

A NORM TO LIVE FOR

THE LIFE OF NORMA TRESPACH

4th Edition

Norma Trespach



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Acknowledgments

To my father, for having given me the basis of life, and especially for having taught me how to swim.

To my mother, who has always been there for me, being part of my life and praying for my well-being.

To my doctor and friend, Dr. José Valdaí de Souza, who healed me physically and who has continuously supported me through difficult moments.

To the friends who encouraged me to write this book.

To my family members, with whom I learn every day.

To my nephews and nieces, who share their doubts with me and make me, many times, their mother, mate and friend. With them, I feel like a child again.

Finally, I must particularly thank God the Father, for the the grace of having given me a second chance to complete my journey.

Preface of 1st edition

While turning the pages of this book, the reader will find a sinuous road, with many corners to be circumvented. However, the author pointed out, in a very simple and clear way, how a life trajectory is, making the traveler stop at each curve and reflect on which path to follow, choosing their own destiny. This work does not reflect all roads, but encourages everyone to think a little bit about what their life goal might be. Each one must interpret in their map which direction to follow; whom should they ask for information and support; what the worth of parental love and guidance is, what the family's contribution is, what friends are for and how strangers may help to light our path.

In these few pages, there are descriptions of facts which teach much more than great encyclopedias, because the narrative focuses on the fundamental points human beings need to know, which are: to believe in themselves, to be humble, to have faith and to trust that all obstacles can be overcome with the addition of science. With regard to health, the author outlined the most important points, where she mentions the importance of

preventing illnesses, believing and adding inner strength to the work of health professionals.

It is up to us to thank the possibility of prefacing this book and certifying, as one of the witnesses of the facts, that this narrative is true and may be useful for many people, even for those afflicted with nebulous and aggressive pathologies; it is possible to win; to come back to life and to contemplate the dawn, a radiant sun, a new day.

Dr. José Valdaí de Souza

Preface of 3rd edition

Editing and publishing a book by Norma Trespach is an honor and a pleasure. However, it is precisely for being a pleasant task that it becomes such a difficult thing to do: it is impossible to read Norma Trespach's work merely with the critical spirit a reviewer or editor must have, because the text is so engaging and delightful that there is a transfer from professional to leisure reading. Reviewer and editor turn themselves into common readers: interested, attracted, absolutely involved by the author's slippery text.

The way she chose to arrange **"A Norm to Live for"** was an excellent idea, as she managed to create a text that, since it was biographical, would obligatorily be intimate, and transform it into a sequence of chronicles wonderfully "tied". They uncover the reality of life and may arouse the interest of any reader of **"A Norm to Live for"**.

In this way, Norma Trespach put together a book that is, in essence, a life lesson, in which "theory" is only mentioned, and not imposed. The readers become aware of her philosophy and her way

of thinking without even realizing that many concepts, principles and rules of conduct are being inserted in their subconscious. The formidable property of the many examples the author offers illustrate the text beautifully, enriching it and making the readers – decidedly – having no desire to interrupt the trip they embarked on when they read the first paragraph of “A Norm to Live for”.

This is the main characteristic of a successful writer: making the readers identify with the text, transporting them to its pages, as if they were on a fantastic journey. A journey through their own inside feelings.

As if the technical merits of this book were not enough, it is also a very rich collection of examples to be followed, especially by the new generations. The author makes it very clear the importance of respecting our parents and loving our family members, including here brothers’ wives, sisters’ husbands and their children.

Norma Trespach values sensitivity. She doesn’t get tired of making elegies to love and make it very clear that love can’t be just platonic, but also sensual, what she clearly says, but strictly following the theory of the great master, Eça de Queiroz: “The diaphanous cloak of fantasy covering the raw nakedness of reality”.

By this I do not mean that in Norma Trespach’s text there is confusion between reality and fantasy, but actually that, when reality requires “hard” pictures and scenes, she knew how to extend a tenuous and translucent veil, so beautiful that it was

able to “disguise” the roughest parts of her life, bringing them to readers with the delicacy of her poetic soul.

Norma Trespach is a star: it shines and sparkles in Brazil’s current literary scenario. And happily, since we are lucky, this is a new star, and will shine for many, many years. Centuries, perhaps, because the immortality of a good book, by a great author, is undeniable.

Ryoki Inoue

Introduction

Before we incarnate in this world, we set our goals, and each of us comes with a set of knowledge, in order to be able to fulfill them. The difficulties which arise suit to provide us with spiritual improvement.

It is known that everyone has, in their particular set, what must be learned and overcome. We may spend our entire lives without making these changes.

Or we may transform everything with a simple action.

During our path, we face difficulties. However, we are never alone, and our friends, who were rooting for us when we reincarnated, always help us when they are called. Now, who is always there for us and never abandons us is our Father, God.

I had actually started this book long before I thought I would ever write it. After having done my father's memorial

and rereading what I had written, I realized that, during my journey, I had the opportunity of meeting several people who only complained about life and its difficulties, but did nothing to change them; they had no goal to achieve and their failures were credited to others.

Watch a lily. A white flower which grows even being born in the mud. From the place where it is born, it uses the nutrients to live, but it does not incorporate in its life the smell and the color of the place where it lives. We can, and must, do the same with our lives.

That's what I did.

In my journey, I faced many situations and people who were difficult to live with, but they gave me what I needed to move on. They made me use what life had taught me until that moment. I tried feeling what I could add to my knowledge, so that I could understand that, at that moment, that was exactly what I needed to grow, survive and always evolve spiritually.

I had a goal to fulfill and all barriers did not change it. Actually, I drew from them the strength to move on. Again, always evolving from a spiritual point of view.

I had promised my father I would help him to be respected and that I wouldn't let anyone else look down on him for having less purchasing power.

Even the cancer itself didn't make me give up. I had it and, with the help of a great professional, the support of my family and my faith, I managed to overcome it.

I hope that you, my reader, can enjoy a little bit of “**A Norm to Live for**”, applying in your daily life at least some of the thoughts and ideas you will see here. I believe that, doing such thing, you shall improve your quality of life, and especially the quality of your spiritual life.

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Harvest

Time to plant, time to reap. We are afraid and uncertain about the future – but it is nothing more than the result of what we do today. When farmers plant, the ones who want to have a good harvest prepare the land well before sowing the seed. This seed will germinate and bring good results when the farmer cultivates it with love, dedication and attention. The harvest should be watered during the dry seasons, fertilized at the right time and constantly watched to prevent pests from taking over the plantation. If all these precautions are done, a good harvest, with excellent results, will certainly be achieved.

In our lives it happens the same. If we only work for money and do not set aside time for leisure and for taking care of our spirit, we will probably believe that, at a certain stage in life, we will have achieved happiness through financial stability - although we are already suffering from illnesses such as gastritis, insomnia, etc. As if that were not enough, it is precisely at this point that another battle begins: to maintain what we have achieved in terms of money. We distance ourselves from our families due to lack of time and, while doing that, we ended up believing, in a very alienated way, that spending time with them is something not important. Why would we bother to pay attention to them if we already gave everything they asked for and everything money could buy? Furthermore, we are always close to each other, at least physically ... Leisure without any reason? No, unless it represents some possibility of establishing contacts which may result in good business. We don't relax anymore, because everything has a price. We stopped enjoying moments on our own, and those are the moments related to the things we like; things which give us inner tranquility.

Life is a road that must be followed carefully and experienced at each step we take. If we focus on only one point, well ahead of us, as a pre-established goal to achieve – having financial success, for example – we will miss seeing everything that happens around us, and things that should be pleasant along the way won't be like that anymore. The flowering and fruiting process of a tree goes unnoticed by us and, when we see its leaves falling down, we get concerned – and we almost always feel guilty – for not having watched its growth and vigor.

We forget that it is time to rest. Tomorrow another cycle will begin. The leaves will be born again, there will be a new flowering that will bear new fruit. Some pieces of fruit will be eaten by the birds, which will be in charge of taking the seeds to other places, making them multiply. Others will fall and their seeds will germinate right there, near the mother tree. The remaining pieces will decompose, mixing with the old and rotten leaves; and they will integrate the fertilizer which will give strength for the continuation of life.

Hummingbirds and butterflies, with their songs and colors, are in charge of Nature to disseminate the pollen of flowers and, because of that, enable their fertilization and reproduction. Doing that, they, in addition, always gift our eyes with their beauty.

It is evident that, along the road of life, stones will appear. Stones of all sizes, representing the obstacles we will have to overcome. We have to pay attention to all of them. Even the small and seemingly harmless ones. If we step awkwardly on one of these stones, we may slip and fall or, at the very least, injure one

of our feet. In the same way, kicking them can hurt us too. Or can ruin a pair of shoes... However, if we learn how to deal with these small stones, we will develop skills that will make it easier for us to surpass the medium and large ones, either by circumventing or climbing them.

We no longer see the leafy trees with inviting shadows in the summer; the ones which serve as shelter for the rain in the winter, with firm and strong roots, and which support the welcoming land. We do not notice the dust imposing itself and causing us to project our eyes, warning us to be careful when it is time to stop and wait. And also giving us the certainty that after it comes down, we will be ready to see what is left. We do not notice the rain, being food for plants, quenching the thirst of animals, invigorating rivers, washing away the negative energies of the Universe and diluting the dust on the roads.

No, I didn't see any of that. I used an umbrella when it was raining. The sun scorched my face. I did not see the leafy, inviting branches which offered me shelter. And the birds? I heard them, but I didn't have time to pay attention to their song. This was not my goal. My goal was to win, win and win: to prove to my father I could, and would, fulfill my promise from the time I was ten years old: "Never again will anyone make you feel inferior, nor step on you".

It took me a long time to understand that I had taken responsibility for my entire family.

It was after having cancer that I began to understand that there was something wrong with the way I had been leading my life. My first reaction was to scream and blame everyone for my problem. It is still difficult for me to be able to awaken (or develop) the flame of pleasure. I want to taste life.

Today I am sitting here on an almost deserted beach, on the seashore of a beautiful sea. It is very windy, but I don't care: the wind helps to sweep away the dense energies in the air. I wonder how much I let go without even feeling the presence of it.

Walking along the beach, I found many shells, of many different sizes. I have been learning to look at the little things and to understand what each one of them has to offer.

Maybe I didn't plant things at the right time, or care of them as I should have, because today I try to identify the results I have had and what each of them has provided me. They may have brought the wrong elements, or maybe it was me who hasn't stop to receive from the things I cultivated the results they produced. I didn't wait, I didn't stop to feel if they would be sweet, bitter, if they would give me any enjoyment. I don't know, because I didn't stop. I realized that on my way there were trees, birds, butterflies and stones, but for me these elements were part of a landscape as beautiful and distant as the one from a postcard. I couldn't feel part of that place.

Today I wonder: what will I reap? It is as if I had walked a lot, run a marathon, and now I am sitting, receiving stones from all sides, without understanding what's happening.

Did I not prepare myself for this? Or there were always stones and I, constantly busy to move on, did not pay attention when they hit me? Maybe that's what happened, because I have marks all over my body, especially in my heart. I lost my feminine part, my reproductive organs. Why? Maybe to not reproduce: and would this get in the middle of the path I had planned for myself?

I was born in a small town in the countryside of Rio Grande do Sul. I was the second child in a family of nine children. As a child, my world was limited to studying at the public school, which had around thirty students, and helping my mother with the domestic chores that I could do by the age of ten. We were poor and our livelihood came from the land. I also helped as much as I could in the field. Sometimes I rode the horse that pulled the plow, so my father could start the planting. The laundry was done in the river, a task I did many times. I filled a wicker basket made by my father with dirty clothes and went to the river to wash them. I liked to see the foam being carried away by the water and the minnow coming close to eat the remnants of soap. When wringing clothes to remove the remaining water, I would often step on one end with a foot and then wring the piece of clothes with my hands, especially when they were big. I also helped to clean the house, make food and everything else that I could at such a young age. I liked to fish with my grandmother, who was also my godmother. We used to do that in the evening. I remember we used to have a snack, and she liked to have a drink made of cachaça, cinnamon and sugar, known as *consertada*. She said it was for mosquitoes didn't bite us. We used to sit and talk quietly, to not scare the fish away. I can still smell the woods and the mud. I remember

perfectly how delicious that feeling was: being alone with her, sitting on the edge of the river, waiting for the fish to nip the bait. We were usually lucky and could catch them, even though she was much luckier than me.

I remember the night was dark, but sometimes a part of the moon appeared between the clouds and reflected its silvery light in the movement of the small waves formed by the breeze of the wind in the waters of the river. It was a dazzling and unforgettable image: the smell, the refreshing breeze, the sound of crickets and owls, the light of fireflies.

It felt like a world made of dreams: just the two of us in that small universe. I had a lot of affinity with her; I felt safe and protected by her side. These were the most unforgettable moments I spent with her.

I used to live happy and carefree, until the day I heard a comment from someone close to our family, saying that my two other sisters wouldn't be able to attend to the worship service in another church, because we had no new clothes, and it was Christmas. It wouldn't be well-liked for that person's daughter to be seen with us. I did not understand what obstacle could our clothes represent, because we were so friend of her, we played together, lived close to her and used to stay up late talking to each other. From that day on that started to bother me and made me sad. That prohibition was recorded in my unconscious and it bothered me a lot. I started to think of something I could do to change the situation. We were poor, but we had never lacked the essentials to live. Everything was divided equally for the children, whether it

was food, clothes, chores or our parents' love. On worship service days, my father used to buy a popsicle for each of us, or a soda, which was shared among all of us. When we started school, we used to gain a school coat (the uniform of the time). As soon as we returned from class, it was an obligation to do our homework and our chores before playing and relaxing. If we did not fulfill any of these obligations, our mother would look at us and the negligent one would certainly get beat up.

