



Sudden loss of an adult sibling : the bereavement experience
by Julie E Long

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of . Nursing
Montana State University
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Abstract:

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Method: A qualitative approach using Giorgis phenomenological method is used to describe the actual lived experience of an adult who has lost a sibling to sudden death. In-depth data analysis was conducted from the interviews of women who suddenly lost their sibling to death. The death occurred not less than one year from the present time or greater than six years from the date of the interview itself.

Findings: Many themes emerged from the analysis of the data. Some themes elicited appear to support the findings of the literature such as perpetual ambivalence, loss of temporality, the healing power of time, transformation of identity, and search for support. Other themes elicited in the study of sudden loss of an adult sibling included difficulty capturing the emotional experience, the siblings attempt to become the strength of the family unit, intensity of pain and suffering, prevalence and importance of intuition, transcendent dimension, and ownership of grief. Elements of complicated mourning and post traumatic stress symptoms were elicited from the in depth analysis of the experience. Implications for practice and further research recommendations are discussed.

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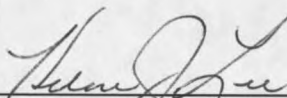
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This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.


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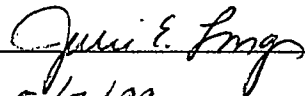
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ABSTRACT

Adult siblings appear to become lost not only in the grieving process itself but also in the available literature. Little is known about the experience of sudden loss of an adult sibling. This qualitative study attempts to find out what the sibling in particular experiences after the death of her sibling.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe the lived experience of sudden loss of an adult sibling.

Method: A qualitative approach using Giorgi's phenomenological method is used to describe the actual lived experience of an adult who has lost a sibling to sudden death. In-depth data analysis was conducted from the interviews of women who suddenly lost their sibling to death. The death occurred not less than one year from the present time or greater than six years from the date of the interview itself.

Findings: Many themes emerged from the analysis of the data. Some themes elicited appear to support the findings of the literature such as perpetual ambivalence, loss of temporality, the healing power of time, transformation of identity, and search for support. Other themes elicited in the study of sudden loss of an adult sibling included difficulty capturing the emotional experience, the siblings attempt to become the strength of the family unit, intensity of pain and suffering, prevalence and importance of intuition, transcendent dimension, and ownership of grief. Elements of complicated mourning and post traumatic stress symptoms were elicited from the in depth analysis of the experience. Implications for practice and further research recommendations are discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Members of the American culture appear to cope with death by denying its inevitability and not talking about the issues surrounding death. We look towards the future concentrating on health and well-being. Many fear death, therefore discussions revolving around death are rare. Death, as defined by Raphael (1983), has many meanings: "the grim reaper; a sleep from which the sleeper does not awake; catastrophe and destruction; nonbeing; transition to another life; the end; the loss of loved ones; the death of self" (p.19).

To die is a part of every human experience. The knowledge of the inevitability of death is incorporated into the psychological structure of each person. The ideas surrounding death are accommodated in many ways. Even when death is inevitable and someone is found to be terminally ill, patients and families find it difficult to approach the subject. People are unprepared to handle the situations surrounding the end of life. Many health professionals also find it difficult to find the right words when talking about death and dying. Because of this difficulty, they neglect to address many fundamental issues and focus on aspects of physical care. There is evidence that approaching death is made easier when the patient feels understood and can voice his feelings, thoughts, hopes, and fears about death and dying (Herbst, Lynn, Mermann, & Rhymes, 1995). If death is openly discussed, both the individual dying and the family will more easily be able to accept and come to terms with it. Attempts to resolve issues can occur and grieving can begin earlier. Death can be a positive experience if dealt with directly.

Each year, 140,000 people are killed in traumatic accidents. Trauma kills more people between the ages of 1 and 34 than all other diseases combined (Coolican, Vassar, & Grogan, 1989). These statistics and the knowledge about anticipatory death lead us to believe the affected families will need prompt intervention and long term emotional support. Sudden death is unexpected and there is no opportunity for anticipation or preparation beforehand. The death brings an extra effect of shock over and above the normal and is also a potent reminder of human mortality. There continues to be a struggle to find expression and closure for uncomfortable psychological reactions accompanying the death of a family member or close friend. These reactions may lead to anxiety about who one is and what one will become, and can include confusion, disorganization, and depression as the world they once knew is shattered and unexpected emotions are encountered (Rando, 1997).

Grief and bereavement have been studied extensively in the literature. Most studies refer to anticipated loss of a family member or sudden loss of a spouse or child. Little research exists on sudden loss of a sibling and even less on sudden loss of an adult sibling.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to phenomenologically examine the experiences of siblings after sudden loss of their adult sibling. Phenomenological research examines the lived, internal experience of individuals with as few suppositions about its nature as possible. Using the phenomenological approach, the researcher attempts to find meaning and commonalties in the experiences of adult siblings to further explain the phenomena of sudden loss. The themes that emerge are compared to current research and theories of sudden loss of siblings.

The background of the study originated from my deep rooted history as both a registered nurse and a close friend of a woman who lost her sister to sudden death. As an RN working mostly in critical care areas, I have often encountered death and dying. The

process is never easy. However, I have witnessed peaceful deaths as well as devastatingly painful deaths. It has always been of interest to me to ascertain an approach to support grieving families coping with the loss of a loved one. I have felt deficient of words and wisdom, attempting to provide assistance, comfort, and empathy but never feeling adequate. It is partially because of my inadequacy that I chose to study the bereavement experience, in hopes I would gain new insight and understanding of grief and loss and become more competent assisting and intervening when appropriate. The phenomenon warranted further study into the experience of sudden loss and in particular the experience of siblings as the bereaved.

Theoretical Framework

The sudden death of a child or young adult may be the most difficult kind of death to experience. There is no time to prepare and seldom are there past experiences from which to learn coping skills. The experience not only affects the individual family members but also the family itself and, therefore, family needs for support and intervention are increased (Coolican, 1994). Stage and phase-based models have recently come under criticism because they seem to many times stereotype the individual. Although stages are still used, task-based models have become more common. Task-based models follow the nursing process and emphasize both individual tasks and family tasks which are part of the larger coping effort associated with dying and bereavement (Corr & Doka, 1994).

Bereavement occurs most often in the context of the family. The family may be considered a system and may be examined in terms of general systems theory. The family is distinguished by its wholeness, by the relation of each subsystem to the whole system, and by its interrelationships with the broader systems of its community, society, and culture (Raphael, 1983). According to Hanson and Boyd (1996), systems theory includes these major principles. Each system has its own characteristics, and the whole is greater

than the sum of the parts, rather than just the sum of the characteristics of individual parts of the system. All parts of the system are interdependent, even though each part has its own role within the system. There are mechanisms for exchange of information within the system and within the broader environment. A change in one member of the family system will influence the entire system. The systems theory parallels concepts of the family stress model where stressful events within a family are more stressful than stressors outside the family system.

Bereavement may affect the family system in many different ways. The death of a member means the system is permanently changed. Interlocking roles, relationships, interactions, communications, psychopathology, and needs can no longer be fulfilled in the same way as before the death. The family unit as it was before dies and a new family unit is constructed. The death will be a crisis for the family unit as well as for each individual member and each component subsystem. Subsystems include diads such as spouse-spouse, mother-child, and sibling-sibling. The threat to the integrity of the family unit may come not only through the change that loss of a family member brings, but also because that member may have occupied a key role in maintaining the structure of the family system, or in regulating it in a crisis. All these factors suggest the need for support of the whole family during the time of bereavement. If the family can handle its loss with feeling and openness, flexibility, strength, and mutual support amongst its members and support from others, it is likely to rebuild a powerful and unified system to face its new future (Raphael, 1983).

Definitions of Terms as Used in This Study

Bereavement: An individual response to that loss or change of status resulting from the loss (Kastenbaum & Kastenbaum, 1989).

Bracketing: To hold in abeyance what one knows about the described phenomenon in order to grasp its presentation in a fresh manner (Giorgi, 1985).

Essential Description: The final level of analysis which situated aspects of the fundamental experience are dropped off in order to directly synthesize the transformed meaning units into a final general description (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Fundamental Description: The description which emerges from combination of all subjects. The description includes structures which are essential to each situated instance of phenomenon using psychological language (Jenni, 1990).

Grief: A highly personal and subjective set of response that an individual makes to a real, perceived, or anticipated loss (Kastenbaum & Kastenbaum, 1989).

Meaning units: Manageable units that emerge after reflection on a subject's description, arrived at when the researcher becomes aware of a shift of meaning of the situation for the subject (Giorgi, 1985).

Mourning: A culturally patterned expression or ritual that accompanies loss and allows others to recognize that one has become bereaved (Kastenbaum & Kastenbaum, 1989).

Phenomenological Research: A descriptive and qualitative method of research which focuses on the meaning of the subject's lived experience of a particular phenomenon instead of on descriptions of their overt actions or behaviors (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Pilot Study: Preliminary or initial interviews designed to aid the researcher in framing the interview question.

Reduction: The acceptance of the description of an experience simply as it presents itself without reflection or judgment of what it means (Giorgi, 1985).

Rigor: Applying exactness, precision or accuracy, in this case of research method.

Subject: He or she who participates in interviews for the research project. They are participants who “open their subjective experience to the researcher, but they are not subjects of the researcher” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 47).

Subject Selection: The interaction between or among two or more people and an even which creates a content in which meaning is derived within each individual (Polkinghorne, 1989).

Triangulation: The method of combining and analyzing information from three or more subjects in search of shared commonalties that pertain to the research question (Giorgi, 1985).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Bereavement is the reaction to the loss of a close relationship. The bereavement reaction often is described in stages or phases that an individual experiences after a death. Each stage or phase represents processes of adaptation to the loss. It is acknowledged in the literature that the phases are not always clear cut and that one may travel in and out of a particular stage or phase at any given time. Sudden loss adds a dimension not frequently discussed separately from anticipated loss. There is no preparation for the sudden death of a close friend or family member. Grief can become more intense when the death occurs prematurely in a young adult or child. The response to the loss becomes even more unpredictable. Each of these areas will be discussed in the review of the literature on sudden loss of a sibling.

It is important to distinguish and have accurate knowledge of the differences between grief, bereavement, and mourning. These terms are sometimes used interchangeably but each has its own unique meaning. Grief is defined as a highly personal and subjective set of responses that an individual makes to a real, perceived, or anticipated loss (Kastenbaum & Kastenbaum, 1989). This can be any loss such as death, divorce, health, relationships, possessions, or hope. Bereavement is an individual response to that loss or change of status resulting from the loss. Mourning is a culturally patterned expression or ritual that accompanies loss and allows others to recognize that one has become bereaved. An example of a mourning ritual in our culture is wearing black and attending funerals.

Stages of Grief and Bereavement

Kubler Ross (1969) first defined the five stages of grieving (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). Since that time, the stages have been condensed, altered and restructured. The current popular belief is that there are three stages of grief. The stages, time periods and manifestations vary greatly among individuals. The first stage of grief includes shock and denial. Shock is a natural way of helping grieving persons cope during the first hours and days after the death. The bereaved persons may experience numbness or lack of feeling which helps them get through the initial notification and burial plans. Some people may experience disbelief and remain unconvinced that the death has occurred until they see the body. The second stage is depression and disorganization. The bereft may experience difficulties such as loss of concentration, weeping, insomnia, and loss of appetite. Many experience anger and guilt over the death of a loved one. At this time the phrase "if only" will abound. Rumination (repeatedly replaying the death in one's mind) may also occur in this stage. The third stage includes reorganization and reengagement. Bereaved persons begin to move onward with their lives without the presence of the deceased. They develop a more balanced view of the person who has died and can assign a new status to the deceased (Herbst et al., 1995).

While there are an abundance of studies citing various stages of grief, few studies were found specifically identifying the stages of bereavement. Lindemann (1944) conducted the first study of bereavement and described the outcome as having a predictable course with identifiable symptoms including somatic distress, preoccupation with the image of the deceased, guilt, hostility, loss of usual patterns of conduct, and in some, the imitation of the deceased's behaviors. Since Lindemann's work, researchers in the field believe the bereavement reaction to be a process where one progresses through a series of stages (Burnett, Middleton, Raphael, Dunne, Moylan, & Maritnek, 1994). The studies located are not in consensus on definite stages of bereavement. According to Parkes

(1970), Parkes & Brown (1972), and Clayton (1973), the terms impact and numbness are used to define stage one. This stage can last a few hours, days or weeks. The bereaved person is dazed and functions automatically. The second stage is defined in various ways by different authors. Terms such as recoil, depression, yearning and protest, and disorganization have been used. Steen (1998) states depression syndrome occurs in about one-half of all grieving people, and about 10% of those persons suffer major depression. It is thought that stage two lasts from a few weeks up to a year. The third stage is labeled recovery. During this period there is acceptance of the death. A return to the level of functioning prior to the death is established (Clayton, 1990).

A "Task Based Approach" is a theoretical model used in the field of bereavement (Corr & Doka, 1994). It describes certain definitive tasks that families who are coping with the death of a loved one may work through. This approach avoids generalizations that obscure the individuality of persons coping with bereavement. The model emphasizes individual tasks that are part of the larger coping effort. This model has been used more often in acute/critical care settings because it emphasizes present-tense concerns. It uses the nursing process and encourages the development of goals and objectives. The task based approach can assist those bereft by improving understanding in coping with the processes of bereavement, fostering empowerment of those coping with death-related experiences, emphasizing interactive participation of shared death-related experience, and providing guidance to assist persons through bereavement. Two authors provide similar examples of the task based approach: Worden's (1982) tasks of grieving, and Corr's (1994) coping with dying. According to Worden, the first task of grieving is accepting the reality of the loss. The second task is experiencing the pain of grief. The third is to adjust to an environment that no longer includes the deceased. The last task mentioned is withdrawing emotional energy and reinvesting in another relationship (Gifford & Cleary, 1990). Kastenbaum and Kastenbaum (1989) include an additional task of reassessing and

rebuilding the faith or philosophical system challenged by the loss which would include the meaning system specific to that individual.

Sudden Loss

Sudden death adds a whole new dimension to grief and loss. Sudden loss, death without forewarning, creates special problems for survivors. Three of the most common problems include intensified grief, the shattering of a person's normal world, and the existence of a series of concurrent crisis and secondary losses (Doka & Gordon, 1996). There is no opportunity for anticipation or preparation. The shock can be overwhelming. The experience can be a potent reminder of human mortality and impotence. The bereaved are confronted with powerlessness and human helplessness. The reality is difficult to comprehend. In contrast, if the death is expected, the family members have the opportunity to make cognitive and practical preparations.

Sudden death becomes more complicated when it occurs away from the home. The death may occur in a strange place. Persons may die alone or with strangers. Sudden, unexpected, and untimely death propose greater problems for the bereaved than anticipated death because there are greater difficulties with acceptance of the loss and adjustment to it (Raphael, 1983). Survivors sudden, unanticipated loss often experience a heightened sense of vulnerability and anxiety. Also experienced are secondary losses such as lost income and spiritual loss (Doka & Gordon, 1996). There is a greater chance of health problems and more difficulty with return to normalcy (Parkes, 1970).

Sudden death also may alter the quality of the relationship between the bereaved and the dying person. It may highlight patterns of the relationship entailed at the time of the loss. Ambivalences normally resolved in everyday life are held frozen most likely with extra guilt and pain. Most persons wish for opportunities to say good-bye, to resolve issues left open. With sudden loss, the opportunity does not exist making it that much

more difficult to move on and face day-to-day issues without that family member (Raphael, 1983).

Loss of a family member may result in an increased risk for health problems. Depression has been found to be a frequent occurrence of the bereaved along with increased physical morbidity and mortality. Little remains known about the factors that determine the impact of the loss on those left behind. Cleiren, Diekstra, Kerkhof, & Van der Wal (1994) state that 10% to 20% of the bereaved do not recover or only partially recover from their loss.

Sudden loss is often considered to induce post-traumatic stress symptoms and increased psychiatric morbidity (Cleiren et al., 1994). Raphael (1983) stated that the news of the death may be so stressful that the ego may become overwhelmed. Ego resources then become consumed with trying to master helplessness and other flooding effects. The shock of sudden death is an overwhelming experience which psychologically complicates any response to it. Many times posttraumatic reactions of bereavement are thought to be neglected or insufficiently appreciated. Relatively little has been written about the clinical combination of bereavement and posttraumatic stress. Yet, in recent years, there has been increasingly more interest in these types of deaths that inherently lead to a mixture of both in the bereaved. Traumatic death specifically predisposes an individual to complicated mourning. This is described to be the state, wherein given the amount of time since the death, there is some compromise, distortion, or failure of one or more of the processes of mourning (Rando, 1996). The number of studies in this area leaves a serious gap in the literature and treatment perspectives.

Complicated Mourning

Confusion, disorganization, and depression are the results when one's world is shattered by an unexpected death. There is continued resistance to relinquishing ties to the old world and forming new ones consistent with present day reality. Complicated

mourning refers to the inability to adjust to any one of the "six R's;" recognize the loss, react to the separation, recollect and reexperience the deceased and the relationship, relinquish old attachments of the deceased and the old assumptive world, readjust to move adaptively into the new world without forgetting the old, and reinvest. In complicated mourning there are attempts to deny, repress, or avoid aspects of the loss, its pain, and the full realization of its implications for the mourner. Attempts are also made to hold onto and avoid relinquishing the lost loved one (Rando, 1993).

Rando (1993) discusses additional issues that are inherent in sudden death. A few of these issues include, (a) diminished capacity to cope as the shock overwhelms the ego manifesting itself as heightened personal threat and vulnerability, (b) the assumptive world is violently shattered causing reactions of fear, anxiety, vulnerability, and loss of control, (c) the loss does not make sense and cannot be absorbed, (d) lack of closure with the inability to say good-bye, (e) symptoms of acute grief and emotional shock persist, (f) mourner obsessively reconstructs the events, (g) mourner experiences a loss of security and confidence in the world increasing many kinds of anxiety, and (h) the death tends to leave the mourner with more intense emotional reactions such as greater anger, more ambivalence, guilt, helplessness, vulnerability, confusion, obsession with the deceased and strong needs to make meaning of the death. With the death a number of secondary losses often follow. In addition the death can provoke posttraumatic stress responses (repeated intrusion of traumatic memories, numbing of general responsiveness, increased physiological arousal). Rando also adds if the body has not been viewed to confirm the death, the mourner is at additional risk for complications.

Post traumatic stress symptoms

Sudden death is often considered to induce post-traumatic stress symptoms (Cleiren et al., 1994). van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth (1996) state "trauma can affect

victims on every level of functioning: biological, psychological, social, and spiritual” (p. 16). They also state that as long as victims can formulate meaning out of the trauma, they often experience the symptoms of PTSD as natural reactions. Symptoms of PTSD include the inability to sort out relevant from irrelevant stimuli and difficulty ignoring what is unimportant and focusing on what is important. They are easily overstimulated and they compensate by shutting down. Those who experience PTSD tend to experience loss of involvement in ordinary, everyday life thus making it more difficult for them to get their minds off the trauma. Secondary to lack of involvement in everyday life activities, they lose the ability to respond to their environment.

The distinguishing factor between people who develop PTSD from the people who are temporarily stressed is that those with PTSD start organizing their lives around the trauma (van der Kolk et al., 1996). Steen (1998) describes distinguishing PTSD from normal bereavement by “intrusive symptoms persisting more than one month, such as increased arousal, reexperiencing the traumatic event, avoiding stimuli associated with the trauma, and clinically significant distress or impaired functioning (p. 59).” The posttraumatic syndrome manifests when time is unable to heal the wounds and the traumatic event itself is not integrated and accepted as a part of ones personal past. The trauma is a completely new experience which confronts the person itself and it stresses the individuals attitudes and beliefs. One must be able to accommodate and assimilate the event (van der Kolk et al., 1996).

Sibling loss

Death of a sibling terminates one of the longest relationships of a lifetime. A report from an Institute of Medicine on bereavement published over a decade ago identified sibling bereavement as an area in need of further research (Robinson & Pickett, 1996). Since then, most published investigations of sibling bereavement have been limited to white

pediatric and adolescent populations, usually from cancer-related deaths. Adult sibling bereavement remains an area with little research.

Robinson and Pickett (1996) provide some reasons why adult sibling bereavement is receiving little attention. A societal perception exists that sibling relationships lack importance beyond the mutual experience of growing up and therefore, sibling bereavement in adulthood is not considered to be a significant area for investigation. The term "sibling" is many times equated with "child" implying that sibling relationships, and their relative importance end at the start of adulthood (Sandmaier, 1994). Little is known about the role and significance of the sibling relationship in young to middle adulthood. Another obstacle in the assessment of adult sibling grief is the challenge of integrating two distinct bodies of literature (Robinson & Pickett, 1996). The sibling literature, emphasizing characteristics of childhood sibling relationships, must be integrated with the bereavement literature. Presently the bereavement literature base predominantly reports the grief experiences of adults following the death of a spouse. Measuring adult sibling grief would ideally capture responses specific to the loss of a sibling, reflect the developmental challenges of adulthood and be sensitive enough to detect varying intensities of response. No instruments have yet been designed to meet these broad needs.

According to Robinson and Pickett (1996), manifestations of sibling grief in childhood and adolescence have included psychological reactions of sadness, guilt, anxiety, and changes in self concept. Observations of bereaved adolescent siblings included fatigue, sleep disturbances, appetite changes, social withdrawal and difficulty concentrating. Sibling grief appears to change over time. Some findings indicate that sibling bereavement can result in positive consequences such as improved self concept, increased sense of personal maturity, and increased level of closeness between family members. Many times the newly bereaved are preoccupied with the meaning of the loss. In the Leiden Bereavement Study conducted by Cleiren et al. (1994), sudden loss and

illness related deaths along with their consequences on first-degree family members were studied. Seventy-three bereaved spouses, 68 parents, 86 siblings, and 82 adults who had lost a parent were interviewed. Cleiren et al. found that the absence of meaning was felt most strongly by parents losing a child, even when the death occurred in the child's adult years. These people were often wondering why their child had to die. Absence of meaning was felt among all bereaved especially when the deceased was fairly young. The question of meaning also extends to the personal life of the bereaved, evoking many existential questions. Finding meaning with loss is a preoccupation which triggers evaluation of one's own existence.

The aspect most directly related to bereavement is the difficulty with detachment from the deceased, and the ability to continue one's life without him or her. To "let go" of the pre-existing relationship and to internalize it is one of the central tasks of the bereaved. Cleiren et al. (1994) found that sisters in particular evidenced the same level of difficulties with detachment and shock as widows. Both groups showed the highest level of avoidance of all bereavement groups at four months. They also reported a high level of intrusive thoughts. In contrast, the brothers of the deceased in general did not suffer major problems of functioning. Most showed few loss reactions at four months after the death and a significant decrease in reactions over time. Their health and social functioning seemed unaffected on the whole.

In those bereaved, social integration appears to be satisfactory. Cleiren et al. (1994) discovered adult children and siblings of the deceased hardly found their networks impaired at all by the loss. Their integration appeared to be more dependent upon factors not related to the loss. The bereaved in general increase their social activity after an initial withdrawal. Stress occurring during the same period as the loss plays a role in post-bereavement health in siblings and children.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Description of the Phenomenological Method

Phenomenology has been referred to as an approach, a philosophy and a method. It is the study of phenomena as experienced in consciousness (Giorgi, 1965). Hammond, Howarth, and Keat (1991) defined phenomenology as “the study or description of phenomena,” and a phenomenon as “anything that appears or presents itself to someone” (and so does not involve any innate sense of the strange or spectacular). Therefore, phenomenology involves the description of things as one experiences them in their immediacy. The assumption of phenomenology is there is an experienced world, it is social in nature, and the existence of objects are not of primary interest but their importance lies in how these objects appear to individuals internally (Oiler, 1981). In phenomenology, the emphasis is on the meaning of the lived experience, how objects or events appear to each person, which thus defines the phenomena. Others’ experiences are “borrowed” so that the researcher will better be able to understand the deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience (Beck, 1994a). Phenomenology is a holistic approach which describes quality of life and life experiences.

Giorgi (1985) talks of three important steps in the method of analysis of phenomenological experience including description, reduction, and the search for essences. According to Polkinghorne (1989), phenomenology “concentrates not on descriptions of worldly objects but on descriptions of experience” (p. 41). Husserl, as cited in Ray (1994), one of the early phenomenologists, described phenomenology as “a descriptive

approach of a return to capturing the essence of consciousness in itself" (p. 119). This is done by conferring meaning reflected on itself, by bracketing or holding in abeyance one's preconceptions about the world, past experience and knowledge, to attain the true form of things themselves (Hammond et al., 1991). Phenomenological reduction is a suspension of belief, preparing the researcher for critical examination before our interpreting beliefs enter in. It leads the researcher back to the origins of the phenomena which are lost in everyday thought. Husserl, as cited in Ray, has used bracketing for the suspension of belief in order for the phenomena to come into full view. The language of phenomenology therefore is descriptive in order to make ordinary experience evident through reflection to clear intuition. By intuiting the meaning of the experience and with the use of bracketing, the researcher is able to allow the data to show themselves "as meant".

"The phenomenology of essences seeks to secure absolute insights into the what, or essence, to whatever is given intuitively in experience" (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 138). The task then is to search out the general essence of the phenomena to yield a descriptive analysis. The researcher seeks the meaning for the subject, or the essence of phenomena. Searching for essences is to look for the most invariant meaning or identity that can be assigned to a phenomenon for a given context (Beck, 1994a). It is important that the lived experience emerges as fully as possible without intervention from the researcher. The experience should emerge and not be manipulated according to the researchers assumptions (Giorgi, 1965).

Phenomenology provides a holistic approach to quality of life experiences. Meaning is created through social interactions and then constructed internally as intersubjective phenomenon. It provides us with an internal lens for viewing real world experiences through the eyes of persons having lived those experiences (Beck, 1994a). Clinical nursing can be seen as parallel to phenomenology. Beck states that phenomenology provides a closer fit conceptually with clinical nursing and with types of

research questions that emerge from clinical practice than quantitative research. Clinical nursing and phenomenological research both attempt to create a deeper understanding of the client's experience by observing, interviewing, and interacting with them. Nurses use self therapeutically just as phenomenological researchers use self as a data collection instrument. There is really no accurate way of knowing about a patient's experience other than to elicit that information directly from the client. An accurate description of nursing phenomena could clarify many questions left unanswered. Davis (1978, as cited in Anderson) argued that "phenomenology provides a more perfect fit conceptually with the functions of clinical nursing and with many of the research questions that evolve from clinical practice" (p. 26).

Oiler (1981) describes phenomenological perspectives as both subjective and perspectival. Subjectivity refers to being in the world. The world becomes real through contact with it. The position one takes in the world determines the nature of his/her reality. Knowing shapes experience. All human behavior is understood in terms of the subjects' orientation in the world and as an expression of that perspective. All understandings are subjective and perspectival. An example of this is a patient's experience of pain. Only the patient can know his own pain, but the nurse can, depending on the perspective, understand the situation physiologically, psychologically, and empathetically.

Anderson (1991) points out that individuals bring a "stock of knowledge" that allows them to typify one another and to sustain communication. Combining different methodological approaches represents a vigorous attempt to build a science of nursing. Multiple methodological perspectives will elicit the lived experience of the patients and their families. Phenomenology attempts to disclose the essential meaning of human experience and because of this, the philosophy and approach are well suited to nursing inquiry (Ray, 1994).

Design

This study follows Giorgi's (1965) method for conducting phenomenological research by stating that the best way to investigate the nature of man is to ask him or her. At least three persons are identified to interview about the experience to be studied. These persons were asked for a thorough description of experience so central themes and variations could be elucidated. Descriptions were subsequently analyzed phenomenologically. In this study, subjects were sought who had experienced sudden loss of a sibling.

A thorough literature review was completed prior to interviews so that the researcher could have sufficient knowledge on the topic of interest. Once personal and scholarly knowledge have reached saturation, the researcher must be able to put all of this aside so one "can see for the first time." To control for bias, the researcher must be as free as possible from bias in reflection of experience. It is, however, impossible to be completely free of bias in reflection on the experience being studied but it is possible to control for it (Beck, 1994b). This is done by bracketing. In "bracketing," the researcher must suspend what he or she thinks they already know about the phenomenon in question (Oiler, 1981). It will bring the experience into clearer focus.

The Pilot Study

Two pilot interviews were conducted prior to beginning the study. The two interviews enabled me to analyze the effectiveness and appropriateness of the initial interview question. The first pilot interview did not meet the sample criteria of the study but allowed the researcher the opportunity to gain knowledge of spousal bereavement. It was discovered that the magnitude of pain experienced with spousal bereavement made it more difficult for the subject to talk openly with the researcher. The second pilot interview subject met the majority of the study's criteria. However, after the interview it appeared the interview had too many outside variables influencing the experience of loss of a sibling.

Both interviews were beneficial in that they allowed an opportunity to become more at ease and assist the subjects to become more at ease while discussing a complex topic.

Selection of Subjects

The number of subjects in phenomenological research is limited because of the quantity and richness of data obtained and the "extent to which the phenomenon is explored in the interview" (Drew, 1989, p. 431). Three participants were sought in this study. A minimum of three subjects is required to allow triangulation providing the researcher a complex variation of description of the studied phenomenon. Participants were siblings who lost their sister due to sudden loss.

Polkinghorne (1989) discusses subject selection as choosing those persons who are able to function as informants by being capable of richly describing the experience being investigated. The subjects must meet two requirements. The first requirement simply states the subject must have had the experience that is the topic of research. The second requirement is the subjects capacity to provide full and sensitive descriptions of the experience. This description involves the subject's ability to linguistically express both inner feelings and organic experiences accompanying these feelings without shame or inhibition. All three subjects in this study met both of Polkinghorne's criteria.

Subjects were sought and found via word of mouth from acquaintances of the researcher. I found that the subjects were more willing to discuss their experience of sudden loss with someone they felt they knew, even if in an indirect way. Subjects were those persons who lost their adult siblings and were between the ages of 18 - 45 years at the time of death. The loss occurred no sooner than one year and no later than six years prior to the interview. Those persons whom had experienced sibling loss secondary to suicide were excluded from this particular study. Suicide would not be consistent to the experience being addressed and most likely would be quite different than other forms of sudden death. Siblings who lost a brother were also excluded from the study fearing the

experience too different from losing the same sex sibling. The goal was to narrow down the sample population enough to get an accurate description of the experience being studied yet choosing an array of individuals who provide a variety of specific experiences of the topic of study (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The subject's experience of loss of a sibling differed in various ways. One subject lost her sister violently two years ago. Another subject lost her sister four years ago in a short-lived lightning storm and the family was then forced to make the final decision regarding life support. The third subject lost her sister tragically through a motor vehicle accident six years ago. All three subjects had little to no difficulty with recall of their experiences.

Procedure for Data Collection

Prior to conducting interviews, a human subjects proposal was constructed and submitted for approval by the Montana State University CON Human Subjects Review Committee. This was to ensure that the research will not cause distress or harm for bereaved persons. Items such as description of the study, procedure to maintain confidentiality, and risks and benefits to the subjects are included. Once the proposal was passed through the Review Committee, the interview process was initiated.

Three subjects were asked to describe the experience of losing a sibling to sudden death in their adult years. The interviews were between 45 minutes and 90 minutes in length. The subjects were briefed on the nature and purpose of the study. Written consent was sought prior to the interview process. The subjects were instructed that if at any time during the interview they were tired or did not want to continue they could stop the interview process. Fictitious names and initials are given as labels on each of the interviews to provide for confidentiality. The interviews were conducted for depth of the experience. Each interview began with the request: "Describe for me your experience after the sudden loss of your sibling." Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Giorgi (1965) states that analysis relies solely on the researcher. Analyzing occurs as descriptions are compared and contrasted noting recurring elements. This allows identification of the ingredients of the phenomenon and the way the ingredients relate to each other. The researcher must become absorbed in the phenomenon without being possessed, previous knowledge held at bay (Oiler, 1981). The relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon is one of the strengths of the phenomenological approach. Drew (1989) discussed its rigor as a method of understanding and as the refusal to accept a perception without first examining the influence of underlying beliefs naively held by the perceiver. Bracketing of pre-suppositions and fore-knowledge must occur throughout the analysis.

