapist. And yet, with all of the hours put into education and psychology, nothing prepared me for widowhood.

I stopped teaching for months after my husband—and soulmate—died a young man from cancer. It took me time to sort through my emotions and gather the strength to face daily living again. All that I had accomplished meant nothing, and I was quite surprised when the urge to write a book on the everythings of life's unexpected surprises came to me in a night's dream. I woke that next morning with a new calling; six chapters spilled out of me and by the time I completed *The Water Dance*, I was back in business teaching, writing and communicating with others. This first book is a memoir of my life, its hardships and gifts, leading up to the death of my husband and how I managed to endure it.

The decision to pen another book, *The After Journey*, was more conscious. A year and a half into widowhood, I realized how alone I felt going through all those first experiences: taking off my wedding rings, figuring out which side of the bed to sleep on, getting through our anniversary and invitations for one. When I started to write it, I knew it couldn't be just about me. I needed to gather the experiences and thoughts of others. Dealing with death is a very personal experience and no one way is the right way. I constructed this site originally to collect people's stories and personal insights, and it quickly became a forum for grieving people struggling to move on in their own lives. *The After Journey* pretty much wrote itself on this site, and what I've done is pieced it together by interweaving my own story with the stories of others. The book is like a quiet friend who understands.

After working for years full time as a private educational therapist, I decided to devote more time to new pursuits that include sharing information about health and disease prevention. I am particularly passionate about my work (www.PreventionIsEasy.com) with a world wide company puts raw fruits and vegetables into capsules. Helping my friends and family receive optimum nutrition is very important to me. Watching my husband go through 77 radiation and chemotherapy treatments tore my heart out and made me feel helpless. My work with prevention and the people on my book website gives my life a new feeling of balance.

I continue to help grievors who've lost partners and who seek my advice and friendship. I would like to spend the rest of my life working with those who've lost a life partner. Working with such people and helping them to get to the next step in life, no matter what that might be, fills me with peace. When I communicate with someone about their after journey, I feel I've made progress in my own journey. I am also a member of Women's Sage, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering, educating, and fostering mentoring relationships among mid-life women. I appreciate the opportunity to further my mission and facilitate the critical bonds that help us move forward in our lives and continually evolve.

When I need a time out, I walk on the beach, exercise, work in my garden, read, or just catch up with friends and family. I love music, dancing, and beautiful golf courses. My favorite place is at the ocean. My soul is renewed at the water's edge. My favorite artist is Aldo Luongo. My favorite all time songwriter is John Lennon. My favorite time of day is sunset on the beach or late morning when the sun is shining on the water. I enjoy traveling and watching sports. I've found great strength in the spirituality inherent to parts of the Southwest. However, it comes in second to the rush I get when eating hot chocolate chip cookies, right out of the oven or my favorite chocolate moulton cake.