I didn't know anything of the world, only the eleven miles I had already traveled to a village where, on Sundays, we used to go to the worship service. I knew there was a big city – the state capital – because there were several aunts who lived and worked there and told us, when they visited us, how big the city was and everything it had to offer. We didn't have a television, just an old battery radio where we sometimes listened to the news and some songs, especially the ones by the musical duet *Tonico e Tinoco*.

How could I help my parents?

Once, when I was ten years old, sitting on the windowsill in the living room, near the radio, I said to my father: "Never again will anyone step on our family. You will no longer be considered less than the others just because we are poorer than them. I will study to be a teacher and I will help everyone".

At the time, the only profession I knew about was as a teacher. I thought they earned a lot of money and were highly respected by everyone. My father looked at me, very frightened, not understanding anything. He said that life outside was very

dangerous, that women had to be careful to not become slutty and start making money in a dirty way. I said I would never embarrass him: I would study, I would work hard, I would succeed.

Today I try to imagine where that idea came from. My family's financial situation had never seemed bad to me, until the day I was told I couldn't go to church because I didn't have new clothes to wear. It was as if a door had been closed for me.

When I realized that there were women who worked, earned money and were highly regarded by everyone – like my teacher, for example – I decided that I would follow this path.

After the idea was launched, I didn't go back. But what should I do to start this journey?

We were part of the Lutheran Church, in Brazil. Our family had always been very religious. We had a close relationship with the Ministers. It was as per usual for my father's family to host them at their home, because they used to come from far, and often riding on horseback. It was difficult to return on the same day. And things had been this way for several generations.

The village where I lived only had one elementary school. Coincidentally, in the town where Minister's House was located, there was a school with the preparation course for the Admission exam. This exam was required at the time, in order to get in the Country Normal School. After studying for four years, I would get the diploma of country normal teacher, what would qualify me to teach first grade students.

On a Sunday of worship, my father spoke to Minister Ernesto about my desire to become a teacher and about his financial Issues in covering expenses. Because of this I would have to move, because there was no school there for me to study. The Minister listened to him and asked him if that was his desire, too. My father said he would always do the best he could for his children and, since that was my goal to have a better life and not having to work in the fields in order to have a more promising future, he would try to help me as much as he could. The Minister looked at me and said he would think of a solution.

On the next service he spoke to my father, saying that he had talked to his wife and that she had agreed in letting me move to their home and live with them for a year. During that time, I would study and get ready for the admission exam. I was very happy with the solution. My dream was starting to come true. However, as time went by and the day of leaving home to go away approached, I began to feel afraid. A door would be open, and I had no idea what it would be like. I knew nothing about the Minister, except what I had seen during the services. He was a very serious man of German origin. But I wouldn't go back. I couldn't do that, everything was already arranged and I was not going to make a bad impression, not after my father having arranged everything with them. Even my stay would be paid with products the Minister might need (products which would come from the farm); and I would also help with all the house chores.

I remember the night before I left home. I slept very badly, wishing the night could never end. On that day, my mother had put my few clothes in an old gray suitcase.

Very early in the morning my mother called me, saying it was time to go. I got up, got ready and, before leaving, I went to the crib where one of my siblings used to sleep. I started to swing him; he was still sleeping; I left the room and his crib continued to rock.

My mother said I should obey Ms. Joana, the Minister's wife, and do whatever she told me to do, be whimsical, because they were doing us a favor and I shouldn't embarrass anyone being careless with my things.

I will never forget when I left home: my father was in the front, carrying my small suitcase and, on his back, a bag full of groceries (part of the deal with the Minister). We walked along a path that would take us to the river. We had to cross it by kayak (small paddle boat) to reach the road where the bus would pass. I remember it was still dark outside, and I had to take care to not get my shoes dirty, because there was dew on the grass and bush at the edge of the road. That, mixed with the dirt I was stepping on, would form mud under my shoes, and I couldn't travel nor get to their house in dirty shoes. I couldn't see my father's face, just that strong figure who was in front of me. Arriving at the river, he placed the suitcase and bag of groceries in the kayak and helped me to jump in. He sat down, picked up the paddle and we started the crossing.

I remember the moon was reflecting in the river, which seemed huge. We could only hear the noise of the bambu, which was being used as a paddle, touching the water. We could see the small waves being formed while the kayak float of. I was paralyzed,

as if in a trance effect; I simply got carried away with the moment. I felt the kayak swinging and watched the river, thinking that, when I finished crossing it, I would be separated from my family and would go on my own. At that moment, my future life was being determined. I came to that conclusion after years of therapy.

The image I remember is the two of us on the river. I don't remember the trip. I remember that when we arrived at our destination, my father talked to them, taking care of everything; he put my suitcase on the floor, handed them the groceries and left. I felt small, abandoned and alone.

My first days were horrible. The language spoken by them, most of the time, was German. They were very demanding and strict in everything. Schedules should be strictly accomplished, whether it was for food, bath or chores. I could eat nothing out of mealtime, not even a piece of fruit or a treat.

I had to do my chores every day after class: sweeping, dusting and, on certain days, waxing and polishing with a mop polisher; I also used to help to make the meals.

Ms. Joana was a teacher of Lutheran Confirmation Class; she also attended ladies' meetings in the church; she was very dynamic and cooked wonderfully, always using fruit and vegetables.

I missed my family a lot. I also missed playing with my brothers and sister; having lunch at our simple dining table, with everyone together, served by our mother. I missed going to my grandmother's house. She lived next to my family, and at her

house there was always something delicious to eat. I also missed playing ball in the rain, even though I would probably have got beaten up for this. Playing ball in the rain gave me a feeling of freedom and momentary irresponsibility.

They had a son who did not like me, because I used to do the things they sent me quickly, while he was lazy. The boy spoiled everything I did, so his parents would have an argument with me.

I learned a lot by living with them. After being there for a month and a half I saw my family again. Those were sad and painful days, but that was the price I had to pay for my dream. I am very grateful for that family. They made me grow, have a right time for everything and believe that everything is possible. That year, I was able to understand and speak many words in German. I learned a little bit of how to play the organ, one of Ms Joana's demands. She did not spare any effort to teach me, even if only the basics. At my older sister's wedding I played it, and that was exciting.

I took the admission exam and passed. This made me go further away from home.

My uncle, who already passed away, was a good friend of mine. We were raised playing together. He lived in the city where I was going to study. He was married, and they had two beautiful daughters. He offered me a place to stay, and his home was almost in the same conditions of the one I had left.

I spent a year with them. Then I went to live in a tiny apartment in downtown (in Osorio), with three other girls. The place was almost uninhabitable. The wind passed through the cracks. The apartment next door was separated from mine only by wooden planks. That place was rented to anyone, mainly truck drivers, and that made us really afraid. So we never used to sleep alone.

But I needed a place to sleep and, at that moment, that was what I could afford. I had to pursue my dream; I couldn't go back home anymore. My parents had already spent money on me and I knew there was no going back.

Sometimes, after spending a weekend with my parents, in the evening before having to go back to the city, where I was studying, my father went to my uncle's house, who had better purchasing power than us and borrowed money, so I could pay the bus ticket. My father did not always have the money or some emergency provisions, but later he somehow managed to get the money by selling products from the fields.

I started to eat only at school, thanks to a special grant concession from the Board of the Institute of Rural Education Ildefonso Simões Lopes. They gave this permission thanks to my mother's request. She explained them the situation in which we lived, saying that it would be impossible to pay for my meal anywhere else. One of the requirements, on the other hand, was that I should help with whatever was needed: collecting and washing dishes, cleaning the cafeteria, helping in the kitchen, preparing food – like selecting the beans and the rice, peeling

potatoes and onions and then chopping them up. There were other girls in the same situation as me, so we formed a group and took shifts with the tasks.

Breakfast was served until 8:00am. Lunch started at 11:30am and dinner at 5:30pm. On weekends, we had to help to serve the food and then do the dishes. There was also a male boarding school there, so many people used to eat at the place. The last meal was at 5:30pm. After that, only in the next morning I would eat again.

I didn't have money to buy something in the meantime. When we were too hungry, we'd pick up oranges fallen to the ground, knocked down by the wind, and ate them. They wouldn't let us pick them up, we were supervised. Sometimes I would take to school a can of cookies, made by my mother when I went home, but, unfortunately, when the local owner's daughters found out about my cookies, they ate them when I was at class.

I had only one uniform. When it was wet, or my socks didn't dry, I slept on top of them, so they could dry overnight. They weren't always dry on the next day, but I put them on anyway. Unfortunately, my shoes, made of plastic, cracked on the sole, which frequently made my socks get wet, although I put my feet inside plastic bags before putting my shoes on.

The local owner's daughter got married and invited me to live with her, and I accepted.

Nothing has changed, but now I had a bedroom inside the house to sleep in. However, it was a very cold room; I think I haven't felt colder in my life. I slept and woke up freezing. She had several blankets stored in the wardrobe, in the very same room where I used to sleep. She never offered me them and, out of shame, I never asked for anything, yet sometimes I would comment on the cold I used to feel. The house was far away from school, and I often got wet by the rain, because I didn't even have an umbrella and kept using the drying technique by sleeping on top of the clothes. How could they dry out if the room wasn't hot enough to keep me warm?

In the summer I worked at my father's cousin's hotel-restaurant, in Tramandaí. I helped in the kitchen, peeling and chopping vegetables, washing dishes and tidying up the rooms. There were no bathrooms in the rooms, so potties were used, which I needed to take downstairs (the rooms were in the upper part), empty and wash them. After everyone had lunch, I had to clean and wash the restaurant hall. I used to finish that around 5pm. I watched my schoolmates passing by, on their way to the beach, and I couldn't go with them. I had no break, no day off. I needed to work to earn a little bit of money and help my parents keep me studying.

I graduated, but I didn't go to ceremony. I had no money to buy clothes. And on graduation night I was working. After my workday was finished, I cried a lot. I made my dream come true, but I couldn't celebrate it.

Unfortunately, in the previous year, they canceled the work contracts for those who graduated from that school. The government came to the conclusion that the education given was not enough to make me a teacher.

What should I do now? I couldn't, and wouldn't, give up.

My godfather-uncle convinced me to try my luck in Porto Alegre, and I went. Fortunately, I soon got a job, but I continued to feel like an intruder at other people's house, living a little for a while with each one of my aunts. The payment was low and I could not pay for my stay with money, only with my labor. Later my salary improved and I was then able to pay a small rent to the aunt with whom I was living at the time.

One day, I concluded: if I had to pay for everything, why not fight for a place where people wouldn't look at me as if they were doing me a favor? I thank them, because if it weren't for their help, I don't know what I would have done it. But I needed to give my life some direction. The experience life had given me would help me to move forward. So I went out again to another stage of my life. I was on my own, alone in my struggle.

I went to live in an apartment with other girls, sharing the rent with them. Later, I managed to acquire a small apartment, financed by Mortgage Bank, through the cooperative in which I worked. To help with the budget, I got another job, as a ticket officer at Gremio Football Club, on match days. In addition, I was still typing envelopes for a lawyer who sent all over Brazil advertisements for the books he wrote on Labor Law. I earned

by unit and, with that, took courses at night. I later changed to a bigger apartment, also financed by the Bank. I have this place until today. Another dream had come true, having my own home. Later I got a phone, and then a car.

However, I never forgot the reason which pushed me into the fight in the first place. I was always paying attention to my family's needs and, if they needed anything, I tried my best to get what they needed. My mother often wrote me telling me about the financial and emotional difficulties she was having with her children. I solved all those problems. I took charge of things I didn't have to, but I had promised that no one would embarrass them. I tried to correct the situation, and I always managed to do it. I worked and studied all the time. I tried to get a better life so that I could supply all the needs.

As a matter of fact, they accepted the situation in which they lived, but I was bothered by my father's indolence in not reacting when someone humiliated him. He was always a good man – accepting everything without complaining or doing anything to change the situation. Everything was credited to God's will. Although unconsciously, because I was still a child, I thought that things could not be this way. I didn't ask them to change, but I decided to try my best, and said "that's enough!". I didn't know that, on that day, I had redirected my life. I lived because of that promise: "Never again will anyone step on our family, I will study to be a teacher and I will help everyone. No one else will laugh at us or be ashamed to go out with us just because we don't have good clothes" and, with this, forgetting or not thinking about what would be good or important for me. My

father said, “Never do anything that can embarrass us.” Perhaps what I wanted to hear was: “You don’t need to worry, stay with us, together we are going to change this situation”. No, he only said I shouldn’t embarrass them, no matter what I went through. I knew nothing about the world outside, since my knowledge was limited to a radius not exceeding eleven miles around our house. For him, the situation he lived in did not bother him, and his way of feeling was different than mine.

I broke through barriers, hid my fears, pretended everything was fine. Everything was acceptable, as long as I could help them. I lived on a tightrope, always walking steadily, without deviating from the path of moral integrity. I was alone wherever I was, but it was as if my whole family, especially my parents, were watching to see what I was doing, in order to check whether it was something immoral or not.

Now that everyone has grown up and moved on with their lives, and my dad passed away, I don’t know what I like. When I do something for myself, and only for myself, it seems it has no purpose. It is as if I lived in a big world, being part of it, but then I discovered this was not true, it was actually a great illusion.

I passed through this world, attentive to solve all the problems people were facing or would face, always running and looking at everywhere, trying not to drop the ball in the middle of the game. And when I was lying in bed, I kept thinking about what I could do to have better financial conditions and, thus, supply them with their needs. I was just a maintainer.

There was no time I thought only of myself. I always thought: what are they going to think or say? Will they like it? Will they approve what I am doing? How could I find or dedicate myself to someone, a partner to be by my side, if I lived in a rush and did not see myself as a human being, with needs and pleasures as everybody else? And what was pleasure to me could be immoral for them. And do you know what happened? I punished myself for the moments of pleasure I had, getting a cancer.