There are many ways described in the literature to phenomenologically analyze the data. The specific method chosen to follow in this case is the method proposed by Giorgi (1985) and the steps as outlined by Jenni (1990):

Level One: (Individual Protocols) Each individual interview is transcribed verbatim. The researcher reads through the description of the experience to get a general sense of the interview.

Level Two: (Individual Protocols) A search for spontaneous meaning units of complete interview protocol occurs. The researcher reads and reflects allowing spontaneous meaning units to emerge. Each meaning unit is numbered sequentially. Repeated readings may be required in order to identify the shifts in meaning. The subject's language remains unchanged at this point. Relevant meanings may be grouped at this time.

Level Three: (Individual Protocols) Meaning units are grouped by theme. This involves transforming the meaning units to reveal knowledge through reflection and variation. Meaning units not reflecting the phenomenon can be discarded at this time. The subject's original language remains.

Level Four: (Individual Protocol) This level involves transforming the meaning units from the narrative in level three into language which expresses psychological meaning of the experience. This is referred to as the structure of the experience and can be expressed on a specific or general level (Beck, 1994b).

After the experience of all subjects is analyzed to this point (see appendices), the data from all subjects is combined and analysis of the data is now from the perspective of all the subjects.

Level Five: (Combined Protocol) This is labeled the fundamental description and involves reflecting on Level Four data from all subjects and combining persistent aspects of phenomenon.

Level Six: (Combined Protocol) This is the essential description and is the final level of analysis. Further reflection of level five allow "situated aspects of fundamental description to recede to allow articulation of essential structural features of phenomenon" (Jenni, 1990, p. 1).

Evaluation Criteria

Reliability and validity are two major areas critical to phenomenology as a research method. Giorgi's (1988) analysis relies solely on the researcher. He warns of the difficulties of "cross-paradigmatic communication" stating that the same words refer to different things. In other words, the same words have different meanings. Giorgi considers the use of phenomenological reduction and the concern for essences by phenomenological researchers. Giorgi warns that the researcher risks error if past knowledge is imposed upon the phenomenon, therefore he emphasizes the importance of bracketing. Reduction is used in attempts to avoid the possibility or error. The search for essences, looking for the most invariant meaning that can be assigned to a phenomenon for a given context, keeps the researcher from speaking about particulars and directs expression toward the essentials. Attempts are made to vary the descriptive characteristics

of phenomena under study in his/her imagination in order to see what the truly essential characteristics of the phenomenon are (Beck, 1994b). Bracketing ensures reliability.

Giorgi (1988) concludes that validity has been achieved if the essential description of a phenomenon truly captures the intuited essence. No additional empirical judges are required secondary to reduction. Reality claims are not made. Every reader must judge for himself the meaning intuited by the investigator. Reliability can be observed when one can use this essential description consistently. Giorgi states a strong knowledge claim can be based on a researcher having taken all the necessary precautions in attempting to arrive at an accurate description. This involves reduction and imaginative variation. He also warns that error may still occur because a researcher can take all these precautions and still describe the experience inaccurately. The acts of identifying can be considered the basis for validity and if these identifying acts can be consistently performed then reliability is achieved (Beck, 1994b).

CHAPTER 4

THE RESULTS

Introduction to Level 5

The fundamental description is the general structural description of the protocol and constitutes level five. Level five is the first level to combine subjects situated experience and to focus on aspects of the experience that are descriptive of the phenomenon at the general level from the protocol. The concrete details of the specific situation of an individual subject are eliminated in order to grasp the essential structure of the combined experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). The researcher initially moves through steps one through four with each subject's protocol developing a separate general description of the situated structure for each subject. These protocols are then combined with only those situated structures which are intertwined within each experience. This process allows persistent aspects of the phenomenon to be combined (Jenni, 1990). "The description does not claim to be of a universal structure of consciousness, it does claim a general validity beyond the specific situation of the subject" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 55). The following two pages consist of both the implicit and explicit themes common to all three subjects in answer to the research question.

Level 5

Fundamental Description of Sudden Loss of an Adult Sibling

Upon reflection of the experience of sudden loss of her sibling, S. finds that concrete images surface easily while difficult emotions are displaced. Protective mechanisms of well learned coping strategies emerge quickly. Words flow freely but do not express the true essence of S's experience. S. feels she cannot capture accurately enough her emotional experience. S. experiences the intensity of the pain depicting images of suffering of the entire body, mind, and soul, ultimately leading to a sense of exhaustion and inconclusiveness. The intensity of the pain is so overwhelming that S. allows only portions of the experience to filter in over time. The physicality of the pain is so great, S. finds that time is the only comfort.

Preceding the death itself, S. has a foreboding sense of doom triggered by intuition. S. fearful of her sense of knowing, feels that something was terribly wrong. This prior knowledge leads S. not only to feel further regret but manifests itself as intense guilt and sadness. The foreknowledge does not ease the pain but actually exacerbates it.

The experience produces feelings of ambivalence for S. which begins immediately after the death and continues into the present. Thoughts and events surrounding the experience are magnified and repeated endlessly in S's mind. The ambivalence S. experiences causes questioning, doubts, and regrets leading to absence of finality. S. therefore finds difficulty moving forward in her own life because she feels overwhelmed with thoughts of her sibling. S. searches to find the gray area where thoughts of her sibling could abound without consuming her.

S. becomes the strength of the family unit, the informant. The role is designated to S. and S. willingly accepts this role not yet realizing the demands it will command of her. S. knows nothing else and by focusing on facts and tasks, S. is temporarily freed from the pain and hurt of the loss. This is S's job. S. therefore holds it together during public times and events in order to defy people's presupposed view she is not doing well. Emotions were deferred until a later date when S. felt she was no longer needed. This stance allows S. to move forward without dealing with the pain that awaits her.

Following the death, S. experienced loss of temporality and became a wanderer questioning the importance of ideals and material items she once found valuable. Days went by and S. had no recall of events or people. Time is required to truly absorb the experience. S. believes she has come to an understanding of the value of life and living. S. frequently reflects on her own existence and finds it is a time of life changes. S. learns to appreciate life and battles to regain control over it.

S. attempts to move forward but realistically struggles with the means. Unique attempts lead to a sense of futility. S. finds herself on a quest for avenues which will offer regression to a time unblemished by death. Time is of utmost importance. With the passage of time, healing renders easing of discomfort and the ability to begin to accept the ultimate evolution of S's life, now without the involvement of the sibling. S. initially wants desperately her old life back but reality strikes callously and S. finds she must search for a new identity. The shift in identity has many facets and it must include both aspects of

the old and the new. S. battles with this identity crisis, desperately not wanting to forget but fighting to move forward. The identity of S's entire world and family changes,

transformed into a strange unforgiving environment and for S. nothing ever to be the same. S's world view is transformed and fear becomes a predominant emotion. Spirituality becomes an important factor which allows S. a sense of peace and comfort. S., able to talk freely to her deceased sibling at any time, finds solace and strength. This transcendence allows S. the energy and desire to attempt to move forward.

S. falls apart on her own time. She does not want to talk to strangers, including counselors, but leans on those persons closest her. S. prefers to grieve in a private manner and demands sole ownership of her grief. S's grief becomes the unique, solitary fragment connecting her sibling to this physical world, a grief that S. is unwilling to share.

Introduction to Level Six

Level six is the reduction of level five into the essential description. Level six no longer is situated in a particular time, person, or life event, but reflects the entire range of experiences for women who have suddenly lost their sibling to death. At this level of the protocol, the term situated can be dropped and the subjects "can be assumed under one typology" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 20). A final general description is transformed from the meaning units of the various protocols. These transformations are tied together to produce a general description not of the characteristics of the combined subjects but the characteristics of the experience itself (Polkinghorne, 1989). This general description "tries as much as possible to depart from the specifics to communicate the most general meaning of the phenomenon" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 20).

Level Six

Essential Description of Sudden Loss of an Adult Sibling

The experience of sudden loss of an adult sibling is one of both physical and emotional trauma. The experience itself is indescribable emotionally. S. is unable to capture the essence of the experience with description, however, futile attempts made. Intuition preceding the sudden loss of her sibling triggers a foreboding sense of doom and manifests itself as regret, guilt, and sadness.

Time appears to be the only relief for the intensity of pain and suffering. The pain is not allowed in all at once, only portions of the experience are allowed to filter in over time allowing a sort of normalcy in her day to day life. Attempts to move forward are lived in various ways. The world view changes are intense, fear predominates, values and ideals once held are questioned. A search is initiated for avenues which offer regression to a time unblemished by death. She searches in her own personal journey, to find balance with the old life and the new but is continually drawn back to a once familiar safer world view as known before the death.

Identity, not only of the sibling but the entire family, is transformed and a search for a new identity becomes a struggle within the framework of the family. The shift in identity has many facets. It must include aspects of the old and the new with emphasis placed on moving forward without forgetting important values and beliefs of the past. Ambivalence abounds in the experience, questioning whether appropriate intervention could possibly have changed the outcome. Spirituality offers a sense of peace and comfort with a feeling of inter-connectedness to the transcendent form of the sibling lost. The grief experience itself is the solitary fragment connecting her sibling to the physical world and she demands sole ownership of this grief.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This study analyzes the bereavement experience as it is lived by the adult who has suddenly lost her sibling to sudden death. The phenomenological method is chosen as the means to obtain a description of this experience and to increase nursing knowledge in the area of bereavement. Themes are elicited from the data analysis of the three subjects interviewed. These themes appear to coincide somewhat with the literature available on grief and bereavement, but also take on some of their own meanings unique to the sudden loss of an adult sibling.

Emergent Themes

The themes that become evident in the study of adults who experience sudden loss of a sibling include difficulty capturing the emotional experience, intensity of pain and suffering, the healing power of time, prevalence and importance of intuition, perpetual ambivalence, attempts to become the strength and informant of the family unit, loss of temporality, identity transformation, ownership of grief, the transcendent dimension, and the search for support.

Difficulty Capturing the Emotional Experience

Overwhelming. It's like, at first it's like waves and it still is like waves, they just don't come as close together anymore. Shocking. Devastating, you know there's only so many adjectives you can use to describe it and it still doesn't describe it. It is undoubtedly the worst thing I have ever had to endure. (Mary)

The first theme to emerge from the data appears to be related to the difficulty of describing emotions. The ability to recall concrete images of the experience is much easier

and subjects are each able to recite verbatim the actual event. Each subject experiences an inability to capture the true essence of the experience with words and is not content with the accuracy and appropriateness of words chosen. Each attempts to find the right words but remain dissatisfied with those available. Nothing can truly describe the intense pain and suffering which abounds throughout the experience of loss of a sibling. The experience is beyond words.

Upon reflection of sudden loss of her sister, Mary was able to easily recall concrete events but had difficulty with recalling the more abstract psychological images. Images of the experience itself and the days surrounding the event remain vivid. "I can stay pretty clinical when I do this." Mary can vividly recall facts surrounding the notification of the death, the trial, and the crime scene but various other aspects of the experience remain a "blur."

Karen attempts to describe the emotions of the experience as "that pain inside and it's achy and it burns and you feel like you are going to burst because there is so much pain there." Karen reflects on the relationship and bond with her deceased sister, so close that she was aching, "feeling as if a part of my body was taken out."

Laura states she had difficulty recalling her own emotions partially because of the "chaos" surrounding her and partially because of the difficulty with description.

.... its really hard to pinpoint any one word, I mean it is, umm, I get sad thinking about people who have to go through that. Any kind of death of a sibling. I may not even know that person but just to know that someone has to go through that horrible feeling. It's um, it was a shock. (Laura)

Intensity of Pain and Suffering

A powerful theme is the intensity of the psychological pain. Subjects depict images of suffering through the entire body, mind, and soul, ultimately leading to exhaustion of the physical body. The intensity of the pain overwhelms each subject. Only portions of the pain are allowed in at a time in order to attempt to cope with the enormity of the

experience. The immensity of the pain is great. Time appears to be the only comfort. Each copes in a very individualized manner but ultimately the experience is also similar across subjects.

Upon hearing the news of the death of her sibling Mary states:

And he told me, and I literally dropped to my knees... I ran... I called my husband And by then my kids were watching, looking out the window and I can still think, if I can run really fast I can run away from this. Obviously, that didn't happen. I couldn't run that fast.

Laura describes her initial reaction of the notification of her sister's accident as feeling very "surreal." Hours went by in the hospital and shock prevailed. It was a long exhausting experience for her and her entire family. "It's just really sad. I miss her a lot."

Laura recalls an intense amount of pain the morning after her sister's death.

I was sleeping across my parent's room and I just remember my mom bawling when she woke up, hysteric like, shock like it was a dream. Moaning and bawling and I heard my dad crying, cause they were saying its not a dream. They had just woken up, and they were, its like they went through it all over again, and they were just wailing. Oh God, oh and it just hurt and it just hurt so much to hear them in so much pain. (Laura)

Upon notification of the death of her sibling, Karen recalls:

my stomach just dropping.... It was shock, major shock, numbness, disbelief, this is still that dream.... The first twenty four hours I was continually crying, I felt like a part of my body was taken out because we were so close.

The pain experience itself does not diminish quickly. Each subject recalls the continual presence of pain after years. The pain and suffering appear to be so intense that it is not assimilated all at once but only small amounts at a time in order for each to carry on some sort of normal existence. Karen recalls months after the death feeling the continued enormity of the pain experience.

I didn't even know why I was crying. All of a sudden I would be doing something in the kitchen and I would be crying. I had no control over it and I would sob, you know, and it was like. And I didn't understand why I was crying you know?

Mary believes secondary to the trial (sister killed violently), she and her family had something to focus on. They knew they had to be brave to get through it and then they could fall apart later. Mary thought she was doing well but realized upon looking back at some of her actions “what a loon, I was no more handling it well than flying to the moon.” Mary almost purposely missed the funeral. It was the reality of it all Mary could not face. It was too painful.

I don't know why this is. I could deal with the police, I could deal with the lawyers, I could deal with the judge, I could deal with the coroner, but I could not deal with the funeral, so I didn't. (Mary)

Mary says just when it starts feeling better, emotions are triggered without notice and easily produce waves of acute pain. “every day is a tough time but you just meander through it.”

Karen recalls going into a major depression. “All I wanted to do was to stay in bed, I was depressed, no energy um, I didn't care, nothing. Kids made their own meals, I did nothing.” Karen recalls feeling empty with a complete lack of self worth. Her journey consisted of quilting as her own personal therapy, “I cried through every stitch.”

The Healing Power of Time

Time appears to be the solitary relief of the intensity of pain and suffering with the experience of loss of a sibling. Time is the essence of acceptance of the ultimate evolution of each of their lives, now without the presence of the sibling. Each personal attempt to move forward is unique and lived out in various ways and yet each subject finds great difficulty with this endeavor. The pain is only allowed in small increments so each may remain healthy and process the information while allowing some sort of normalcy to remain in her day to day existence. Each subject holds fast the idea that with time will come healing. Mood swings are prevalent and everyday activities may unknowingly trigger a cascade of emotions without forewarning. The subjects are aware the pain will never go away completely but are hopeful it will subside to enable them to continue to move forward in their own lives.

Mary describes the pain as so intense and overwhelming that if she let it all in at once, it would consume her, therefore she assimilates tiny fragments at a time yet continually processing events. Just when the pain of the loss appears to be easing and Mary's outlook is better, something triggers the painful memories. She describes the pain as "a wound that is covered and then somebody goes back in and stirs around in it." Mary describes the whole experience:

I still sometimes have a hard time believing it. And it may be a while before I get it all the way in and I kind of do a little bit, then I back off for a while and then I'll let a little bit more in and then I'll back off.... It hurts so bad and then I just kind of, like up goes my wall and I will stop it for awhile and then I'll go back to it and do it again.

Mary has realized that with the passing of time, she will get some relief of the intensity of her pain but also that this pain will never cease to exist. Her life will never be as it once was. "I have made it this far you know, its still excruciatingly painful, but not on a day to day basis.... It will get better, it will get better, it will just never go away."

Karen describes a personal journey. She becomes engrossed in activities which allow her sanity and motivates her to get out of bed each morning. She encountered problems with the completion of each activity. Keeping her mind occupied did not allow her to deal fully with the emotions that were so prevalent in her life yet only time itself appeared to truly be the variable which allowed some healing to take place. Karen recalls:

It has only been in the last, well, I still get a little teary eyed and stuff but it was after the two years that I could finally say that Sue is dead.... I still had my heart up here... the more I talked about it the better it got, but it took me a long time to talk about it.

The death consumed Laura but the realization that she must move forward with her own life slowly filtered in. She was encompassed with thoughts of her deceased sister and questions of any future normalcy to her own life. "At some point you need to go on." Laura recalls being unable to stop thinking about her. The difficulty was finding the

balance between thinking about her and not thinking about her. Laura describes her feelings after the people were finally gone:

Because people go back to work and you don't know what you are supposed to do. And, isn't everyone else thinking about it twenty-four hours a day? I mean I can't stop thinking about her, when am I going to stop and when is my life going to be normal again?.... Its encompassing me all the time, its always in me, how sad I am, and how much I miss her and what she was like.... and as time goes on you start to not think about her as much. And I don't know if that's sad or if that's worse.

Laura has struggled with this gray area and continues to intermittently question herself. She is aware that she must live in the present but at times finds this an incredibly difficult task. The passage of time has allowed Laura to work through the complexity of her grief and find a balance with which she feels comfortable in order to proceed with her own existence.

Prevalence and Importance of Intuition

One theme which emerges is the prevalence of intuition. The intuition exists as some form of knowledge prior to the death that something was horribly wrong leading each of the subjects to a foreboding sense of doom. This intuition evolves into feelings of further regret and continual questioning of their own actions prior to the death. Could they have possibly changed the outcome? The foreknowledge does not ease the pain but exacerbates it. Intense self-blame, guilt, and sadness are manifested through this questioning of lack of intervention and leaves each constantly challenging her own integrity.

Mary claims:

I knew something was wrong all along, I just didn't know, I didn't know that she was dead but I had this hole a mile wide.... and it was just a dull.... I just knew something was wrong. And when I saw the police car coming down the road I knew.

Mary went on to question her actions and place blame first on herself for not intervening in order to prevent the death and then directed it toward her sibling for not following her

advice to leave the relationship. She will always question if she could have somehow changed the outcome.

Karen recalls hearing the tone of her brother-in-law's voice and knowing:

He told me that something horrible had happened and I said "Sue is dead," because a month before the accident I was having nightmares at night, waking up. And I would see a car crash.... I just knew it was her, and yet it was like the dream... I will wake up. Well, I never woke up.

Karen also questions her actions. "If only's" abound, if only she would have seen faces, she could of intervened. She spent two years feeling guilt and remorse and just recently came to terms with her lack of action. She now realizes she was not to blame. This seems to be an effort to reverse time in order to do it over again in another way.

Perpetual Ambivalence

It becomes apparent that each subject endures a significant period of questioning throughout the experience. The whole magnitude of events before, during, and after the death are analyzed piece by piece. Even when it becomes apparent that conclusions have been drawn about a particular event, the situation is again reevaluated. The subjects' question things such as possible interventions prior to the death leading to a change of outcome, perhaps the continued presence of the sibling "maybe they identified the wrong person" and their sibling is still alive, and whether they grieved in the "right way." Each subject is constantly reworking the total event and all of its ramifications therefore living in a perpetual state of doubt. This leads to an inability to gain a sense of peace.

Laura is ambivalent, questioning both herself and her family's decisions. Her doubts cause her to analyze herself and her family's actions while at the same time she is attempting to convince both her parents and herself that they did the "right thing." Laura questions if it would have been less painful if her sister had died at the scene. She believes her sister was just a shell of her former existence by the time she arrived at the hospital "there was nothing there." Even though she realizes her sister was ultimately going to die,

she wonders if it was she who pushed her parents to the decision to discontinue life support. "I think it was all about me at that point."

My mom has even asked me a couple of times, so did we make the right decision? And I say of course we did, of course we did..... My mom questions it and I always seem to have to reassure her that it was the best thing to do.... I kind of feel like I gave them the push, just like you have to start thinking about this..... Its hard, its hard, sometimes I wonder.... I don't know part of me wants to get that reassurance, but I don't need it.... I mean they told us there was nothing, but you still kind of wonder. (Laura)

This perpetual ambivalence continues to cause discomfort and doubt in Laura's life.

Because of her past experience in the health care industry, Laura knew things did not look good when she arrived at the hospital. She did not completely understand the seriousness. It was "surreal." Laura remained what she labeled herself as "the pessimist" but in actuality she was the realist. Laura also blames herself, feeling as if she was the motivating force for the discontinuation of the life support. She is struggling with the continual need for reassurance for her family and herself that they did the "right thing." There will always be that flicker of doubt.

Another example of the ambivalence surrounding the experience regards Mary and her family's decision to follow the advice of the coroner and not view her sister's body.

Mary continues to question:

So we never saw her, which I don't know if it's good or bad. You know, I think its good from when we would of seen her here, but I know and I never understood why it was so important but it really is very important, um, because still like its, well, maybe there's a chance that they got the wrong person. I mean you know logically that that's not possible but it is still there. It's still there today.

Mary realizes the lack of validity of this argument but it remains a distant thought surfacing intermittently causing her indefinite doubt. Mary also relives her phone conversations with her sister prior to her death and continually questions her actions. "I went through a lot of guilt for a while because I didn't tell June to run..." She states she went through the "what ifs" over and over but after two years of debate she has decided that she can no longer

blame herself. She advised her sister to leave. There was nothing more she could have done.

Karen will always question herself for not disclosing the description of her nightmares, "there was no connection there." Karen blamed herself for two years, "if only I had seen faces.... because I felt like I could of warned her." Beliefs continue to prevail about the possibility of changing the outcome. Could she have prevented her sister's death?

Attempts to Become the Strength of the Family Unit

I felt strong. I mean I felt I was going to have to step above.... There were certain parts where I felt very strong, I was okay, someone had to be strong.... You feel superhuman at that point, nothing can really get any worse than it is now and you gotta deal with it. (Laura)

As a person experiencing the sudden loss of an adult sibling, it becomes evident that the surviving sibling takes on a parental role. The sibling survivor feels the death is more difficult for other members of the family and by taking on the role of the strong one, it provides the survivor temporary relief from the intense pain they are experiencing. Emotions are put on hold and they focus on the tasks assigned them. They tend to become the support person and the person with whom information is given and transmitted. The sibling becomes the link in the family unit which ties the unit together, preventing any social breakdown at this time of maximum stress.

Mary wanted desperately to support her mother when she heard the news, "all I knew is I had to get to my mom to tell her...." Mary discusses how she normally holds it together in a time of crises and falls apart before or after. This particular situation was no different:

In the middle of a crisis, I usually hold it together very well and fall apart before or after.... and I kind of gathered it up and did what I had to do.... You try to put up a brave front, you try to do what you have to do because you still have kids to take care of. (Mary)

Mary wanted to protect her family but was still uncertain how to protect herself from the pain and suffering which ensued.

Karen willingly took on the role of informant and recalls her urgency to phone the rest of the family "I got to get a hold of them, I got to tell these people." She felt she had to be the "support" person for her sister, "I always had to give the encouragement." Karen had a desire to be strong in the presence of other people. She held it together in front of people but was able to grieve with her family in private.

Laura attempted to be the strength of the family unit, feeling as if she needed to "step up." Her family was in shock and "someone had to be strong." She placed her emotions temporarily aside, denying them until a later time when she was no longer needed by her family. Laura was able to internalize and process information about her sister's condition and because of this she was called upon to act as planner, organizer and decision maker. Laura recalls the social worker approaching her with requests:

You're the one who seems to understand the severity of what is going on, you need to call your uncle and get him in here to do last rites, and you need to call your brother and if he really wants to be here he needs to get on the next flight out here.... I'm the one making these phone calls, I'm the one having to do this and to really be.... I guess I was somewhat of a decision maker, the go-between the people and my parents.

This was very difficult for Laura. She felt this was not her job but that of her parents, yet does not blame them but feels a little resentful that she was forced into the role of informant.

Loss of Temporality

Time as experienced by the body in the past, present, or future tense becomes distorted and unimportant. Being in the world in a particular time becomes the focus for all three subjects, each wanting desperately to return to a time unblemished by the death of their loved one. A definite loss of temporality becomes evident initially as difficulty with recall of thoughts and events and then initiation of questioning the importance of ideals and

material items once found valuable. She initiates the battle to regain control over her life in order to find an existence which is both comfortable and rewarding.

Mary describes the blurring nature of details after the notification of the death.

Mary wonders if maybe she was just "totally detached."

I don't remember a lot of it. I can remember the trial, I can remember the funeral, I can remember the, things on a day-to-day basis I don't remember a whole lot. I, I don't remember what I did, I just don't remember a whole lot. I don't think I did anything. I think I sat around a whole lot.

Mary found it difficult to recall certain events and emotions and in particular how she attempted to handle them and states: "It's just something you can do nothing about, you just kind of have to wander your way through."

Karen says it did not become a reality for a long time. She recalls "going through all the grieving processes, bargaining, disbelief, and finally acceptance." Karen talks of temporality with emphasis on the concept that she and her sister were supposed to be in this world at the same time, not without each other.

I never, ever, dreamed in a hundred years that I would lose my triplet. I had no concept of that, and it was like we came into this world together and we were going to leave this world together so to have the third gone it was like, I had no idea that would ever happen, I had no perception of that. (Karen)

Laura recalls it was a time of reflection on her own existence and a time of life changes. She says she is continually striving to move forward instead of living in the past but this has proven to be a difficult task.

You just don't think there is really anything else more to life than that moment and that experience but the fact that, that you start to get your life back to normal because you want to have that feeling that you appreciate every moment.... cause nothing, nothing else matters in your life, and everything else is pretty irrelevant. (Laura)

Transformation of Identity

You have to just get on, move on. Cause what you want to hang on to is the fact that life is so important and life is so precious.... You want to hope you are living your life every moment to the fullest and sometimes you just don't necessarily think you are. That's what I think the sad part of not thinking about her all the time.... I

don't know what's bad, I don't know what's worse. Just not thinking about, starting to go through moments where you are not thinking about it I think is really hard. You start questioning like oh, wait a minute, I am getting normal again... its so weird, you feel like you are an alien. (Laura)

A common theme becomes evident within the realm of identity. It appears that the loss of a sibling triggers many major life changes with the inability to return to the familiarity of life once known prior to the death of a sibling. A type of transformation takes place usually without awareness. It is a time of struggle to retain certain aspects of the old life and develop important aspects of the new.

A shift not only in the identity of the sibling but the entire family becomes apparent. The integrity of the family is challenged. The family must relearn their roles with the possibility of taking on new roles within the structure of the family system. There appears to be a struggle within the family unit to return to the comfortable existence once felt. To "carry on" without transformation. This struggle continues until they become exhausted and eventually discover a new avenue for which to carry on their existence. The shift in identity has many facets, it must include aspects of both the old and the new. She battles not wanting to forget but fights to move forward. The identity of their entire world and family changes and is transformed into a strange, unforgiving environment. Nothing is ever to be as it once was.

Mary attempted to avoid confrontation of her new identity as less one sibling by detaching herself from the world of the living for a period of time. Mary becomes a wanderer, muddling her way through daily life and eventually realizing she can not change the past and has to accept the transformed present. She battles to regain control of her life and find a comfort zone in which she can begin to live again.

Mary's worldview changed secondary to the violence of the death of her sibling. Where once Mary could find solace and safety within her own surroundings she now experiences things such as fear, anger, and betrayal.

...this whole thing has done such head games to me, like I am afraid of things that I have never been afraid of before. I am afraid to leave my family.... I am afraid something is going to happen. I have no control over that, and I know that here but the rest of me says one thing. I am afraid that, I am afraid of the pain if it did, so I don't want to leave my family.... I am really mad... I am afraid of things.... and I don't want to live my life in fear.

Mary becomes hypervigilant to the safety of her surroundings. Her family is aware they must be sensitive to her needs and protect the new fragile image she has transformed into.

Karen also searches for avenues which would lead her back to an acceptable existence while allowing easily accessible memories of her deceased sister. She begins a personal "journey" which she hopes will guide her safely to a comfortable place. Karen talks about the "death of the triplet." Her identity is completely transformed without the presence of her triplet. Her living triplet and herself jokingly say "don't die before me, like we have any control over that." Karen claims she feels "subconsciously she is detaching herself from her living triplet so it is not as severe of a shock because I know what happened before.... so it won't be so painful." Karen's world view, like Mary's, has also transformed and fear again appears to predominate. Karen fears experiencing the intensity of the pain she felt with the death of her triplet.

Laura says her sister's death forced her to reflect on her own life and make necessary changes to become a better person. It was a period of growth for Laura and she feels it has made her appreciate life, and become a more positive person. Laura recalls battling to get her life back to normal. She was able to focus on her own identity and paint a more clearer picture of who she really was.

I learned a lot about myself, I learned just how important life is. You could take everything away from me you know if I have a healthy family, good friends, and a good bottle of wine, I am all right. You have to move forward, no matter how difficult because life is precious. (Laura)

For Laura, it was a time of reflection of her own existence and a time of life changes. Laura's family identity was also transformed. She believes her family is avoiding the situation of being alone without the extended family because it would be too

obvious who was missing and this would be difficult and quite painful. When talking about her family gatherings without the extended family Laura states:

It would be really prevalent who was missing if we did that so it would be easier to have other people around, so you don't have to think about it even if it was one person, you still don't have that pressure of looking at each other.... but I think if we did it would be really hard.

Ownership of Grief

Another theme which becomes apparent is the strong desire to have sole ownership over one's grief. Although this was not always possible, this was always the wish of the sibling. At times the sibling was found to be possessive, withdrawn, and basically numb. All subjects held fast to the grief as it was the only thing holding their sibling to this physical world. Each subject attempted to create and enforce boundaries delineating who was inside and who was outside. They needed boundaries in order to grieve. The subjects believe it is a private and personal time for a family to share without intrusion thus allowing the family to begin to determine how they were going to cope without the presence of the loved one.

Mary recalls becoming possessive after her sister's death. Mary thought of her sister's friends:

She had some very close friends and they were very involved and at time I didn't like it, it was like, this is not your place. Your place is beside us but not with us.... So I got very, very possessive.

Mary and Karen did not want to share their pain, they wanted sole ownership of the pain that went along with the loss. This was all Mary had left of her sister, only the intense physical pain which helped her grasp the last shred of her sister's physical being which belonged to this world. Karen's inability to grieve in front of others allowed her the solace she desired. Karen felt as if she was on display at the funeral while wanting desperately to have sole ownership of her grief. She required time alone with her pain and thoughts.

Laura questions if they were grieving in the "right way." Laura says this is all her family knew in a time of crisis, was to have people over to eat and drink and at the same time remembers the emotional exhaustion of the vicious cycle of reliving the grief. She wonders if she would just close her doors next time and say "just let us grieve." Laura grieved publicly, felt exposed and vulnerable, when what she desperately wanted was to escape. Laura states:

...and at the time, it's all we knew, the people, the physicalness of the people in front of us. But, I don't know if I would necessarily do that again. Cause its nobody's business to be there and unless you invite them.... You expose yourself way too much and you're very vulnerable to other people when you do that.... I think then people know that much more about your pain. Maybe they don't need to know, or maybe you don't want them to know. You don't want them to even have a clue.

Transcendent Dimension

I have had incredible dreams about her and I just, I have this great feeling that she is doing a magnificent thing right now, I don't know what it is, I just have this very good sense that she was meant to be gone. It was definitely her time to go."
(Laura)

Spirituality is portrayed in each experience and appears to act as a comfort to all three subjects. Each relies heavily on some form of spirituality to allow healing time and the ability to process not only the death of the sibling but their own existence without the sibling. Even without a strong belief in a higher being, each truly believed in the existence of the deceased sibling. Spirituality allowed each subject the ability to move forward without losing the image of their deceased sibling.

Spirituality plays a role in the experience of the loss of Mary's sister. Mary believes her sister's spirit endures in transcendence, it was her destiny. Her sister's continual presence allows Mary to move forward in her own life. "Several times a day, I talk to her." Mary and her family have a strong faith, "We all have a very strong belief in God and very strong faith." Initially Mary talks about her attempt to bribe God in order to get her sister back.