But life is wise and I have had, nevertheless, great loves. I fell in love, I loved, I cried when those loves ended, but they were beautiful, real and intense – while they lasted. Unforgettable moments that made me feel alive when loneliness knocked on my door, the same way it happens to everybody else.

Learning to be alone

People say human beings were made to live in pairs, as couples, never alone. It is the law of the Universe.

Unfortunately, they still haven't created a way to store human warmth, love, friendship and fraternity, in a way that we would be able to acquire what we need to replace the touch, snuggle, the sound of a voice, a specific smell, companionship and the energy that one human being can transmit to the other one by a simple smile. We are human beings who still need to share our doubts, our fears; wins and losses. We need accomplices on our journey here on Earth.

I believe that this is why many couples can't stand each other, they live a relationship that is already strained, and even though they remain together. They do that because, this way, there will be someone who, even if only by obligation, due to a commitment made, will have to listen to them and stand by them, present at least physically.

Each human being is unique. We often say people have found their soul mates, since they make perfect couples. However, if we look closer, we can actually see one person annulling their partner for their own benefit. And this is possible to see even in very simple things. What can also happen is finding a couple where the two people are in the same degree of evolution, balance and have come together to help a group to harmonize.

We came to this world of challenges to learn. We often need to be alone to acquire knowledge.

We still haven't been able to assimilate that we're here just passing through, we are in a school and we will soon return to our home through the soul outcome. At school, what is the most difficult subject to learn? Isn't it the one that irritates us and takes a lot of time from us? It is the same with our life.

If I need to stop depending on others, if I need to have my own ideas and learn to have self-esteem without the benefit of others, I'll probably have to live part of my life on my own, but not necessarily alone. Our fellow travelers will always be by our side, or watching us – waiting for the chance to help us. These companions might be incarnate, people who cross our path, or disincarnate, people who preceded us in this Dimension.

But we are so concerned with our own belly buttons, feeling sorry for ourselves, that we have not learned to value the smile of a stranger and the “good morning” from a friend. And then we think: “Good morning? Why will this morning be good? I'm alone!”

By any chance were we born attached to someone? We were born alone, unique, but from the very beginning several people helped us: a doctor or a midwife, who helped us to be born; the nurse or midwife who gave us the first bath; the kind mother who gave the breast to feed us.

Now that we are grown up, with good jobs, a home to live in, a family that respects and supports us, in good health, we, paradoxically, feel alone.

Think that in each course we are going to take, we feel a little insecure at first, because it's something different, but as we understand what is happening and learn what the purpose of the classes is, we become more secure.

Why don't we apply this to our personal lives – which should interest more than the professional? Our professional life is only part of our existence, the rest of the time we should learn to grow, live, live and grow old.

What are we so afraid of when we are alone? Have you ever stopped to think about this? Loneliness? Do you miss having someone by your side? Thousands of people are on your side, but that's not enough for you, you want someone all yours! However, when you have someone, you feel trapped, because the loneliness is yours. You don't solve the puzzle you built with your spirit. Despite the many lives you have already lived and the increasing the number of pieces in your puzzle, you are not able to fit any. You don't build an image of yourself. You spend your whole life looking for someone to complete you, but how do you find the puzzle pieces? They are loose, without shape!

We may have our hiking companions, but we are unique, and each feeling of ours is personal. Being happy depends on the love (specially self-love) we have, because we cannot love another person without loving ourselves first.

Loving someone expecting that this person is going to complete us, even when we don't practice self-love, is putting our happiness in other people's hands. Love yourself first and let life take care of the rest.

How did I find out I had cancer?

I was in love. One day we were talking and he said it would be amazing if we had a child (he was already divorced and had four children) because it would be a mixture of the two of us, and that mix would certainly make a beautiful child. We joked a little bit and talked a lot about the subject.

I said I was maybe too old to have a child; I was 41 years old. He said that current medicine had many resources. He worked as a psychotherapist, and also as a university professor. He had good arguments (today I need to thank him for my life). I loved him very much.

It was actually the first time I thought about having a child. In the end we came to the conclusion that we would undergo all medical exams and only then we would decide.

I started with the well-known “pap smear test”, although it was not the regular part of the year I used to undergo this process, because it was done annually and it had only been six months since my last one.

I had some terrifying news: the doctor called me and said I should go to her office. When I was there, she told me that a serious problem had arisen. She was the doctor with whom I had consulted for several years. She showed me the results of the test and told me that it had accused cancer, and one of the most violent. I looked at her as if I didn’t understand what she was talking about, after all, I

had gone there periodically. She had never told me I was at risk. She just used to say I had a little wound, nothing to worry about. I trusted her so much... I believed in her. It was actually my fault; I shouldn't have left my life in the hands of a professional without questioning things and seeking another opinion.

I asked her what would happen from that moment on, and how much time I had left. She coldly said that due to the stage of the disease, I had perhaps six months of life. I don't know how I was able to leave her office. I was beginning to conceive the idea of having a child and I was offered a cancer. What now?

I got in the car and went to my mom's. I was speechless. When I got there, I told her what had happened. She told me I shouldn't despair, and advised me to seek another doctor's opinion, perhaps the same one she was going to receive an orthomolecular treatment. She liked him, and considered him a very good doctor.

I didn't sleep that night. The other day I went to the new doctor's, the one my mother had recommended me – Dr. José Valdaí de Souza, Md. He talked to me a lot. He said that only by that exam, the severity of the condition could not be diagnosed. After much explanation, we decided to proceed a conization, just in case.

After having the surgery, the collected material was sent to a laboratory. The result came: 99.9% probability of the tumor has been totally extirpated.

He said I should go ahead and live my life; he also told me I should have a child (I had explained my dream to him and why I had taken the exam in the first place) and we would keep an eye on it. If, in the future, the need of removing my ovaries, uterus and fallopian tubes was verified (in other words, if the tumor spread), this would be done. I told him that I would not have a child feeling insecure, just to satisfy my ego. What if something happened to me? What type of pregnancy would I have? What about the child? No, if until that age I had not had the courage to have a child, it would not be at that moment that I would have one. We decided on the surgery.

I didn't say anything to my boyfriend. We celebrated my birthday as if nothing had happened. When I was leaving, I told him that it would take me some time to see him again, because I was going to pass through a treatment. I didn't mention anything else. He asked if I wanted to talk about it. I said no, not at the moment, maybe on another occasion I would explain everything to him. He was wonderful and understood me. When we were saying goodbye, he hugged me with kindness, gave me a beautiful kiss, smiled and said he would miss me. I turned my back and left. I thought I might never see him again in this life. I didn't cry at the moment; I needed all the strength to face the approaching problem.

Thank God, my doctor and all the prayers of my family, everything went well. I managed to win.

When the doctor released me, I called my boyfriend and we met. He asked me how I was doing and if everything had gone

well. He said he missed me a lot, but he understood if I didn't want to talk about what happened. For me it was wonderful. Wanting to get back in touch with that wonderful person (whom I loved so much and made me so happy) gave me strength to face everything I had to face. He was the greatest reason, my point of reference for the fight and I am grateful to have known and loved him, because it was with him that I discovered the problem in time to fight against it and survive. A long time after that I finally told him everything. Nothing changed between us because of that. I thank him for showing me that I was still a woman even after the surgery. I was the same person as before (or even better).

We are no longer together. Our story is over. But he has a very special place in my heart. He was my reason for fighting for life at that time. I am no longer part of a risk group, but I have periodically kept undergoing medical exams. I am always in contact with my doctor, taking the medication he recommended me, the one he considers necessary to keep my body in balance.

Sensitivity and balance

As a child, my father taught me how to swim in the river.

First, he would put me on his back and swim. This way I could see and feel how it was done. Then he would stretch his arms and tell me to lay on top of them. Then I should do as he had done: stomping my feet and taking an arm forward, pulling the water; one arm after the other. The secret, he said, was to trust and not be afraid, because he wouldn't take his hands off, he would only do it when he felt I was ready to swim alone. Little by little I was relaxing, he was lowering his hands and the water was doing its support.

And that's life. When a problem arises, there is always a helping hand to support us. We need to trust – you can be sure the help always comes. The moment we can go on by ourselves, the help disappears. This serves to strengthen us. It happened to me when I had cancer. The relationship I had with my boyfriend was a relief for me, a helping hand. I needed to live a great love story to face cancer and overcome it. His love, at that moment, strengthened me and made me want to live. After that, each one of us went on a separated way.

When children start walking, they always hold their mother's hand and, gradually, let go of it. At first the child falls to the ground, but then the mother holds the child's hand again, and so the child goes on (a little stumbling, of course). If this is not done, the child will never have the necessary confidence to believe she or he can walk alone.

In this life we meet several traveling companions, with whom we walk side by side. Sometimes we need to be carried by them, in order to rest, but as soon as we are able to support ourselves on our own legs (or with a friend's helping hand), we must move on, despite some difficulty in standing up. Only in this way we get strong. Often this strength comes from the Father, just ask Him, and He will send the necessary strength: either through a friend or taking away from us the fear of falling.

I feel like my life is fragmented.

Things do not come together and have no continuity.

It seems that I have always lived jumping around and running to different directions, always seeing and doing something isolated and not closely-knit.

It is as if I were responsible for the entire Universe and, because of that, that, I had to do something to change all the wrong things. I don't like to see people's mistakes and I always want to disentangle them, finding a reason to justify everything.

My therapist told me something: her grandmother had only two coffee bushes in the backyard. She would harvest, dry, grind and prepare them, when they were mature. It was enough for the family. The same routine was repeated every year. My therapist, like every child, liked to pick up the ripe grains and suck them, throwing the seeds away, not knowing that, doing this, the production would be decreased. But even doing that, the remaining grains were enough for their entire year. Mother Nature already knew that some grains

would not be used for grinding and that a child would taste their pleasant flavor. Nature was in charge of producing enough, so that these grains would not be missed.

Why didn't this lady grow more coffee bushes, if she had land and a place for it? Her ability was limited to those two trees. She was aware of her limitations, perhaps unconsciously, but she had the wisdom to listen to her heart.

In my life, I have never stopped to think about my limitations. I have always run to several places, doing several things at the same time, although this often made me very tired, impeding me to taste the pleasure of an accomplishment. I had to prove to the world I was capable of doing what I had to do.

I was the second born female daughter. I always heard my mother telling the guests I was slow and did not do things well, as she would like me to do. So I used to run all the time, trying my best to do everything in time. This way I could prove I was fast. I wanted to be loved and seen. My older sister was quick and organized – their favorite. I felt like the Ugly Duckling, incapable. Now I understand why I said what I said on that day, sitting at the window, when I told my father I would study and work hard to help them, so no one else would step on him and us. In reality I wanted him to tell me that was not necessary, that he would do everything by himself, that I was very important to them and that I was already doing my part. But they only told me to be careful and not do anything that would embarrass them. It didn't matter to them my loneliness, my fears. They didn't have time to think about it either. Not even wisdom, perhaps.

My father, in his understanding, let me go because he believed it was for my own good and that I wanted this. What a ten-year-old child, living in the countryside, where there was no television or electricity – the old battery radio was powered, rarely used because the battery was used up quickly and then it was difficult to recharge it - would know about life and the world? Nothing but what my aunts, who lived in the capital, had told me.

Today I know life is a bus with many stops. In some patches of the road we have the company of some people with whom we exchange ideas, a smile, energy. Sometimes people who simply occupy that space for a few moments. Some get off the bus before us, others after us, and while this happens, other people are getting on it. When our time comes, we have to get off and take another bus, train or plane and keep moving forward. We have time to stop and transform the knowledge acquired from each moment into wisdom for the next trip. There is no point in wanting to live running everywhere.

We must have a point of reference – our home. The place where we always return to, whether we are tired, sad, happy or fulfilled, it doesn't matter, it is where we recompose ourselves to move forward with the knowledge acquired. This way we transform this knowledge into wisdom for the next steps in our journey of learning.

The pursuit of security

Have you ever stopped to think that we have no security in this world? The type of security I'm talking about is a safe place where nothing can happen to us, where we know everything we want is within our reach, visible; full security.

We have a home we surround with bars, alarms, dogs, iron gates, locks on doors. We stay inside it, locked everything up, and yet we don't feel safe, because the danger is on the streets and, even with all the protections we put in our homes, nothing prevents us from being robbed. On the other hand, our spirit is not trapped within four walls. Our thoughts go to unimaginable places in a matter of seconds, causing, therefore, a lot of fear, because we go where there are wars, disorders, sadness, catastrophes and we do not find, within us, the confidence to change the direction of our imagination. We don't have a fixed point giving us support and security – that's when we start being afraid of developing a phobia.

We create mechanisms to give security to our mortal bodies, but we haven't found a way to balance our spirit. For example: when we are in love, we think we have found our journey companion in this world and we place all our hopes and security on this person... But sometimes we forget that this other person is looking for someone to give him or her security as well. And each person takes full responsibility for making the other one happy and calm. For some time that works, but little by little the idealization of a partner goes by land, because the other person is

also a human being, someone full of insecurities. And then we get lost and frustrated again.

Many people try to find in religion security and the answer to everything, starting blindly to follow what the preacher teaches. As we are lost and desperate, we agreed to hold on to that board that was thrown to us in this river of uncertainty in which we find ourselves. We try to continue blindly, giving our lives into their hands.

As time went on, we begin to notice the world is too small and that we don't do anything of our own accord. Everything is determined or guided by them and we see that our insecurity has increased because not even what we need or feel is evaluated by us. We put our whole life in the hands of others, without ever questioning or having ideas of our own, such as interpreting or criticizing what we hear. Pain and pleasure are personal, so no one can feel them for other people. We can even try to understand and be supportive, however, never feel for the other. Each human being is unique and is in a stage of evolution of its own.

And then what happens to us? We feel lonely and disillusioned again. We often try to do the opposite of what we were doing before. We throw ourselves into worldly pleasures, because we feel lost. Everything that was offered to us as true, certain and eternal, was unsustainable because that faith didn't come from us. We weren't taught to question and feel the Divine Love in its fullness.

We live in a world with people who do not think like us, but with whom we daily make rewarding exchanges when we are not

imbued and pressured by thoughts that the world is our enemy and only those who are part of a specific religion will be saved, while the rest will burn forever in the fire of Hell.

What about nowadays?

I believe in a Greater and Loving Father who, indiscriminately, created a perfect Universe for His children, who came to populate it. We have the free will to take advantage of it as we see fit, without hurting our peers, following the feelings and desires of our heart, which are exclusive. God will supply us with whatever is necessary for us to be happy. We don't need intermediaries to reach Him, because no one is better or more special than the other one when it comes to talk to Him. We must know what we want and then we will be able to have an honest and deep conversation to ask for what we need. We do not always receive things the way we ask for them, nor at the time we want them, but He always answers us. It doesn't mean we can't have a religion. Each one of us is free to decide. Being part of a group in which we feel good, and having travelling companions who support us and are in the same phase of evolution we are, strengthens our journey, which will be lighter this way. This helps us in the learning we committed ourselves with when we reincarnated. But our individuality must never be lost.

Listen to your heart to feel what you need. Then, run after it, because God has given you everything you need to complete your needs here on Earth. He gave you the rivers so that you could be supplied with energy and wash away the body impurities. He gave you the sun, which can warm you during the day. He gave you the

night, for your body to rest, for your spirit to come out and seek answers from the other side, along with more evolved spirits. The Mother Earth, from where you make a living for your body and that brightens your eyes with beautiful colored flowers, trees and lawns, forming the sacred carpet where your feet step on, where birds find their food and the wind dances a beautiful ballet with the leaves of the trees, offering us the pleasure of the breeze on our face, making us feel alive. All is contributing to form a beautiful thing, called Nature. We also have the sea, a rare beauty, at our disposal. Its waves, which seem alive, are tireless; a place where we can recharge our energy. Walking on the seashore, feeling the sand under our feet and the water hitting our bodies, the sound of its waves, the brightness of the sun on its surface. The horizon, where the sky meets the blue of its waters, is a perfect picture.

All those things evidence that God created the space for us, so that we could supply ourselves when we needed. Everything is at our disposal, free of charge.

We are free to come and go. We just need to know that the security we need is within us, and everything is available to us in this world.

Live life, don't fight with it.

Mother's love

We must always be attentive during our journey. My nephew Rafael, who has Williams Syndrome, had a heart surgery that, at first, went well. However, after that, he had a blood loss problem that made doctors redo his surgery. Fortunately, he recovered well after his surgery, until he started running a fever, which didn't go away, making everyone, the doctors and us, his family, very apprehensive.

I was taking a computer course at the Department of Labor about the change of system at the Department Court, where I worked as an Assistant Secretary Director. Until that day, I had not visited him.

But something warned me that I should go and see him. We have always had a very strong connection: he has a great affection for me, and I adore him. When I saw his face, I got very worried: he cried all the time and didn't move his arm, where the serum was. I asked the nurses who were taking care of him at that time if the needle was not out of the vein. They said it wasn't, and that they had just checked.

It was like someone told me to call my therapist, who was also my friend. She could help us at that time with her professional knowledge. Fortunately, she was in Porto Alegre. I managed to speak to her. She was about to return to her city, but even so, she answered my cry for help.

His parents were the face of dismay; they didn't know what else to do. When my friend, the therapist, entered the room, it was as if a divine light had come. Claudia, Rafael's mother, hugged her as if looking for strength, and wept. After that, my friend took Rafael, who was sitting in a wheelchair crying, and placed him on his mother's lap. She put Claudia's hand on the cut and asked her to massage it with affection. She also put Denilson's hand, his father, on the spot.

Rafael's crying suddenly changed, becoming the cry of an upset baby. Gradually he calmed down and fell asleep.

I will never forget this scene. She also said to his parents: "Just be a mother, don't be afraid of hurting him, show him that he's your baby and that you are here for him. And you, father, your son needs you now, nothing in this world it's more important than him, work can wait, but he doesn't" (she said this because Denilson had said he had to go away, in order to rest and come back to work). She got up and gave the three of them a hug. I walked her to the door and thanked her for coming. She smiled, closed the door and left. Nobody else said anything. It seemed that at that moment nothing could be said that made any sense. The love and security the two were passing to Rafael was what mattered.

In that room there was an inexplicable energy. Only those who lived that moment can know, and I was one of the privileged ones who were there. A moment that, despite the pain, was enveloped in peace. I asked the Masters to protect that family and give the doctors light to find the origin of the fever.

I had nothing left to do. It was their moment; what I could do I had already done. I kissed each one of them and left. I wanted to cry, but I couldn't do it because I was going to meet my colleagues and go back home, in Osorio.

When I got home, I couldn't cry, because I shouldn't worry my parents. But I expected something to happen. I felt numb.

Denilson was trying to change Rafael's room, because the one he was had no comfort, but it was being a difficult task. Thank God it was possible to change his room, and he returned to the floor where the male nurse who had already known the family and whom the boy liked very much was.

Claudia, with her son still on her lap, started to notice that he had a red welt on his, exactly where the serum was. That was when she called the nurse and showed it to him. He promptly examined the welt and found that the needle was out of the vein. Rafael's arm had already an intumescence close to phlebitis. He immediately took all the necessary measures and the fever started to decrease, until it disappeared, making my nephew to recover and return home.

At night, Claudia called me hopefully, after having discovered the serum problem. Her voice was different. It was as if she had her son again.

One thing was certain: what saved Rafael was not only the work of the doctors, who examined and did not find the reason for the fever, but, instead of that, the love of his mother,

who had caressed and watched her son with love, without fear. Doctors examine the body, but only love discovers things that are hidden by fear.

Later, in one of our conversations, Claudia told me that day was the most decisive of their lives, because that night she and Denilson talked to each other as they had never done before and became closer. They didn't solve all the problems in their lives, but they united strengths. They felt that something has changed within them since that date.

I thank God for all this. I also thank the selfless doctors and nurses, my therapist and friend, the family members who took affection to Rafael and everyone who prayed for his recovery.

I have great affinity with Rafael. When we used to go to the beach and he was around three years old, every time he managed to jump a wave I said "Yes!", raising my arm with a closed fist. This was our gesture of victory and it was what he said and did when he left the hospital and his mother asked him what Aunt Norma would say at that moment.

Today he is a handsome young man who likes playing soccer, a Gremio fan; he loves climbing trees and does everything a boy at his age likes to do.

The responsibility of a promise

I ran through life. I never stopped to breathe. I have always lived under pressure, which was created by me.

When a problem came up in my family, directly or indirectly, I was the one who had to solve it, because I had promised I would do that. I never said no. I never said it wasn't within my reach, however difficult the problem seemed. Nobody asked me how I was going to solve it, I had to find out how to do it. As Machiavelli, the end justified the means. Thanks to divine protection I always resolved things in a clean, correct way. If it were financial problems, I would find a way to get the money, moonlighting. Although I already had a job, I also had the evenings during the week, and Saturdays and Sundays. If there were sickness problems, I would find someone to help me.

So many times I resorted to Mr. Valdemar, a spiritist who prescribed and also performed astral surgeries. I lived in Menino Deus and he lived in Restinga Velha, a neighborhood known for being dangerous and violent. Several times I crossed the whole city at dawn and spent the whole day waiting for an appointment with him. I had to go there in the early hours of the morning, because the service was in order of arrival and he had many customers. I used to go there by myself. Besides doing all that, I still used to feel really tense, because the astral surgery needed to work out. My family had put the solution of their problems in my hands. If it worked out? I did not do more than my duty. If it went wrong or the treatment didn't work out? They had someone to blame and demand more. I became very close to with Mr. Valdemar and his wife, to whom I owe a lot of gratitude.

Once, on my birthday, he said I should go there, because he had an urgent matter to talk to me about. As I was undergoing treatment for several people in my family with him, I did not question his request, although it was nighttime and, as always, I would go alone. When I arrived there, a barbecue was being made to celebrate my birthday. I even had a cake with candles, my first birthday cake with candles... It was a beautiful and pleasant surprise.

It was already quite late when I left, around midnight. It was a cold, dark winter night (my birthday is on July 31st).

In the streets there was no lighting, just on the main avenue, around 30 miles away. I was afraid when I said goodbye, so he hugged me and said: "Go without fear my daughter, God will be with you".

As soon as I left, I turned on the first street. In front of my car there was another one lighting the way, so I was guided by its headlights. It always kept some distance. It continued like this until I reached the avenue with a traffic light and normal lighting. The signal was closed and, when I got close to it, it opened for me. I tried to identify the car that guided me for several miles, but, as if by a stroke of magic, it was no longer there.

I thanked God, because I know He sent me that light to lead through the most dangerous part of the way. Despite being a violent neighborhood, I have never seen or anything dangerous there, nor anything bad has ever happened to me when I was there. I felt that something very strong was with me, protecting me, whether by car or bus.

Trying to review my life to find the reason I feel insecure when I need to make a decision for myself, because I never know whether I will do the right thing or not, I reached a point of my childhood. At the age of ten I left home. I had to keep going, and I didn't have my parents or sibling to talk to me. I didn't have anyone I could tell my fears. I had to make my decisions on my own. Now I admit I'm afraid, and that's why I miss having a partner whom I can talk to and share my thoughts with. How good that would be!

I was raised to always share what I had with the ones who had less than me. I lived looking around, seeing if anybody from my family needed help. For this, in addition to having my own job, I still frequently had to moonlight.

I was always studying, taking courses to improve my knowledge or looking for a job that paid more. I have always tried to fulfill everybody's needs, both financial and emotional or whatever else they needed. Doing that I put aside my own fears and needs.

Nowadays, I try to find within myself the things I like and stop seeing others as my responsibility.

Today I feel that I have always tried to show them I was self-sufficient, when in reality I feel needy like every human being. Everyone is living their lives, structured and with their own families. I can't make them understand what my challenge is. They did not ask me to pursue a better financial life for my family. Many of them were not even born and I probably don't even know about the promise I made to my father. How could they

understand? The way to react to injustices is mine. The desire not to feel inferior is mine. Not wanting my father to be humiliated was my something I wanted. I wanted the best for everyone.

I don't regret making the decision to change a situation that bothered me. I would never be happy living under the hypocrisy of people who feel fulfilled by disparaging those who have less purchasing power. I wasn't going to continue to accept that. Thanks God I went to the fight, looking for a new world. I have found good and bad people, it's true, but I've never given up. There were moments I complained, yes, I cried, but I've never stopped believing that when a person really wants something, the Universe helps a lot, and because of that we find people who help us to go ahead and overcome the difficulties that arise.

It is worth going after a dream. Today, looking back, I can say for sure: it was worth it, and I won. Of course, I didn't always get it right, but the wisdom that all this gave me is what makes me want to enjoy all the moments I have left in my life, whether they are difficult, sad or happy. This world is a great school that starts when we are born and has no limits, because we are always discovering things.

The cure of a disease is a victory, without a doubt. We must not forget that, at least in part, it was our fault to get cancer and, before raising a flag and screaming "how powerful I am", we must withdraw and review our concepts and how we are treating ourselves. We need to think that, in first place, we must be important to ourselves, and consider that what happened was a

deliberate detour from our road or a stop to review concepts and cure calluses and blisters. If afterwards we go out and shout to everyone “Take a look at us! See how well we are”, we may have feet with more calluses, more blisters and more wounds. But if, on the contrary, we restart our walk slowly, looking at where we step and observing each feeling, each moment, stomp down no rush, we may arrive where we dream, with a much greater load of knowledge and having control of our feelings.

Don’t think that after going through cancer you are different just because you beat it. The difference is in recognizing life. The cancer serves to show us that we are not that powerful, that something inexplicable might reach us.

It is like walking at 60 miles per hour and not noticing that, just ahead, there is a traffic light. When you see it, it is 6 miles away, and its light is red. All we can do at this moment is to brake abruptly and hope the signal changes in time. We can also close our eyes and pass the red light, believing there will be no more time to brake. Doing that, the crash is almost certain, unless, luckily, there is no car crossing at that very moment. The most reasonable thing to do is to drive at the speed limit, paying attention to the intersections and to the other drivers on the road.

My father always used to say that, if he were smart, he would write a book about his life. He might not have the intelligence to write, but he had the wisdom of life. He had no study, but he had experience, because life is our school to acquire culture and knowledge.

Whether we are going to transform knowledge into wisdom or not, that is our decision.

He lived inside a village with his seven children. In 1966, he came to a larger city, where two more children were born. Without major studies, he managed to create and give life security to everyone, shaping worthy personalities to society. He kept his family together until the end of his life.

How did he do that? I don't know, but in some way he always managed to positively change our Sundays. He gathered his children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren around the barbecue grill. After the barbecue was ready, everyone went up to their homes, each one taking their part of the barbecue. However, they often decided to stay, share the meat, the bowls of rice, the potato salad, and put everything on a large table, where everyone had lunch together. His wisdom was innate. He knew each of his children very well and, therefore, he knew how to keep them all around him.

Now, after his departure, everything has changed. Sundays are sad. Nobody gathers anymore. Not even on hot summer days, under the jambolan stalk. Saturdays and Sundays in the afternoon were famous, special. The children, daughters-in-law and grandchildren used to arrive one by one, and soon lunch had become a big party, with popcorn and mate.