It was like if I pray hard enough and beg hard enough we would get her back... logically I knew this was not going to happen. However I wouldn't believe it.... I am done trying to bribe God because its not going to work. (Mary)

Karen also feels her sister's continuous presence in her life.

I always, I feel she is here, I don't feel like she is gone and I talk to her every day, every day. I carry her obituary with me all the time because I don't want to ever forget the day she died. I want to remember that. (Karen)

Karen's continual awareness of her sister's presence in her life allows her the capacity to move forward in her own life while grasping memories of her sister from her past. Karen has come to the realization that "now we have to go on, each our own lives."

Laura believes there is a powerful spiritual component within her experience of sudden loss of her sibling. She believes her sister was very complete prior to her death. "If you complete your circle here then you go on to the next line." Laura believes in fate and that it was her time, "she was meant to be gone." There is evidence of continuing relationship beyond death. Laura declares a sense of the continual presence of her sister surrounding her all the time. She did not feel she had to say good-bye because she never left her side. When questioned if Laura was able to say good-bye to her sister she states:

It's hard to say because I still feel her around.... that's the kicker... I still have these weird feelings about her around me all the time.... It's the darndest thing. I laugh all the time because I feel her. Great feelings, like reassuring feelings. Almost like not even a guardian, not like someone's protecting me, but someone's laughing next to me.

Search for Support

...and our relationship got so close that it is almost as close, not closer, almost as close as the relationship that I had with my sisters. You know... its like we have an understanding, I guess more like a bonding together now where I never had that... I never allowed that because my sisters were so close.... but we are real, real close right now, I trust him totally with... we talk about anything and everything now, like my sisters would be. (Karen)

In their own unique way, each subject searches for support. They attempt to be the rock, the foundation, but do not necessarily want it only that way. Although they feel the need for assistance, they look to family and close friends. The siblings do not feel a strong

desire to seek outside counseling services, even when significant others beg them to receive some help. Each believes they must get through it and process the loss in their own way and in their own time.

Mary talks of her husband as a integral part of her existence today. Her husband is very supportive of her and was and has always been supportive of her entire family. He never let Mary down and was there whenever she needed him. Mary talks about how many times "he was just propping everybody up." Mary considered making an appointment with a bereavement counselor but thoughts overcame the urge "at some point, I have to deal with this myself."

Karen began to detach herself from her living triplet thus preventing further painful situations. Karen relied heavily on her husband as supporter, counselor, and friend. She found herself switching her bond and attachments from her sister to her husband. "We got real close... talk about everything... like my sisters would be." Karen's husband urged her to see a counselor but Karen thought she was okay just talking with him. She did not like entertaining the idea of a bereavement counselor.

After her sister's death, Laura tried to "carry that torch of her." She felt pressure from Ann's friends and she wanted to hear that she reminded them of Ann. "It felt good." Laura also talks of feeling pressure to be the person everyone knew her to be when in reality she wanted to escape, be introverted, grieve in solitude alongside her immediate family. Laura shares that after her sister's death her family became closer. They were very supportive of one another. Laura recalls the pronounced time of growth she experienced during the past four years. She recalls feeling the impact of what was really important in life and really noticing the petty things. Laura states of her husband:

I am lucky Dan is, was a part of that and a part of me, it was that growth period for me for those couple years because, I mean he's just, he believes the same things too, you know.

Dialogue with the Literature

*Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break.*

William Shakespeare

Great strides in research have been made in the area of grief and bereavement.

Where once it was exclusively thought to consist of a series of stages lived consecutively, it is now considered a very individualized process where one may move in and out of various stages of the grieving process, fulfilling certain tasks.

Consistencies of Stages, Phases, Tasks

*Dead: the act of gone-ness,
and incomprehensible event that leaves me mute*

Stephanie Ericcson (1993)

Kubler Ross (1969) first delineated the stages of grief as stage one through five each to be conquered within a predetermined period of time. Lindemann (1944) identified symptoms of bereavement and claimed them to have a predictable course. Further research into bereavement also led to the notion of a series of stages and phases. Now, much of the focus of research is on these stages and more recently phases and tasks of bereavement. Current knowledge has declared a scattered transition between and through each of the stages and phases. Some may completely skip an identified phase. The bereavement process is individual. One can never predict how one would personally cope with the death of a loved one. Coping mechanisms kick in spontaneously and each person attempts to ultimately find a comfortable existence where aspects of the old and the new life coexist.

Some aspects of the stages directly from the literature also appear within the experience of loss of an adult sibling. The stages cannot be identified or isolated but the emotions identified within each of the stages are definitely present in the interviews in this particular study. Stage one in the grief literature discusses aspects of shock and denial. The bereavement literature labels the first stage impact and numbness. In this study, each subject talks of shock and denial in some way. The subjects speak of how they felt numb

as if they were wanderers through time, unable to recall day to day experiences. The initial shock and numbness of the experience allowed these women to cope and function automatically therefore taking the position of strength within the family unit. Also evident within the experience is disbelief. The literature talks of the importance of viewing the body. Mary was unable to view her sister's body and therefore continues to question whether they possibly could have made a mistake.

The experience renders a severe impact on aspects of everyday life. They are unable to escape it. The second stage is depression and disorganization. Depression is evident within each experience. Some of the depressive symptoms discussed in the literature include crying, sleep disturbances, low mood, fatigue, poor memory, guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness, and loss of interest (Clayton, 1990). Each subject appears to experience some of the above depressive symptoms along with loss of concentration, feeling of being dazed, moving forward yet not knowing exactly how it is occurring. Each woman repeatedly replays the death in her mind, which may also be known as rumination. Herbst et al. (1995) describes this process as belonging to stage two.

The third stage of bereavement, consisting of recovery and therefore acceptance of death, does not clearly manifest itself in the findings of this particular study. Instead, subjects attempt to move forward, begin to accept the death but still struggle with its implications. Clayton (1990) said one will return to the level of functioning prior to the death during stage three. The women who experience loss of their sibling do not return to the level of functioning as prior to the death but inherit a whole new set of ideals and values. Their experience was and continues to be a time of life transformation that enables them to move forward with their own lives. The siblings appear to move through certain emotions in a circuitous pattern with attempts to find a livable existence without continuous pain. Labels cannot be placed on the emotions experienced yet they appear to parallel

emotions found within stages and phases of bereavement. Each person attempts to move toward an acceptable existence in an individually chosen path. New life events inevitably require a remaking of the loss as each woman moves through her life.

Identity Transformation

Hope / No Hope:

The state of being I swing between, like a pendulum over two destinations.

I must let go to hang on. I must surrender to win.

Stephanie Ericcson (1993)

The death of a loved one is a time of life transformation and change. Subjects can no longer identify the formerly familiar life. The family identity is transformed in order to preserve the integrity of the family and move forward without the existence of a valuable member whose obvious absence is noted. The literature on grief and bereavement parallels the findings of this study pertaining to the aspect of rebuilding ones life without the presence of the sibling. Worden's (1982) tasks of grieving include adjusting to an environment which no longer includes the deceased. Each person experiences a shift in identity. This has many facets and most importantly it must include aspects of the old life integrated with aspects of the new. Each subject does not want to forget, at the same time tries desperately to move forward.

The identity transformation also includes aspects of post traumatic stress disorder. As Raphael (1983) declared, the shock of sudden death is so overwhelming that it can predispose an individual to complicated mourning. According to van der Kolk et al. (1996) PTSD has created a framework for how a person's biology, conception of the world, and personality are intertwined and shaped by experience. The women in this study will never be the same person they once were. Their identity changes and their entire world is transformed. It is usually within the scope of people's inability to come to terms with real experiences that have overwhelmed their capacity to cope.

Sudden Loss

*The emotions may be endless. The more we express them,
the more we may have to express.*

E.M. Forster

Doka and Gordon (1996) talk about the bereavement reactions when death occurs from sudden, unexpected circumstances such as accidents and homicide. The reactions appear to be more severe, exaggerated, and complicated. Sudden loss is often accompanied by intensified grief, the shattering of a person's normal world, and the existence of a series of concurrent crises and secondary losses. The mourner is overwhelmed. Not only is the beloved lost forever, in sudden loss, the bereaved's world is turned upside down. The subjects experience an exorbitant amount of pain. Pain and suffering is cleansing and necessary in order to continue one's existence. There may be elements of either complicated mourning and/or post traumatic stress symptoms.

Doka and Gordon (1996) reported that the diagnosis of PTSD emerged from the DMS-III (APA, 1980) without death, grief, and bereavement constituting a traumatic event. Rando (1993) and Raphael (1983) were able to build upon the innovations of many others including Lehrman (1956), Parkes and Brown (1972), and Parkes and Weiss (1983) to develop a more complex view of bereavement which deals with the traumatic nature of the circumstances of death. The concept of complicated mourning emerged. Rando (1993) described symptoms of complicated mourning which are very similar to PTSD:

"...the grief symptomatology persists much longer than usual, and mourners typically remain socially withdrawn, developing a sense of the deceased's continued presence. The sense of continued presence binds them to the deceased and hampers their ability to function socially and occupationally (p. 175)."

Elements of both post traumatic stress symptoms and complicated mourning are evident within the experience of sudden loss of an adult sibling. Survivors of a homicide must specifically deal with feelings of fear and vulnerability, anger, rage, shame, blame, guilt and emotional withdrawal. Mary's experience depicts these feelings. Mary's

worldview changed after the death of her sibling, fear and vulnerability becoming her predominant emotion, although guilt, blame, and emotional withdrawal obviously evident in her grief experience. Doka and Gordon (1996) state that survivors feel vulnerable to further psychological or physical assaults. "The fears are not irrational. The world is no longer safe as was previously believed" (p. 58). Both Karen and Laura also appear to have a heightened sense of vulnerability and anxiety. Karen distances herself from her living triplet in order to protect herself from the pain reaction she endured with the death of her sister. Laura finds herself always aware of how fragile life is and is constantly attempting to value and appreciate it, living each moment to its fullest potential.

Secondary losses become evident in each experience. Secondary losses experienced include monetary, spiritual, health problems, and a heightened sense of vulnerability and anxiety. After Mary experiences the death of her sibling, she experiences loss of her health and then loss of a parent. Karen endures loss of a parent shortly after the death of her sibling. Laura experiences loss of physical closeness within her family unit. Family members remain close emotionally but find it difficult to gather as a family without the presence of her deceased sibling.

Survivors constantly review the death, wondering if they misread early signs or could have taken more effective action (Doka & Gordon, 1996). This is evident within each experience. Each woman is ambivalent, questioning every action, always wondering if in some way one could have changed the outcome.

The siblings search for support persons or networks. Initially, she relies on the one closest them, then she is pushed to search elsewhere as needed. Karen's husband became her foundation. He was patient and consistently supportive but when he no longer noticed improvement in Karen's symptomatology, he encouraged her to seek outside help. Karen resisted until problems within the dyad arose. They then sought marital counseling that also assisted her in her grief. van der Kolk et al. (1996) found that people seek emotional

relationships with others in order to help them anticipate, meet, and integrate difficult experiences. "Emotional attachment is probably the primary protection against feelings of helplessness and meaninglessness" (p. 24). "When people's own resources are depleted, outside help needs to be mobilized to compensate for their helplessness" (p. 25). This can be looked upon as external validation.

Each woman has a sense of the continual presence of their sibling. This continual presence does not, however, hamper their ability to function socially as in complicated mourning. It actually allows each woman the ability to move forward in their own lives, now without the physical presence of the sibling lost to sudden death.

Spirituality becomes an important aspect of the recovery. Religion fulfills the critical function of providing a sense of purpose in the face of terrifying realities by placing suffering in a larger context and by affirming the commonality of suffering across generations, time, and space. Thus, "religion can help people transcend their inbeddedness in their individual suffering" (van der Kolk et al., 1996, p. 25).

Time vs. Loyalty

*Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it,
casts the shadow of our burden behind us.*
Samuel Smiles

Ericsson (1993) states time alone does not heal. Time and distance can give us perspective. Feelings do not understand time. Loyalty to our inner soul and willingness to be alive again will be the crucial factors to the ability to say good-bye. The subjects interviewed in this study do not appear to have reached this point. Perhaps bereavement itself is somewhat different with the loss of a sibling. Maybe good-byes are not necessary in order to move forward. Each woman holds personal and close the memories of her sibling and their continual presence in their lives today. Charlton & Dolman (1995) agree that "the hurt of the death of a loved one may wane with time, but the loss can never be replaced, only substituted with an acceptance of what has happened." Time alone does not

heal but it does allow each to process and begin to feel again, to live again, to move forward yet never forgetting. It is apparent that time is a large part of the healing process in experiences of sudden loss of an adult sibling.

Sibling Loss

It is apparent that there is a need for further research in the area of sibling bereavement in one's adult years. It is apparent that the bereavement and sibling literature needs to be combined and studied. The nature of sibling bereavement was discovered to be a forgotten group. These individuals experience definite pain and grief with the loss of a sibling. Siblings often serve to take on a type of "parental" role and attempt to care for the entire family while placing their emotions temporarily on the side. However, the impact on the sibling after the sudden loss is significant. These sisters found great difficulty with detachment and "letting go" of the bereaved which parallels the findings of the study by Cleiren et al. (1994).

Implications for Practice

Grief is itself a medicine

William Cowper (1968)

The experience of sudden loss of an adult sibling has a lifelong impact on not only the siblings but the entire family. The siblings cannot and should not get lost in the shuffle. The grief they experience is very real and painful. They tend to take on more responsibility after the death becoming the family informant and also the strength of the family system. They tend to overfunction. This prevents them from initiating their own grieving process. They tend to displace their emotions until a time when their family no longer requires them to be strong. Interventions need to focus on the entire family system that has been disrupted, thus providing support to overfunctioning members.

According to Raphael (1984) one-third of all bereaved manifest problems for which professional help is deemed necessary. Steen (1998) feels some grief responses of the

bereaved such as depressive symptoms, anger or guilt, and risk factors for complicated grief reduce the likelihood that persons bereaved will seek bereavement services on their own. This only magnifies the importance of primary health care providers to become proficient in screening of the bereaved, assessment, and appropriate intervention.

None of the subjects interviewed in this study were very willing to seek outside help. Each searched for support within their own family unit or close network of friends. They believed they did not require outside assistance when they were able to talk openly to a significant other. One subject even stated "I figured at some point, I just needed to deal with this myself." Secondary to the intense feelings of ownership of grief and the need to seek support from family initially, the provider must respect the individual boundaries of the bereaved. However, at some point and with the allowance and passage of time, use of outside support becomes a valid approach. The women could no longer "deal" with it on their own and they ultimately sought some form of outside help. It is therefore of utmost importance that a list of bereavement counselors and support groups be easily available and updated annually. A referral to a counselor must always be considered, even after many years have passed. The current trend is to envision grief and bereavement as questionably limitless in regards to time, instead of the belief that the experience lasts up to 2 to 3 years (Steen, 1998). Persons may never appear to completely recover from the death of a sibling but eventually learn to adapt to their absence.

There are various types of therapy for those persons experiencing sudden loss of a family member or loved one. Doka and Gordon (1996) discuss several approaches to bereavement support including both family centered and individually oriented approaches. The provider should be aware of these various approaches by keeping reference material at hand with the ability for quick reference. It is important to make attempts to ease the pain of grief and promote the natural process of bereavement.

Emphasis on holistic health care, including accurate screening, assessment, health promotion, and prevention of illness is the key to continuity of care for the bereaved. Some of the more basic things we can do as health care providers is to facilitate the grieving process by first acknowledging the death and increasing the reality of the loss. It is important to use the language of death and avoid words like "passed away," and "lost." Encourage the family to view the body and get the autopsy or accident reports. Encourage the expression of feelings and emotions without value judgments. Recognize that emotions such as guilt, ambivalence, and blame may be present. Finally, with each office visit, attempt to help the grieved with reinvestment in life. This is difficult and could take many years. Expect that for surviving siblings, a delayed response to the loss may occur. The provider must realize that with the passage of time, it will become easier for the grieved to open up and talk about what they are feeling. Always allow time with each visit to address the death of the sibling.

Post traumatic stress disorder does not develop in the immediate aftermath but rather emerges out of the pattern of the acute distress triggered by an event (van der Kolk et al., 1996). The health care provider must familiarize himself/herself with the literature on PTSD and complicated mourning and identify patients at increased risk in order to prevent further complications. Referrals must be made for the appropriate services as needed. The health care provider may be the only one the grieved may see so again emphasis is placed on a thorough history and assessment as a valuable means for the identification of potential problems.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study looked specifically at the lived experience of adults who suddenly lost their adult sibling to death. The sample chosen was gender specific. Women were chosen in order to present a more accurate picture of the experience. The experience cannot

necessarily be generalized to men. Men who have experienced sudden loss of their sibling may have a different experience. A study looking particularly at the experience of men losing their brother/sister or women losing their brother would be an interesting comparison to the experience in this study.

Another research area of interest is a re-evaluation of these same women in about five to ten years to find out what experiences they have had since last interviewed. If time allows healing, as was apparent in these women, with the passage of more time, it would be interesting to see what changes may have taken place.

The experience of family members who have experienced death of a sibling through suicide would be another valuable area of study. This experience would most likely be quite different. Potentially, a higher proportion of those individuals would be prone to experience complicated mourning or elements of post traumatic stress disorder.

As stated previously it is imperative that the sibling not be forgotten in the area of bereavement. There is a need for further research focusing on siblings who are bereaved. Clearly, this is a transformative life even complete with positive and negative outcomes.

Conclusion

The pain and trauma experienced by survivors after a sudden death are inescapable. The passage of time allows healing to take place but the survivor's world is forever transformed into a strange, unforgiving place which is never to be the same. There is an evident struggle for "normalcy." Facets of the new life and the old are intertwined and become an important combination. The sudden loss of a sibling is so painful, words are unable to describe emotions, therefore, we are unable to place labels. The stages and phases delineated in the research literature appear to parallel aspects of the pain experience but are lived individually and uniquely. Subjects did not pass through phases or stages of bereavement but continually experienced aspects of them in no particular order and as life

unfolds. Health care providers must practice holistic health care and identify and assist those who are bereaved.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC TOOL FOR NURSING RESEARCH

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Marital status: _____

Location of Residence: _____

Current number siblings: _____

Date of siblings death: _____

Age of sibling upon her death: _____

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR NURSING RESEARCH - INTERVIEW

Purpose

I am a registered nurse, and also a student in the Family Nurse Practitioner Program at Montana State University. As part of my education, I have chosen sudden loss as the topic for my research study. Few studies have documented the needs and perceptions of young adults after the death of a sibling. Knowledge in this area would be beneficial to providers and families dealing with persons experiencing sudden loss of a sibling. The purpose of the study is to discover the true lived experience of loss of a young adult sibling through sudden death.

Participation

This interview involves a one-time audio-taped interview. The interview will last approximately one hour to ninety minutes. Your participation in this is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. I will ask you to describe your experience of having lost your sibling to sudden death.

Risks and Benefits

Taking part in this interview may be an inconvenience because of the time needed for the interview. Also, the interview will discuss issues of a sensitive and personal nature and it may be difficult to recount the experience of the death of a loved one. This experience may trigger renewed grief. If you should need assistance to deal with your sadness or discomfort, we will provide you with a list of professional persons to consult. I urge you to call if you feel the need to talk to an experienced bereavement counselor.

There are no payments for your participation. It may be beneficial however, to voice your thoughts and feelings about the events that have occurred in the past. The findings of this study will assist in the understanding and development of more appropriate and effective interventions dealing with sudden loss of an adult sibling.

Confidentiality

Interviews will be held privately to foster confidentiality. The interviews will be transcribed onto paper. In order for the information to remain confidential, your name will not appear anywhere on the typewritten pages. The transcription and consent forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the Montana State University for a period of five years. The researcher and committee will be the only individuals who will have access to audio-tapes of the interviews.

If you have any questions about this study, you may call me, Julie Long at 406-327-0235 or you may reach my advisor, Dr. Helen Lee, at the Missoula Campus: Corbin Hall, 32 Campus Drive, Missoula, MT (406-243-6515).

Date: _____ Signature _____
Interviewer

I have read this consent form and agree to participate in the study. I have received a copy of this consent form.

Date: _____ Signature _____
Participant

APPENDIX C

**Attachment to Form A2
Human Subjects Proposal****I. Purpose of the Study**

To discover the true lived experience of loss of a young adult sibling through sudden death. Grief and bereavement have been studied extensively in the literature. Most studies refer to anticipated loss of a family member or sudden loss of a spouse or child. Little research exists on sudden loss of a sibling and even less on sudden loss of an adult sibling. The death of a child or young adult may be the most difficult kind of death to experience.

II. Brief Description of Subjects

Subjects will be adults who have lost an adult sibling in the last one to three years from a sudden death experience. Those who have lost a sibling due to suicide will be excluded.

a. Number and Age

The number of subjects will range from 3 - 5. Subjects will be between the ages of 18 - 45.

b. Criteria for Selection

Subjects who identify themselves as having suddenly lost a sibling within the time period of one to six years prior to the present time. The sibling lost to sudden death must have been between the ages of 18 - 45 at the time of death.

c. Criteria for Exclusion

Young adults who have lost their sibling secondary to suicide or if the death has occurred within the past year.

d. Source of Subjects

Subjects will initially be identified through personal contacts and resources. Advertisements in the Kaimen and Missoulian will be utilized along with notices placed on billboards of the University and local churches, if necessary. Participation will be solely on a voluntary basis. Subjects may be located either in-state or out-of state.

e. Steps to be Taken to Avoid Coercion

Subjects who are personally known to the investigator will be contacted and informed of the purpose of the study. Voluntary subjects inquiring about the study will be fully informed prior to initiation of the study. A written informed consent will be obtained and will be given to and/or read to each subject. The investigator will answer any remaining questions and provide requested clarification and explanation. All participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Attachment to Form A2, Page 2

f. Location of the Study

Contact will be made and interview conducted at convenient time and in a neutral area. Phone interviews may be necessary for access to subjects living outside Montana. The interviews will be conducted in settings which are comfortable and convenient for the participants, with respect being given to privacy.

III. Brief Description of Procedure

Potential subjects will be identified and approached regarding participation. The study, purposes, and uses of the study will be explained and subjects will be asked to participate in a confidential interview. Informed consent will be obtained. After informed consent is obtained, the time and place of the interview will be arranged. The subject will be notified of the approximate length of interview, between 45 and 90 minutes, and their right to withdraw at any time during the process. Basic demographic information will be obtained at the introduction of the interview process. One interview question will be utilized to initiate each scheduled interview: Describe for me your experience of having lost your sibling to sudden death. Interviews will be tape recorded with consent. Subjects will be assured confidentiality of names. Interviews will be transcribed verbatim.

Data will be analyzed through the use of the Phenomenological method as described by Giorgi. Analysis will occur as descriptions are compared and contrasted noting recurring elements therefore identifying the ingredients of the phenomenon and the way the ingredients relate to each other. Four steps are involved including: getting a general sense by reading through the description of the experience, breaking down the description into meaning units, transforming the meaning units to reveal knowledge through reflection and variation, and synthesis of transformed meaning units into a consistent statement regarding the participant's experiences.

IV. Brief Description of Risks and Benefits to the Subject and how Adverse Effects Will be Handled**a. Potential Risks to Subjects**

It is possible that subjects may be recognized through their experiences. The interviews will discuss issues of a sensitive and personal nature and it may be difficult for the subjects to recount the traumatic experience of the death of a loved one. This experience may trigger renewed grief. Efforts will be made to provide an atmosphere where the subject feels at ease and comfortable discussing these emotions with the researcher. If assistance is needed to deal with sadness or discomfort, a list of professional persons to consult will be provided. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that at any time the interview can be stopped. The subject is not required to answer questions or discuss ideas and feelings he/she does not feel comfortable discussing.

Attachment to Form A2, Page 3.

b. Potential Benefits to Subjects

No direct benefits to subjects in this study are anticipated. It may be therapeutic for the subjects to voice their thoughts and feelings about their experience dealing with the sudden loss of their sibling. Knowledge gained through this study may indirectly benefit the subjects through the understanding of adult sibling bereavement. Few studies have documented the needs and perceptions of adult sibling loss. Knowledge in this area would be beneficial to providers and families dealing with sudden loss of a sibling. The findings of this study will assist in the understanding and development of more appropriate and effective interventions dealing with adults who have lost a sibling to sudden death.

V. Brief Description of the Procedure to Maintain Confidentiality

Interviews will be held privately to foster confidentiality. Participants will be informed that their name will not appear on any written or verbal report.

Pseudonyms will be assigned to each participant and demographics, such as age and location of residence, will be changed in the report of data. For example, geographics will be changed by declaring the subject from a rural state similar yet different from their current place of residence. Identifying characteristics such as specific details about the incidence surrounding the death will be omitted leaving only a general description. An example of this would be to change the name of the highway and city where a fatal traffic accident had occurred. The subjects will be encouraged to review the transcription of the interview. At this time they will be able to request removal of information they believe too sensitive or incorrect. The subjects will also be reassured that if at a later time they decide they want certain information omitted, they are encouraged to call the researcher and this request would be granted. Signed consent forms will be kept locked in a file cabinet at Montana State University for a period of five years. The researcher and committee will be the only individuals who will have access to audiotapes of interviews.

VI. Statement Regarding Deception

The study proposed is a qualitative study in which the data of interest are the subject's shared experiences through thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. There is neither need nor occasion for deception and it is not intended nor anticipated.

VII. Questionnaires and Informed Consent

The unstructured interviews will be based on an initial question at the opening of the interview regarding the experience of losing a sibling to sudden death. Prompting will be utilized to obtain additional clarification and detail.

A standard informed consent is provided. The informed consent will be given to each subject with explanation prior to the interview. Questions will be encouraged and answered at this time.

APPENDIX D

Interview with Laura - Level 2

J: I would like you to describe your experience of having lost your sister suddenly to death.

S: My, experience, hmmm; its really hard to pinpoint any one word/, I mean it is, umm, I get sad thinking about people who have to go through that. Any kind of death of a sibling. I may not even know that person but just to know that someone has to go through that horrible feeling./ Its ummm, it was a shock./ Certain things that I remember are the phone calls, that when you came and got me at the restaurant or when I came home and that drive. That, when I think about that day and that night, it was so chaotic./ And uh when people say, you know when I have talked about it in the past.....there are certain images that come back. I remember driving with you across the bridge and thinking that oh, people get hit all the time by lightening./ And you were just like yeah, you kind of had that hesitation in your voice. Its almost like you kind of knew also a little bit more than I did./

J: Right

S: Because I didn't know at that time the extent of what had happened, and then when I walked into the hospital room and saw her on that vent and saw how she was on full capacity and everyone, the doctors, and everyone had this look like... you know... we are just keeping her on here. Just, it was a shock, it was just such a big eye opener for me./ Chaotic, it seemed like the longest day, that whole 24 hour period. I don't even think we were there 24 hours, I think we were there for only 12./ She died the next morning. But, uh, it was very surreal./ Umm, I forgot what the question was.

J: Its all right. Tell me more about how you "knew", what made you know, by looking at the doctors, did you know.....

1. S. states it is hard to pinpoint.
2. S. states she feels "sad" thinking about people who have to experience a loss, even if she doesn't know that person, she feels bad that they have to go through that "horrible feeling".
3. S. states it was a shock.
4. When S. thinks of the day and night of the accident, she remembers it was chaotic. She also remembers things such as phone calls, when she was picked up at the restaurant, the drive to the hospital.
5. S. remembers images of the night, feeling as if I knew more than she.
6. S. remembers it was a shock walking into the hospital room because she did not know the extent of what had happened. "It was just such a big eye opener for me".
7. S. remembers chaos and it feeling like the longest day, even though they were there for 12 hours.
8. S states she died the next morning and that is was very "surreal".

S: I didn't know right away, I did know when I had to...everyone had, I still feel like I was the big pessimist of the group, of the family. Only because I had worked in the hospital and I knew some of the things that I saw was not good./ My family on the other hand were like oh no, no no no, they are going to keep her on and she is going to be okay and the doctor says that we're going to check on her in the morning and all this /and I was like - What? what is the doctor saying. Well, I feel like out of that whole experience, although my family might not necessarily feel like, that I was the big negative pessimist person saying this is ridiculous, she is not going to make it./ Ummm, but being the realist to say...but when the social worker came to me and said you know, "you're the one who seems to understand the severity of what is going on, you need to call your uncle and get him in here to do last rights and you need to call your brother and if he really wants to be here he needs to get on the next flight out here from Boston. I'm the one making these phone calls, I'm the one having to do this and to really be.....to really have to feel like I was the one who understood what was really going on but my parents have no clue and my sister is just oblivious to what is going on./ I still won't forget that because I don't think that was my job.

J: No,

S: That should of been my parents job. I can't blame them for not necessarily, I mean no parent is going to want to think that you have to start making decisions and maybe that's why the social worker came to me cause you don't ask parents to do that at that point. I mean there is probably a reason why she did that. Cause as a parent I don't think I would want to have to listen to someone saying, "you have to call a priest in now:?"

J: Right.

S: I would be like, get the hell out of here. I kind of resent that a little bit./

9. S. states she didn't know the seriousness right away but because of her past experience she knew things were not good.

10. S's family remained optimistic.

11. S. felt like the pessimist, "this is ridiculous, she is not going to make it".

12. S. ended up being the one responsible to call people and begin to make arrangements because her family did not fully understand the seriousness of her sisters injury as she did.

13. S. felt strongly that those decisions should not have been placed on her but should of been her parents responsibility, however, she does not blame her parents.

14. S. states she does "resent that a little".

J: Do you feel like you were given a choice at that point or.....

S: No, I knew. There were no choices. There were no choices.

J: That was your responsibility?

S: Umm, that was my responsibility. Umm, I was I guess somewhat of a decision maker at that point. The go-between I suppose between the people and my parents. And we've talked about that, I mean I remember the point where in the morning I walked in there, it must of been about 6 or 7:00 in the morning and I couldn't go into her room anymore. And I went to my parents and I'm like you know what, whatever happens/ and the kidney specialist had just come in and said there is nothing we can do./ And I remember going into my parents and saying well this is the last time I am coming into this room because this is not how she would ever want to live her life. Even if she could come out of it, she couldn't, its not the existence she would wish for./

J: Right.

S: And at that point, my mom has even asked me a couple of times "So, did we make the right decision?" And I say of course we did, of course we did./ But at that point when I said that my parents clued in and like your right, "this isn't the existence she would want." And that's when the doctors I think finally said okay, now we can talk to them about this. They were just waiting for us to get to that point./

J: They were just waiting.

S: And I don't know, is that what they are supposed to do? I think, I mean I don't know./

J: Right.

S: But, I mean my mom questions it, and I always seem to have to reassure her that it was the best thing to do. But I

15. S. states there were no choices, it was ultimately her responsibility to become a decision maker in the process, she was the "go-between".

16. The Dr.'s informed S. and her family there was nothing more they could do.

17. S. told her parents this was not how her sister would want to live her life, even if she was able to survive, "its not the existence she would wish for."

18. S's mom questions the decision and S. must reassure her.

19. Once S's family was in agreement, the Dr.'s were able to talk openly with them.

20. S. questions the reality of it.

21. S. must continue to reassure her mom that they did the right thing. This is an ongoing issue with her parents.

know, I know that's been an issue with them. Like we were the ones to decide and they shouldn't feel like that./

J: No they shouldn't, and you feel like you were the one who gave them that little push?

S: I kind of feel like I gave them the push, just like you have to start thinking about this. And, um,/ maybe I'm not, maybe it wasn't really me, maybe there was more going on. I think it was all about me at that point. And it probably wasn't, I mean everybody else is probably still talking or saying the same thing./ But at that point, I mean it was really late, and we were all exhausted. But, I think when I look back, because the doctors and the nurses were jumping on the opportunity for us to really talk as a family and figure out what was really going on./ But I feel like it was the decision that everybody really wanted it to make. You know, for her, you know what, she wouldn't, even it was that was the way it was supposed to be.

J: It was.....