After his death, I decided to make his memorial. I visited the place where he was born and where I lived until I was 10 years old. I didn't know that, in reality, I would revisit my own

life. Was that my father's intention in the first place? He always said that he wanted to write a book about his life, and I always tried to do the things he thought and did. So, I made him a tribute: I tried to tell his life story on a videotape, putting together old and current photos and videos where he was present. I wanted to show his taste and his aptitudes. I also collected testimonies from his children so that each one could talk about what their father represented for them and for their lives; his teachings, his demands. So, when we miss him or someone asks us how our father was, we can show his story as a whole, impartially. In this way, people will be able to get their own conclusions and form a profile of him according to the understanding of each one. I believe this will be especially useful for future generations. His descendants who did not know him will be able to understand themselves much better by knowing who their predecessor was, and seeing what they inherited from him, both in physiognomy and in behavior. This memorial is precisely for him, who consciously or unconsciously made me return to the places where I had lived my childhood and from where I left to the world, in pursuit of my dreams.

I was in the river, in the same place where I crossed it one day, one morning, with my small suitcase and the few clothes I had. I remembered my father paddling. We crossed the river and took the bus that took me to the center of the village, a place where I would start my journey in search of myself. The river where my father taught to swim. How this river divided my life! Crossing it, I left my family and went to a totally unknown world. How old was I? Ten years old.

Now, standing inside this same river, with water on my knees, I started to think: at that time the river seemed so wide and large... Now I see it narrow and calm.

Our challenges are the same: when they appear, they look like monsters, but after we move on, transposing them, we look back and verify that each difficulty that arises will always be greater than the previous one, because things are like a ladder: each step we climb, we get higher above the ground – and the fall is bigger. We know the steps to go up because we have already passed them. We need to be patient and think about how to take the first step, not worrying about reaching the top, but valuing it step by step. It is a new climb, and we realize we stop seeing and learning a lot when we passed by it the first time. Each fall is there to see if we have learned the lesson and if we can see how much we have learned and how we will always have things to learn and put into practice.

The encounter with ourselves

On a cold winter afternoon, Joana was sitting, lonely, on top of a cliff, facing the sea, with the sun behind her, feeling the gentle breath of a light breeze. Her gaze was lost on the immensity of the ocean and the emptiness of the beach. She had parked her car after driving alone and crying a lot for several miles, trying to find answers for her life. She had already tried to find them, attending parties, traveling to distant countries, knowing different cultures, being loved by her partner, but nothing filled the void she felt in her heart.

She felt that the things her eyes saw and the words people said to her couldn't overcome the invisible wall that surrounded her, not letting her feel the beauty of the Universe or the sweetness of messages sent by friends and seen in movies. She remembered the vacation trip she had taken to Paris with her friends. At the time, she was very excited about the idea of traveling to a country that had always been her dream to visit.

She had packed her bags with enthusiasm, asked for her vacation and left. She chose a good hotel, well located, and decided that she would enjoy every moment of that experience. She made a list of the museums she would visit, the plays she would watch, the good restaurants she would go to and the beautiful walks she would take.

When the plane landed at the airport, she thought, "My new life certainly begins here." She went to the hotel and approved

the accommodations. She didn't even unpack her things, and immediately went for a walk, going to a very cozy cafe she found relatively close to the hotel. She chose a table with a good view of the street and asked for something to eat. She had no difficulty communicating, since he spoke French fluently.

After eating, she decided to go back to the hotel and get ready, because at night she would go with her friends to a play. The place was very beautiful, everything was perfect.

She liked the play, but felt nothing different from what she felt when she saw other plays in Brazil. That started to worry her, because the same thing had happened before, in the cafe. Place after place, she followed the script she had planned, however, she increasingly felt empty. It was as if she were just doing a pre-established task.

When trip was over, she came back. She had taken many pictures and, when she looked at them, she felt as if she were not present in them. Just her face was there, not her heart. She commented the case to her friends, about how she was feeling, explaining that the trip, although perfect, had not added anything to her, as she was still empty.

She remembered the boyfriend she had found in Brazil and who, she thought, would fill her void. They hung out a lot and he was quite handsome and kind. However, she couldn't continue that relationship, because the feeling of loneliness, despite being with him, remained. The sea has always been her great companion. She didn't know what made her feel that way, if it were the salty

breeze, the sand that her feet touched, the tide that, tirelessly kept itself alive, coming and going, throwing its white foam on the beach, or maybe the whole thing.

After a long time contemplating the infinite, she decided to walk along the seashore, as she always did when she needed to think or feel the pleasure of the sand and the sea water at her feet. Perhaps that would help her to understand that moment of her life. She walked absorbed, savoring the breeze on her face and the cold water on her feet, letting her footprints in the sand.

The beach was almost deserted, only a few fishermen with their reeds trying their luck in the fishing industry. The birds used empty beach to feed on small fish that the waves brought to the shore. They took flight when Joana approached, forming a beautiful postcard together with the sea, its waves and the fishermen.

She looked up to observe all of this, when she seemed to hear a voice that said: “God made a beautiful world with all the things we need to be happy. Nothing has meaning if we don’t look inside ourselves and look for our essence, our divine spark or our inner self. We must love ourselves and live knowing that everything is at our disposal for our pleasure. We must not forget that we are unique and individual, but we are never alone. We have always a Guardian Angel with us. Just call your Angel and be humble to hear its answer and feel its presence “. She looked around and saw no one, but everything seemed so clear and real that that voice did not come out of her mind. She asked herself: “Did God look at me and answer my prayers?”. Tears started to run down her face. They’re not tears of sadness, but of emotion, making her feel alive again,

filled with a great feeling of peace and love for everything around her and for the life she had. She felt a great gratitude for the Being who had sent her that amazing feeling of protection and love.

She opened her arms, looked at the sky and said: “Thank you, my God, for the grace to feel Your love for me, and to be able to see and experience so much beauty in this moment and in this small world”.

He wet her hands in the sea, washed her face and walked a little into it, until the water was touching her knees and the waves splashing salty drops on her body.

She went back to where she had left the car. She got in it and, feeling light and safe, started it. On the radio, the song that was playing completed the moment. She started to follow the rhythm by tapping her fingers on the steering wheel, trying to sing along. She felt young again.

When she got home, she realized for the first time how nice it was to return and see her things again.

When she opened the gate, she felt as if she were embraced by that small world, created by herself. The house looked bigger and more welcoming; her garden exhaled the scent of beautiful roses that were in bloom. She didn’t even remember there were so many roses, and she definitely couldn’t remember when she had seen them bloom for the last time. She felt the warmth and didn’t seem to be alone anymore. Everything was part of her life and she saw herself as part of that Universe.

She would start working again, her vacation was ending, and she would think more about other people. She knew that peace she was experiencing would not last forever, because life's difficulties would continue to happen, but she also knew she would not be alone to overcome them. She would be humble and ask for help from the Master and Creator of this beautiful world.

She trusted that He would not abandon her, that He would send her help and wisdom, so that she could move on.

Rediscovering the sensitivity to love

Sarah was fifty-eight years old and after her last romantic relationship, which had brought her great joy, but also great pain, she had decided that she was old and that the possibilities of being happy in love with a partner had ended.

She was sitting in a clearing during an ecological hike, and looked around. She was able to analyze how everything fit into Nature, making that environment calm and cozy, with a light breeze blowing and the sun with its rays passing through the leafy trees. Leaves fallen on the ground would soon be transformed into nutrients, both for small vines and other species of plants born among large trees.

She began to think of the many times she had fallen in love and what each of them had meant in her life.

She remembered of Itacir, with whom she had learned to enjoy good food, travelling, dancing and living without a determined time to do anything. With him, she had learned to not demand company, but to live every moment. He used to arrive when she least expected him.

At that time, she was very methodical and critical. She was afraid to experience new things and to lose control. With Itacir, she managed to see the world in a different way from hers, she understood that nothing is stable and not everything has to happen as planned.

Then, the image of Marcos appeared in her mind, sweet and full of tender little gestures. She remembered, nostalgically, the notes left by him on her desk or sent by a colleague, an accomplice of their romance, which was not known by anyone else in the company, a decision they took to avoid comments and also because they understood the only important thing was themselves; she remembered his phone calls before going to sleep, as soon as he got home from college, to know how her day had been and to wish her good night. He also used to call her in the morning, to say “good morning” and to tell her he had missed her affection during the night. She had never imagined that one night, a night of love without any highs and lows, that could happen... They were sitting in the living room, drinking soda and eating snacks – carrots, cucumbers, cheese and ham cut into small pieces and stuffed on a stick – which she had made with such affection, as it was Marcos’s favorite appetizer and he had asked her to make it.

He looked at her and said, in the most natural way as possible, without any bluntness, that he would get married in a month. He also said that he had not had the courage to tell her that before, and that’s why he postponed it so much.

She didn’t want to believe it, thinking that was a nightmare. He tried to justify what was happening and why he would get married to that person, justifying his decision saying he was an only child and his mother liked the girl very much, and so he had gradually accepted the idea.

She didn’t remember what else they said that night, only that she tried hard not to cry in front of him. She kept asking herself

why he had done that to her – and how she had never suspected about anything. She also couldn't believe Marcos' mother could be so phony, because she always called her to find out how she was doing or to ask her something about her son, when he didn't agree with a personal or professional suggestion.

He said goodbye and she stood there, in unbearable pain. She tried to sleep, because in the morning she had to go to work.

After that, she was lucky enough to meet a great friend, Voltaire, and he helped her to pass through the terrible days that followed. She thought she would never fall in love with anyone again. Her self-esteem was shaken and she was in no mood for anything, but her friend had managed to make her understand that life went on and she had to move on as well.

With the expectation of feeling emotionally alive again, she tried a new relationship she knew it couldn't possibly get anywhere.

She just wanted the opportunity to take Marcos out of her life. She imagined there was nothing better for that than another man taking his place.

She knew she was doing that only to get revenge, because she was not happy and all that was not helping to ease the pain of the rejection she felt. Her current boyfriend treated her like a queen, but she felt no pleasure in what she was doing, and so she decided to stop the bad taste joke that was only hurting her.

Life doesn't stop, and time is the best medicine to heal any wound, although time cannot erase the pain we experience. The pain gets milder, but it doesn't disappear.

One day she was walking down one of the halls of the college where she studied when her teacher came in the opposite direction.

When they got closer to each other, he smiled at her, and that smile made her freeze. She had often seen him in the classroom and all the girls thought he was very handsome, but she didn't notice anything different about him. It seems that she was anesthetized and did not look at any man with the type of gaze that could arouse any kind of feeling. She didn't allow this to happen. He stopped in front of her and said "hi". He said he would like to speak to her elsewhere, not at college, and asked her if she could give him her phone number. She got scared because she had never imagined he would speak to her to say something not related to class; let alone talking to her in private. She gave him her number, but didn't expect he would remember to call her. She knew he was a professor at several universities, and that he also had a clinic, because in addition to being a professor, he was a psychotherapist. On the following day, he called her and they arranged to meet. She was nervous, because she didn't understand what was happening to her. She had started to feel a chill every time she remembered him. She thought it was all due to fear and insecurity, but that would only be discovered in person.

On the arranged day, she went to meet him. She was tense and insecure, lingering feelings of the breakup of her previous relationship. When she arrived at the building, he was already

waiting for her. When he saw her, he smiled at her, and that eased her insecurity. He took her to his apartment and said he was making dinner for them. While they waited, they drank some wine, and he said he had been watching her in class, because she was the only one who only cared about attending his classes, and didn't try to attract his attention. He said that sometimes she didn't even greet him when he arrived at class. He said her appearance caught his attention, but the most significant thing for him were her sad beautiful eyes. He said that every time after teaching at her college and crossing her in the hall, since he was no longer her teacher outside classroom, he thought of a way to talk to her without drawing the other students' attention. This was the first of many other dates and dinners, which last for seven years of great love. Those dates were always wonderful, full of conversation, exchange of knowledge and a lot of affection. They didn't break up, they only separate ways. Then he got sick and went back to his city. He called her once after that, saying that he would love to talk to her, that she was an angel who had come into his life and that he had never forgot her. Sarah said that when he wanted to, he could come and visit her. She would be happy to see him again, but he didn't show up and didn't call her anymore.

She remembered about her teenage crushes and others that were not so important in her life, and she thought she would never feel that butterflies in the stomach again while hearing someone's voice, waiting for a date, or even dreaming about someone's kisses and affection. She felt two tears run down her cheeks and saw that the sun had already set and that the night would soon arrive. She got up and decided it was time to go home.

The next day she got up, drank a cup of coffee and decided she would take a walk, the same way she used to do every other day, or whenever she felt like it. She needed to continue living and taking care of her health. She made the usual itinerary, arrived at the place where she liked to walk, but she didn't notice the people who were walking on the athletic track nor the young people who were training on the soccer field. After a few laps on the track, she remembered that, on the previous day, she had heard on the radio that a young soccer team in the city had been beaten down by its opponent. She looked at the young people who were sitting on the edge of the field, waiting for their coach, and she began to notice they were sad, crestfallen, commenting about the embarrassment they had. She continued her way and, when the exercise was done, she decided to return. As she approached the entrance gate, she saw someone sitting there, talking on the cell phone and, for the tracksuit he was wearing, she could see who he was: the coach of the losing team. She approached him, asked him if he were the coach of the team that had lost. He looked up and said "yes". They talked and she introduced herself, saying she was a writer who loved football. They talked for a few minutes and she said that, if she had the chance, she would give him some of her books, so he could get to know her work. He said goodbye and left. She took the same walk several times, but she always forgot to take the books and recognize him training the boys. She seemed to live in a different world, and not that one around her. One morning, when she left home, she finally remembered about her promise. When she arrived at the field, there he was, with his team. After walking, she sat down and waited for the training to finish. She watched the boys training and, as soon as he was free, he came towards her

with a smile on his face. She also smiled at him and said that the books were in the envelope. The coach thanked her and invited her to watch the next game, and gave them strength. She asked him when it would be and assured him she would be there. They said goodbye as people who had just met would say goodbye to each other. It meant nothing to her.

The following afternoon she was at home with her hairdresser when the phone rang. She answered it and, for her surprise, the voice belonged to Paulo, the coach she had met. Then she remembered that she had written down her phone number under her autograph, in one of the books she had given him.

She had found her own gesture strange, because such thing was not a habit for her. He said he would like to speak to her. She said he should come to her house, and asked him where he was and if he knew the neighborhood well. After he confirmed, she said she was waiting for him. She was curious to see the reason he had called her and wanted to talk to without further due. Had he read one of the books and wanted to share with her his opinion? Now she had to wait to know what he wanted with her.

At the appointed time he appeared at the gate. She opened it and gave him a kiss on the cheek. It was as if an electric discharge went through her entire body.

It was the end of a summer afternoon. He was wearing shorts, a T-shirt and sneakers, and she invited him in; When they were in the living room, he said the defeat had cost him his job, since the club had fired him that afternoon. He also said he was separated

from his wife and she was asking for the divorce. The directors of the club said that the problems about his marriage were affecting his work. They told him to go to his city and solve this problem. Then they would talk again, because he was a good coach, but he was not being able to manage his personal and professional life at that moment. They continued to talk and, as it was very hot inside the house, they went to the edge of the pool, where they chattered for a long time. He said he had three children and had been married for sixteen years. He was confused because of everything that was going on, and told her about the time he had played football, his future professional dreams and the mess his emotional life was. Then he said he would have to go, because he had an appointment, but that he would like to talk to her again. He also asked her if she would like to have dinner with him the next day, so they could continue the conversation that, for him, had been very pleasant. He said it was the first time he had trusted someone so fast, at the point of making confidences. She said she would like going out with him; it would nice continuing their conversation. As he had come walking – according to him, he needed to walk outdoors to think better and that was when he had the idea to call her – she asked him if she might give him a ride. He accepted her offer, but just after some reluctance. The journey was not long and Sarah, feeling him sitting next to her in the car, wished to kiss him when he made a comment and smiled at her. That sensual smile made her want to hug and kiss him. However, she held herself. She was the one driving the car and thought she was lucky, because otherwise she didn't know if she would be able to hold herself. He gave her his cell phone number, said goodbye, kissed her on the cheek and left.

The other day, Paulo called her to arrange everything for their dinner together. He picked her up and took her to a calm and cozy restaurant, where he knew the food was good and the background music was nice.

Their dinner was wonderful and the conversation flowed as if they had known each other for many years. They felt some sensual energy flowing between them.

When they left the restaurant, he commented that she was the first woman who had agreed to go out with him after his breakup, and that he thought she was very beautiful, intelligent, and had a wonderful sense of humor and a little bit of malice, which had enchanted him. They talked again, but nothing more than talking and flirting a little bit. Then Sarah received a call from him inviting her to lunch, what she quickly accepted. This time they went to a very beautiful inn. They were looking at the landscape when he said: “I want you, I want something more than just friendship, but I can’t start something without first finishing what is still pending in my life. I want to be totally free to live this feeling that I am experiencing, if that’s what you also want “. She said that was what she wanted the most. He said he would go to his city, solve everything and then he would come back. When he said goodbye, he kissed her on the cheek and said he would soon return, free to live what he wanted. She said she would look forward to his return, because the feeling was mutual.

After a few days she received a call from him, informing her that everything was being resolved and that he would soon return, free for her. A month later he returned. When they met again, they

expressed all the feeling they felt, and the experience was much greater than they could ever imagine.

Sarah discovered that love is eternal within us, we just need to find the right person and be open to new challenges. If love dies between two people, it is because what should be experienced by them is finished. But we can always find ourselves in another person and rediscover love in a different, in a more mature way. And that will still be love, and many times will be even better than the one already lived.

Summatization

“Your body is an amazing creation, capable of performing great wonders, but you can destroy that miraculous machine’s potential with an overdose of stress.”

Dr. Harry J Johnson

Our organism reflects our state of mind.

I have had a skin problem since I was twelve years old. Later, this problem was identified as psoriasis.

I have always tried to find the best specialists and to undergo all the recommended treatments. Iodine-based formulas, ointments, lotions, I tried everything. The spots disappear, but come back. Later, the pills appeared, and, according to the doctors, they were specific and would bring the definitive solution, along with the application of a special shampoo for the hair and a specific soap for the body. Years after that, in adulthood, welts appeared and took almost my entire body. They itched, burned and made breathing something very difficult. Evaluations were made without reaching a conclusion. When the symptoms start to appear, I take anti-allergies. I feel when the allergy is going to appear, because I start to feel indisposition and a confused sensation in the head.

After trying to understand the reason for these two problems and thinking about my life, I concluded that everything was caused by tension and fear, things I have felt since my pre-adolescence.

When the body is always tense and insecure, it cannot function in harmony, and the toxins are accumulated. It comes a time when those toxins have to be released in some way, and then they come out through the pores. Cancer may also have been one of the consequences, along with the fear and the feeling of not being completely correct with my father. He believed that the correct thing was to date and get married, and only then to have intimacy. I lived that with the ones I loved, without signing any paper or asking for his permission.

This is my definition; not medical, but personal. From my life history, I could see that these facts occur when I go through a very stressful situation, either because of decisions to be made or because of some fact that hurts me. For example: if a family member, especially someone I trusted and embraced in difficult times, giving financial support and being a friendly shoulder, turns their back on me after they no longer need me – pretending I never existed. This brings me down. It is one of the reasons for the stress I feel, because then I have to ask myself whether what I experienced was true or illusion. Similar facts have occurred many times in my life.

Our body reaches a point of alert, and mine is this. I only realize this when the problem is expressed through stains and welts. There are several signs before, but I only alert myself when I reach an extreme situation. The mirror reveals what's happening, and I can't pretend that everything is fine, when of course it isn't. I am hurt and angry.

Some of the symptoms I feel before the crucial moment are: lack of sleep, nausea, lack of appetite, tiredness, stomach ache, bitter flavor, tasteless food, and fear. Fear of what? Just fear. It's like I'm living in a place where I'm a stranger. As much as I try to communicate with some family members, it seems that we do not understand each other. If I say something, they say it is not so. The sensation is that the floor is missing under my feet and, as much as I try to hold on to something, it is like a domino cascade starts to fall, piece by piece, one after the other.

Today I can understand what happens to me. So I withdraw and, little by little, with the help of my Mentors, I go back to reality, because I cannot expect others to feel the same I feel; they don't understand what is happening to me. The fall is long and painful, but fortunately I was able to understand I am not alone in this world, and it is at this moment I ask for superior help and listen to my Masters. They help me.

I take medication, but I also do exercises and Yoga to get back to balance. I know this will continue to happen, but I want to prevent letting physical damage get so far; I need to be able to reverse the situation. For example: being less arrogant and thinking I'm capable of everything and nothing can happen to me. I need to think a little more of myself, and worry less about the others. It's never easy, but I take it one step at a time. If I identify the problem, the solution will be simpler. I am currently doing exercises, meditating and reading good books. I write when I want to. I can't go back in life and live each moment differently. But I want to learn to see everything as it is, and be calm to let things reach my heart, and only then make a decision on what to do. After all this, I wonder if I really achieved

my goal as a child. My whole family is well situated, each one of them has their homes and their own companies, in the photographic and electronic fields. My mother can live with what was left after my father's death. I am retired and earn enough to live. I have a house with a small pool and my dog, which is my best companion. I continue with the apartment I acquired in Porto Alegre.

What about me? How am I? Am I happy? Do I feel accomplished?

When I think about the promise I made to my father, yes, I managed to accomplish what I promised. I also beat cancer, many fears and many challenges, but things are not over. Life goes on, and I will go on too. Each difficulty I encountered along the way took me deeper in the search for understanding this life, and I believe this was my goal when I decided to reincarnate.

With the promise I made to my father, I felt responsible for my siblings too. That is why I was always attentive, making them go ahead. The first company my siblings and I opened (although I worked in Porto Alegre, I was always with them), was discussed and planned in one night. At the time, we only had the dream and the need for work. It started as a joke, because we had no financial means to open a company, but we had our father's credibility with society; their will to work and the dream of owning a business. I had some credit with companies in Porto Alegre; they had some knowledge about the work they were going to do, in the photographic field, because they had learned it from our uncle Arlindo.

I encouraged them to make their dream come true. And that's what we did. We rented a commercial room in my name at downtown. They borrowed a camera and we bought on credit, on my behalf, some more things needed for them to start working. The color photographs revelations, at the beginning, were made in Porto Alegre; I paid them and then, little by little, they paid me back. It worked out. The company grew, although with great difficulty. The photos were taken by one of my brothers who, at the beginning, went by bicycle to parties, baptisms, weddings, carrying a backpack with the equipment on his back. Much time later they bought a W.V Beetle.

Doing what I did, I changed the life of some of my siblings, because I helped them to open their company, a place where they would work together, as partners and owners. Today, from this company, many families take their survival, forcing them to continue together.

They didn't stop to think if they should, or wanted, to continue together, or how satisfying that was for their personal relationship. People change over time. Everyone's way of working is different, but they continued as they started. They didn't want, or didn't have the courage, to change. Later, their children were added to the company as employees. They still live from that same company, but one of them, who was one of the founders and partner, decided to leave the company and started, alone, a small business in the same field.

Today, I feel responsible for this situation. If it had not encouraged and helped, perhaps the company would not have

been created and each one would have taken a different course. Whether it would have been better or worse, I will never know. But at the time my concern was that they would have a job and would be able to survive, and this would give me peace of mind.

Because of God, their determination, their ability and intelligence, financially everything worked out. The rest is not for me to evaluate or judge, because everyone is free to do whatever they want in their life. Everything has a price, and each one has already paid for it in order to stay together. The assessment is personal, it is up to each one to get their conclusions. I have always remained aware to my family's needs, although everyone is already married and with children, but I don't know how to remain indifferent when one of them is in trouble. They got used to have my support when they are not well, whether it is a brother, a sister-in-law or one of my nephews.

More recently, Andreia, my younger sister, had serious problems during her pregnancy. She got deeply depressed, and there was a real risk of losing the baby. I helped her and paid for therapy sessions, bought proper clothes to support her pregnant belly and, as it was winter and she was very cold, I bought her a thermal sheet to keep her warm. Fortunately, little by little she got better. She gave birth to a beautiful blonde girl.

Later, her eldest son fell ill. He had to be hospitalized, because with a fever that didn't go down. The doctors took a long time to detect the problem. As he was having a lot of back pain, the doctor in charge of the case decided to give him a chest X-ray and found out that, besides having pneumonia,

staphylococci had lodged in the place. After that, it was possible to start a treatment with specific medication. He started to react slowly to it. It is difficult for me to get in a hospital, because when I leave the place, it takes me time to recover. I am very close to my family, though, and when they needed my support, I didn't think of myself, it was time to support them. As his body ached a lot, he asked me to massage him, in order to relieve the pain he was feeling. I used to sit behind him, prop him up on my chest and massage him. Then I used to do the same with the rest of his body. After the identification of the disease, and the care and attention of the doctor who treated him, in addition to the use of correct medication and spiritual help (through the prayers of family and friends), he reacted to the treatment, being discharged after eight days of hospitalization. He lost a lot of weight but, being a young man, soon gained it back.

Today he is healthy, and we have been even closer. After that fact, the friendship with my sister was strengthened, and I know that I can count on her whenever I need, just as she can count on me.

Alcoholism

What drives someone to a drinking addiction? I am going to tell a story that, I believe, answers that question.

Let's call him John. He was born in a poor family. He studied with difficulty. He didn't always have good, warm clothes to go to class. He had no money to take care of his teeth and, unfortunately, he lost the ones from the front, thus not allowing him to smile. His classmates mocked him, but, even so, he continued to smile, with his mouth half closed though. Later he could put on a prosthesis. However, the period in which he was toothless got recorded in his unconscious. He learned a profession that made him be in contact with well-dressed people. Even in this period, he didn't have good clothes or a car to go to work. He used an old bicycle, and carried a backpack with the tools he needed on his back. But he always smiling, doing his job, watching other people's joy. In his social life everything was the same. On weekends, he had no money to have fun, date or go for a walk. Perhaps unconsciously, he thought that if he drank, he would have the same joy as the people he met, both at work and out of it. Trying the drink, he felt that, for a moment, he was not ashamed of his social situation; now he could forget the insecurities and shyness he used to feel when he was with other people. But he was still doing his duties, as it was his profession to record the facts that happened at events and parties; many people depended on his work. Every time he felt insecure, he sought refuge in the drink. He had no one to talk to about it, because they might find it stupid of him. He didn't

want to demonstrate his fears and insecurities either. He was increasingly getting dependent on that feeling, having alcohol as a friend, an ally. The problem is that alcohol is destructive, and the consequences started to appear.

John is a great professional. He has a generous heart, and never complains about anything. If it is necessary to hurt someone to win an argument, he keeps silent. And what happens then? He gets numbness in the arms of alcohol, so he doesn't put out what he is feeling. It doesn't matter that his financial situation is great today. He doesn't have both feet on the ground and cannot believe that he can, and deserves, to be happy and enjoy everything he has. He becomes, this way, a very sensitive and needy person.

Everyone around John thinks he is weak and arrogant. Why people don't go back in time and try to put themselves in his place, to try to understand him? Because throwing stones is simpler than asking questions. People forget it's not easy to live with alcoholism. When people have this addiction, we get always insecure, waiting for their arrival at home to know if they are sober. Drinking gives them the security they need to face their fears, making them unable to discern whether they are able to drive a car or not, for example. They do not accept being questioned and refuse to hand over the car key to another driver. The drink gave them security and no one will take it away from them. Their will is inconsistent with reality. Their reflexes are compromised, but the certainty they have that everything is fine makes them not see the problem. They believe alcohol helped them to be safer. They trust it, and never admit it is destroying them.