S: But I think that....my mom doesn't talk about it very often in terms of that like did we, but she has brought it up I think it was at like about her one year anniversary and they had been going to therapy and she was telling me. I said how are things going, they go to a bereavement class, she was like well you know its good, its hard, its hard, and she is like sometimes I just wonderI'm like why do you even wonder, I said you can't, no way, there is no way that the existence of what she was going to have even if we kept her going. there is no way she would ever want us to keep that decision, keep her going. My moms like you're right, you're right, you're right. But it still is like I have to feel like I even have to reassure her of it. I feel bad about that./

J: You feel bad because you feel responsible?

22. S. feels responsible for forcing the issue and pushing her parents towards a decision.

23. "I think it was all about me at that point." S. is unsure if it was really her who pushed the decision.

24. S. states they were all exhausted during the decision making process.

25. S. believes her family was in agreement.

26. S. states it is difficult and really makes her feel bad when her mom questions their decision and S. must reassure her that they did the right thing.

S: Somewhat. No, I don't feel responsible, I mean it was ultimately going to happen, it was ultimately but umm./ I guess part of me was like God you know it seemed like it had been days that we were there but it was really only 12 hours. What if we would of waited 24. Its still, I think, it would of got worse and worse and worse for us to have made that decision if we would of waited three or four more days./ You know, they could of kept her going, I think maybe we were just tired. I know we were, I know that sounds stupid.

J: No it doesn't.

S: But we made an irrational decision./ But, I think it was better we made it early on than trying to give more hope when there wasn't really any hope./ And that's the part of me that would love to see the medical records to see what the nurses were writing, like oh, I don't know if people write, Oh were just waiting to see where the family goes with this, we want them to make the decision but ultimately there really is nothing we can do. I mean you know, I don't know, part of me wants to get that reassurance,/ but I don't need it.

J: Because in the back of your mind you have a little question back there too?

S: Yeah, and there is nothing that really could of, there is nothing that, there is nothing that could of happ, done, they could of done. I mean they told us, they told us there's nothing but you still kind of wonder. You know, that's why you, you know, I think yeah, my parents ultimately I guess had to make that decision. Its too bad they had to do that.

J: Right.

S: Because they probably second guess themselves a little bit, I don't think they do a lot, but they probably will. Probably./ So you know the fact that you know she was hit and someone revived her and all that. You know its too bad that you know it just didn't happen there.

27. S. states she does not feel responsible because her sister was ultimately going to die.

28. S. states part of her thinks maybe they should of waited longer than 12 hours but also believes the decision would have been more difficult the longer they waited.

29. S. wonders if they made a rash decision because they were tired.

30. S. states it was better that the decision was made earlier when there was little hope.

31. S. wishes she could view hospital records for some reassurance they did the right thing.

32. Even though the Dr.'s told them there was nothing they could do, it was still unfortunately her parents decision and because of that S. states they will always wonder and second-guess themselves.

33. S. states it may have been easier if she had died at the scene.

J: So, in your mind you almost think that it would of been less painful?

S: I think so, well less painful.....

J: If that decision hadn't been placed upon you.

S: Yeah, yeah, but then, the flip side of that is that we wouldn't of had the closure that we as a family, you know then we wouldn't of had that opportunity to get together and and and be able to say good-bye like that./ You know, I don't know, it depends on what you believe, I think that was important for my parents.

J: How about for you?

S: Yeah, I think, I think it was I guess. I think at some point, I just kind of, she was already dead.

J: Right.

S: I had made that decision ,well you know what, she is already gone, even if they could keep her going there is nothing there./

J: Do you feel like you were able to say good-bye to her?

S: Yeah, yeah, I still uh, It s hard to say because I still feel her around. Sorry you are not going to be able to get this on tape. I still feel her around me though, that's the kicker. I still have these weird feelings about her around me all the time. Its and I , and I don't' know if anybody else in my family does but its the darndest thing. I laugh all the time because I feel her.

J: Good feelings?

S: Great feelings, like reassuring feelings. Almost like not even a guardian, not like someone's protecting me, but someone's laughing next to me./ Its a weird thing, I can't explain it and I am not a person who believes in psychics or anything but I would go just because I know she would like beat me there, and

34. S. states two sides and because she made it to the hospital, they were allowed closure and the opportunity to say good-bye.

35. Although S. believes it was important to her parents to say good-bye, she believes her sister was already dead and that "there was nothing there".

36. S. says she does not know if she was able to say good-bye because she feels her all the time.

37. S. continues to feel her sister's presence around her all the time, laughing and talking with her.

laugh and talk to me and tell me what she is up to. I have that feeling about her.

J: Really?

S: Its the weirdest thing Jules. And if I was listening to someone else tell me that, I would be like they're cuckoo.

J: I don't think that.

S: But I just, every once in a while, I will be doing something and I'll be, I'll look up to around me and I'll be just like Oh my God, its just so weird./ And I have had incredible dreams about her and I just I have this great feeling that she is doing a magnificent thing right now, I don't know what it/ yeah I just have this very good sense that she was meant to be gone. It was definitely her time to go, It was definitely her time./ And I meet other people and I hear stories. A good friend of mine, Sherry's friend, Lucy um, did you ever meet Lucy and Greg?

J: I don't think so.

S: They came to our wedding. Lucy has a younger brother, I think he was 25 26, he just died about 3 weeks ago. He had a bone marrow transplant and he didn't make it. And he has had, I forget what kind of lymphoma but he had um, he has been sick for a couple of years and he just got married about a year ago. And sherry called me and said Lucy's brother died and I don't even I only met him once and I felt so bad for Lucy I just felt like God I got to call, I gotta send her a card or something, I just feel so bad for her that she is having to now miss her brother. Its so weird, but I don't even know him that well but I just get so sad about that, thinking that she has to go through that. Now, her family is now one less person. I just.....

J: You know how that is.

S: Anyhow, I feel really bad, anyhow.../ I have the sense that Ann is around here all the time. I feel really weird.

38. S. thinks this is strange and normally does not believe in things of this nature.

39. S. talks of incredible dreams of her sister.

40. S. believes in fate, that it was her time "she was meant to be gone."

41. S. tells the story of a friends brother who died and states she felt so bad that her friend and their family are now "one less person".

42. S. states a continual sense of her sisters presence.

J: I think that's great.

S: I wish she was around others in my family, because I don't necessarily know if I need it the most. Maybe I do. But I think you know./

J: Do you and your family talk about her or share anything about her?

S: Well, my parents and I do. I mean I talk, and I talk and I try to bring Ann's name up. I feel comfortable talking about it with Tom and Tim and my parents but I can't bring it up with Jean, she just will not budge. And that's okay, I mean I never felt like, never felt like I wanted to have this deep conversation with her about how much she misses her or what she misses./ Same thing with the kids, every once in a while I'll say something to Maria like oh I remember when da,da,da,da,da, and Jean will be like oh, I remember when Ann did that. That's about it, she'll just leave it at that, but nothing like and I miss that or I really wish she was around here, like the important stuff. The I remembers are good but she needs to tell Maria and Mike how spectacular she was or how energetic or how funny. Those things they don't get from there mom. So I, Jean, that's why I get mad, like she needs to tell them these things and Its not about just I remember when we went on vacation, well you need to say, well I remember when we went on vacation and it was so funny because we did this and it was and then Ann freaked mom and dad out because she did this. You know, she needs to tell them more than just what they did./ But I don't think, you know, and then I don't want to overstep my boundaries because they're not my kids, they are her kids. Its so, its hard./ But with Tim and Lana (Brother and sister-in-law) we talk, we talk about that, Tim not too much but more Lana but guys are different. Um, but my parents love to talk about her, any opportunity to talk about her they will. But I don't know who they, they must talk about her to each other. But, um, not not usually about with Jean, Jean is hard.

43. S. wishes others in her family could feel her sisters presence as well, she believes they need that more than she does.

44. S. states she is able to talk comfortably and openly with her parents and brothers about Ann but not with her sister Jean.

45. S. states her sister rarely talks about Ann and this bothers her especially since her sister's children do not hear how spectacular their Aunt was. This makes S. very angry.

46. It is difficult for S. because she does not want to overstep her boundaries with Jeans kids yet she wants them to remember their Aunt.

47. S's parents love to talk about Ann.

J: I just want to go back to probably the first day after Ann died, that day, kind of that initial time period after the death.

S: Umm, lets see. It was such a long day. We went back to the hospital, we had been up all night and I think we left the hospital about 10:00 in the morning. At that point, things started to get really chaotic. Really weird, none of us had slept./ My dad, sent my brother and I, Tim has never been able to forget this. My dad sent my brother and I from the hospital, gave us a hundred bucks, and he said go to the liquor store and fill the house full of liquor because people are coming. So, we're at the liquor store and Tim is crying, and I am sitting there going we got to do this. He's sitting there going, this is bullshit, we are in the liquor store and we have all these people coming and I am like you know what, Tim we gotta do this. And he's right you know, people are coming over. So we're buying liquor on our way back from the hospital. So that was lovely. I know Tim will always be pissed about that./ Ummm, then we got in and phone calls and people were in our house who my parents friends came over and were answering telephones. I think that's actually when Frank drove us home, but, which is another weird thing in its own. Um, but people, my friends parents came over and were answering telephones for us./ And everybody just wanted to get a couple hours of sleep but nobody was./ At that point my brother Tom we had thought left on a flight that very early in the morning (1 or 2 am.). And so we thought he was going to be coming in and nobody had heard from him and his friend said I dropped him off at the airport hours ago. And so nobody knew where he was or how he was getting here. So, we figured well he'll call. So he completely missed everything at the hospital. So we were waiting for him to call so someone could come and get him at the airport,/ but we were all exhausted and my mom, out family doctor came over who is a very good friend of ours.

48. S. states the night of the accident was a strange night. No one slept and things were chaotic.

49. S. and her brother were sent to the liquor store by their father who knew they would have people coming over. S's brother will always be angry about that incident.

50. S. remember a house full of people and telephones ringing.

51. S. states no one could sleep even though they tried.

52. S. remembers waiting for her brother and worrying about him.

53. S. and her family were exhausted, their family Dr. was there and gave her parents medicine to help them relax.

he gave my parents drugs so they could at least relax./ And I fell asleep out started in my moms living room and I think I had about an hours sleep and people just started coming over. And just walking into our house grieving and looking for something to do. Like, what can we do, what can we do to help?

J: Right.

S: And standing in our house, like my moms friends who we all grew up with. And they were all,/ so my mom starts feeding them.

J: How did that make you feel?

S: Well, at the time I mean, I was so tired I wasn't mad because this is the only thing we knew is people coming over in a time of crisis or happiness and eat and drink. That's what we know, that's why my dad said, because he probably knew. But the fact that he could of had his friends do it. You know like they could of bought their own fricken liquor.

J: Right.

S: You know?

J: Yeah.

S: At the time, I mean I'm older now, its been four years. At the time I appreciated Shawn (friend) coming by and waking me up and crying and saying I can't believe what's going on. I can't believe this. And, and at the time it's all we knew, the people, the physicalness of the people in front of us./ But, I don't know if I would necessarily do that again. Cause its nobody's business to be there and unless you invite them or unless you have them./ And people are looking because they don't know how to respond. They don't know, like my Aunt, I mean of course like my Aunt, and all that but my parents friends didn't belong there. It just added more chaos to and stress to my parents and to the house./ Meanwhile my brother's trying to get home and he at that point didn't know that Ann had died. So, he was flying back which I think was a good thing.

54. S. fell asleep and remembers waking to people "grieving and looking for something to do" to help.

55. S. states the only thing her family knew was people coming over in a time of crises or happiness and to eat and drink. That's what they did.

56. S. remembers a friend waking her, crying with her and comforting her. At the time S. states that was all they knew, "the physicalness of the people" in front of them.

57. S. states if ever she was in that position again, she would not have a house full of people, because it is no one else's business.

58. S. states people don't know how to respond.

59. It was difficult when S's brother arrived to town, he went to the hospital first and broke down, upon arrival to the house, S. was the fist one to meet him at the door.

Umm, so he went directly to the hospital without calling from the airport. He took a cab and he went to find everybody and everybody is gone and he couldn't believe and he broke down at the hospital. The social worker was there who had been with us for 24 hours and she took him back to visit Ann and um, the body was still there and uh and then he came over to the house. He didn't even call from the hospital. We're 2 miles from there, he didn't even call and he took a cab from the hospital to the house and he walked in the door and he dropped all his bags and started crying/ and I was the first one there. I was the first one at the door for him. And we, he just started crying and I was holding him and he was like why didn't anybody.....I was like you know what, we didn't know where you were. So then we started fighting about how like he got there and it was already done and he has said now that that was probably the best thing for him to have not been there with the family.

J: Really?

S: Because he is pretty disconnected from everybody so in a way that was probably his own closure and I mean he said that was probably okay that he was better doing that on his own./ So yeah, there I was I was the first one at the door to greet him and then my parents came up and, and then it was going through it AGAIN, going to the whole, explaining what we had gone through and going through everything with him and reliving it. And uh, so that was exhausting so then I think its only been 24 hours now and its dinner time, and as family members start to come over and people from out of state start coming in your reliving it again and again and again. So anytime someone came over you are breaking down and reliving it again./ So that's where I think, I don't think I would have, I would close my doors and say let us just grieve. Because its exhausting and it just wears you down. It wears you down and all of a sudden you are in this

60. Emotions were labile, S. states they grieved then they argued.

61. S. remembers reliving the grief over and over while explaining the sequence of events to each person and family member who arrived.

62. S. states at that point, she would close her doors and say, "let us grieve". You are exhausted, it wears you down but you can't sleep.

phase of exhaustion but you can't sleep./ And uh, people don't, they just want to grieve with you and you just can't do it that many times over. So, uh, it was hard. I think my old boyfriend, that's when John came over, he wanted to grieve, because you know all these people who knew her wanted to grieve. You can't do it all that time, you cannot do it that much. It is just too much on people./ So, um that was just like one day and then the next day more people just kept coming over. So we had a big festival there that night, like a big food fest. People, my mom had this big humungous spread. I mean I look at it and people deal with things differently, stress differently, we deal with food and drink. So rather than my mom going to the back room and crying she is feeding people and she is staying occupied/ so I can't, I mean I can't be mad at that. Its just, I don't know if that is necessarily the right thing to do. So everybody does it differently./ Um, so here she is, she is feeding people and this is that night and there eating their food and we're just sitting there and then we have to write an obituary. So then we started writing an obituary and my brother Tim and I started to write it and Tom was sitting there and he said you know what let me write this, you know I am a writer. "You know I can't do much," you know he said I don't want to do any readings for the funeral. My uncle was here so he said I can't plan this funeral, I don't want to be part of this funeral but I can do something which know well and that will be to write her obituary. And so he wrote it and that was like his little thing that he did. It was beautiful, it was such a beautiful obituary. We had people send it, but we have it, people kept sending us saying I found this in the paper, I wasn't sure if you had this. This is wonderful, what a tribute. So that was his gift to her, it was his writing. And uh, people just started coming in and uh I think the first night we went to sleep, I slept at my parents

63. S. states it was difficult because people wanted to grieve with you but you couldn't do it over and over, "its too much".

64. S. talks of people handling stress differently and talks of a big festival the night of her sisters death. Instead of her mom going to her room and crying she feeds people and stays occupied.

65. S. wonders if dealing with stress this way (eating and drinking) is the "right thing".

66. S. describes how the family assigned tasks and how each family member worked together to make the funeral ceremony very special. They had many compliments on the obituary.

house. And waking up early in the morning, it was the second day, I'll never forget it. This is again one of those images, I was sleeping across my parents room and I just remember my mom bawling when she woke up, hysteric like, shock like it was a dream. Moaning and bawling and I heard my dad crying /cause they were saying its not a dream, they had just woken up..... and they were, its like they went through it all over again, and they were just wailing. Oh God, oh and it just hurt and it just hurt so much to hear them in so much pain. /It was in the morning so there weren't that many people there. It was just me and my brother Tim and Tom, so it was just our family but to hear my parents wail and moan and be hurting so much that next morning, I just won't forget that. I felt so bad for them Jules, I felt so bad./ And then it starts again, people come over. Their best friends would come over and answer our phones and uh, you know then it just starts again, breakfast and people coming over and figuring out/ because I think the funeral was the next day so we had a day to plan the funeral. And uh, I think it was on a Friday, I went to dinner on a Wednesday night when you drove me over so we're talking short period of time here./ So my mom, got up, but I'll never forget that morning, that was so hard for them. I think more so than the funeral day, that was the first morning after she had died. And uh, I think that was harder than the funeral but then, I don't know.

J: How about for you?

S: Oh, to me just listening to them I, made me upset but and hard. I don't really remember how I felt, only because it was, it was just chaotic/ but um, I went with my mom that next day and we went to go pick out flowers. My parents were going to pick out caskets and shit like that and we were and I, she says will you go up with me to pick some flowers out? So we went up there to the flower shop that morning and uh, it was someone who grew up with Ann, who was running the

67. S. vividly remembers the morning after her sisters death she was awoken to moaning and bawling from her parents room.

68. S. remembers feeling intense amount of pain to hear them wailing, they had woken and realized it was not a dream, they went through it all over again.

69. S. states she won't ever forget their sobs "I felt so bad for them".

70. S. again remembers the repetition of people, phones, and food on the second day after her death.

71: S. remembers having to plan the funeral the second day.

72. Again, S. states how difficult the morning after her sisters death was for her parents, she believes more difficult than the funeral.

73. S. doesn't recall her own emotions secondary to the chaos.

74. S. recalls being unable to escape from the situation because wherever they went people were grieving and wanted to grieve with them, for example the flower shop attendant was Ann's friend.

flower shop and she was in tears the whole time. So, you know we really couldn't go anywhere at this point. Not like we wanted to go anywhere, but you really couldn't turn around when there wasn't someone who was grieving again with you. And going through all of that plus she was crying and picking out flowers with us and doing that./ And uh, then people started coming in again. My cousins from Idaho came in and people are in the house all day. There really wasn't a moment when we were by ourselves at all until after the funeral and after the people left that weekend./ Um, but, I felt at the time, I did, I felt strong. I mean I felt I was going to have to step above,/ I mean I didn't think about it at the time but I did feel strong, I felt like I had my act together a little bit but I certainly had my moments, broke down./ But uh, you know, I was helping my uncle organize mass, what he was going to do. There were certain parts where I felt very strong, I was okay, someone had to be strong.

J: Right.

S: I couldn't, you can't expect my parents to do it. Jean wasn't around really, she didn't stay with us at my parents, she was with her family in shock. And uh, so somebody had to do it./

J: So strong meaning.....someone who wasn't crying and who wasn't'

S: No, I was crying but um, just going yeah I'll go pick flowers out with you and yeah, this needs to be done. And okay you need more food and yeah okay, you know we were having to make, do these things where it would of been just as nice to crawl into bed and shut the door.

J: Right, right, uh-huh, but again you felt like you needed to do that because there was nobody else really to do that?

S: No one else was doing it, yeah and my parents needed someone, they needed us to be strong, they needed Tim and I to do certain things and they needed us to

75. S. remembers people filtering in and unable to be with just immediate family until after the funeral when people finally left.

76. S. states she felt strong, "I felt like I was going to have to step above".

77. Upon reflection S. states although she had her weak moments, she felt she needed to keep it all together.

78. S. states her family was in shock and she realized someone needed to step up, S. helped organize mass, "someone had to be strong".

79. S. states that although she realized things needed to be done, she really just wanted to escape.

80. S. states she had her moments of weakness.

do, and we were. I mean, / I don't know, I think I was pretty strong, I mean I definitely had my moments though. / But you feel superhuman at that point, nothing can really get any worse than it is now and you gotta deal with it. There are certain things that you gotta do and its about shit, its about stupid stuff, for us it was. Its about picking up this stuff and doing this and people are coming in and we gotta org, where are they gonna stay and da da da da, you know. / Its stupid. There aren't really focusing on Ann or anything that is really important. Because you are thrown into this big production. Its a production, stupid. / Yeah I think at certain points I was strong, I mean you know someone needed to be strong with my parents so you know. / And then we had the funeral.
J: Right.

S: And uh, we were planning the funeral the day before with my uncle and uh, you know he said I want you to do a reading. I was like all right, I can do that and Jean, and Jean wanted to do something for once now. / Oh, which, which goes back to planning the funeral, so you know, I call, I call Dani and her parents who are singers and talk to them and invite them over to do the music part of the, you know its like.....sitting there in my living room and grieving with them and here two parents that I absolutely adore and they're crying and my parents, my parents don't even really know them that well, they do now. /

J: I bet.

S: And having to go through the mass with them and my uncle and taking the time to do that and you know here I am sitting with them and saying okay well this is what we should do and I think this would be good and here we are organizing this. Its really weird. Its really weird. And part of me wishes like I could of been my brother Tom and not have been a part of it.

J: Really? You don't feel like that helped you through?

81. S. states you feel "superhuman" and realized there were certain things that had to be done and that nothing could get any worse at this point.

82. S. stated it was "stupid", the focus was not on Ann or anything of importance but the big "production".

83. S. states someone needed to be strong for her parents.

84. S. talks about the funeral, planning it, deciding who would be part of it, she would do the reading, Jean wanted to have a part for the first time.

85. S. remembers the singers, crying and grieving with them and how they ended up close with her parents.

86. S. remembers feeling strange about organizing the funeral but realizing she was unable to just sit back and let things happen like her brother did.

S: Oh absolutely, its the only thing I know though, that's the only thing, I can't just sit back. But that's just me./ But, part of me wishes I could because I could care less what happens but I wanted to make sure the right things were done. I suppose, that's who I am./

J: Exactly.

S: But then that was a nice surprise because Jean wanted to do something in the mass, which I don't know why she did. She was a wreck and she shouldn't of, she shouldn't of put herself up there, she shouldn't of put herself.....she wanted, I don't' know what she was, why she was doing it./ I felt strong that I could, I was inspired that I wanted to do this beautiful service and you know this was but she shouldn't of. She was a wreck the whole time. She shouldn't of put herself up on the altar to do anything. I don't know why she did./ But I felt strong and I did, I felt really good cause I remember to like Ann's friends Sue, her best friend, she um, I mean they would look at me and they would hear her laugh and they would grab me and say and cry looking at me because they would hear her or as my mannerisms were the same as Ann's. They would tell me that and then I feel like yeah, I gotta do, you know I gotta do this, I gotta participate. Be strong./

J: You have to be there for these people?

S: Yeah!!! Absolutely, because it feels good. I want to hear that,/ but um, but Jean did that and there were just too many people there at that funeral, it was just insane. It was just insane but you know what, my parents invited Bob um, Ann's boyfriend to be part of the family, you know, you know he was right there with us, just as if they were married and um, that was important for him, for us for him to be part of the family too./ The funeral morning was so weird. They brought the limo and the guys were playing hoops out in front of the house. I couldn't believe it, I mean, not out of like, just because, how surreal is this? They're coming to

87. S. is torn between playing an active role, making sure things are done vs. being able to let things happen because she didn't really care what happened.

88. S. states her sister wanted to have a role in the funeral which was nice but she shouldn't of because she was a wreck.

89. S. felt inspired to do a beautiful service and felt strong she could where her sister should not have been a part.

90. S. remembers feeling pressure from Ann's friends with all their compliments about how much S. reminded them of Ann.

91. S. states she wanted to hear that she reminded them of Ann "it felt good".

92. There were many people at the funeral, Ann's boyfriend was invited to be part of the family.

93. S. remembers the morning of the funeral as feeling surreal, boys playing hoops, women cooking, waiting for a limo, people twiddling their thumbs, she wasn't mad, it was weird.

pick us up for our sisters wedding and Tony and Tim and Bob are playing basketball in the front, you know they are all dressed up waiting for the limo to come and they're shooting hoops out in the front. And that to me is, you knew you can't, I'm not mad at it, but I remember that, like that's another image that I remember of that morning. People waiting around, people waiting around twiddling their thumbs and I think that's a really bizarre thing, to have to be twiddling your thumbs waiting for bizarre shit like this. That to me is so surreal. Like I am waiting to go to my sisters funeral and here are these guys shooting hoops./

J: So it felt more like a wedding than a

S: I guess you're right, at that point you're so tired of crying and you know you're going to cry once you get there, and everyone's just kind of, and we're funny and we're a happy family, we're funny and we're happy so if there's moments where people aren't crying, making jokes or whatever, no ones joking/ but um, you know you're waiting around, you're waiting to go to your sisters funeral and their shooting hoops. I'll never forget that. (laughs) You know because that's just what they know. And again,....

J: You're cooking and they.....

S: Yeah we're cooking and...../ and also it would of been nice to also be in the room and wait until someone calls you out. We're not, we're just not like that. I wish I could be more like that./ That's the one about me that I wish I could keep, I could be more introverted about it, because I think you expose yourself way too much and you're very vulnerable to other people when you do that. You set yourself up a little bit.

J: You set yourself up to hurt more?

S: Oh yeah, I think so and then people know that much more about your pain.

94. S. states normally they are a happy family and realizes they were tired of crying.

95. S. remembers "waiting around to go to your sisters funeral."

96. S. wishes her family could keep more to themselves.

97. S. wishes she was more introverted because she felt exposed and vulnerable "people know that much more about your pain" and you don't really want them to.

Maybe they don't need to know, or maybe you don't want them to know. You don't want them to even have a clue./ But, um, yeah, so that morning was really weird like dressing up, it was a big production thing./ And then actually being there was just a nightmare, just being there and seeing all those people and doing that it was just not good. It was not a good day. And then when Dani's brother sang that song, by Eric Clapton, he did that on, you know, he didn't tell us he was going to do that. Its like I can't, I can't handle this day, that was a pretty sad day./

J: It was.

S: And then more people came over after. And there's food, and there was a reception downstairs I think, and they had put all her pictures up everywhere and then people came back to the house. It was just a long process of people, nonstop./ You know that's how I think I remember but I also remember being very positive and strong. And um, I mean, you know, like I, I feel sad thinking about it but I remember at the time I like I tried to put myself out of that and be strong. But it didn't matter if I was strong or not. But that's all I knew, I only knew how to just be oh, its okay, its going to be okay, and then you can break down later.....For years later, and the months and the years and the days and you can do that later./ You know, I don't, people are, people are all so different on how they do that. I'm sure the people you have interviewed have all been different too.

J: Its been very individual.

S: Yeah, I just wish though I didn't necessarily, I wasn't like that. Sometimes it would be easy to just say ah, I'm out of here, I don't want to be part of this. I'm not like that. I'm not like that./

J: So what happened when the people finally left?

98. The morning of the funeral was a big production.

99. S. states being at the funeral was a nightmare, "it was a sad day".

100. S. remembers a long procession of people nonstop.

101. S. remembers upon reflection trying to keep herself positive and strong, thinking she should break down later, years, months and days later.

102. S. states people are individual on how they handle situations like this.

103. S. wishes she could have distanced herself, get away, not have been a part of it but couldn't.

S: Oh, God. That's I think the worst time, it was the worst time. Because people go back to work and you don't know what you are supposed to do./ And, isn't everyone else thinking about it 24 hours a day. I mean I can't stop thinking about her, when am I going to stop and when is my life going to be normal again?/ I don't think I went back to work for like 2 weeks or you know but people do go back and you know there is just no normalcy for a while. You cannot stop, you think, you think for after a couple weeks I can't stop thinking about her. Its sur..its encompassing me all the time, its always in me, how sad I am, and how much I miss her and what she was like./ But I don't know, as you start, as time goes on you start to not think about her as much. And I don't' know if that's sad or if that's worse.

J: How come?

S: Because at the time you can't think of anything else. Um, you just don't think there is really anything else more to life than that moment/ and that experience but the fact that, that you start to get your life back to normal because you want to have that feeling that you appreciate every moment. And at that time, I think Christmas was coming up, so we were in, I think I am jumping ahead, I am in the fall time now. We are talking about Christmas time and we're thinking about, I mean its on everybody's minds all the time. You go back to work and....but I think at that point at Christmas we were laughing because whatever you want you'll get, who cares? It doesn't matter. The kids want...yeah who cares. Jean's attitude with the kids like yeah okay, whatever, it doesn't matter. Cause nothing, nothing else matters in your life, and everything else is pretty irrelevant./

J: Right.

S: Um., so the fact that you don't think about her like you catch yourself not thinking about her is where you start to think, Oh God is that a bad thing? I actually went to work for a couple hours

104. S. states no knowing what to do when the people were finally left.

105. S. remember being unable to stop thinking about her, "isn't everyone else thinking about it 24 hours a day?" She remembers wondering if her life would ever be normal again. This was the most difficult time.

106. S. denies any normalcy to her life, thoughts of Ann encompassing her, feeling sad and missing her.

107. S. remembers wondering with the passing of time, thinking of her less if that was worse or better.

108. S. remembers trying to appreciate every moment battling to get her life back to normal.

109. S. remembers the first Christmas after her death, how it didn't matter, nobody cared, cause you go back to work and still are thinking of her all the time. "Nothing else matters in your life, and everything else is pretty irrelevant."

110. S. states difficulty finding a balance between thinking of her and not. S. remembers going to work and not thinking of her for a few hours and thinking that was a really bad thing.

and I didn't think about her for a couple hours - Wow. That's a really bad thing isn't it./

J: So it made you feel guilty?

S: Yeah, yeah. But you have to do that, you have to just get on, move on. Cause what you want to hang on to is the fact that life is so important and life is so precious. And the fact that I am caught up in work for a couple hours is telling me, well it's not that important right now, I just have to help this customer./ I just uh, I think it's, you want to hope you are living your life every moment to the fullest and sometimes you just don't necessarily think you are./ That's what I think the sad part of not thinking of her all the time, cause at the time for the first couple of weeks you can't stop thinking about - Oh yeah, you know life this is nice but you know I love people and I love my family and I love Ann and I miss her and everything else is nothing./ Then you start thinking about- okay yeah but I need a new shirt and I gotta go to the store to get it and then when I walk into the store-/ do these people know what I have gone through? I mean things, I don't know what's bad, I don't know what's worse. Just not thinking about, starting to go through moments where you are not thinking about it I think is really hard. You start questioning like oh wait a minute, I am getting normal again./

J: Normal?

S: Normal, yeah, its so weird, you feel like you are an alien. You really do and you know what, people still look at me funny Jules.

J: Do they?

S: Oh yeah. People that, I think that's probably the most disturbing part. You read people, I mean its been years and they know something happened to you and your family./ But people, like people for my reunion, I had my reunion, class reunion, and people knew, they might not have seen me but people knew um that I've gone through this and they knew of Ann or they knew of our family having to

112. S. states you have to move forward because life is precious.

113. S. states you try to live your life to the fullest and sometimes you just don't think you are.

114. S. states it is hard not thinking of her because you are able to easily prioritize, you put your family first and everything else is always second.

115. S. states the reality is you have to go on, if you need a new shirt you have to work and then go to the store to get it.

116. S. can't figure out what is worse, not thinking about it or thinking about it all the time, wondering if you are getting normal again.

117. S. states people look at her strange when they know what has happened. "You feel like an alien."

118. S. describe how people who know what her family has been through act differently, strange and she is able to tell by looking at their faces.

go through this. And you can just tell at the moment where they are talking to you and then they remember just from the expression on their faces. And you can tell and you're like oh yeah, you can just tell. Its the weirdest thing. I don't know if anyone else has said this to you um but people look at you differently./ My dentist um I went to my dentist, it was our family dentist. Ah, I think it was like 3 months later who are very good friends, best friends with my parents. They play cards all the time. I went in to see him, and he's a talker, like a nervous talker and I got in there and he says something, first off he called me Ann which people do because you know like I said, its okay, we're five kids you know people get the names mixed up anyhow. SO he called me Ann, and he kind of caught himself and he was embarrassed and you know I make people feel comfortable, I don't care. It's no big deal, I mean I love that, I don't mind that, it makes me feel good. But, later on in the conversation, so obviously now he is thinking of her, like the experiences with my parents all the time every week, they play cards and so he knows exactly what my parents have gone through. He's got kids too butand he made a reference to something and he said "Oh yeah, its not like you know you get hit by lightening all the time" or something like that. And people say that cause you know what are the odds of that happening like getting hit by lightening. You know, they use it as a reference like but you know and he said it at the same time and I kind of laughed a little bit and I'm like well yeah and he I think just about, I saw him and he just about fainted when he said that to me./ And its weird you know because you can't help people, its a , its just a phrase that people you know -hit by lightening, you don't get, oh god getting hit by lightening./ But he just about fainted when he said that and he it was because he was nervous, he is a nervous around me, um he shouldn't be. He

119. S. tells the story of her dentist putting his foot in his mouth, becoming embarrassed and making them both uncomfortable. For example, he called her Ann (which she loves), he stated its not like people get hit by lightening all the time.