Palliative and momentary solutions are always used. I believe these people should undergo a detox treatment, body rebalance and deep therapy, along with their relatives. I know several Johns and their stories are similar. I don't want to be extreme saying that this is the only problem, but this is definitely one of them. If those measures are not taken, the feeling of guilt of these people will attack the organism (which is already fragile, with destroyed organs) and make the problem irreversible, with a very sad ending.

If you, who are reading this book, have any family member with this problem, go further in search of a cure, just as you would if this person had cancer.

If cancer is curable, why isn't alcoholism?

Reborn

Marta is a great friend of mine and whenever she goes to spend a few days at her beach house, we meet and take the opportunity to walk by the sea and talk. We always enjoy this moment to catch up, a moment she can tell me all about her trips. She loves travelling, and I think I envy her for it. She then replies by saying she envies me for my courage to write. She has been to several countries, and does it for pleasure. She likes to meet different people and cultures, especially new types of food and flavors.

That day, she had just returned from Mexico. As she was talking about the places she had visited, the different types of food she had tried, the beautiful gardens she had seen, it made me feel like I had been there too. After two hours of excited conversation, we were hungry. We hadn't noticed the time passing. She invited me to have lunch at her house, which was at another beach, a few miles from where we were. I quickly accepted, both for the company and the good food I knew she would make. After lunch, we sat on the porch of her house and started paying attention to the boy who was taking care of her front yard with great care. His face was not strange to me. I commented to Marta about this. She started to laugh, and said that this was also one of the reasons that had led her to invite me to have lunch at her home. She said:

– As always, you see everything! Do you remember José, who took care of my front yard for a long time? You even said

he deserved an opportunity to improve his posture, have his hair cut, shave, take care of his teeth, and that perhaps that was the reason he never smiled. You said that those things might give him more self-confidence and, consequently, more opportunities of work. You were right. Yes, that is José, totally reborn. I started to think about what you told me and saw that he was an honest person, needing only a push to start believing in his ability. I started talking to him, and doing that I knew his past had been very sad and painful. He was disappointed with mankind. I said to him: ‘‘ José, you are an intelligent young man, and you work with affection and dedication. Why don’t you believe in yourself? Why don’t you buy a lawnmower? Since it has been difficult to find a job, why don’t you make your own regular clients? I can give your contact to the people I know’’. He said he was afraid he wouldn’t be able to pay the installments of the machine. I also asked him if he wouldn’t like to take care of his teeth. He said that was what he wanted the most, but the experiences he had had with dentists were not good. After that I started to think of a way for him to start liking himself and believing that there are good professionals in this area. I talked to my dentist and told him José’s story. I asked him if he couldn’t help José, so he could have a chance and start a new life. My dentist told me to take him to his office, that they would surely come to an agreement to fix his teeth. I talked to José and told him everything about my conversation with the dentist. I handed him a business card from him and said he should make an appointment and talk to him, if he wanted. If he trusted my dentist, he should undergo the treatment. He thanked me and said he was going to think about the subject. The next time he came here, he was really happy, and thanked me. He had had an appointment

with him, and one tooth had already been extracted as a test. He had felt nothing, no pain whatsoever. He was going to continue the treatment and put on a prosthesis, since in the upper part of the mouth there were only pieces of teeth that could no longer be saved. After that day, he seemed more confident. He accepted the idea of his half-brother, and became part of a group which read the Bible. Then, he joined the Church. He had his hair cut and shaved. Now his clothes were cleaner and less rumpled. One day he came to my house, to look after the patio, and said: “Good morning, Ms. Marta”, and then he smiled at me. I saw that now he had a beautiful denture. I replied to him: “Good morning, José, you are so different, much younger. And what a beautiful smile! You should always smile, it suits you”. He told me: “Thank you very much, Mrs. Marta, if it weren’t for you, I wouldn’t have done anything, because I was afraid of going to the dentist. I must thank you for talking to him. He is very good, and made me a good price and good conditions to pay”. I told him that if he hadn’t been unwilling to do it, nothing could have encouraged him to seek help. We were just the supporters of his wishes. When I went to my dentist’s, I thanked him and told him how José is now and the difference his teeth made in his life. He said the only thing he did was helping another human being who needed something he could accomplish. He had made a special price in response to what I had asked him, but the gratification was greater in seeing that less one Brazilian had no teeth.

Marta also told me that he regularly attended worship service and that he had taken his siblings, too. He bought a good lawnmower and his clientele is much larger now, because not he mows the lawn,

he also moonlights regularly, and he does everything willingly. His encouragement and example made his siblings start to work, getting far away from bad companies and the use of evil things. Now, along with his mother, stepfather and siblings, they have been building a house, and José is the responsible stonemason. His mother said that her family is completely different now, and she will finally have her own house, something she has always dreamed of.

After hearing Marta's report, I was moved and said:

– If each one of us looked beyond our own belly buttons as you did, and people started giving what they have left and sharing what they have (not only material things, but also knowledge), there would be more happy people in the world, and less helpless human beings.

We also commented on how important it is to have faith, whether in our potential, in the human being or in God. It doesn't matter what religion it is, but one that touches the heart. José had to stop looking down at the tip of one's toe feet, to see that there was a bigger world out there, with a lot of good things to offer him, and that this world was created by a Higher Being, a very wise one, the type of being that makes sensitive people get together and make exchanges.

– I was happy to see him better – she said – my dentist was happy to see his work making someone else so happy. It was all part of a great learning experience. Before, José lived asleep, escaping the world. In the past, If I had asked him to do

something, he wouldn't have shown up until noon. Sometimes he started working at 11am ... Today, he starts working at 8am, and keeps going until the work is done, even in the summer, when it's really hot.

We watched José keeping the material he had used to clean the patio and noticed that he had a different energy. His body was more erect, and he had a slight smile on his face, showing calm and security.

Marta added:

– Now he started living fully, and the path to follow will now depend on him. I believe he already knows what he likes and what gives him pleasure. But all of this is just the beginning, like a rebirth.

A Helping hand

My niece Viviam was hit by a motorcycle on the way out of school. She was hit in the forehead, above her eyebrow, what made her bone break. At the time, she was nine years old and lived in the countryside, in the same village where I was born and lived my first years of life.

I was let know about her accident when I arrived from work, because she had been moved to Porto Alegre, the city where I lived and worked. I immediately went to the hospital where she was. When I arrived there, the desperation of her parents and siblings was huge, because the girl's condition was serious. The doctors allowed me to see her in the room where they were preparing her for a CT scan.

She was a beautiful girl, and now she was all deformed because of the accident. Her face was swollen, including her eyes. I held her hand and said that I was there, that I would stay with her parents and that we would pray and ask God to take care of her, because everything would be all right. I also told her that she shouldn't be afraid, because we would be in the other room, waiting for her. She nodded her head. I kissed her on the cheek, hugged my sister and we went to the waiting room, to wait for the results.

It was a long time before a doctor came with the diagnosis: she had head trauma, and a bone tip was pressing the layer which protects the brain. She needed an emergency surgery, and it was

a very delicate intervention – but they would do anything to keep her from having any sequels.

As she was in good health and the results of the exams were excellent, the surgery was scheduled. When it was time to take her to the operating room, she didn't want to go and started to cry. Her mother was unable to go with her, because she was too nervous, and Adilson, Viviani's brother, had not arrived yet. So, I suggested to her: if I went along, holding her hand, would she be less afraid? Viviani said yes. She was scared, because she was going to be alone there. She was afraid, too, of what they were going to do, even though the doctors had explained her everything. I told Viviani she should trust the doctors; they would do anything to make her look beautiful again. She calmed down and agreed. We went down the hall and I, helping to push the stretcher, made her laugh at some comment I was making, but in reality I was very nervous. I knew the seriousness of the surgery, but I couldn't show her my fear, she needed to feel safety and support from me. She held my hand for the entire way. When we arrived at the door of the operating room, the nurse said that I couldn't go any farther. Viviani started to cry. I told her that they were going to take her now just to take a picture of her, so it would be possible to see a big difference after they cut her hair. Since she didn't like her blond curly hair, she could keep the photo as a souvenir. She laughed and agreed.

When I was going away, she looked at me and said: "Wait for me, okay?" I said: "I'll be waiting for you in the room". The nurses took the stretcher with her, who still raised her hand and waved. When those doors closed, all my security and certainty

collapsed; the tears threatened to flow, but I looked at my side and my sister was there, desperate, crying, nobody could calm her down. I put my pain aside and hugged her, trying to give her a little comfort. It took a long time for her to calm down.

When Adilson arrived, I asked everyone to say a prayer asking God to guide the doctors' hands so that everything could work out...

I don't know how long that surgery lasted, but when the door opened and the doctor took off the surgical mask, a slight smile appeared on his face. It was the certainty that everything had gone well. He said it was more difficult than they had expected, because there was sand and dirt inside the wound – but luckily no part had been hit that could bring serious consequences. The rest only time would tell.

Today she is married, pregnant and the only sign of the accident is a slight difference between the eyebrow and eye which were injured and the ones which weren't, but only those who know about what happened can see that.

Life sends a message

Rosi was a beautiful, tall, thin, 18-year-old, brunette girl, and she was aware of how pretty she was. She was also very cheerful and playful with her friends. I can't say I was her friend; I knew her because she was my brother's sister-in-law. The two were very close.

She started to feel pain in her hip and went to see a doctor and, believing that the pain might come from a hit, she took some anti-inflammatories and analgesics. As it didn't pass, they decided she should take some exams. The whole family got desperate when the results came. She was diagnosed with bone cancer.

The treatment to try to reverse or stop the problem started, but nothing worked out. After many examinations, the doctors opted for the surgery, to see if they could remove the cancer.

After the surgery, the chemotherapy sessions started. She was transferred to a hospital close to my apartment. Her parents did not have the financial means to visit her every day, since they lived in the countryside. As I like my brother very much, when I saw the situation of the family, I started to visit her daily. The chemotherapy started to make her depressed, her hair started to fall and she started to lose weight. She always wore a scarf on her head, no longer looked herself in the mirror and didn't want to eat anymore. She used to lay down as if she were dead, and didn't collaborate with the nurse who needed to do physical

therapy on her because of the surgery done. Many times, I got there and she turned her face away, deciding not to talk to me.

I was sad because I understood her desperation for the situation she was going through. I wanted to help her. She needed to eat and to do the recommended exercises. I had to find something that could get her out of that torpor. I started to notice that the only thing that changed her face was when she heard the voice of Carlos, the physiotherapist. He was friendly, playful and very handsome. He called her a princess. Rosi still didn't speak to me, but I started to tell her that Carlos was friendly, and he cared about her, although she didn't help him to do his job. I started by telling Rosi to let the nurses bathe her, to eat something and sit for a while outside that bed. She looked at me and said she was feeling rubbish, hairless, ugly and it was not worth getting up. I asked her to try, once she was much more than just hair and, if she couldn't walk yet, she had the crutches that would help her. Beauty is found within, because the exterior beauty is always going to be taken by time. I also said that, as little as I knew her, I considered her to be an intelligent girl; a girl who at the moment needed to help herself, so that the medicines, doctors and Carlos could help her:

– He has a special affection for you, he is always playing with you and calling you a princess.

She looked at me, but said nothing.

On the other day, when I arrived, she was sitting on the chair, and had already taken a shower. She had had some coffee and was

waiting for Carlos for the physiotherapy session. From that day on we started to get closer, to talk about nonsense and to tell secrets to each other. I implied that Carlos was falling in love with the new Rosi. She laughed and said:

– Do you think so? He is so handsome and I am in this state...

– Rosi, life is made of moments. This is your moment, here, inside this hospital.

Illusion makes us live. Actually, I didn't worry about knowing Carlos's feelings, what mattered was that he treated her well. She needed something to wait for every day besides medication, doctors, nurses, food, the day, the night... She still had bad days, mainly after the chemotherapy sessions, when she didn't talk to anyone, not even me, and didn't eat. Sometimes she wanted something different, like a soup made by me, so the nurses called me, and I would cook everything quickly and take it to the hospital. She didn't always eat all of it, but at least a few spoonfuls were worth it. I always took something different to her, and gradually she got better.

After the treatment was finished, and since the new drastic surgery that the doctors wanted to do didn't guarantee any improvement, neither she nor her family agreed with it. After all, she was fine, so much that she returned home, in the countryside, hoping the tumor would stabilize. The doctors even insisted that I convinced her to have the surgery, using my friendship to influence her, but I said that I wouldn't do such thing. She was the owner of her life, and only she could decide

something like that, and that I would never use our friendship and the trust she had on me to convince her to do something that neither I nor the doctor knew would work. They even tried to coerce me, saying that I would feel guilty when I saw her on a bed and in unbearable pain after. According to them, if the tumor did not stabilize and the surgery was not performed, that would happen. I told them that it was up to her and her family members to make that decision, since she would be the one who would suffer the consequences of that. The surgery was not done.

Rosi's recovery lasted for a few months, but unfortunately her condition got worse again. The cancer has not stabilized. She tried an alternative treatment with the doctors, and that helped to relieve her pain for a while, but there came a time when she got tired of fighting. It was when I told her mother I was handing over her daughter and walking away, what I could do I had done, unfortunately she wanted to give up and the life was hers, that was a right she had. Rosi's mother thanked me for everything I had done for her daughter and said that God would always help me. I said goodbye to her and only went to see her again a year later, when she had already been at the hospital of the city she lived for several months. She was there because she needed to take a cocktail of drugs to relieve her pain. She recognized me; she was extremely thin. I gave her a kiss and said that I had learned a lot from her during that time we spent at the Hospital, in Porto Alegre. She closed her eyes, as if to say she knew what I was talking about, and a tear streamed out of the corner of her eyes. A week later she disincarnated. Later, when I found out I

had cancer, I remembered her and how I awakened in her mind that need to fight and collaborate. No matter what the situation is, someone will always like us, because the physical appearance is not the only thing that matters. As I always say, in every situation there is a helping hand for us.