120. S. states its weird you know the phrase "hit by lightening" and people use it all the time and you just can't help them.

shouldn't be nervous around my family but obviously he was thinking look at what this family has gone through and it was in his mind and he wanted to say, he just about flipped. I have never had anybody put their foot in their mouth like that. I've had other things too. I was in South Carolina that holiday season, so this was like four months later after I had met, been with Dan. And I went to go visit him on vacation, and that was the first time I met his brother Joe, and my first time we were at dinner, we were talking about odds at Vegas or something like that. And he said something like, and maybe no wait so this is the first time I had been with his parents and Joe and loving the family too, just open arms. And, we're sitting there talking about Vegas odds or something and he said something "Well the odds of that are like getting hit by lightning", and I said oh really lightning huh? You know his mom got up and she is just about, she walked away from the table and he started going on more about it. So he wasn't thinking that I, he was thinking, well yeah you know people get hit by , so he started talking about people who get hit by lightning. I'm like and he goes "yeah and they were on Johnny Carson or something and they survived and they and I saw this show on lightning da da da da da and his mom is just about slamming doors in the kitchen. And I'm like oh yeah you know people actually do survive, yeah you're right, sometimes they don't but you're right sometimes they do. Then all of a sudden he's like "Oh my God, I totally forgot." I'm like no that's okay, its okay and Dan of course is like "Thanks a lot Joe" You know, I'm like no, its okay and you know I am laughing but meanwhile I got a tear coming down my eye, I'm laughing going that's really okay, its really okay, you know what I mean. I felt like shit and his mom is crying and I kept on going I feel so bad, I'm like you know what, its really okay, people say that and they don't think about what they are

121. S. tells the story of a friend also using the phrase "well the odds of that are like getting hit by lightning". Even though she knows it is not meant to hurt her, she tells how she is laughing, feeling horrible, with a tear falling down her cheek.

saying. And I, you know, there is no hatred or intent but they like put their words in their mouth a lot./

J: Yeah, right.

S: But anyhow, back to when people hear that you have a family member that died, you can tell at the point when they're looking at you. I can tell when they realized oh yes, that's right, she has gone through this. She lost a family member. Or I remember that's right your sister died. You can tell when they are kind of remembering that or they're thinking of that in their conversation with you./

J: How do they react?

S: Their eyes, concern, um I almost get a sense that people are stepping on eggs around me/ cause I am usually pretty comfortable around people and people are usually comfortable around me. They can laugh and when they are on the up and up and I've known them they are very cordial, people aren't usually cordial with me you know?

J: Right, right.

S: Like all, concerned and cor....and the first thing you ask me is "how are your parents, how are they doing"? Oh, they're fine, its like, like normal parents. How are your parents doing? "Oh good" It's like they are almost diving into it a little more./

J: Really, so its not like they are skirting it but you think that they more or less want to.....

S: They just want to, like that's their way of saying "I heard what happened but I don't want to bring it up"./

J: Okay. So kind of in a round about way?

S: Like you know, oh, like if I grew up with, I went to high school with them and I knew their parents. They didn't, they knew my parents but they didn't necessarily know them well like "Oh, how are parents?" (in a sympathetic tone)

122. S. states she can tell immediately when talking to people when they realize what her family has been through.

123. S. feels people become very uncomfortable around her when they know what has happened.

124. S. states people are normally comfortable around her and if they are cordial, she knows they are not comfortable.

125. S. feels when people talk to her they want her to know they know what happened but don't really want to talk about it.

126. S. gives an example of people asking sympathetically now her parents are and she thinks this is weird.

J: Right,

S: Oh their fine! (Normal tone). How are your parents? My parents are almost retired. Its like they almost want to know like are they okay, are they doing all right, are they surviving this all right. Its kind of a weird thing./ My friends of course ask how my parents are doing and I'm like, like you or Dana or anyone "How are your parents" and I'm like oh they're good they're good, you know they have had some tough times, Amy and Alex ask me all the time (Friends), "Are your parents doing okay, I'm sure their anniversary, its kind of hard", and I'm like oh yeah, its just as hard as ever. But people who don't, who I don't know very well who have heard of what's happened and you know "oh, how are they doing"? Oh, they are fine, like normal parents are. You know and I don't really want to go too much into it, but you can tell, you just, I have this sense when people clue in./ Now this also has been, was hard right after, like within the first year of running into Ann's friends because Ann's friends would say oh, S____, how are you and then just blatant, just come out and cry in front of me. I would be talking like oh you know I am working here and they would just be bawling and they would say because "you have the same mannerisms and especially the laugh", I guess is the same. And I never really noticed that actually./ But um, and that was kind of disturbing, I had, I had Mary do that couple times and where she just couldn't even look at me, and I was like oh God, you know that's kind of disturbing/ but I love it. In many ways I love it,/ I just, I kind of I don't want people to feel sorry for me or for our family, you know, maybe think about us but don't feel sorry, don't be sad cause we're okay...sometimes. I just don't want people to look at me and feel sorry. They shouldn't have to do that.

J: Right.

S: I am kind of all over the place aren't I?

127. S. states it is okay when her friends ask her questions, just not okay when acquaintances ask her questions.

128. S. states difficulty when running into Ann's friends, its hard because they cry and tell her that she has the same mannerisms.

129. S. tells of a disturbing incident where a friend of Ann's couldn't even look at her.

130. S. states she loves reminding people of Ann.

131. S. states she does not want people to feel sorry for her or her family because they're okay.

J: Its all right, its okay, its okay.

S: But I appreciate my friends asking about my family, I think that's neat./

J: And asking about you?

S: Oh, you know I'm, yeah yeah, I don't really know how to answer that like if you were to, say if you were to call me and say hey how are you doing huh? I'm doing about, like, fine I guess, just as good as ever. I don't know how to answer that./ Its just really sad, I miss her a lot. And I miss the fact that um...../I just wish, because when we start to have a family, there is just things that I will always wish and that would be to share that, to share Ann and to have another Aunt, and that would be you know./ I think of things like, I miss her so much.....but I just wish that you know...like we could have a full family again. It would be really great. It would make everything so much nicer./ But that's okay, I've learned a lot, I've grown a lot, more than I probably wanted./

J: Really?

S: Yeah, I don't think I was quite ready for that. To learn that much about myself, I mean I appreciate it and I do say, and people say this to you when you are going through this like you know, "Some good things do come out of it", they do, but you don't realize it at the time. I mean you can't look until you look back./

J: Right.

S: I'm sure there are good things that come out of it I guess. Our family became closer.

J: Did it?

S: Yeah, I became closer to my brothers, my mom and dad./ um I would trade it in for the world though, I mean any of the good things I would drop in a heart beat.

J: Right, to have her back.

132. S. states she appreciates her friends asking about her family.

133. S. states she doesn't know how to answer questions related specifically to her.

134. S. states its just "really sad" and she misses her a lot.

135. S. wishes Ann would be there when she starts her own family.

136. S. wishes they could have a full family again, "it would make everything much nicer."

137. S. says she has learned a lot, and grown a lot, more than she wanted.

138. S. states she doesn't know if she was ready to learn that much about herself but she appreciates it and realizes now that some good things came out of this experience.

139. S. states on second thought she is not sure if good things came out of it, but states her family became closer.

140. S. states she would give up all the good things, the world, to have her sister back.

S: To have her back, yeah./ I mean, there are some good things. I learned a lot about myself, I learned um just how important life is. I mean even to this day with people I work with and their like, "God you know, managers we've had before are so negative, everyone is so negative". I'm like why would you even want to be negative about things, its just a job./ If you have this attitude, some people live life based on really petty things. Its just their work, its just really ultimately really just stupid money. You could take everything away from me you know if I have a healthy family, good friends, and a good bottle of wine, you could take everything away, I'll be all right. Its really ultimately so petty./ And that's really the thing that oversee's everything is that life is just way too short. If you get caught up in all that shit, its not worth it. It really isn't./ And that's why I'm lucky that Dan was, is a part of that and a part of me, it was that growth period for me for those couple years because, I mean he's just, he believes the same thing too, you know. Its just a, its just got to, its all bullshit out there. IT really makes you appreciate life, it really did turn me around. I mean I want to be a positive person and I want to just live life as best as I can./

J: Right.

S: You know, I just want to have a family and basic things. You know cause it, you know doesn't matter. So it puts you in that perspective, I think everyone should get to that point./ I'm not saying I am the best person, I certainly have my moments. Everyone hopefully will, hopefully they won't have to feel it the way I found out but hopefully people get to that..../ I think Ann, I think Ann already knew that, that's why it was her time. She was a very complete person, she knew who she was and she knew what she was about. She didn't necessarily know what she wanted in her future, she didn't really plan too far out but she really was a very, very, complete whole person and I think that's why it

141. S. states she has learned a lot about herself and how important life is.

142. S. states so many things in life are so petty but claims as long as she has a "healthy family, good friends and a good bottle of wine" she is all right.

143. S. states life is too short to get caught up in the petty things.

144. S. states it was a growth period for her, it made her appreciate life and become a more positive person. "I want to just live life the best I can."

145. S. states after an experience like hers, you put things into perspective. All she wants a family and basic things.

146. S. states she still has her moments but hopes other people prioritize and realize what is truly important.

147. S. believes it was her sisters time to go because she was a very complete whole person.

was time for her to go./

J: Really?

S: Yeah, that's ultimately, I mean I am, I'm not very, I don't know that much about um other religions but I definitely know it was her time. She's very, she had finished what she had needed to do with this life and this level and now it was time for her and.../and people, people of all faiths believe that, if you complete your circle here, then you go on to the next line./ You know it was her time. And then I think well gosh you know, what do I need to do to become a complete and I I don't wanna, I, I am not there yet. She really knew who she was. Its weird. Yeah, I feel good talking about this./ My parents probably don't feel the same way. You know my parents see it as an act of God,/ but I see it as like whatever it was, her level was just way above it here. That's why these dreams and these feelings I am having that she is doing something better, I kind of think its true./

J: It makes sense for you.

S: It does, I have to, because I really can't blame God. I really can't blame, you know, I have to, I have to grab on to something and I am not a big, you know.

J: Was there a time when you were placing blame do you think?

S: Um, I don't know, did I place blame, I don't know, do you remember if I was placing blame? I don't really remember,/ it just happened, you know I didn't realize that she was at that level in her life until I read her journals. Um, in reading her journals and in listening or reading and maybe we shouldn't of but we did, I mean she is not here to yell at us. But she was extremely complete.

J: Really?

S: Oh yeah, more so than anyone I've ever met. Um, she knew what she was all about you know, she talked about her purpose here and yeah, yeah its really neat. My parents haven't read them, they

148. S. states lack of knowledge of other religions but truly believes Ann had completed her tasks for this life and this level so it was her time.

149. S. states people of all faiths believe "if you complete your circle here, then you go on to the next line."

150. S. states she is not yet complete and she hesitantly wonders what she needs to do to become complete.

151. S. states her parents see her death as an act of God.

152. S. believes she is doing something better because she was way above it here in this world.

153. S. states she can't blame God, she can't blame anything so she must grasp on to something.

154. S. states after reading Ann's journal's, she realized how extremely complete she was. In her journals she talked of her purpose here.

have only read a couple of things. I read them, I think my brother Tom read them too. And um, well maybe he didn't actually but somebody else read them in my family./ But, she, she knew what her point was. You know her life, she was at that point in her life where she was like you know I've got pretty much everything that I need. And um, you know I am really happy in my life and I don't need much else, and if this is what its all about then, then I am a happy person. You know, she was a, she was very in tuned to who she was./ At a very young age, 33 you know, usually you know, you don't think of people our age being at that point but she was. I think she was years before, you know part of that had to do with her traveling and um why she loved to travel and meeting people and meeting other cultures and experiencing other things.

J: Right.

S: You know, throwing herself kind of in the midst of all and all, to know what's out there./ But she never wished she was anywhere else other than where she was at the time and who she was with. I don't know, it is really weird./

J: Do you see yourself..... it sounds like you are striving to get similar things that she had but.....

S: Oh absolutely, all the time, all the time. But that's a lot of pressure./ A lot of people have said you know, you got to be who you are. You can't be her, you can't, you can't try to live her life. And I would in no means,/ we live completely separate lives but the concept I like. I like knowing that um you know you just have to be who you are here and be really happy and content with it and do it as best as you can. Be the best S. that I can./ Um, so no initially I think there was the pressure to try and keep her spirit going but you can't do that. Everyone is there own person, but initially I kind of did feel like that and people would just say you know you gotta be you. You can't be her, you can't live her life./ She had a

155. S. states Ann was tuned in to who she was and knew her point in life and felt she had everything she needed.

156. S. states she was so young for knowing so much and maybe part of it was secondary to her travels and experiences with other cultures.

157. S. states Ann lived in the present and always enjoyed where she was and who she was with.

158. S. states she strives for similar characteristics but that it's a lot of pressure.

159. S. states people have told her she has to be herself, she must live her own life.

160. S. states they live separate lives and she knows she must be the best she can be.

161. S. states feeling pressure initially to keep her spirit alive but figuring out she couldn't do that, she is an individual.

pretty good life so (laugh) I wouldn't mind mimicking it, certain aspects of it. She really didn't like to work, she worked to play, which I think most people should do. I like that concept./ I mean there is certain things you know definitely I have nothing in common with her, we were complete opposites too but I like her basic concepts, being happy and enjoying those around you and accepting of other people. I think most people do,/ so no that died quickly, like me trying to carry that torch of her, I couldn't you know, can't do that, but its a neat idea. Its too much./

J: So with the, the passing of time now, does it feel like its easier or does it feel like its almost more difficult?

S: Um, there is certain moments that are difficult. Sometimes looking, like family events. We haven't gone on a family vacation ever for a long time./

J: And you used to?

S: Well, we used to do something in the summertime. We used to even, even if it was a long weekend someone was over like 3 hours away at the lake for the week and then we would all come and go. But at one point we would all be there for a couple of days. We haven't done that at all. We used to do it every summer but family events...../and I've brought up just saying things like why don't we rent a house on the coast and we never get the whole family there.

J: No?

S: Its either, its just, its never everybody, even, I don't even know when the last family..... I don't even know, like we haven't really had our whole family together for anything I don't think since. I'm trying to think if there is even Thanksgiving, maybe one Christmas, the first Christmas after but that was only a couple of months since everybody has been somewhere else. Even if, even if its just one person, not everybody has been there. Our other

162. S. states she wouldn't mind mimicking certain aspects of her sisters life, she worked hard to play.

163. S. states she and her sister were complete opposites but she like basic concepts of being happy and enjoying others.

164. S. states she tried to carry that torch of her but just couldn't do it.

165. S. describes certain times which are more difficult than others like family events.

166. S. states they used to do more things as a family but they haven't done that at all since her sisters death.

167. S. suggests family vacations but they can't ever get the whole family there or they always have extended family around.

family members have been around us, our cousins and our aunts more so but Tom or Jean or someone is not there /so we need to do a family thing and I have been dying to do a family thing but no one seems to be wanting to do./

J: Really?

S: Yeah, my parents want to, they just don't want to organize it. Um, but no one, Tom is not receptive to it or and Tim and Lana are now gone and now they would have to fly a flight. We need to do a family event./ But I think if we did it would be really hard you know, there would be that little bit of a moment where you know she is not there./ We are never alone you know, we always have cousins or aunts around us. We are never sitting, like Christmas dinner with just our family. It would be weird, we've never done that Jules. It would be weird, I mean I have with Tim and Lana and my mom and dad or Jean and the kids and mom and dad but not just our family.

J: Just the immediate family?

S: Never, never. There has always been a Uncle or an Aunt or someone, even on her anniversary days./ This is the first year my mom didn't really have, the last 3 years my mom has had people over on the anniversary of her death and we have all been there for dinner but friends or cousins, people have been there, not just our family. We have never done anything./ Isn't that kind of disturbing? I think that is weird. I think its weird. I mean, me personally, I think its wrong. Um, I think my parents should demand it, that we have, that they do something and have us over or I.....I don't know what it is. But I think its weird./ I think we are avoiding the feelings and the emotions and yeah, cause we have to look at each other and say oh yeah, it was four years ago since the last time we did this. It was probably even longer than that./ You know we did, we did a family portrait for my parents.

J: Oh you did?

168. S. describe the need to get together as a family.

169. S. claims no one in her family seems interested in a family vacation except her parents who don't want to plan it.

170. S. states it would be difficult because it would be obvious Ann was missing.

171. S. states that extended family is always around, it is never just the immediate family.

172. S. states this to be the first year that her mom has not had people over on the anniversary of Ann's death.

173. S. thinks it is disturbing and wrong that they are never together as a family.

174. S. believes her family is avoiding the situation of being alone because it has been so long since they got together.

S: Right after Dan and I got married so its been a year ago and they hadn't had an updated picture of our new family with Dan and Lana and the kids, and everybody so....I organized it and I said, I think mom and dad are ready for this, they are ready to have a nice picture of all of us and they were like no way, no way. Tom and Tim were like no way, and Jean was like yeah, I think so. I think you're right, I think they are ready. I'm like you know, they would love it. They would love it, they'll be sad, but they will love it.

J: Right.

S: So, we had to pull teeth to get Tom to do it. He fought it the whole way and even on our way there, he was like this is stupid. And we are taking the picture and everyone is sad doing it, um, but it needed to be done. At some point you need to go on. And they loved it, they cried, and but they love it, they love having it. Cause its also their new family, you know the kids in there, and the kids are older you know they need that. And my parents are pretty good, they are ok about a lot of stuff so, if they, if I think they are ready and Jean and I think they are ready, they're ready. Obviously its Tom and Tim who are not ready. So, there's certain things, but our family has not done anything and it bothers me. It bothers me, but then I am one to stir up emotion, to bring it all out, I don't know, I want to try and do that.

J: Try and do what?

S: Get my parents to make sure we are all there for dinner but nobody else.

J: I think that's a good idea.

S: Dan has always commented on how we never do anything just our family, he thinks its weird.

J: Because you used to before?

S: No, because we were always a big family and then we had to take cousins

175. S. talked of organizing a family portrait and the difficulty getting the whole family to agree to do it. Her parents were ready but her brothers were not.

176. S. states "at some point you need to go on."

177. S. states her parents loved the portrait, they were sad and they cried, but they loved it.

178. S. states her parents are doing pretty good, its her brothers that are not ready to move on.

179. S. states that she is the one to stir up emotion and bring it all out.

180. S. states because they are a large family, it is difficult to get the immediate family together but that now it is more important than ever. Both she and her husband think this is strange.

and aunts, so no we didn't really used to but I think more than ever it is probably important to do. He always kind of thought, you know you need to do, early on he always thought it was weird we never did anything just our family, he has always said that./

J: You're right, its a big Italian family.

S: It sounds great, it would be really prevalent who was missing if we did that so it would be easier to have other people around, so you don't have to think about it even if it was one person, you still don't have that pressure of looking at each other./ She's gone, we are not going to talk about her now./ I think that's important to do, I am going to try to make that goal, to get my family together, interesting. Oh wow, thank you for bringing this up, for letting me bring this up./

J: Thank you, is there anything you want to add?

S: Just that I love you.

Addendum:

S: I have never been back to the cemetery since. I give my mom flowers to go but I hate that place. I absolutely hate it,/ and I know it is such, it is such, my parents go there for peace. They go and visit her all the time. They laid her in between them, they bought two gravesites, three gravesites and they laid her in between. They love that,/ I cannot ever go back there, I hate that place./ It probably would be good for me to go but I give my mom flowers to take there all the time and I won't go. And I know my mom is dying for me to go, she really wants me to go, but I just don't want to go./

J: Why?

S: I hate it, I just, because that to me is such a negative that I don't want to remember her in the ground, physically there, that we had to bury her. I would

181. S. states it would be easier to have other people around the family because it will be obvious Ann is missing.

182. S. states she is gone, we are not going to talk about her now.

183. S. is going to make a goal to bring her immediate family together.

184. S. states she hates the cemetery and has not been back since the burial.

185. S. states her parents find peace there and visit frequently.

186. S. states she gives her mom flowers to take and knows her mom desperately wants her to go with her. She states she can't even though "it may be good for her."

187. S. states she does not want to remember placing her sister physically in the ground, she would rather remember her and celebrate her.

rather just remember her and celebrate her./ I don't want to have to go, I mean I can think of her without going there. I mean I could be driving in the car and hear a song, a really good song that makes me feel good and all of a sudden I am thinking of her. You know I don't need to go to a burial place to do it. So its just a big negative connotation to me./ Jean doesn't go either but I think its different, I don't necessarily know if its cause Jean thinks of her other places or I mean I don't know why Jean doesn't go actually. It bothers me, I have issues with Jean and how she deals with it, how she is. And I can't blame her for how she does or how she doesn't, I just want her to be more like me, and she's not, she is exactly opposite of me. She is very introverted and um you know...../so yeah, I don't go back there.

188. S. states she can think of her without having to go to the cemetery.

189. S. states issues with her sister Jean who also will not go to the cemetery but for different reasons. She wishes they were more alike and states this is difficult.

190. S. simply states "yeah, I don't go back there."

Interview with Laura - Level 3

S. recalls vivid images in the days surrounding her sister's death. S. states when she thinks of the night of the accident, she remembers it was chaotic. She remembers the phone call, being picked up at the restaurant she was at, and the actual drive to the hospital her sister was taken to. S. remembers trying to be more optimistic but feeling as if we knew something more than she. S. remembers it was a shock walking into the hospital room to see her sister lying there on "full capacity", because she did not know the extent of her injury. "It was such a big eye opener for me." S. says that although she didn't know the seriousness right away, because of her past experiences she knew things were not good. S. states difficulty in recalling her own emotions secondary to the chaos surrounding her. "It was a shock." She says that night no one slept, they remained at the hospital, "it was a strange night." S. says it felt like the longest night. Her sister died the next morning. S. recalls it feeling very "surreal".

S. remembers having to step up and play an active role in the decision making process. S. states there were no choices, it was ultimately her responsibility to become a decision maker in the process. She was the "go-between." Although S's family remained optimistic initially, S. felt like the pessimist, "this is ridiculous, she is not going to make it." S. told her parents this was not how her sister would want to live her life, even if she was able to survive, "its not the existence she would wish for." S. wonders if it would have been easier if she had died at the scene. She does however feel there are two sides, they wouldn't of been forced to make a decision regarding discontinuing life support but they were allowed closure and the opportunity to say good-bye. Although S. believes it was important to her parents to be able to say good-bye to her sister, she believes her sister was already dead and that "there was nothing there".

S. ended up being the one responsible to call people and begin making arrangements because her family did not fully comprehend the seriousness of her sisters injury. S. felt like she had a grasp on what they were being told about her sisters condition. Because of this, the social worker with the family requested that S. notify her Uncle to come to the hospital to give last rites and any family members not yet notified to come in to say their good-byes. S. felt strongly that those decisions should not have been placed on her but should of been her parents responsibility, " she resents that a little bit". She does not, however, blame her parents but realizes this was an incredibly difficult time for them.

S. says she feels responsible for forcing the issue of discontinuing life support and feels she pushed her parents towards a decision. She does not however, feel responsible for her sister's death because "her sister was ultimately going to die". Later S. commented that she was unsure if it was really she who pushed the decision, "I think it was all about me at that point". S. states the doctors had informed them there was nothing more they could do. S. and her family were exhausted during the decision making process. She believes they were all in agreement. Once in agreement she felt as if the Dr.'s were able to talk much more openly with them.

S. says even though the Dr.'s told them there was nothing they could do, it was still unfortunately ultimately her parents decision and because of that S. believes they will always wonder and second-guess themselves. S. also questions their decision at times. She says part of her thinks maybe they should have waited longer than 12 hours. Did they make a rash decision because they were tired? She also believes the decision would have

been more difficult the longer they waited. S. believes it was better that the decision was made earlier when there was little hope rather than attempting to keep her alive for several more days on support. S. wishes she could view the hospital records for some reassurance they did the right thing. S. must continually reassure her mom they did the right thing. It is an ongoing issue with her parents and she says it makes her feel really bad.

S. talks of people handling stress differently and recalls the only thing her family knew in a time of crises or happiness was people coming over and to eat and drink. That is what they did. S. and her brother were sent to the liquor store from the hospital by their father who knew people would be coming over. S's brother will always be angry about that incident. There they were at the liquor store, crying, sobbing buying booze for their parents friends. S. talks of a big festival the night of her sisters death. Instead of her mom going to her room and crying she feeds people and stays occupied. They couldn't sleep even though they tried, and when S. finally fell asleep, she remembers a friend waking her, crying with her, and comforting her. At the time it was all they knew, "the physicalness of the people in front of us." She also recalls waking to people "grieving and looking for something to do" to help. S. remembers reliving the grief over and over while explaining the sequence of events to each person and family member who arrived. S. states it was difficult because people wanted to grieve with you but you couldn't do it over and over, "its just too much." S. remembers a house full of people and telephones ringing. S. states you are exhausted, it wears you down but you can't sleep. She remembers waiting and worrying about her brother who had flown in from out of town. S. was the first one to meet him at the door. He broke down upon arrival to the house. Emotions were labile, they grieved then they argued.

S. says she vividly remembers the morning after her sisters death when she was awoken to moaning and bawling from her parents room. S. claims she won't ever forget their sobs, "I felt so bad for them". She remembers feeling an intense amount of pain to hear them wailing. They had woken and realized it was not a dream, "they went through it all over again". S. believes the morning after the death was more difficult for her parents than the funeral.

S. says again, the day after her sister's death, there was a long procession of people nonstop. She remembers the "repetition of people, phones, and food, on the second day". S. and her family were exhausted and S. remembers her family Dr. giving her parents medicine to help them relax. S. recalls that due to people filtering in, she was unable to be with just the immediate family until after the funeral when people finally left. S. questions if dealing with stress this way (eating and drinking) is the "right thing". S. says if she was in that situation again she would not have a house full of people because it is no one else's business. She says that at that point she would of closed the doors and said "let us grieve". S. recalls being unable to escape from the situation and grieve without people around because wherever they went people were grieving and wanted to grieve with them. An example of this was picking out flowers for the funeral. The flower shop attendant was a friend of Ann's, she was very upset and she wanted to grieve with them. S. wishes her family could keep more to themselves. S. states not knowing what to do when the people were finally gone.

S. believes people are individual on how they handle situations like this, but immediately after her sister's death, her family was in shock and she realized someone needed to step up, "someone had to be strong". S. states someone needed to be strong for her parents. She recalls feeling "superhuman" knowing certain things needed to be done

and nothing could get any worse at this point. "I felt like I was going to have to step above." S. remembers upon reflection trying to keep herself positive and strong, thinking she could wait and break down later, years, months, days later.

S. realizes she had her moments of weakness but felt she needed to keep it together. S. wishes she could have distanced herself, get away, not have been a part of it but couldn't. She was torn between playing an active role, making sure things are done versus being able to let things happen. S. says she really didn't care what happened. In a way she really just wanted to escape. She would have liked to have been more like her brother, not have taken an active role and not have been so willing and open to share. She wishes she was more introverted because she felt exposed and vulnerable "people know that much more about your pain" and you really don't want them to.

S. recalls planning the funeral the second day after her sisters death. She remembers feeling strange about organizing the funeral but realizing she was unable to just sit back and let things happen. S. describes how the family assigned tasks and how each member worked together to make the funeral ceremony very special. S. felt inspired to do a beautiful service and felt strong she could. She would do a reading. Her sister would also do a reading which she was ultimately unable to do because she was a wreck.

The morning of the funeral was a big production. S. remembers it as feeling surreal, "waiting around to go to your sisters funeral", men playing hoops, women cooking, waiting for a limo, people twiddling their thumbs. There was some joking around. She wasn't mad, just thought it was weird. Normally they are a happy family and realized they were tired of crying. The funeral itself was a nightmare, "it was a sad day". S. stated it was "stupid", the focus was not on Ann or anything of importance but the big "production".

When S. reflects on her thoughts and emotions after her sisters death, she says it's just "really sad", and she misses her a lot. S. recalls thinking "at some point you need to go on". She recalls being unable to stop thinking about her, "isn't everyone else thinking about it 24 hours a day?" S. denied any normalcy to her life, thoughts of Ann encompassing her, feeling sad, and missing her. She remembers wondering if her life would ever be normal again. This was the most difficult time for S. S. says it was difficult finding a balance between thinking of her and not. She remembers going to work and not thinking of her for a few hours and thinking that was a really bad thing. S. says at the time, you can't figure out what is worse, not thinking about it or thinking about it all the time, wondering if you are getting normal again. S. says the reality is that you have to go on. S. says if you need a new shirt, you have to work to make the money and then you have to go to the store to buy it. S. remembers the first Christmas after her death, how it didn't matter, nobody cared cause you go back to work and still are thinking of her all the time. "Nothing else matters in your life, everything else is pretty irrelevant."

S. states initially after her sister's death, she tried to "carry that torch of her". She initially felt pressure to keep her spirit alive. She remembers feeling pressure from Ann's friends with all their compliments about how much she reminded them of Ann. She doesn't deny she wanted to hear that she reminded them of Ann "it felt good". S. loves reminding people of Ann. S. states difficulty at times when running into Ann's friends because they continue to cry and tell her that she has the same mannerisms. She tells of one disturbing incident where a friend of Ann's couldn't even look at her because S.

reminded her too much of Ann. People would tell S. that she has to be herself, she must live her own life. S. soon realized that they live separate lives and she knows she must be the best she can be. She is her own person. S. continues to strive for similar characteristics but states that is a lot of pressure. She wouldn't mind mimicking certain aspects of her sisters life. S. states her sister worked hard to play. S liked her sister's basic concepts of being happy and enjoying others.

S. shares that after her sisters death, her family became closer. She feels closer with her brothers and she is able to talk comfortably and openly with her parents and bothers about Ann but not with her sister Jean. S's parents love to talk about Ann. Her sister rarely talks about Ann and this bothers S. especially since her sister's children do not get to hear how spectacular their Aunt was. This makes S. very angry. She does not want to overstep her boundaries with Jean's children yet she really wants them to remember their Aunt so she is torn. She tries to bring her up but Jean keeps it superficial. S. states her parents are doing pretty good.

Even though the family is much closer emotionally, S. states they used to do more things together physically but haven't done anything like that since her sisters death. S. wishes they could have a full family again, "it would maker everything much nicer." She tells of certain times that are more difficult than others such as family events. She is from a large Italian family so there are always many Aunts, Uncles and cousins around. She says because they are a large family, it is difficult to get the immediate family together without the others, but feels that it is more important than ever now. She believes her family is avoiding the situation of being alone without the extended family because it has been so long since they were all together as a family. It would be very obvious who was missing and this would be difficult. This is also the first year that S's mom has not had people over on the anniversary of Ann's death. S. states it was difficult enough to organize everyone for a new family portrait but felt the need to update the old one for her parents. S. states her parents were ready for this but her siblings were hesitant and it was like "pulling teeth" to get them to agree to it. S. states her parents loved the portrait, they were sad and they cried but they loved it. S. has suggested family vacations without the but they can't ever get the whole family together. S. thinks it is disturbing and wrong that they are never together as a family. S. is going to make it her goal to bring her immediate family together in the near future. She feels this is very important.

S. says she feels "sad" thinking about people who have to experience a loss, even if she doesn't know that person, she feels bad that they have to go through that "horrible feeling". She tells the story of a friends brother who died and states she felt so bad that her friend and their family are now "one less person", now they have to miss him every day.

S. also discusses experiences with people outside the family circle and how that affects her. S. states people don't know how to respond to her once they know what she and her family have experienced. S. feels people become very uncomfortable around her when they know what has happened. S. feels normally people are comfortable around her so if they are cordial, she knows they are simply not comfortable. She feels as if people want her to know that they know but really would appreciated not talking about it. S. says she has become very good at reading people and knows immediately upon talking to people when they realize what her family has been through. This bothers S. She gives an example of people asking sympathetically how her parents are and they are just acquaintances, the subject of her sisters death is avoided but in a round about way they are

asking how the family is coping with the tragedy. S. thinks this is weird. S. states "I don't want people to feel sorry for me or my family because we are okay". S. appreciates her friends asking about her family. She thinks it is okay when friends ask her questions, just not okay when acquaintances ask her questions.

S. says people look at her strange when they know what has happened. "You feel like an alien." She describes how people that know what her family have been through act differently. They act strange, become nervous, and say things they would not normally say. She is able to tell by looking at their faces. S. tells the story of the family dentist putting his foot in his mouth, becoming embarrassed, and making them both uncomfortable. For example, he called her Ann (which she loves), and then he made the comment, its not like people get hit by lightening all the time. A second example involves a friend of hers just forgetting what she had been through. She used the phrase "well, the odds of that are like getting hit by lightening". Even though S. knows it is not meant to hurt her, she tells how she is laughing, feeling horrible, with a tear falling down her cheek. S. says it weird, the phrase "hit by lightening" and people use it all the time and you just can't help them. But it hurts.

There is a spiritual component to the way S. feels about her sister and her sisters early death. S. says after reading Ann's journal's, she realized how extremely complete she was. In her journals she talked of her purpose here in this world. S. says she was so young for knowing so much. She relates part of her sister's knowledge of the world to her vast travels and experiences of other cultures. Ann was tuned in to who she was and knew her point in life and felt she had everything she needed. S. talks of how her sister lived in the present and always enjoyed where she was and the company she kept. S. admits to her lack of knowledge of other religions, but truly believes Ann had completed her tasks for this life and this level so it was her time. She claims people of all faiths believe "if you complete your circle here, then you go on to the next line". S. believes in fate and that it was her time, "she was meant to be gone". S. believes her sister is now doing something better because she was way above it here in this world. S. claims she can't blame God, she can't blame anything so she must grasp on to something. S. says her parents however, feel her death is an act of God.

S. talks of incredible dreams of her sister and states a continual sense of her sister's presence around her all the time, laughing and talking to her but mostly laughing right next to her. She talks about how she didn't feel she had to say good-bye to her sister because she has always and continues to feel her around. S. denies ever having these feelings prior to her sisters death and would normally not believe in things of this nature. S. wishes others in her family could feel her sisters presence as well, she believes they need that probably more than she. She denies ever discussing this with her family so maybe they do feel her presence, she is unsure.

S. has refused to return to the cemetery since the burial. "I hate that place!" "I don't go back there." S. does not want to remember placing her sister physically in the ground. She would rather remember only the positive things and celebrate her life, not her death. S. claims she can easily think of her without having to go the cemetery and she thinks of her often, driving in the car, listening to music. S. says her parents visit the cemetery frequently and there they are able to find peace. S. gives her mom flowers to take with her when her mom visits. S. knows her mom desperately wants her to go with her but S. says she can't even though "it may be good for her". Her sister Jean also does not visit the cemetery, but S. feels for different reasons than her own.

S. says her sister's death was very difficult for her. It made her reflect on her own life and things she needed to change to become a better person. S. says it was a period of growth for her, it made her appreciate life and become a more positive person. She learned much about herself and how important life really is. "I just want to live life the best I can." S. says you try to live your life to the fullest and sometimes you just don't think you are. S. recalls trying to appreciate every moment "battling to get her life back to normal". S. says it is hard not thinking of her because when you do, when thoughts of her abound, it is easier to prioritize. You put your family first and everything else is always second.

After this type of experience, S. says you put things into perspective. All S. wants is a family and basic things. So many things in life are petty, and life is too short to get caught up in petty things. "As long as I have a healthy family, good friends, and a good bottle of wine, I am all right." You have to move forward, no matter how difficult because "life is precious". S. says she grew a lot, more than she really wanted. She doesn't know if she was ready to learn that much about herself but she appreciates it and realizes now that some good things came out of this experience. S. wishes Ann could be there when she starts her own family. S. says she would give up all the good things, the world, to have her sister back.

Interview with Laura - Level 4

Upon reflection of the experience of sudden loss of her sister, S. finds concrete images easier to conjure up than abstract psychological images. S. easily recalls vivid images of the days surrounding the accident but must search to recall emotions. S. was in shock when she was able to finally determine the extent of the injury. Past experience assisted in her knowledge of the seriousness. She felt as if it were "surreal". S. felt the emphasis and the energy flow was on her during this time. "I don't know, I think it was all about me." S. was ambivalent questioning both herself and her family's decisions. Doubts flood in to cause her to analyze their actions while at the same time she is attempting to convince both her parents and herself that they did the "right thing." S. says her parents continue to require reassurance but S. herself also finds this necessary. S. questions if it had been easier or at least less difficult if her sister had died instantly. She sees two sides to this phenomena and expresses doubts with both. Her parents found solace in having the ability to say good-bye, yet S. felt like she was already gone, there was nothing there but a shell of her former existence.

With her family full of hope, S. was not as she labeled herself the pessimist, but actually the realist. She appeared to be the strongest of the weak. S. internalized concrete information and was able to process what the family was being told about the seriousness of her sister's condition. Because of this, she was called upon to act as planner, organizer and decision maker, the "go-between". S. questions the fairness of this, does not place blame, but feels slightly resentful of this designated position. She did not feel as if this should be her job but feels strongly this was the parental responsibility.

S. attempted to be the strength of the family, the backbone. S. felt she had to "step up", yet at the same time can recall her weaknesses. S. recalls feeling superhuman. She placed her emotions temporarily on the side, denied them until a later date when she was no longer needed by her family. S. played an active role but wished she could of just escaped. She continually questions her role. She was doing what she thought she was supposed to do but not necessarily what she wanted to do.

S. recalls the intensity of pain she internalized for her parents the morning after her sisters death when the reality of her death struck them with a jolting force. She awoke to their wailing sobs upon the realization that it was not just a bad dream. S. also recalls wanting desperately to make the funeral ceremony special, she felt inspired to make it a true dedication in her sister's memory. S. claims the day was a nightmare and intensely painful. The focus was not on Ann but S. says instead it was all about the "big production", her wounded family on stage being viewed and analyzed by all.

S. is continually questioning herself: Is she thinking of her sister too much or not enough? The death consumed her but the realization that she must move forward with her own life began slowly filtering in. She was encompassed by thoughts of Ann and questions of any future normalcy to her own life. S. recalls great difficulty finding that gray area where she could still think about her but not be consumed by her. Initially she made attempts to take on Ann's life, to become Ann. This did not last long before she realized she needed to be herself. It was too much pressure. She is her own person. However, S. attempts to mimic certain admirable characteristics of her sister.

S. questions if they are grieving in the "right way". Again she questions, searching for answers. S. questions whether her family handles stress the wrong way. Should they

have had a house full of people or should they have been left to grieve as a family. S. says it is all her family knew, people coming over in times of crises and celebration. S. recalls the difficulty of handling the situation in this fashion, procession of people, phones, and food. S. now knows that that was all they knew, "the physicalness of the people in front of them", and at the same time she remembers the emotional exhaustion of the vicious cycle of reliving the grief. She wonders if she would be that open again or would she close her door and say "just let us grieve".

S. and her family have grown closer together emotionally but the physicality of their existence remains lacking. They are fearful of experiencing too much pain by the act of getting together with the immediate family. The missing person would be obvious. How would they react and how would they interact? It would be very painful.

S. feels people look at her and act differently when they know what she has experienced. She feels they don't know how to act or what to say and it becomes very uncomfortable. They avoid the issue of the experience but feel they want her to know that they are aware of it. She feels great discomfort and resentment in these instances. She also says people become awkward and act strangely while saying things they later regret. S. is adamant that she and her family want no pity.

S. describes a spiritual component to her experience. Her sister was a spiritual person, talking of her purpose here in this world. S. is a fatalist and truly believes it was her sister's time, she had completed her tasks of this world and it was time for her to move onward. Existentialism allows her to cope, allows her to battle through difficult times. She is aware of the continual presence of her sister surrounding her, laughing with her. She says she did not have to say good-bye because her sister never left her side. Secondary to the life she feels around her, she will not think of the death and burial. She refuses to visit the cemetery. This allows her to accept the fact that her sister is physically gone but spiritually lives on.

S. has found growth out of sadness, positivism out of negativism. It was a time of reflection on her own existence and a time of life changes. S. grasps the value of life and prioritizes always placing family first. S. is attempting yet struggling to appreciate life and live each moment. She says you try to live your life to the fullest and sometimes you just don't think you are. She is "battling to get her life back to normal." To S., life is precious and she is striving to continually move forward instead of living in the past. S. realizes that she would give up anything, the world, to have her sister back.

APPENDIX E

Interview with Mary - Level 2

J: The question I am going to start out with is: I want you to describe for me the experience of having lost your sister to sudden death.

S: Agonizing./ Oh, here it starts already.

J: Its okay.

S: Overwhelming. Its like, at first its like waves and it still is like waves, they just don't come as close together anymore./ Shocking. Devastating, you know I don't know there's only so many adjectives you can use to describe it and it still doesn't describe it./ It is undoubtedly the worst thing I have ever had to endure. Probably because there, my sister was killed violently, and uh, so there is a lot of different things that I had to experience because of the violence...../

J: Why don't you go back if you can, this is hard, go back to the day and kind of just tell me what happened and then go from there.

S: Okay, I can stay pretty clinical when I do this./ Um, I have to go back to the day before my sister was killed.

J: All right.

S: I got a phone call that evening, it was on a Wednesday, and uh, she called um and she was in Utah, she lived in Utah. She called and she had been working a lot and had that day off which was Thursday./ And she, my sister was uh, how can I describe her, effervescent, that kind of rough around the edges. So, a term of endearment to her was: How are you doing you dirtbag? And, that's what she did to my husband and they kidded for a while and then I talked to her and um, she was pleased that she had some days off. We visited for a while./ She asked me a couple of very personal questions about her life and I just said June, I can't make those decisions for you. Whenever you make a decision, make the decision and don't look back. It was about getting out of a relationship that she wanted out of but didn't know

1. S. abruptly describes the experience as agonizing.

2. S. crying, describes it as overwhelming, like continuous waves, just not as close together anymore.

3. S. says there are not enough adjectives to describe it and it still doesn't do it justice - devastating.

4. S. says "undoubtedly the worst thing I have ever had to endure." The violence caused to her to experience many different things.

5. S. says it's much easier for her to stay clinical when describing it.

6. S. recalls the phone conversation with her sister the day prior to her death.

7. S. describes her sister as effervescent, rough around the edges.

8. S. recalls her sister asking personal questions about getting out of a relationship and S. instructed her to make her own decision. "Make the decision, and don't look back."

how to do it./ Um, so we visited some more and that was the end of the conversation. She called at 5:00 the next morning, 5:00 my time, 4:00 her time to say that her and Joe had gotten into a big fight. He had pulled a gun, she had called the police. He never really threatened her life, she thought he was going to kill himself so she called the police um, and they picked him up and put him in jail for a misdemeanor of um, showing a weapon, whatever they call that./ Um, I asked her if she could please go to someone else's' house to stay. He was to get out of jail at 0830 in the morning. I said, can't you go to a friends? She hadn't lived in Utah very long so um, she said you know I don't really have any place to go. I said can you not go to the people that you work for? No, I don't want them to know. I said okay, she said I'll lock my door and my windows, I need some sleep, I am very tired. I said okay./ I never talked to her again. She um, Joe was out of jail at 0830 and she was dead by 0930./ Um, nobody knew that, I tried for a day and a half to find her. Um, I went..... I called the police and I called the hospitals, the police went to her house and they said the house was all locked up and her car, her vehicle was not there so you know they had no reason to go in. Um, she did not show up for work, a friend of hers had started to get worried about her so he called his roommate and he broke into the apartment and found her./ And how I found out is, she was killed on a Thursday and we found out late Friday afternoon. The sheriff came to my house and told me um, but I saw the sheriff coming and I knew./ I had, I knew something was wrong all along I just didn't know, I didn't know that she was dead but I had this whole a mile wide.

J: For a day and a half?

S: That I couldn't find her./ And I never told the rest of my family which I am not so sure I am ever going to be forgiven for. But, because, for all I knew she was

9. S. recalls her sister phoning early the next morning after an incident where Joe pulled a gun. She had called the police. S. says her sister thought he was going to kill himself and didn't' feel personally threatened.

10. S. asked her sister to leave the house and stay with a friend, it was not a possibility. She stayed and locked the doors and windows and tried to sleep.

11. S. never talked to her sister again.

12. Nobody including S. knew her sister was dead for a over a day. S. searched everywhere, hospitals and police. A friend finally broke in and found her.

13. S. found out late Friday afternoon. The sheriff came out to her house, when she saw him, she knew.

14. S. says she knew something was wrong, she didn't know she was dead. "I had a hole a mile wide."

15. S. says she did not inform her family that her sister was missing, "for all I knew she was shopping." They may not ever forgive her for that.

shopping, I mean you know, I didn't know where she was./ So anyway um, when the sheriff came and he told me um, I asked them where Joe was and they said we don't know, we can't find him. I said well you better find him because that's who did it. And they were like you don't know that, and I said I know that. I do know that. And um, anyways yada, yada./ They didn't get Joe, I think it was for ten days and they finally found him. He was in Utah and then it just you know, we it took a while to uh, because of the legalities um, it took a while to get her back here./ So um, right after the funeral we went to go to Utah and we were in a car wreck. And um, so obviously it took us a while longer to get there and when, we were in a car accident on Monday, we left Tuesday and they got Joe Monday night. So sometimes I wonder if there was a reason we weren't to be there, I don't know you know I'm like a flat tire would of worked. No, it wouldn't have./ Anyways we went there and we got her stuff and Joe was arraigned. And we were there./ Um, and then it was just the legalities you know and there was a trial and in fact, she was killed in Aug. and it took until Feb. We went to trial and then tomorrow I go back to Utah again.

J: Its not over?

S: It's not over. And that's probably why I am so raw right so close right now, normally I do fairly well, because I basically ... that's what happened./

J: I am going to take you back to that day and a half when you were trying to find her where you said you knew that something was wrong, can you kind of think back to what was going on in your head?

S: I had asked her on the phone that morning when she called that we, please be home, I am going to call you at noon my time, be home which is 11 her time, I said be home because I will be worried and um, I got home early so I tried at 10 um, and I called pretty much nonstop you

16. S. says she told the sheriff that they should find Joe because that is who did it, "I know that".

17. They finally found him 10 days later. Secondary to the legalities then, it took a while to get her sister back here.

18. S. recalls getting into a car accident after the funeral on the way out to Utah. It was almost fate because they found Joe that night.

19. They went to get her sister's things and at the same time Joe was arraigned.

20. S. says then there was a trial, 6 months after the murder and it is ongoing. "That's probably why I am so raw so close right now."

21. S. recalls the phone conversation with her sister early the morning of her death, S. instructed her to be home for another phone call. S. called nonstop and when her sister didn't answer, she "knew something was horribly wrong".

know I left message on their answering machine and uh, it was, it was that, I didn't know that she was dead but I knew something was horribly wrong because she promised me that she would be there and uh, she was there, she just.....was dead./

J: Right.

S: Um, and the thing that amazed me later that I found out was that Joe was there when I called and he heard the answering machine and uh, it is just beyond me that he could sit there and listen to me and um and listen to me. You know, I mean I guess I didn't expect him to pick up the phone because you know they estimated her time of death at 0930 and he did not, the witnesses saw him leave the house about 1030, quarter to eleven so he was there every time I called./ And it was just a dull ache and and I had no, no, I mean there wasn't, I just knew something was wrong. It wasn't that I knew she was dead, I did not. But I knew something wasn't right. And I don't commonly call the police in Utah nor the hospitals looking for her.

J: Exactly.

S: I thought maybe he had hurt her and she had gone to ER or something and that wasn't the case. But it was just a dull, and I, you know I remember um, I just knew something was wrong. And when I saw the police car coming down the road I knew. I didn't know she was dead but I knew it was about her./

J: Did you, you said you didn't tell your family, do you mean you didn't tell your family that day and a half that you couldn't find her and this is something you feel bad about, you feel like you should of shared, was there a reason you didn't want them to know?

S: Yeah, there was a reason, because she asked me not to tell mom in particular that her and Joe had got in that big scrap, she didn't want mom to worry and I honored that. And I told my mom that. Because

22. S. found out later that Joe was there during her phone messages, S. can't understand how he "could sit there and listen to me".

23. S. recalls feeling a dull ache, knowing something was wrong, not thinking she was dead. S. thought her had hurt her but not killed her and when she saw the sheriff, she "knew" it was regarding her sister.

24. S. said she honored her sister's request to not inform their mom of the argument between her and Joe.

we were hundreds of miles away, there was nothing that we could do, but there was you know she said but I could of called her, by the time I would of told you mom it was too late anyhow. So.../

J: When the sheriff pulled up and did tell you what were the span of events and how did you feel?

S: I look back on it now and I think oh, I must of looked so funny, that when he told me, I know the sheriff, he graduated from high school with June, my sister that was killed.

J: Okay.

S: And so um, how they got a hold of Tom was because they um, somehow they found out that we live in rural town, or that my mom did, my mom didn't even live there anymore, but Tom knew that I did so he came, he told the Utah police department that he would take care of it and he would tell the family and, and uh,/ they came and I was cooking dinner and my kids were in the house and I saw the police car and I just said you need to stay in the house and they were like what's wrong and I said I don't know but you need to stay in the house, do not come out of the house, so I went, I met Tom./ And he asked me where my husband was and said well he is working, he's working. He said we need to find your husband, and at first I thought for a minute that it, he'd been hurt and I said no he's working,/ I said tell me what's wrong and he said no, we need to find your husband and I said no, you need to tell me./ And he told me, and I literally dropped to my knees/ and my husband, I ran, I had, I didn't want to go back in the house so I had a car phone so I called my husband, he had a car phone so I went and got my phone and he was coming actually coming home. He was just coming around the corner and I said you need to come home, and he said well I am killing a rattlesnake, and I said no you need to come home. And he said why? The sheriffs here and he said what happened? And I said they found June

25. S. recalls her mom questioning her and S. says there was nothing they could have done. If S. had told her, it would have already been too late.

26. S. recalls knowing the sheriff designated to inform them of the death and recalls how she must of "looked so funny" to him.

27. S. recalls the sheriff coming when she was cooking dinner, she instructed her kids to stay in the house.

28. S. says the sheriff wanted to find her husband and S. thought for a moment maybe it was her husband who was hurt.

29. S. convinced the sheriff to tell her the news without her husband around "you need to tell".

30. Upon hearing the news S. says "I literally dropped to my knees".

31. S. recalls running to her car phone in order to avoid her children, calling her husband and telling him the tragic news.

and she is dead./ And by then my kids were watching, looking out the window and I can still think, if I can run really really fast I can run away from this.....Obviously, that didn't happen. I couldn't run that fast./ And um, all I knew is that I had to get to my mom to tell her um, my dad lives in Texas so I called him but I couldn't get him to answer the phone so um, um I came to moms as fast as we could get here/ and as luck would have it we got to the top of S-hill and my belt broke on my truck.

J: Oh no,

S: I was like this is a hoot, So, there I sat, we called some friends and they came and picked us up so that we could get to my moms. And um, they uh, highway patrol had stopped you know and um asked us what was wrong and Steve kind of told them that the belt broke and that we have to take care of some um, "My wife's sister was killed"/ and the highway patrol had just got the APB or whatever they call it over the radio to look for Joe because they thought he might come here which just frightened me to death and um, um./ But we got to my moms and stayed there, I um kind of got on a roll here, what was the question.

J: That's okay, you go ahead.

S: So we just you know, we came to my moms, my mom was at work and we took her home and um, um/ we stayed there and in the middle of the night somebody knocked on the door, it was like somebody shot me out of a cannon, because I was so scared and um, what it was, was the police looking for Joe, looking for June was who they were looking for. And uh, we're like, he said do you know Joe S. and we were like well yeah, "well is he here?" No he is not, and then I said you know I think you need to be told that it was my sister that was killed and that is why they are looking for Joe. And he said, oh, I am so sorry because they didn't tell us that part of it. You know I says that you

32. S. says her kids were watching out the window and her instinct was to run "if I can run really fast, I can run away from this." That didn't happen, she couldn't run that fast.

33. S. says she had to get to her mom urgently to tell her and remembers trying to phone her father.

34. S. remembers the truck breaking down, calling friends, the highway patrol stopping and informing the PD of the incident.

35. S. recalls the highway patrol receiving a call to watch for Joe who may appear and S. remembers feeling very frightened.

36. S. remembers picking her mom up from work and bringing her home.

37. S. recalls a knock on the door in the middle of the night "it was like somebody shot me out of a cannon", it was the police looking for Joe. S. had to inform the police that her sister was killed most likely by Joe.

know and I understood that. So they left/ and um that was the end of the first night.

J: Before you took your mom home did you tell her?

S: Well actually what had happened is that I had got a hold of my dad and my dad and my dad called and told her which I had asked him not to do. I didn't want her to be there without us being there. I didn't necessarily want to tell her, but I didn't want her to be there by herself.

J: You wanted her to have support?

S: But he, she heard his voice and knew that something was wrong and sort of like Tom, he will tell me and he will tell me now./

J: I just wanted to ask you one other thing about what you had said initially you wanted to run so fast and so far, was it to run to her, was it to run away from the pain?

S: Uh, yeah, both.

J: And then it sounds to me like you became more focused, more I have to do this and this...

S: And that you know, that's kind of how I am. In the middle of a crisis I usually hold it together very well and fall apart before or after. And uh, in the middle I normally don't and I kind of gathered it up and did what I had to do./ But my kids walked out of the house and my one daughter is very very close to June and she asked "Mom what?" And I don't sugarcoat things very well and I just sat down on the lawn and I said they found Auntie June and she's dead and she did the same thing I did and started running./ I said I did that that fight or flight thing, I think so, there was nobody to fight so I had to run./

J: Right.

S: And then it just, it got more grizzly when we you know found out how she

38. S's mom forced her ex-husband to tell her the news before S. had arrived. S. wanted to be there for her mom for support.

39. S. says in the middle of a crises, she holds it together and falls apart before or after. "I kind of gathered it up and did what I had to do."

40. S. recalls telling her kids frankly what had happened, her daughter reacting in a similar fashion to herself - she started running.

41. S. stated "I did that fight or flight thing, there was nobody to fight so I had to run."

was killed and none of those things you had to you know, we didn't want to know but you had to know and we wanted to know you know and uh, but um when we went to Utah we met with the coroner who was a very, very nice person./ And uh, she came to the house, we, we had to get Junes stuff, so we went to Junes house. And um, and that took quite a while because it was sealed, I mean you couldn't, you couldn't get in. So we had to wait for them to give us the okay to take her things and um, and all Joe's things were there. And uh, so that was, that was difficult because again, I didn't want to take any of his stuff. I didn't know what was his and what was hers of furniture and stuff so we just took whatever we wanted. And I you know, I was scared there was going to be you know I called the police and said you know, you know if we take something that's not Junes is there going to be... and they just said you know take whatever you want, take whatever you want. And so we did, and it was Junes, most of it was June's so the furniture and the microwave and TV and yada, yada, it was all Junes anyway so...../

J: Tell me about the days between when the sheriff came and the funeral?

S: Um, God its such a blur./ I remember parts of it, there was, um....She had some very, very, very, very close friends and they were very involved and at times I didn't like it um, it was like, this is not your place. You're place is beside us but not with us. And it and now I look back and say "Oh man". So I got very, very possessive/ and uh, I called the coroner. Um, I had to testify over the phone so and they took my statement over the phone so I didn't have to come over right away./ And, um, I called the coroner to find out if they had released the body because they had to do an autopsy and stuff and uh, um, she said well I just talked to your sister and I said my sister. I only have two others and I said neither of them are here. And they were like

42. S. recalls the details of her sister's death were grizzly.

43. S. remembers how difficult it was going to retrieve her sister's things, the house was sealed, they didn't know what was hers but ended up taking whatever they wanted.

44. S. says the days between the notification of her sister's death and the funeral were a "blur".

45. S. remembers becoming possessive. Her sister had many close friends who were too involved at times "you're place is beside us but not with us".

46. S. recalls calling the coroner, testifying over the phone.

47. S. recalls an incident where she knew she was being possessive, a friend only trying to help had phoned the coroner for information. This made S. very angry, S says she will not apologize for that.

well, her name is Julie, I said that's not my sister. And I still have problems with that because she, she was only trying to help I think but I had become very possessive.

J: This was a friend?

S: Of Junes, and I think she was only trying to help, because she wanted to know if if Junes belongings had been released and um, but for her to tell the coroner that she was Junes sister, I was just like about went nuts. And I got very, very possessive and I know that and I'm not apologizing for that./ And then um, and then we.... um, a lot of my family came from outside the US. We had to sit down and tell everybody what happened and part of it was just horribly grizzly, um, but I wanted my parents to hear it from me and not from -----, I asked them exactly what had happened and how she had been killed. So I sat my parents down and I just told them straight out, and said this is what has happened and this is how she was killed./ Um, my dad is and alcoholic, he has not been sober a day since. Um, how we got him up here to the funeral is beyond me./ Um, but I deal better with facts than my imagination, because my imagination is just out of control half the time anyhow, so um, and I wanted to know before we got there. I didn't want them to say "Oh by the way, um, we forgot to tell you that this and this and this happened, and I just said you know, and they were like "Are you sure you want to know" I said I am sure I want to know, so just tell me and tell me straight out. There were some other things that they weren't sure of, they had to wait for some tests to come back. And uh, I didn't tell my family that part./ There miss S keeping secrets... um, I didn't want to have to tell my mom that she had been raped if I didn't have to tell her. So I didn't say anything about that until they got the results back and then um, then I did tell her.....which is one more blow, um,/ and then you did the typical stuff. I said you know, I can do everything, but I cannot pick out her

48. S. remembers informing their large family exactly what happened and how she was killed. "I just told them straight out."

49. S. says her father is an alcoholic and has not been sober a day since.

50. S. says she needed to know the details because she does better with facts where her imagination can get out of control.

51. S. says she kept some secrets until all the results came back.

52. S. stated, "I can do everything, but I cannot pick out her clothes and I cannot see her." As it turned out, they couldn't view the body secondary to time lapse and they had to convince their mother of this.

clothes and I will not and I will not see her. Um, as it was, we couldn't see her anyway um, because of the time lapse because of when they found her to when they do the autopsy, it had been so long. So we never did, they couldn't of stopped us from seeing her had we pushed the issue, but I trusted my other sister, my oldest sister came from outside the US and she, they told her we cannot stop your mother from seeing her, however due to our experience it would be best if she did not. Um, and so and that's just what we told mom. Because of the lapse of time um, nature had taken over and um, they sealed the casket. And that's pretty much what they did, they would of unsealed it had we made an issue, but we did not. We said we trust your judgment, you know better than we do. And um, you know from past experience funeral directors, they'll say yeah we can fix it or no we cannot and they said no we can not./ So we never saw her, which I don't know if its good or bad. You know, I think its good from when we would of seen her here, by the time she got here um, but I know and I never understood why it was so important but it really is very important um, because still like its, well maybe there's a chance that they got the wrong person. I mean you know logically that that's not possible but it is still there. Its still there today./

J: Maybe not that closure?

S: Yeah, yeah..... And then um, you know there's the ----- picking up the casket. Actually the he casket was a fiasco. It had, I laugh now, we all laugh about it now. But at the time it wasn't the least bit funny. When we went to the cemetery to get a plot um, were down on one side of the cemetery and it was very nice.... as far as cemeteries go and I got to looking around at the other headstones and stuff. And I just said you can't bury her here, and they were like well why not? And I said because, put her up with someone her own age. They were like that makes a ton of sense, but at the time

53. S. questions whether it was good or bad they didn't view the body. S. says she didn't understand before why it was so important but states "well maybe there is a chance they got the wrong person". S. knows logically it is not possible but that remains with her anyway.

54. S. talks of picking out the casket, she did not want to bury her next to people who had passed away a long time ago. S. "wanted to put her up with someone her own age."

it meant, these people had passed away in 1919 and 1902 and 1920, and I'm just like no, no, no, they are too old, put her up.../ And I look back it now and I'm just like what a loon. But it was important at the time. You know, I look back now and I kind of laugh, because its just like, you thought you were being so cool and you were just a mess um, and me and my sister from outside the US we just laugh about it. Its just like, I thought I was handling things so well and I was no more handling it well than flying to the moon./ And then um, I was actually you know very, very, very, very calm at the funeral which I did not expect./ Um, and maybe, it just because I was totally detached, I don't know./ I was very calm./ And her friends had made a video tape of her and they showed it at the funeral and that was the only time I got pretty squeamish./ But um, the rest of the time, I was very, very calm. My whole family was very calm. Before and after no, but at the funeral itself we were very calm./ And the minister, and he didn't know June, he knew my mom really well but he didn't know June and uh, the one thing he said and we still all of us talk about it, and this is just how she would of said it. I beat you, now you have to wait your turn. And it still sticks to this day.

J: And what was the meaning?

S: We all have a very strong belief in God and very strong faith and I took it to mean.... I'm up here where I am supposed to be, I beat you, now you wait your turn.

J: Okay.

S: You know, and that's just the way she was. "I beat you!" and she was very competitive and um, and we still are like yeah it would come right out of her mouth, we were all very common./

J: Did you have a pretty active role in the funeral arrangements?

S: I did not, um, I chose to step back. I, and I don't know why this is, I could deal with the police, I could deal with the

55. When S. looks back on it now, she thinks "what a loon". At the time she thought she was cool handling things so well but really she was a mess. "I was no more handling it well than flying to the moon."

56. S. says she was very calm at the funeral which she did not expect.

57. S. says maybe she was just totally detached.

58. S. was squeamish while viewing the videotape her friends had made.

59. "My whole family was calm... before and after no, but at the funeral itself, we were very calm."

60. S. says her family has a strong faith, belief in God and recalls one thing the minister said her sister would say, "I beat you, now you have to wait your turn." S. took that as, she is up in heaven where she is supposed to be.

61. S. chose to step back away from funeral arrangements, "I could deal with the lawyers... the judge... the coroner... but I could not deal with the funeral."

lawyers, I could deal with the judge, I could deal with the coroner, but I could not deal with the funeral/ so I didn't Sorry.....

J: Its okay.

S: I mean, I told my sister the day before, I said I am not going, she said yes you are, I said no I'm not. I said I don't want to, she's like I know you don't want to but you'll go and I did, and um, but it was, I didn't, I couldn't.....

J: You didn't want to go to the funeral..... was it facing.....

S: Uh-huh. Yep./

J: Was it the reality? But yet at the funeral you said you remained very calm.

S: Very calm, I don't even think I cried. I may have but just..... but when they showed the video with her, you know she had,----- I kind of went (interviewee gasps) but that was about it. And we all, we all remained fairly calm./ In fact I don't even, I don't' even know, I had to ask someone later how many people were there. I said I don't even know, I mean I don't. We sat in the family room you know and um, I still don't know. I mean we had that signature book and stuff. I had to ask somebody you know, and I said this is going to sound just ridiculous but how many people were there? You know And maybe it was just because I was detached, or, I don't know where I was, but I was very calm./

J: How about the days following?

S: Um, after the funeral?

J: Yeah.