Possession

We usually say: “I lost my father”. “I lost my mother”. “I lost my son” ... But how can we lose something we don’t have?

Let’s use my father as an example. He is my father because he made me, but he doesn’t belong to me. Each person has a life, own feelings and knowledge. I can say that something is mine when I have all the powers over it. But we are transitory in this world, so we only have temporarily the possession power.

Our life is frequently analyzed for what we have. We are evaluated by what we have, not what we are. In reality for the goods we take care of. We spend a large part of our lives working to build our heritage, and the rest of it to maintain it. When we disincarnate, it is as if only one piece was removed, and everything is reorganized again. We remain as a memory of those who stayed here and, little by little, we are just a distant image that quickly passes through their minds. Our assets are divided between those with legal rights. Sometimes old photos are handled and only then people comment on that fact recorded in it, and what our presence did in their lives. Nothing is ours forever, nor is our body.

They teach us to live, and there are many courses for our life learning, but there are no courses for preparing us to have detachment from material things and accept death as a consequence of life. We get scared when someone comes to tell us about the death of someone we know, and immediately we want to know how that person died. Why? We will die too – we

just don't know when. This is the great secret and challenge that we should learn to live with. We should also discover how not to feel so much when there is a separation from someone we love. Do we love the physical or the spirit (or soul or whatever way people call it)? If it is only the physical, we really lose that person, but if it is the spirit, this person never dies, because the spirit is infinite in its existence. How can we love what we don't see? We do not see with our physical eyes, but with the sensitivity of spirits that vibrate at similar frequencies and complete each other.

Religions try to alleviate pain by saying it is God's will. But is God, being our Father, going to make His children suffer, taking away a loved one? This is one more reason for our pain to increase and for us to revolt at the loss and at our Father's betrayal. Why is He punishing us? Each religion has a way of explaining death and where the spirit that inhabited that body goes. For those who didn't die and stayed on Earth, at the first moment it doesn't matter where the spirit of a loved one goes. We will miss the sound of the voice, the warmth of the touch, the smell, the smile, the speeches, the reconciliations, the hugs, the friendly shoulder, the right word at the right time and knowing that we can count with that person whenever we need, either to share pain or joy. The emptiness that remains is the size of the love we feel. We need to understand that God made a perfect world for us to learn and grow, as if we were going the pass from elementary school to college, with new subjects every day and tests to know if we learned the lesson. Those tests are the difficulties that we face in life. If they came, it was because we

were already able to overcome them. Like a math test, it can be difficult, but we have already been given the content to solve the problems. If we don't learn in the right way, we will take more time to pass these tests. In this case, we may try using the longest path, or the teacher may try using another technique to teach us the content to solve the problems, as life will give us another opportunity to learn, in other situation.

We came here with time to learn, and after learning we must return, without any memories of the time that has already been lived. Each one of us returns after living what we must live. Not always we transform what we learn into wisdom.

Using what we have learned

I had just finished renovating my home, a dream that I had cherished for a long time until I managed to achieve it. During the works, I had to leave the house to facilitate the process and also because of the impossibility of habiting it because of the dust and chaos that every renovation causes. During this period, I stayed at my mother's.

I chose a great architect to design the changes I intended to make, so that my residence would be as I desired. Then, I took care to deliver the project to an honest and responsible builder, already known to me.

Everything ready to begin, I started to be afraid: I would change my small world, a delimited and closed space, and transform it. I would hand the transformation over to other people, and this scared me, although the team was led by a builder of my entire trust.

Since the beginning, I felt as if they were also changing things inside me. I looked at all those people inside my backyard, each one of them performing a different role, like: breaking the plaster, changing windows, doors and the roof, trucks bringing material and removing debris. In a short time, the house was disfigured, and no longer looked like my home.

Like all works, it had its setbacks, but finally it came to an end, in the time agreed, and even better than I was expecting. Of course I was tired of all that confusion, and you can be sure I often stopped and wondered why it all started in the first place.

I didn't want to remember that the house was in need of repairs and that it would be impossible to renovate it without disturbing the structure.

Approximately a month after returning to the finished house, an allergy appeared in my body, mainly in my arms, and also an irritating cough.

I looked for medical help, and several exams were performed. However, they didn't find any reason for the skin and the respiratory allergies. I was treated with ointments and oral medication, but we didn't see any positive results, and the medication made gain 10 pounds.

Time went by and I was not getting better. I was already feeling helpless and very irritated, and that was even affecting my sleep. After ten months of struggle, I started to think about the last events in my life: I had changed my "nest", my home, enlarging it. It was my space, and I was afraid of occupying it. My body answered by transforming the skin of my arms, which are our wings, into a breastplate, and I started to breathe as if my insides were smaller, due to the transformation of my home. It was as if the house was getting big and I was getting smaller. I was afraid to open my arms and take a deep breath.

It was a long learning process. It took me almost one year to start identifying what was happening and that my improvement depended more on me than on the doctors. I had the help of wonderful professionals, both in traditional and alternative medicine. I tried to strengthen myself internally and spiritually.

Fortunately, the same way my allergies came, they gradually disappeared. What healed them? The identification of the real problem.

After getting rid of what bothered me, I stood in front of my house and, for the first time, saw it as it was. I saw how beautiful it was, and felt that I deserved to occupy it with all the good things it had. I had dreamed of my house that way, and now I would occupy it with great joy.

Gradually, things started to get better. My friend, Professor Antonio Uliano, a parapsychologist who applies the Quantum-Alchemical treatment, and whom I have seen for many years, said: “we only learn in difficult times”. I looked for help in everything of good the Universe had to offer and that I was aware of. The path is slow and it is pleasant to notice each sensation reemerging. I didn’t taste or smell for a long time, and how great it is to be able to feel those things again!

During that period, I also had a small home accident, injuring a vertebra. I was semi-immobilized for twenty days, depending on others for almost everything. As I live alone and considered myself very self-sufficient, I learned to ask for help and to receive affection. For all those reasons, today I say that we learn in difficult times, and that the Universe is a school with teachers everywhere. Each one of these teachers has their knowledge, and all of them are ready to reach out to help and welcome all of us.

We just need to be humble and know how to ask.

Farewell, my father

My story of life and struggle with my father started when I was ten years old, as can be seen on the previous pages, where I told the promise I made to him. My life has been based on that promise.

When he was very ill and could hardly speak due to the consequences left by the stroke, one afternoon, the two of us, sitting in the living room of his house, talked and cleared up everything we he had gone through together. I told him he had been a warrior, and that our “pact” had worked out. I think maybe that’s why I often interfered in my siblings’ lives, and why sometimes I was not understood by them; it was as if I were co-responsible for all of them. After all, I had promised my father that no one else would step on our family. I did everything in my power to keep my promise. We cried a lot in that afternoon. I told him to be calm, because he did a lot to keep his family together. Besides that, de helped us to build what we have today. It was an unforgettable afternoon. We said everything we should have said, despite the difficulty he had to express himself. Thanks, dad...

A few days later, he got worse. He was unable to sleep properly, despite the medication. So, the doctors decided to admit him again. They said that to him, but my father didn’t accept the idea of returning to the hospital. He got up and started walking all over the house with the help of his stick, although with great difficulty. In each room of the house, he looked at everything and

wept. When he got to the bedroom he shared with my mother, he sat on the bed, propped on his stick and, between tears, he said:

– Norma... If I go to the hospital, I won't come back home anymore; I will die.

I knelt at his feet, placing my hands on his knees, and said:

– Dad, at this moment, this is the best for you, and I promise you something: you will come back. You will get stronger and sleep in this bed again. Have I ever promised you something and didn't keep it?

He said “no”.

I asked him to do what the doctors were suggesting. I also said that he would get better, and that my mother would be waiting for him.

My father truly adored my mother, his partner for 55 years. He was too scared thinking that maybe he wouldn't see her again. He looked at me sobbing and said that yes, he would go to the hospital. He asked us to take good care of my mother and, for me, he also said I shouldn't leave her alone.

Once again, God granted my request. I prayed hard so that he could get better and come back home. I promised him this would happen, and it did. When he was at his front door, I said:

– See, dad? I said you would come back home!

He was weak, but managed to smile at me. A smile of victory.

Unfortunately, a few days later, in the morning, he sent for me. I arrived there and saw he was very short of breath; he definitely wasn't well. He was lying on the bed. I sat behind him and lifted his head, propping him against my chest. I tried to pass some calm and energy to him while we hugged each other.

I felt those would be my last moments with him in this life, and I could do little to alleviate his fear and anguish. We were alone for approximately two hours. I asked God to give me the strength to help him at that moment, which, although painful, for me was like a long physical farewell (and, temporarily, a spiritual one too).

I felt his uneven breathing, as well as his persistence in resisting. He calmed down a little bit and asked me send for two of his children. He had an urgent need to speak to them. Everyone was working, but I did what he requested me. When they arrived, he asked the first one to forgive him. My brother replied he had nothing to forgive, but my father insisted. I signaled to my brother that our father needed to hear his forgiveness, only he knew why, and there was no need, at that time, to question him about the reason. My father and my brother, holding each other's hands, forgave one another. The same happened to my sister. We never got to know the reason for his request, but that was important to him and, fortunately, he had a chance to do that.

Then the other children arrived and decided to hospitalize him again. He said he didn't want to go, he just wanted to be

with my mother. They put him in the wheelchair, to take him to Odilon's car, the eldest of his children. My dad still looked at me, trying to say with his head "no". I knelt down in front of him, took his hands and said:

– Dad, I didn't want you to go either, but they think this is better for you. I cannot promise that you will return this time, as I did before. Perhaps your mission on Earth, in this life, has ended, and our pact ends here as well. You were a warrior, and I have loved you very much. You can be sure that our pact worked out. You taught me and showed me how to carry on. I will continue here, fulfilling my mission, taking care of mom. You also know I am not going to visit you at the hospital.

He nodded and I continued:

– But one day, we will meet again. I will continue my journey with everything we have learned together.

He started to cry with his intense blue eyes. I asked him if I could give him a kiss. He didn't like kisses (he said people used to drool too much in kisses), but he agreed. I gave him a kiss on his forehead, and I can still feel that exchange, that farewell: he holding my hand and squeezing it tightly while I was kissing him. I said he shouldn't be afraid, I would stay at home, take care of mom and pray for him. He was still holding my hand, and the gaze we shared was one of goodbye. I felt I would no longer see him alive, and that in fact happened.

Talking about what my father taught me, and the role he had in my life... I always felt he was a person to whom I had to give explanations. He made sure I would never give up. I have never forgotten what I promised him, and that promise pushed me forward. I was often afraid, very afraid of life, but I couldn't fail, because I had given my word to a warrior. The first thing he taught me was how to swim, and this teaching helped me on my journey. Whenever I had difficult problems to face, I knew I could trust that a helping hand would arrive to keep me from sinking, and this has always happened. He taught me to have dignity. He never said how to proceed in life, but his life was an example to be followed. Saying I miss him? This is redundant.

I had arguments with him, it's true, and only we both knew the reasons. As I was trying to go ahead, influenced by his grit, I didn't want him to give up. When I had an argument with him, it was to provoke a reaction. If he gave up, who would motivate me to move on? And whom would I do that for?

My father did have fears: of dying, of becoming ill and of becoming dependent on others, because he liked the freedom to come and go as he liked. He didn't like anyone's ride, he preferred his bike (which he rode until the moment his legs allowed him, because over time a problem in his right leg prevented him from cycling). He hated closed windows and closed doors to sleep. He had a phobia just thinking about having to go under the house. He was very afraid of being forgotten when he died, so he planted trees everywhere in the land where he lived. The allotment was created from an area of approximately eight hectares that he had acquired in Osorio. He lived there for many years, but made little

use of the land. It wasn't a good land for production. The idea of a subdivision was successfully implemented by Sergio, one of his children. The place was named by the family as Panoramic Allotment, and there almost all the family lives, because my father gave each one of his children a piece of land to build a house. He used to say that owning a house was important, because people should have a safe place to return to at the end of a working day.

He used to make nests and little houses for the birds to have a place to lay their eggs and take care of their babies when they were born, thus preventing other birds from eating them. He also planted several trees in the land. He worried a lot about the lack of green and shade. He used to say that the ground also needed protection.

He had his strengths and his weaknesses. He failed sometimes, yes, like any human being, but he also had the wisdom of life, which often irritated us. He knew by our attitudes when we had a problem, although we tried to hide those things from him, so as not to worry him, or because we wanted to solve things ourselves. He started to say that something was wrong with us. We thought he was teasing us, but then we realized that he was right. He always said what he was thinking, but if he later found out he was wrong, he would go to the person's home and apologize. He never told his point of view indirectly; he was direct and spoke his opinion himself. Nowadays, after his death, I miss him very much, but I know that his mission was accomplished, and my deal with him in this life too.

I tried to do my best and everything my ability allowed me to do in order to fulfill the promise I made.

But my mission in this incarnation is not over yet. I am trying to use everything I have learned and transform this into wisdom, so that I can develop my inner self. I no longer have my father's physical presence with me, but I have the learnings he left me and all my experiences. As there is no end, I will continue my journey and make the best of the chance God gave me when I reincarnated and he placed me in a family that had the necessary requirements for my evolution. God took my father because it is time for me to go on with my life by myself, without him. But I know that when I need, I will find a helping hand to hold until I am strong and able to move forward.



This is my father, from whom, with great pride and gratitude, I temporarily say goodbye. Until one day, my father and friend, *José Antônio Trespach*.



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