S: Um, I just kind of wandered./ Did everybody cry this much (R asks this of me)? or is is just me./ Um, they were just, you know you try to put up the brave front, you try to do what you have to do because you still have kids to take care of and um,/ my husband was just so patient, he still is. Because he knew this was going to be tough and he said do you

62. S. wasn't even going to go to the funeral, it was the reality of it all, but her sister encouraged her to.

63. S. says she doesn't remember how many people were there, maybe because she had detached herself, S. is not sure.

64. S. says in the days after the funeral she just "wandered".

65. S. wonders if everyone cried this much.

66. S. states "you try to put up a brave front, you try to do what you have to do because you still have kids to take care of...."

want me to come and I said no, I'll handle it./ It was just, its just, it just something that you can't, you can do nothing about, you just kind of have to wander you're way through./ Um, part of, we had something to focus on because there was a trial so it was like okay we are going to be brave, we are going to do this, we gotta kind of stiff upper lip, get through this and then we'll fall apart./ And um, the trial was supposed to be in (month) and they knocked it up to month and then they knocked it up again and then we got through holiday and they called and said why haven't we heard from you and I'm like you know. I just tried to get through holiday in some sort of normalcy you know and um, "well we didn't know if you still wanted to take it to trial", we said yeah, we do just you know and you know/ and then I don't', I don't' know what I was like. You know I think people thought I was losing my mind. I thought I was doing very, very well. And I still think that, however I probably wasn't./

J: What makes you think people thought you were losing your mind?

S: Just, to be quite honest with you, I don't remember a lot of it. I can remember the trial, I can remember the funeral, I can remember the.... things on a day to day basis I don't remember a whole lot. I, I don't remember what I did, I just don't remember a whole lot. I don't think I did anything, I think I sat around a whole lot. You know I don't, you know./

J: Did you work?

S: I came back to work after three weeks.

J: And how was that?

S: Um, it's funny how people reacted, they wouldn't say anything. Um, they wouldn't say anything and so..... I wouldn't say anything. I mean like, I just know they were like (how's S), S's

67. S. says her husband has always been patient.

68. S. says it's something you can do nothing about "you have to wander your way through".

69. S. says because of the trial they had something to focus on, they knew they had to be brave to get through it and fall apart later.

70. S. says the trial was postponed several times through a holiday at one point where they tried to get through it with some sort of normalcy.

71. S. thinks people thought she was losing her mind, she thought she was doing okay.

72. S. says she doesn't remember a lot of it, things on a day to day basis, what she did. S. thinks she sat around a whole lot.

73. S. says it was funny how people reacted, they wouldn't say anything so S. wouldn't say anything. They would ask others but not her.

okay you know. Why don't you ask me, you know./ And see, and I'm still very, and I have always been like that. My husband tells me that most people aren't, I have not problem saying are you okay you know, or how are things going? But some people don't want to bring it up because they are afraid, that you are going to start to cry and it's very amazing how people do not handle grieving well at all. At all, they don't want to see your pain, cause they can't handle it so don't be in pain./ And June was killed in month and my grandma died in month. And I was diagnosed with MS in month so it was just like kaboom, kaboom, kaboom. So, that that was a sterling year, year was a dandy year./

J: Sounds like it.

S: And um, but I have made it this far you know its still excruciatingly painful. But not on a minute to minute basis. The waves just come farther./

J: You still think about her quite often?

S: Oh yeah, everyday. Several times a day, I talk to her. You know I do,/ and this is a horrible, horrible rut to get into but I was in it. It was like if I pray hard enough and beg hard enough we would get her back. You know, but, logically I knew that that wasn't going to happen, however I wouldn't believe it. You know, -----/

J: Are you?

S: Oh yeah, I'm done trying to bribe God because its not going to work. You know, you know, but yeah I went through that bribing deal you know. When I knew that she was dead but I was still going to bribe him. I'll do this, this and this if you will just give her back to me./ Not only was she my little sister, she was my best friend. And I um.....

And people don't understand it, I didn't just lose a sister or a best friend, I lost my baby sister. And to me, she was still a baby. So it was just like, and that's how

74. S. says some people don't want to bring it up, they are afraid you will cry, "people do not handle grieving well at all." "They don't want to see your pain, cause they can't handle it...."

75. S. says she had a sterling year, her sister was killed, grandmother died, and she was diagnosed with MS.

76. Even though S. has made it this far, it is still excruciatingly painful. "The waves just come farther."

77. S. says she thinks about her sister everyday and talks to her several times a day.

78. S. says she was in a horrible rut while thinking "if I pray hard enough and beg hard enough, we would get her back."

79. S. no longer tired to bribe God because she realizes this is not going to work.

80. S. says people don't understand, she didn't just lose her sister or best friend but her baby sister. "I feel like I have lost my friend, my sister, and my child all in one shot."

my other sister's feel to, because we were older than her, she was our baby. So I feel like I've lost my friend, my sister, and my child all in one shot.....I still feel that way.....
But.....are we done now?/

J: Are you okay?
S: Yeah, I'm fine.

J: We are not in a hurry, I was just going to ask you about holidays, how your family does, how you get through those.

S: Um, on the holidays I kind of brace myself and um so I am actually fairly good on the holidays./ Her birthday, we have our little ritual that we do. We all meet at the cemetery and um, like this year it wasn't her birthday, a friend of hers flew up from state and we all met and we went to the cemetery and we uh, my sister liked Coors beer so we all had a beer and then we went out for dinner. And we do that on her birthday and on the day, the anniversary of her death. And we talk about her, and I think the people at the restaurant think we are a bunch of nuts but its something that we have to do for us and um a, and we talk about her and stuff and we laugh and we go home./ It, the third Tuesday of month which absolutely means nothing to nobody that all of a sudden kaboom, its the days that you don't', I brace myself for holidays and so I am kind of psyched up for them. The wall goes up and I am calm and I'm collected but its, when you don't expect it, something will trigger. And it doesn't have to be anything in specific./ Its like um, lets see. Tues., Monday, like Thursday last week I was a disaster, and I don't know why.

J: Nothing triggered it?

S: No, I just got up in the morning feeling um, like I wanted to talk to her and the rest of the day was downhill from there. And then the next day I was fine,/ my family is just like oh, no big deal. And its not, and they accept, they let me do what I need to do. You know

81. S. says because she braces herself over holidays she does fairly well.

82. S. describes the ritual on her sister's birthday and anniversary of her death where they all meet at the cemetery, have a Coors, go out to dinner, talk about her and laugh a lot.

83. S. says it's the absolutely meaningless days she is not braced for when all of a sudden "kaboom": Holidays, the wall goes up and S. remains calm and collected, its when you least expect it, something triggers it.

84. S. recalls an incident last week where she woke and wanted to talk to her and the rest of the day was a disaster.

85. S. says her family it very accepting and patient with her.

sometimes I am downstairs doing laundry and when it hits and sometimes I am watching television.

J: Right.

S: You know, and those are the days that I am not prepared for. Holidays I'm prepared for, I prepare myself you know. But um, her birthday, holidays, Christmas I prepare myself. I don't um, we include her, we talk about her a lot. You know um, but we you know, those days for me aren't that bad because I am all psyched up and ready for them. Its the days I don't expect it that are bad./

J: And how often do you have those days, are they pretty frequent?

S: It depends, sometimes they are, and for a long time I will be really good. And then they will start again. And like certain times of the year are bad, like last time I saw her was in June so springtime is really hard for me. Um, just because we are doing the same things that we were doing when she was here. Um, we just got done calving and we are roping some calve and we were branding them and she was here and and that's my last memory of seeing her so that's a tough time./ But you know, everyday is a tough time but you just kind of meander through it/ and at least now I can get to town without crying.

J: Really?

S: I never, I didn't get to town one day without bawling all the way there and it was, cause I think it was because I was by myself when I would drive to work and it was okay.

J: Right.

S: There was nobody going oh no she is out of it again. You know/ and I don't know how many times I must of walked into work just red-eyed but nobody said anything.

J: Really?

86. S. says during the holidays they talk about her a lot, she is ready and psyched up for them.

87. S. says her bad days are intermittent at times more frequent then others but always unpredictable. June is a hard month for S. because that is the last time she saw her sister.

88. "..... everyday is a tough time but you just kind of meander through it...."

89. S. says she always used to dry while driving to town because she was alone and it was okay.

90. S. says she would walk into work red-eyed and nobody would say anything.

S: No.

J: So you don't feel like you got very much support at work anyway?

S: I did to some degree, um, I just think they were just bowled over that everything just kept coming and they were just like oh man, she is going to fall apart/ and I DID. I did, I took two months off work. I took a medical leave.

J: When was this?

S: Um, last, last Aug. - Sept. Oct., I didn't come back to work until November. It took me three months, it took me a year to fall apart but I, but I did, but it was just everything at once. And I wasn't feeling good and I um, um, I did, I took that leave./ And I think there was some comments made directly to my face that today still hurt.

J: Such as?

S: Well, wouldn't we all like to take a 3 month vacation. And um, how I didn't bite their heads off I don't know but I didn't, I didn't say a word. I just I wanted to say well you can walk in my shoes if you would like. But I didn't you know, and there is a couple of those./ I have one really good friend here and she just, you know, takes care of me you know and like on the anniversary of June's death she sent me a card and stuff and so she doesn't forget./ I don't say much, I'm afraid they are going to say "Oh God, enough already, we have heard about it". But most people are pretty good. I don't say much so...

J: Is it because you don't like to talk about it or is it because you don't want to burden other people?

S: Exactly, Its, I I don't mind talking about it but they have to ask, only because I don't want, I don't want them to so oh man get a grip. So I don't' say anything./ I mean I talk at home about June a lot.

91. S. says she did get some support at work but they were overwhelmed and thought S. would fall apart.

92. S. says it took a year for her to fall apart but she did and took a medical leave for 3 months.

93. S. says hurtful comments were made by her co-workers and S. is surprised she didn't bite their heads off. "I wanted to say, well you can walk in my shoes if you could like."

94. S. says she as one friend at work who takes care of her, sends her cards and doesn't forget.

95. S. says she doesn't mind talking about it to people, they have to ask but she doesn't say much because she does not want them to say, "Oh God, enough already."

J: To your children?

S: Yes, yes and to my husband and um, um, but I don't other than that I don't talk much. But I can talk to them./

J: So after your medical diagnosis in addition to the death of your sister and grandmother, I mean what sorts of things went on, it just got to be too much?

S: I just, this whole thing has done such head games to me, like I am afraid of things that I have never been afraid of before. Um, I am afraid to leave my family. I have to go to (City) tomorrow and I mean they are going to take me kicking and screaming because I don't want to go, I don't want to leave my kids. I am afraid something is going to happen. I have no control over that, and I know that here but the rest of me say one thing./ But I am better than I was um like I say my husband said I didn't think I was going to get you to drive to town to go to work. He said I thought I was going to have to take you. I am afraid of things I have never been afraid of before. And I am not real happy about that./ Um, I am afraid that, I am afraid of the pain if it did..... so I don't want to leave my family./ But I do. But, I manage to get to wor you know and that's the thing that I am really mad about is that I am afraid of things. Like until they caught Joe and even after they caught him I still am pretty, you know if someone drives into my yard and I don't know who they are I freak, you know because I don't know, I am afraid they won't tell me if --- gets out and then he is gonna, and I don't think, I don't think he will come to my house um but it still sneaks in every once in a while, what if he showed up? You know what would we do?/ Because I, because I never thought, I knew Joe very well, we all did and so we feel like we have been horribly betrayed. And we never thought he would do something like this./ Its made me, its just done some crazy odd head games you know like I am afraid of things I never was afraid of before. And I don't want to live my life in fear./ My kids respect that I am pretty

96. S. says she talks a lot about her sister at home to her family.

97. S. says the whole experience has done head games to her, she is afraid of things she has no control over, for example she is afraid of leaving her family for fear something will happen to them.

98. S. says she is getting better but is still afraid of things she has never been afraid of before.

99. S. is afraid of the pain if something did happen to her family.

100. S. is angry at her new fear, she is afraid of Joe, if he gets out would he come to her house.

101. S. feels horribly betrayed by Joe.

102. S. says "I don't want to live my life in fear."

jumpy, and so when they're not where I think they need to be, they need to call me and they respect that. Because they know I just lose it. I do, I will be quite honest with you, I lose it./ You know, because I am afraid, I am afraid something is going to happen. And I know logically I have no control over that stuff you know./

J: Right exactly, so during that three months that you had off, was that beneficial for you?

S: I stayed home, you know I didn't go anywhere, it was the first time since I was 19 years old that I didn't have a job that I had to go to. And um, I think I needed some rest. um, and yeah, it did, it did help a lot, I felt physically better because I had not felt good for a long time./ Because well, it was prolonged stress. Prolonged stress and MS do not go very good together. And yeah, it helped, and I am only working 10 hour shifts, I am not working anymore twelve's which has made a big difference.

J: Do you work forty hour week?

S: No, I only work 20 hours here and then I am the school nurse in town. So about 28 hours a week./

J: It sounds like your family has gotten closer, or were you always close?

S: We were always very close. We've had some major tragedies in our family and how it hasn't ripped us apart I don't know but we tend to get closer instead of the other way just like the fact that my mom and dad are divorced, um, they remain very close,/ um, my husband has been very supportive of my whole family. And we have put him in some positions where he could of said I have had enough and he hasn't. Um, like going to (City) tomorrow, he has said I will go if that's you know, and I said no, I think I can do that by myself. Um, and he just lets us do you know, /my sister in Kansas is not well, does not do well and has not done well since June

103. S. says her kids respect the fact she if jumpy and if they don't call she loses her mind.

104. S. knows logically she has no control over certain things but continues to fear something bad happening.

105. S. says during her medical leave, she stayed home, got a lot of needed rest and felt physically better.

106. S. says prolonged stress and MS do not go well together. She decided to cut back at work.

107. S. says even though they have experienced major tragedies in their family, they remain close.

108. S. says her husband is very supportive of her whole family even at times where he could of said, "I have had enough."

109. S. says she has a sister who is not well since the death and the family has done everything they can to help her.

was killed. And um, and that's been that's been horrible and we can only do what we can do and the rest has to be her./ There's been a lot of alcohol in my family and I, and I um, think that the alcohol, there was alcohol and drugs involved in June's death. Not on June's part. But on Joe's, and um, just how my dad has handled it or not handled it is more like it. And my other sister has not handled it. So there is a lot of alcohol./ And because it is so prevalent in my family, um, I am sort of on this main mission that you know, that my kids are not going to be that way. And that there's better ways to cope and that there is help out there./ And my brother who lives with my dad is stuck in a horrible situation, and will not leave, won't come live with me but...../ it, it, it is just amazing what this has done and how it took, how long it took everybody to fall apart at their own little time span.

J: It was all different.

S: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, everybody had their own little time span./ And you know some, you know like my older sister outside the US, she is doing much better than the rest of us. Um, she had an anger and a hatred in her for Joe that I have never had and probably won't have. I don't expect it. I would like to hate Joe, I can't do it and I don't know why I can't do it, I want to, it would be easier, I would have someone to target./ But, I sort of feel that he is still someone's son and they love him despite what he has done. And um, I would think that if I did something then I would expect my family to love me./

J: Did you ever think of getting outside help, like with a bereavement counselor?

S: I have for a while, the thing is that it's the same story over and over and over again so at some point I have to deal with it myself./ And I did go for a while, I went through a lot of guilt for a while because I didn't tell June to run, um, I don't have that guilt anymore. I was hundreds of miles away, she was an

110. S. says there is a lot of alcohol in her family, involved in her sister's death, (Joe's part), and is how her dad and sister are handling the death.

111. S. says because alcohol is so prevalent in her family, she is on a mission of abstinence, "there are better ways to cope and help is out there".

112. S. says her brother is stuck in a horrible situation living with her father.

113. S. says it is amazing what this experience has done to her and her family, "how long it took everybody to fall apart at their own little time span."

114. S. says some of her family is doing better than others. One sister has intense hatred for Joe, S wishes she had that, she thinks it would be easier to have someone to target but she can't do it.

115. S. would expect her family to love her unconditionally therefore Joe's family loves him despite what he has done.

116. S. saw a bereavement counselor for a while but it got redundant and S. thought "at some point, I have to deal with this myself."

117. S. says for a while she experienced a lot of guilt because she didn't tell her sister to run. S. now knows those were both her sister's choices and Joe's choices, she couldn't do anything.

adult, she made the choices that she made. And Joe made the choices that he made. Um, I did not make those choices and had I been three blocks from her I probably would of went and got her but I was 700 miles. And I don't have that guilt anymore you know, because I couldn't do anything./ You know and we went through that what if I would of done this and that and this and that, I didn't. I told her that she needed to go someplace else and it was her choice not to. And I you know, and I don't disagree with what she did, she shouldn't have to leave her own home, her own you know, she had a really good job, she went to college and got a 3.9 and worked full time and it was her house and her deal. She shouldn't of had to run./ I wish she would of because I suspect she would still be here. But I don't know that neither, you know, it depends on whether you believe when your time is up it comes up and you will go no matter how you will go./ I think the hardest thing for my family is that she was alone. And the only person that was there was the person that intended on taking her life and he did. And I think that has been really hard is that she was by herself..... or without us./

J: Without family.

S: And she you know, to think that she died that violently, and the worst thing that our family so had to know and this is going to sound pretty gruesome. I don't know it might not sound gruesome, um, I had to know if she suffered you know for a long period of time and um, and when they said no, I said you explain to me how you came to that. And they did and it made sense. You know and um, it was the coroner who did that and she was so nice. Everybody there was very nice. You know, real compassionate, and you know um,/ they had made a video..... (bathroom break)

S: Um, when we went to state um, and we went to talk to the prosecuting attorney, kind of asked him what the plan was and I am pretty vocal and um, and

118. S. says she went through the "what ifs", she doesn't disagree with her sister's choices, she shouldn't of had to run. S. told her she needed to go somewhere else and her sister chose to stay.

119. S. wishes her sister would of run because she feels she may still be here today but then again it depends on whether you believe in fate.

120. S. says the hardest thing for her family was that she was alone except for the person who took her life.

121. S. says because she died violently, the first and most important thing her family had to know was if she suffered. The experts explained how they knew she did not suffer and it made sense to the family.

122. S. recalls the video of the crime scene and viewing pictures from the crime scene.

we knew that they had made a video of the crime scene um, the police asked us the first time we were there not, maybe not to watch it and um, we said okay. So the prosecuting attorney said something about well, they will blow the pictures of the crime scene up, and I said whoa, whoa, we have not seen the pictures. Um, we probably need to see them before they are blown up poster size and he said oh my goodness you haven't seen them. So we did, we sat down and looked at them./

J: Your whole family?

S: Um, actually my mom, myself, my husband did not and um, and it was out of respect to my family because my sister was naked and he just said you know, out of respect to your mom, I am not going to look at these. You know, and I said that's fine but he sat right by the door so if one of us tipped over, he could run pick us up and he was busy doing a lot of propping. He would prop me up and then he would run around and prop mom up. I mean he was just propping everybody up./ And um, um, once again I was extremely calm to see the pictures of her. Um, and they were flipping through it you know, and um, he said now there is some pictures of the autopsy and I said no, no, no, no, I said we got to stop and my mom said yeah I want to see them and I said no you don't, I said we saw what we needed to see and we do not need to see anymore./ And um, I didn't want those pictures stuck in my head, and um, I still see the pictures I saw, now and then, not much, but every once in a while there will kind of be like a flash you know. But no normally I remember her the way I remember her./

J: When she was here in June.

S: Yes, yes, but I think it is hardest for me to remember her when she was little.

J: Why do you think that is?

S: Probably because in my eyes she was still seven, she wasn't,

123. S. and her mom viewed the pictures, her husband out of respect abstained but he sat by the door and did a lot of propping, "he was just propping everybody up."

124. S. says she was extremely calm to see the pictures. They refused to view autopsy photos.

125. S. stated "I didn't want those pictures stuck in my head", and once in a while she has a flash but mostly she remembers her the way she knew her.

126. S. says it is hardest to remember her when she was little because in her eyes she was still 7 and also maybe because she has young children.

she was and adult you know she was 29 but but um, um, to see her little pictures like when she was four and five, ooooooh they just I can't look at them, and maybe its just because I you know have little children and oh,/ I just can't imagine what my mom must be going through. You know because that's her baby./ Oh, by the way I got a book for you.

J: Good.

S: So um so, and you know, my husband asked me when I saw the pictures you know, he kept thinking that when I saw the pictures I was going to say, that's not June! You know, and um, he said you never said it and I said that's because it was. I said it was and it wasn't and I still remember looking at them going that's her but that is NOT her. Um, cause it is not the June that I remember./ And that's what I said at the sentencing you know, so I um, you know I showed them pictures of what I, we lost and I said you know and this is probably the only time I got angry, angry and I just said you know you guys all got to see the poster size after pictures instead I would like you to see something that we know and um, um, and they you know it was gruesome and um, it was June but it wasn't and I don't know how to explain that other than it was but it wasn't./

J: Did that help you do you think with the realization that she was dead or...

S: Um, to some degree, but it didn't..... I still sometimes have a hard time believing it. And it may be a while before I get it all the way in and I kind of do a little bit ----- then I back off for a while and then I'll let a little bit more in and then I'll back off./ And I still go over and over and over things./

J: By you letting a little bit more in, I don't really understand that.

S: Um, I think, I think, I'll let only so much in at a time because it hurts so bad and then I just kind of like up goes my

127. S. can't imagine what her mom is going through, losing her baby.

128. When looking at the pictures, S. remembers thinking "that is her but that is not her." "It is not the sister I remember."

129. S. says the only time she got really angry was during the sentencing, S. showed them pictures she had of her sister "of what I lost".

130. S. continues to have a hard time believing that her sister is gone and it may be a while before she fully absorbs what has happened. "I kind of do a little bit, then I back off.... then I'll let a little bit more in."

131. S. says she still goes over and over and over things, continually processing.

132. S. says because it hurts so bad, she will only let so much in at a time and then the wall goes up and she stops for a while.

wall and I will stop it for a while and then I'll go back to it and do it again, and that's kind of how I handle things anyway. I kind of have to go over them and over them and over them. And then when it gets too much or hurts too bad I will put it away for a while and then I will dig it back out and do it again and .../ I still go over the trial you know and I still go over, there's certain things that I go over and over until I um, assimilated it and then I will put it away./ And some people don't like that, they are like hey, just leave it alone, but that's how I assimilate things, I go over and over them in my own head. I mean I don't, I don't necessarily talk about it but I will think about it and think about it and think about it and/ I will tell you what. I have had a conversation with the defense lawyer every day for the last year.

J: Have you?

S: Yes, and that sort of, and I target him for some reason and I don't know why I target the defense lawyer but I do./

J: Do you think things are going to get a little bit easier after the trial is dealt with, after that is resolved?

S: A, probably because you know it feels pretty good and you know then it is all opens back up again, its like a wound that's covered and then somebody goes back in and stirs around in it./ And yeah, I'm not normally this emotional about it you know. You know but I haven't talked about it for a while,/ and yeah it will get better, it will get better all the time. It will never go away.

J: Right. Is there anything else that you would like to say?

S: No, I don't think so, I will probably have this conversation forever./

J: Thank you.

133. S. says she still goes over certain things in her head like the trial until she feels she has assimilated it all.

134. S. says she doesn't know why but she targets the defense lawyer and she has frequent conversation with him.

135. S. says the trial makes it feel "like a wound that's covered and then somebody goes back in and stirs around in it." It starts to feel better until it's all opened back up.

136. S. says she normally is not this emotional but it's been a long time since she has talked about it.

137. "...yeah, it will get better, it will get better all the time. It will never go away."

138. S. states "I will probably have this conversation forever."

Interview with Mary - Level 3

S. begins by saying it is always much easier for her to stay clinical when describing the experience. S. recalls the phone conversation with her sister the day prior to her death. Her sister was questioning her about personal issues. S. recalls her sister asking how to get out of a relationship. S. instructed her to make her own decision. "Make the decision and don't look back." S. recalls receiving another phone call from her sister early the next morning. Her sister talked of an incident where Joe, her boyfriend, pulled a gun. S's sister had called the police. S. recalls her sister saying that she thought he was going to kill himself and that she didn't feel personally threatened. Her sister requested that S. hold these conversations confidential and S. honored her sister's wishes. S. did not tell their mother what was happening. During the second phone conversation S. asked her sister to leave the house and stay with a friend. This was not a possibility and her sister stayed in the house, locking both the doors and the windows and attempted to get some sleep. S. recalls during the phone conversation instructing her to be home for another phone call. S. called nonstop and when her sister didn't answer, she "knew something was horribly wrong." S. never talked to her sister again.

S. says she did not inform her family that her sister was missing, "for all I knew she was shopping." S. states her family may not ever forgive her for that. Nobody, including S. knew her sister was dead for over a day. S. began making phone calls to all the local hospitals and to the police. Finally, a friend of S's sister, also concerned, broke into her apartment and found her. S. says she knew something was wrong, she didn't know she was dead. "I had a hole a mile wide."

S. found out about her sister's death late one afternoon. The sheriff, who was a friend of the family, drove out to S's house. S. states when she saw him, she knew. S. recalls reeling a dull ache, knowing something was wrong, not thinking her sister was dead. S. thought her had hurt her but not killed her and when she saw the sheriff, she "knew" it was regarding her sister. S. recalls when the sheriff arrived, she was cooking dinner. She instructed her kids to stay inside the house. The sheriff insisted upon finding S's husband and for an instant, S. thought maybe her husband had been hurt. S. convince the sheriff to tell her the news without her husband around, "you need to tell".

Upon hearing the news, S. stated "I literally dropped to my knees". S. stated, "I did that fight or flight thing, there was nobody to fight so I had to run." S. recalls running to her car phone in order to avoid her children, calling her husband and telling him the tragic news. S. says her kids were watching out the window and her instinct again was to run. "If I can run really fast, I can run away from this." That didn't happen, she couldn't run that fast. S. recalls telling her kids frankly what had happened, her daughter reacting in a similar manner to herself, she started running. S. felt she needed to get to her mom urgently to tell her of the news and attempting to phone her father. S's mom, like herself, forced her ex-husband to tell her the news before S. had arrived. S's mom knew the sound of his voice was troublesome. S. wanted to be there for her mother for support. S. couldn't begin to imagine what her mom was going through, losing her baby. S. vividly recalls picking her mom up from work and bringing her home. S. recalls her mom questioning her and S. reassuring her that there was nothing they could do. If S. had told her of her sister's troubles with Joe, it would have already been too late anyhow.

S. describes how in the middle of a crisis, she holds it together and falls apart before or after. "I kind of gathered it up and did what I had to do." S. told the sheriff that

they should find Joe because that is who was responsible for her sister's death. "I know that." S. remembers her truck breaking down on the way to her mother's, calling friends, the highway patrol stopping and informing the PD of the incident. S. recalls the highway patrol receiving a call to watch for Joe who may appear and S. remembers feeling very frightened of this. S. recalls a knock on the door in the middle of the night, "it was like somebody shot me out of a cannon". It was the police looking for Joe. S. was disturbed by this and had to tell them that her sister was killed most likely by Joe.

S. recalls vividly certain other facts surrounding the notification of the death such as knowing the sheriff designated to inform them of the death and recalls how she must of "looked so funny" to him. S. found out later that Joe was there during all of her phone messages left for her sister the morning she was killed. This disturbed her and she says she can't understand how he "could sit there and listen to me". S. tells of another car accident on the way to retrieve her sister's things. She says it was almost like fate, because that was the night they found Joe, 10 days later. Secondary to the legalities it took a while to get her sister's body back here. S. recalls the great difficulty going to retrieve her sister's things. The house was sealed, they didn't know what was hers but ended up taking whatever they wanted.

S. also talks of the trial and crime scene. S. says because of the trial they had something to focus on, they knew they had to be brave to get through it and then they could fall apart later. S. recalls calling the coroner and testifying over the phone. S. says then there was a trial, six months after the murder and it is ongoing today. "That is probably why I am so raw so close right now." S. says the trial was postponed several times. It was postponed through a holiday and S. remembers trying to get through the holiday with some sort of normalcy. S. recalls the video of the crime scene and viewing pictures from the crime scene. S. says she and her mom viewed the pictures, her husband out of respect abstained but sat by the door and did a lot of propping. "He was just propping everybody up." S. recalls being extremely calm while viewing the pictures. They had refused to view the autopsy pictures. While looking at the pictures, S. remembers thinking "that is her but that is not her." "It is not the sister I remember." S. stated "I didn't want those pictures stuck in my head", and once in a while she says she has a flash but mostly she remembers her the way she knew her.

S. recalls trying to be strong and putting up a brave front. "You try to put up a brave front, you try to do what you have to do because you still have kids to take care of..." S. stated, "I can do everything but I cannot pick out her clothes and I cannot see her." As it turned out, they couldn't view the body secondary to the time lapse. S. recalls having to convince their mother of this. S. questions whether it was good or bad they didn't view the body. S. says she didn't understand before why it was so important but states "well maybe there is a chance they got the wrong person." S. knows logically it is not possible but that remains with her anyway.

Although S. thought she was doing so well, handling things well, being strong, she now looks back on it and thinks "what a loon." She really was a mess. "I was no more handling it well than flying to the moon." She tells an example of this about how when they went to pick out the casket, she did not want to bury her next to people who had passed away a long time ago. S. says she "wanted to put her up with someone her own age." S. chose to step back from funeral arrangements, "I could deal with the lawyers... the judge... the coroner... but I could not deal with the funeral. S. wasn't even going to go to the funeral, it was the reality of it all she wasn't sure she could face. Her sister was able

encourage her to go. S. says she was very calm at the funeral and she didn't expect that. S. was only squeamish while viewing the videotape of her sister that her friends had made.

S. recalls the details of her sister's death were grizzly. S. says she needed to know the details because she does better with facts where her imagination can get out of control. S. recalls keeping secret some of the information given her from her family until all the test results came back. S. wanted to protect her family as much as possible. S. says because she died violently, the most important piece of information to her family was to know if she suffered. The experts explained how they knew she did not suffer and it made sense to the family and they were able to accept this information. S. says the hardest thing for her family was that she was alone, she died alone, except for the person who took her life.

S. has attempted to place blame and has directed this energy various places over the past two years. S. says she wishes her sister would of run because she feels she may still be here today. Although along with this thought and in the same breath, S. adds that it depends if you believe in fate. S. describes how she went through the "what ifs", she doesn't disagree with her sister's choices, she shouldn't of had to run. S. told her sister she needed to go somewhere else and her sister chose to stay. S. says for a while she experienced a lot of guilt personally because she didn't tell her sister to run. S. now knows those were both her sister's choices and Joe's choices, she couldn't do anything. S. describes how some of her family is doing better than others. One sister has intense hatred for Joe. S. wishes she has that, she thinks it would be easier to have someone to target but she can't do it. S. says she has frequent conversations with the defense lawyer and targets him. She is unsure exactly why she targets the defense lawyer.

When discussing the experience, S. abruptly describes the experience as "agonizing". S. says there are not enough adjectives to describe it, nothing does it justice - devastating. S. says the days between the notification of her sister's death and the funeral were a "blur". S. says she doesn't remember how many people were at the funeral, matter of fact she doesn't remember a lot of it. She cannot recall things on a day to day basis, what she did. S. thinks she sat around a whole lot. She wonders if maybe she was just totally detached, she says she is not sure. S. talks about how it's something you can do nothing about "you have to wander your way through". S. talks about in the days after the funeral she just "wandered". ".....everyday is a tough time but you just kind of meander through it...."

S. remembers becoming possessive after her sister's death. Her sister had many close friends who were too involved at times. S. thought "your place is beside us but not with us." S. recalls an incident where she knew she was being possessive. A friend, only trying to help had phoned the coroner for information, telling the coroner that she was family. This made S. very angry but she says she will not apologize for that. She does not feel she has to.

S. continues to have a hard time believing that her sister is gone and it may be a while before she fully absorbs what has happened. "I kind of do a little bit, then I back off... then I'll let a little bit more in." S. says people don't understand her pain, she didn't just lose her sister or best friend but her baby sister. "I feel like I have lost my friend, my sister, and my child all in one shot." S. says it is hardest to remember her when she was little because in her eyes she was still seven. S. thinks this may also be because she has young children herself. S. says she still goes over and over and over things, continually processing. An example of this is how S. continues to go over certain things in her head

like the trial. S. says the trial makes it feel "like a wound that' covered and then somebody goes back in and stirs around in it." It starts to feel better until it is all opened back up. S. says she will continue to go over things until she feels she has assimilated it all. S. says because it hurts so bad, she will only let so much in at a time and then the wall goes up and she stops for a while. S. while crying describes the experience as a whole as overwhelming, like continuous waves, just not as close together anymore. S. believes that even though she has made it this far, it is still excruciatingly painful. "The waves just come farther."

S. asks at one point if everyone cried this much. S. says she always used to cry while driving to town because she alone and it was okay. She can now make it to town without crying. S. claims she has her bad days which are intermittent, at times more frequent than others but always unpredictable. June is a hard month for S. because that is the last time she saw her sister. S. recalls an incident last week where she woke and wanted to talk to her and the rest of the day was a disaster. S. says it is the absolute meaningless days she is not braced for when all of a sudden "kaboom". Holidays, S. says the wall goes up and S. remains calm and collected, "its when you least expect it", something triggers the emotions. S. says because she braces herself for the holidays she does fairly well. S. and her family talk about her sister a lot on the holidays and S. is ready and psyched up for them. S. describes the ritual on her sister's birthday and anniversary of her death where they all meet at the cemetery, have a Coors, go out to dinner, talk about her and laugh a lot.

S. shares what a "sterling" year she had. Her sister was killed, grandmother died, and she was diagnosed with MS. S. says prolonged stress and MS did not go well together and therefore she decided to cut back at work. S. recalls it taking a year for her to fall apart, but she did and took a medical leave from work for three months. S. recalls during her medical leave, she stayed home, got a lot of needed rest and felt physically better. S. shares that she say a bereavement counselor for a while but it got redundant and S. thought "at some point, I have to deal with this myself." S. stated "..... yeah, it will get better, it will get better all the time. It will never go away."

S. says "undoubtedly the worst thing I have ever had to endure." The violence caused S. to experience many different things such as fear, anger, and betrayal. S. says the whole experience has done head games to her, she is afraid of thing she has no control over. For example, she is afraid of leaving her family for fear something will happen to them. S. says "I don't want to live my live in fear." S. knows logically she has no control over certain things but continues to fear something bad happening. S. is afraid of the pain if something did happen to her family. S. says she is getting better but is still afraid of things she has never been afraid of before. S. says because of this fear, her kids respect the fact she is jumpy and realize if they don't call she loses her mind. S. is angry at her new fear. S. says the only time she got really angry was during the sentencing, S. showed them pictures she had of her sister "of what I lost." S. says she also has intense feelings of betrayal by Joe. S. says she is also terribly afraid of Joe, if he gets out would he come to her house. These thoughts haunt her.

S. says even though her family has experienced major tragedies, they remain close. S. remembers informing their large family exactly what happened and how she was killed. "I just told them straight out." S. says is amazing what this experience has done to her and her family, "how long it took everybody to fall apart at their own little time span." S. talks specifically about how her family remained calm at the funeral. "My whole family was

calm... before and after no, but at the funeral itself, we were very calm. S. says there is a lot of alcohol in her family, involved in her sister's death on Joe's part, and is how her dad and sister are handling the death. S. describes her father as an alcoholic and says he has not been sober a day since her sister's death. S. says because alcohol is so prevalent in her family, she is on a mission of abstinence. "There are better ways to cope and help is out there." S. describes her sister who is not well since the death and says the family has done everything possible to help her. S's brother is stuck in a horrible situation living with her father.

S. says her husband is very supportive of her and her entire family even at times when he could of said, "I have had enough." S. recalls that her husband has always been patient. S. talks about her sister frequently with her family at home. S. says her family is very accepting and patient with her. S. recognizes that her family loves her unconditionally and therefore realizes that Joe's family loves him despite what he has done.

When discussing the reaction of people around S. she stated, "people do not handle grieving well at all. They don't want to see your pain, cause they can't handle it..." S. says some people don't want to bring it up, they are afraid you will cry. S. says she doesn't mind talking about it to people but they have to ask. S. says she doesn't say much because she doesn't want them to say, "Oh God, enough already." S. says in a way it was funny how people reacted, they wouldn't say anything so S. wouldn't say anything. They would ask others but not her. S. thinks at times people thought she was losing her mind when she thought she was doing okay. S. says she did get some support at work but they were overwhelmed and thought S. would fall apart. S. says she has one friend at work who takes care of her, sends her cards and doesn't forget. S. says there were days where she would walk into work red-eyed and nobody would say anything. She also recalls hurtful comments made by her co-workers. S. says she is surprised she didn't bite their heads off. "I wanted to say, well you can walk in my shoes if you would like."

S. says her family has a strong faith and belief in God. S. recalls one thing the minister said when speaking of her sister's words, "I beat you, now you have to wait your turn." S. said this was very appropriate for her sister as her sister was "effervescent, rough around the edges." S. took that meaning as, she beat them and is now up waiting in heaven where she is supposed to be. S. says for a while she got herself into a horrible rut while thinking "if I pray hard enough and beg hard enough, we would get her back." S. no longer attempts to bribe God, realizing this is not going to work. S. says she continues to think about her sister everyday. S. says she feels her sister's presence and talks to her several times a day.

S. states "I will probably have this conversation forever."

Interview with Mary - Level 4

Upon reflection of sudden loss of her sister, S. finds concrete images easier to conjure up than abstract psychological images. Images of the experience itself and the days surrounding the event remain vivid and clear. "It is easy for me to stay clinical." The violence added a new dimension to the loss in itself, concerns ensued about the suffering, the length of suffering, and distress about the fact she died alone except for the one who took her life. S. tells of her vivid imagination and her desire to know all of the facts of the "grizzly" murder or her imagination would get out of control. S. continually reflects on her internal knowledge of events. She had internalized thoughts and fears about what may have happened to her sister. She did not want to share, nor could she share secondary to the pact they had made between sister's. She was prepared for injury but not death.

S. became the protector and informant of the family, only giving out verified information. S. had a strong desire to be the support for her mother realizing what intense amounts of pain it would be to lose a child. Secondary to the experience, S's family pulled together through tragedy. Her husband's role was that of patience and support.

S. describes a definitive dull ache upon first sight of the sheriff and the continued existence of that dullness today. S. believes she is in continual denial and that it may take time until she can truly absorb the experience. The initiation of denial began prior to the notification of the death, S's intuition allowed her prior knowledge her sister had been hurt, however, the idea of her death was nonexistent. S. felt like it was her duty to be strong. S. recalls "I kind of gathered it up and did what I had to do." This allowed S. to continue to move forward without dealing with the pain that awaited her. S's family felt the need to be brave, to hold it together for the trial. Focusing on facts freed them temporarily from the pain and hurt of the loss. Again S. knew she needed to be strong in order to persevere but uncertainty grew heavy as to how she should proceed with her own life.

Emphasis was placed by S. on her requests that her sister remove herself from danger. This emphasis later turns to blame, regrets, and what ifs. S. had many unsuccessful attempts at placing blame. Initially she blamed herself for not taking a more active role in encouraging her sister to get out of danger's way. She then blamed her sister for choosing to stay and not run. She attempted to and wishes she could blame Joe but can't. She now places blame on the defense lawyer, and doesn't know why.

The what ifs consumed her. Ambivalence about whether they could of intervened and averted the death. Again, reoccurring questioning and ambivalence about not having viewed the body. There was no finality and a flicker of doubt remains. "Well, maybe there is a chance they got the wrong person." Even though S. thought she was being strong, she now looks back and realizes she was not handling things well at all. S. has difficulty with reality, wanting to escape. She almost neglected to attend the funeral, too much reality. S. felt enveloped in a vacuum with intense feelings of emptiness.

S. vividly recalls hearing the news and instinctually initiating a "fight or flight" response. S. ran, not only in attempts to escape reality but in order to run to her sister. It was too painful to acknowledge. Once it was evident there was no escape, S. knew she had to face the pain. S. experiences difficulty describing her emotions and finds there are no appropriate words. "There are not enough adjectives to describe it, nothing does it justice." Some of the concrete words used by S. were devastating, agonizing, blurring nature of details about people and events after notification of the death. S. became

detached, a wanderer, muddling her way through realizing she could not change the past and would have to accept the present. During this process of wandering, S. was trying to regain control of her life. She recalls becoming possessive of her grief. She did not want to share her pain, she wanted sole ownership of the pain that went along with the loss. S. believes people don't understand her pain, she didn't just lose her sister or best friend but her baby sister.

S. describes the pain as so intense and overwhelming that if she let it all in at once, it would consume her therefore she assimilates little fragments at a time yet continually processing events. She referred to the trial as "a wound that is covered and then somebody goes back in and stirs around in it." S. describes the continuous pain increasing to the point she could no longer cope. S. describes "falling apart". S. says just when it starts feeling better, emotions are triggered without notice in waves of acute pain. The expectations alone on holidays are so traumatic, S. realizes she must protect herself during these times and puts up a wall to shield herself from the pain. S. has come to the realization that the pain will never go away, it will become easier but will never go away.

The violence of this experience has changed S's world view. Where once S. could find solace and safety within her own surroundings, she now experiences things such as fear, anger and betrayal. S. is afraid of things she has no control over. S. fears experiencing the excruciating pain over again and she will go to great lengths to ensure the safety of herself and her family. S. discusses her fear of rejection, of opening herself up to people just to possibly be turned away. S. believes "people do not want to see your pain cause they can't handle it..." With her world collapsing in front of her, S. battles to regain control over her life. This makes S. bitter where once she was a free spirit now she must constantly live in fear convincing herself everything is all right. S. grieves for this loss of freedom and her new anger. S. has become hypervigilant to the safety of her surroundings. S. feels also a sense of betrayal by Joe.

Spirituality plays a role in the experience of the loss of S's sister. S. and her family have a strong spiritual belief and faith in God. S. believes her sister's spirit endures in transcendence. It was her destiny. S. continues to feel her sister's presence and this assists her in moving forward in her own life. Initially, S. recalls bargaining with God to get her sister back but shortly after realizing the impossibility.

APPENDIX F

Interview with Karen - Level 2

J: I would like you to try to describe for me your experience of having suddenly lost your sister in the accident.

S: Well first of all we got a phone call and it was my brother-in-law and he told me that something horrible happened and I said Sue is dead because for a month before the accident I was having nightmares at night, waking up. And I would see a car crash ----- and I knew something was happening but I wasn't sure, I never got a face of the person./ So before, and I would wake up and I would just be terrified and my husband would be like what's going on and I would say I am having that dream again. And I would be scared, but when he called, my brother-in-law I knew, because I, I, just knew it was her. And yet it was like the dream, oh its a nightmare, I will wake up. Well, I never woke up, so um,/ went to the funeral and I saw her and it was like you are numb and it wasn't her. I touched her and I couldn't believe it was her. She was so swollen and bruised and her hair was different and it was like, I can't believe it's her so um...../ My other sister was, was hysterical. She was just all upset. And she couldn't believe it either, she was just totally depressed and it was like my role, I am the middle one, was to support her at that time./ So, anyway, we made it through the funeral and um/ then, lets see, it still didn't become a reality for a long time like even a year before we....cause you always wanted to call. Because we would call once a week each other and stuff and it didn't become a reality until finally no one answered that phone. I couldn't make a telephone call because I didn't believe it./ And then you go through this, you know you go through all the grieving processes, bargaining, well you know this this this this then its a misbelief and then finally I think after a year I accepted her death./ I

1. S. says a month before her sister's accident, she was having nightmares viewing a car crash but never with faces so when her brother-in-law phoned with the news she knew, "I said Sue is dead."

2. S. describes waking up terrified intermittently from that same dream and the phone call reminded her so much of the dream, "oh, its a nightmare, I will wake up..... I never woke up."

3. S. says she was numb when she saw the body, it didn't look like her, she was swollen and bruised.

4. S. recalls feeling her role at the time was the support person for her sister because her sister was hysterical, totally depressed and in denial.

5. S. says they mad it through the funeral.

6. S. says it didn't become a reality for long time. S. recalls she and her sister talking via telephone weekly. S. recalls wanting to call after the accident but not because she couldn't let herself believe it, but finally she called and no one answered.

7. S: recalls going through "all the grieving processes, bargaining.... this, this, this, misbelief and finally... acceptance.

8. S. recalls going into a major depression.

went into a major depression, major depression. (long pause) /

J: I would like to know a little bit more about that initial phone call you got and then that first 24 hours if you can remember that.

S: The first 24 hours I was continually crying, I felt like a part of my body was taken out because we were so close./ And we were on the phone, my sister and I were on the phone a lot, talking a lot. And um, my brother-in-law was a mess, a mess, he was totally a mess./ First of all, we had to confirm when she died um, she was in a pick-up with another lady who was in critical condition and her four year old son. So, we had to find out details. I didn't go to as far as my other sister, my other sister actually called the lady who was in the vehicle with her. She had to find out was she in pain when she died. Was she um, was she alive at any point, did you see her. And this lady was in critical condition, I couldn't do that but then I was getting the information from my sister so that was, that was, I got myself satisfied that way. Also um, what about the condition of the little boy, apparently he didn't, he had a scratch on him. She had buckled him just before the accident and somehow he had gone through the window and was walking down the highway, the vehicle was not visible and someone found a 4 year old boy walking along the highway and that's when they found the car./ So, and, he doesn't remember, the little boy, we, we, he was in shock and stuff but you feel for the kids cause our kids are all the same age. But you see your daughter and you go through all this stuff./ It was shock, major shock, numbness, disbelief, this is still that dream, you know, and stuff./ My sister went into a state of depression where she couldn't eat, drink or sleep or anything for two weeks./ And when she finally went to sleep, you are going to think this is crazy, but when she finally went to sleep, in her dream, we were all sitting in the living room in chairs in a circle and Dan was there, my parents

9. S. says during the first 24 hours, she was crying continually feeling as if "a part of my body was taken out because we were so close."

10. S. recalls talking frequently with her sister on the phone.

11. S. says they went in search of details like when she died, the status of the other passengers, if she was in pain before she died, was she alive at any point. S. says her sister went so far as to call the woman who survived. Although S. said she wouldn't do that, she got the information from her sister.

12. The child who was involved didn't remember, he was in shock.

13. S. says it was shock, major shock, numbness, disbelief, feeling as if it was still the dream.

14. S. recalls her sister going into state of depression unable to do anything.

15. S. recalls when she finally fell asleep she dreamt Sue appeared to the family and consoled them and stood especially behind Sara. She told her she needed to get on with her life, then she told them her husband would remarry and that the family needed to accept that. S. says he did end of remarrying.

were there, my brother and sister and Sara and I and in that dream Sue was behind us, talking to us, consoling us and Sue being my sister, the one who was killed. And she, especially stood by Sara because Sara was having such a hard time and told Sara you know, you need to go on with your life. You know, this is something I don't want you to live the rest of your life like this. And I am going to tell you something, that in a year or two, Dan, (her husband), is going to remarry and he is going to remarry a woman with a couple of kids which I want him to do. I want him to go on with his life and you are going to have to accept it. Well, Sara didn't tell me this dream until 3-4 months later and when we went the following year at Thanksgiving, Dan was dating a woman with two kids and got married within a year and a couple of months. And it reminded her of the dream, because she had a really, / well of course he was cheating on her and all this other stuff and it was what Sara was going through but I said Sara you knew this beforehand - the dream - and she, she still has a hard time accepting it but um, / myself, I accept it because I really think that this was meant to happen, you know and stuff so. And um, I, I have accepted it, she hasn't accepted it so there is a difference in that way.

J: Right and so now still today she hasn't accepted it?

S: She is real leery and has difficulty trusting this woman. / But, I have seen what this woman does and she is just amazing you know, here is orphaned kids. My brother-in-law was a veterinarian who was gone all the time farming out the kids, trying to find somebody, at least they have stability. And I look at that and she loves these kids and she doesn't let them get away with too much you know as far as being spoiled, because everybody felt sorry for them and they were spoiled. I mean they

16. S tells how her sister did not accept it then and continues to battle with acceptance of the other woman and their marriage.

17. S. says she accepts the marriage, "I think it was meant to happen."

18. S. says her sister continues to have difficulty trusting this new woman.

19. S. says her brother in law's new wife is amazing, she brought stability to the home, she cares for and loves the kids. S. says they were spoiled, people feeling sorry for them, but she doesn't let them get away with anything.

were unmanageable, they were out of control. Where she brought that stability in the home and she really cares about the outcome and what kind of people they turn into you know and I see that./ But I am being more objective, you know she's, Sara's the first to criticize this woman and I understand where she is coming from, I do./ I do accept that, in fact we are pretty close, we call each other often and stuff. She kind of says our relationship, which I agree, is kind of like sisters too./

J: Did your sister live close by you?

S: No, rural area, so about a 10 hour drive, 10-12.

J: And you got the phone call, was it in the middle of the night?

S: No, in the morning. I could tell by his voice, that something was going on and I had to be the carrier of the news to everybody else./

J: You did?

S: Yeah.

J: Your parents as well?

S: My parents, was different. They were living with, or near my older sister. So my older sister gave them the news./ But I did with my older brother, but I waited till last to call my sister, because I knew what it would be like.

J: And how did that feel for you?

S: Well, it was weird, she said why are you telling me this, she wouldn't believe me at first./ But, see I had that dream and I, it just fit, for what I was going through./ And I said no, Sara, it is true. well, she still didn't believe me, she had to call Dave and find out and then she had to call the lady that was in the car accident. And then she had to call other people, so I mean she was doing a lot of phone calling./ And of course then she went through the denial, you know like, "oh, he was having an affair", especially when he was married a year and a half before, he was not true to her, you know I said Sara, that is not true, you know that's not true./

J: Did you then go to that area? _____,

20. S. says her sister is the first to criticize.

21. S. says she and her brother in laws new wife are close and have a good relationship and it is kind of like sisters.

22. S. says she got the phone call in the morning and she was designated carrier of the news to everyone else.

23. S. says her older sister lived close to her parents so she gave them the news.

24. S. says she called her triplet last, "because I knew what it would be like", and it was weird, she wouldn't believe her at first.

25. S. says to her it fit secondary to the dream.

26. S. says her sister continued to disbelieve and had to verify from other family members and those involved in the accident.

27. S. says her sister went through denial, was convinced hr brother in law was having an affair.

the next day?

S: No, no the following day, I think it happened on a Friday, the funeral was on Monday and I think we left Saturday morning because we had to wait for

J: And how was the trip there?

S: Well, we had our kids, the trip there was okay. We continued to talk about it. My husband was very good. He listened to me bawl and cry and cry you know and stuff./ He didn't understand the bond that we had. He had never had, you know cause I just sobbed and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed you know and just lost control. Just waking up you know even in the middle of the night, and stuff, he had no idea the bond that we had./ And then when I went into depression, he suggested going for help and stuff like that./ I had some really good friends at the time./ And after the funeral, I had a journey, I like to think. She was a seamstress and she made beautiful, beautiful, beautiful quilts. And her goal was every year until every one of us had a quilt, that's what she was going to do was to make these beautiful king size quilts, um bedspreads. So, I decided that I was going to complete that goal, so I started with my brother. And she had made my older sister one already. And she had already had the material bought for my other sister, she had just made me one. And she had made my mother one. Nope, she didn't finish mom's, I did that. Well anyway, within that two year period, I made um, all of us a bed..., and I don't sew. I don't sew./ I had a good friend that helped me. I told her what the thing was and she said we are going to do it and that was my therapy.

J: Was it?

S: Oh yeah, I cried through every stitch, cried through every stitch that I made but I got it done. Every single one of them got a quilt from her so that was my/, that, that was over a two year period of time and then I just, I got a lot of that out. I

28. S. and her family left for the funeral the following day, S. says they continued to talk about it. S. recalls how good her husband was "he listened to me bawl and cry...."

29. S. recalls sobbing continuously, losing control, realizing her husband had never truly understood the bond between she and her sisters.

30. S. says her husband suggested she go for help after she was enveloped by depression.

31. S. recalls good friends at the time.

32. S. talks of her "journey" after the funeral. Her sister was a seamstress and at the time of her death was in the middle of making quilts for each family member. Even though S. is not a seamstress she decided to complete that goal. She did within two years.

33. S. says quilting was her therapy, she "cried through every stitch" but was able to complete them with help of a good friend.

34. S. says she felt like she had a mission and worked 12 hour days to complete them.

mean I worked twelve hour days getting these things done but I felt like I had a mission./

J: So when you talk about your journey, is this part of it?

S: Yes, yes.

J: So when did this start?

S: It started probably um, I asked for the material that she was going to make Sara and I found the book, she had it marked in the book which pattern she was going to use, she had all the pieces together with that book. And I remember her telling me that Sara was going to be next. Of course Sara's quilt, its not the most great quilt. In fact I made her one since because that was my first one and stuff but, it got done. But it was funny, cause she had x-d it and the colors she had wrote in this book and everything so I knew what she had wanted me to do with it. So we did it. It was an Amish quilt.

J: So, when did you start with these?

S: About a month after the funeral./

J: You said, you had mentioned that you had gone through a period of depression, did that start shortly after the funeral?

S: It was really bad, I wouldn't get out of bed or nothing, I was really...../ and when I started the quilts, when I started, because I had a mission./ All I wanted to do was stay in bed, I was depressed, no energy um, I didn't care, nothing. Kids made their own meals, I did nothing./

J: Was there just one morning where you woke up and thought.....

S: Actually my friend said you know, you have that quilt, she wanted to do this. She told me to think about it, cause I didn't know nothing about it, I didn't even have a sewing machine that worked half the time. And um, I said lets do it. And I thought, yeah, this is what I am

35. S. says the "journey" started about one month after the funeral when she found her sister's book, everything was already picked out so S. knew exactly what she had wanted.

36. S. recalls her depression as "really bad, I wouldn't get out of bed or nothing."

37. Her mission was to finish the quilts.

38. S. says during her depression, she had no energy, wanted to stay in bed, didn't care about anything, "kids mad their own meals, I did nothing."

39. S. recalls a friend mentioning the quilting and S. thought "this is what I am supposed to do, she has it all here", and it got her motivated.

supposed to do, she has it all here. Lets do it. So then, it got me motivated./

J: It kind of forced you up and.....

S: Yeah, I didn't want to see anybody, I didn't want to do anything. But thanks to really good friends they got me going. They got me going./

J: Did you go back to work?

S: I was part time then, I had a hard time looking at people. Cause I just, I was working PDR at that time, so it was only one or two days a week so I wasn't there regularly and it took me a while to get back to work. I think it was about maybe a month before I could go back but I still couldn't talk about it./

J: Did people ask you about it?

S: They knew that I was gone, they knew so, only later. So, it was a PDR position where I worked on different units, I wasn't on a regular unit so a lot of people didn't know about it. And I didn't share./

J: And it was during that time that you had a hard time looking at people? And why was that?

S: Because I was afraid they would ask, what was going on and I didn't want to share.

J: And why do you think that is?

S: Why I didn't want to share.....um,/ cause I think I was too emotional yet. It has only been in the last..... Well, I still get a little teary eyed and stuff but it was after the two years that I could finally say that Sue is dead...../

J: So in the meantime, you started this journey, did that include anything else?

S: Quilting was a big part of it, the other part was you know I have always been in the middle sister, getting Sara back on track. That was another, I could not in

40. S. recalls even though she didn't want to see anybody or do anything, her friends got her going, she says now she is grateful.

41. S. says it was about a month before she could go back to work but she still couldn't talk about it and she had a hard time looking at people.

42. S. says her co-workers didn't know her well enough to know what had happened and she didn't share.

43. S. says she was "afraid they would ask and I didn't want to share."

44. S. says she was too emotional to share her experience, it took two years for S. to finally say Sue is dead and even today it is difficult.

45. S. says her journey included quilting and getting her other triplet back on track. "I always had to give the encouragement and stuff."

my eyes even though I had my doubts, even though I was real, I said you know Sara, this is what Sue wanted, remember the dream. I always had to give the encouragement and stuff so, the only one that really knew what I was going through was Bill cause we talked long at night. You know, we would talk about it and talk about it and talk about it and stuff. I didn't even want the kids, the kids knew I was upset, they knew I was crying and stuff, and they knew you know how much it affected me and stuff but um, the one that really knew what was going on with me was my husband. We got real close. Real close./

J: Good, good.

S: But after a while like I say, you know you go through that depression and stuff, you got tired of it and stuff and it was getting really old, C'mon S. you gotta get going, you gotta get going. It was like I can't get out of it, I can't get out of it, and I just kept saying you can't live like this, you know, I don't like it./ You know, then pretty soon after the poor thing was trying to get me going and he would get mad and stuff you know, you can only live with it so much. Get back to your old self and stuff so.....

(Phone call)

J: So we were talking about.....

S:How my husband got tired. An then the tension started because I didn't want to work, all I wanted to do was stay home and stuff./ So he planted the idea, you know, how about, cause he knew I liked tree's and flowers and stuff. like that. Well why don't you do some more yard work, get involved in stuff like that, so I put in some hedges, and I got motivated that way and stuff so um..... that helped me./

J: It sounds to me like the busier you were the better you felt?

S: Yeah, well when I wasn't busy, I was more depressed. Some of it stayed with me and stuff and it wasn't, I don't think it was a um, you know a cop-out or anything, it was more of a, I gotta get

46. S. says the only one who really knew what she was going through was her husband because they would talk about it endlessly. S. says her kids knew she was upset and how much it affected her but not like him, "we got real close".

47. S. recalls that after a while you get tired of being depressed, it gets old and you realize you have to get going but you can't, "you can't live like this... I don't like it".

48. S. says her husband tired of his futile attempts to get her going, he wanted her back and then the tension started.

49. S. recalls her husband suggesting involving herself in yard work, "that helped me."

50. S. says, "when I wasn't busy, I was more depressed." She had to reevaluate and get back on track.

back on track. Cause I am a busy person anyway and then all of a sudden I wasn't doing anything, just sitting around. I didn't even want to go outside, to the kids games or..... so I had to reevaluate what I was doing./ And then I did get on antidepressants, I thought, I had a friend at the hospital who was a physician and I was telling him of my situation and he said you know maybe you just need to get started on something so I so he put me on some antidepressant for a while. Something to get back some energy so I could quit crying and all,/ I mean I would think about it and I would bawl and stuff, or I would be going through some books and recipes she wrote for me or some old letters so I would start all over again. And then my sister sent me the funeral and the, oh um, the video, the last video of our family where you know it was Thanksgiving and we were all home and my sisters, we were having a pajama party you know that kind of thing so, anyway..... All the memories and stuff just kind of triggered the tears./

J: How did you feel with holidays and her birthday?

S: August is a real hard month for me because I, its the month of my first failed marriage, the month of her death, um, and then um, it was shortly before August my father had his stroke so, in that time frame, it seems like I have had a lot of crisis and stuff happen and losses so it is difficult./ My birthday for a long time, Sara and I would get on the phone and talk for hours. And the memories, you know when we did this, and wouldn't it be nice if Sue was here./ I always, I feel she is here, I don't feel like she is gone and I talk to her every day, every day. I carry her obituary with me all the time because I don't want to ever forget the day she died. I want to remember that.

J: And why do you think that is?

S: Cause I have poor memory, I have a

51. S. says she started on antidepressants "to get back some energy so I could quit crying."

52. S. says memories or anything that reminded her of her sister would trigger tears, for example books, recipes she had given her or letters.

53. S. says August is a difficult month secondary to many crises, first failed marriage, month of sister's death, and fathers stroke.

54. S. says her birthday is hard for her and her sister, they talk and memories rush in, wishing Sue were there.

55. S. says she always feels her sister's presence, "I feel she is here, I talk to her everyday." S. carries her obituary around because she doesn't want to forget the day she died.

very poor memory so I have to write things down and stuff and I just didn't want to ever forget./ And then there's spots, every time we went to see Dan we have to go by the place that she was killed and stuff so we always get that memory too, you just kind of feel a (sigh) funny feeling when you go by that spot./

J: How often do you end up visiting?

S: Well we were going every year until the last few years but its better, it was strange going into her house and her not being there. You know walking in there and not seeing her there and then walking in and seeing anther woman there and she does things totally different. You know that was like really strange but um, now its okay./

J: How have your parents done through this?

S: Well, my dad had a stroke, he has left sided paralysis and it has affected his reasoning a little bit but he and my mother, my mother has Alzheimer's, but before she got real severe they accepted um, him remarrying, far better than I thought they would. I mean they, you know, they were glad he was finding somebody to help with those kids. All they could see, was that they werè being farmed out while he was trying to get his job done./ But um, the death itself, they were, they were real emotional, but I think they accepted it better than, especially Sara and I./

J: And the funeral was held there?

S: Yeah, the church was totally packed. She was a real social person and um, all our, we went to the same college and all our college friends in the dorm that we lived at and the ones that graduated with, our classmates, there was like 20 classmates from college. That was good. It was nice seeing them, we keep in touch, but its not like, I had no idea, they came from all over the place, all over./

J: How did you do during the funeral?

56. S. says she has a poor memory and she never wants to forget

57. S. says there are certain places which trigger emotions or a funny feeling.

58. S. says they continue to visit her sister's family however it is strange going into her house and her not being there.

59. S. says her parents before their illnesses accepted Dan remarrying, they were worried about the kids being farmed out.

60. S. says although her parents were real emotional, they accepted her death better than S. and her triplet.

61. S. says the church was packed for the funeral, she had many friends.

S: Numb, pretty numb.....
...../

J: Do you remember much about it?

S: I just recall not thinking that was her, number one. And it didn't even look like her, and stuff and um, looking at the kids and Dan, Dan just grabbed me, um, when I walked in the door he just grabbed me and it took my breath away, he was crying and I was crying um, he said if you think this is bad wait until you see her and he just walked down the hall./ Every, everybody in our family knows us, knows how we are ----- so everybody was watching, so that was hard, I had to be, now Sara, Sara completely lost it when she saw her. I did that before we came.

J: Did you feel like you had to be strong?

S: Yeah, I had to be/.

J: For, your sister?

S: Well, in the presence of people but with just Bill and my family I was okay, that was it. You know, I was grieving with them and stuff..... my dad was weak with the stroke and my mom was partial Alzheimer's and Jane, my oldest sister had to take care of them at the funeral./ Sara was out of it, I mean she could hardly take care of herself, so her husband was taking care of her and then um, my brother was kind of semi-helping with my folks./ So, it was like we didn't stay in the same places which was good, people offered their homes to us. Because there were all these people coming in, to rural town and stuff so people offered their homes to us. They gave us their house and stuff, it was very nice./ because it was such a tragedy. She had the four year old and then she had and eight year old or maybe nine or so and that was pretty traumatic./

J: How long, did you leave shortly after the funeral then and come back home?

62. S. recalls feeling "numb" during the funeral.

63. S. recalls a few things about the funeral, thinking it was not her, didn't look like her and Dan grabbing her and both of them crying.

64. S. says it felt like everybody was watching her and her triplet and how difficult that was. Sara completely lost it but S. says she did that before she came.

65. S. felt she had to be strong.

66. S. says she had to be strong in the presence of people but she could grieve with her family.

67. S. says her triplet was out of it and couldn't take care of herself, she was reliant on her husband.

68. S. recalls her family staying in different places, people offering their homes.

69. S. recalls what a tragedy her death was leaving young children behind, pretty traumatic.

S: No, that, after the funeral the next day, we scheduled the auction for selling my folks house. Because we had to take, we had to move them to Utah where there was someone living so we had to sell all their stuff, and Sara helped a little bit. Like a month before hand we had gotten together and gone through the whole house because they are both disabled. So we had to sell, I didn't care what the price was, I just wanted to get in there and sell, so we had to go back and set up for the auction./ And you're numb, thank God for our husbands. They did a lot of this stuff, because we had to go back and get it organized into groups for the auction./ So, right after the funeral we had to leave and go 300 miles where their house is, work all night, and have it ready in the morning of the auction. And then after the auction, we had to clean the house and get it ready for sale. So, all this happened at once, one big bomb! So. J: At least you were with your family, did you talk about it very much at that time?

S: Oh, yeah, we were all in the living room, no furniture in the living room, we were all on the floor sitting, crying./ You know we couldn't go out there, none of us could go out there except other sister. She really kept it together and she really kept everything going. J: You couldn't go out where?

S: Oh, where the auction was, so I was just sitting in the room and stuff. I didn't want to be out there, I didn't want to see people. There were people we grew up with out there, there were people that came from our original home town, um, you know, all the people that were at the funeral were at the auction, that were in the same vicinity. J: Sounds crazy.

S: It was, it was a mess./ J: So, when did you get home?

70. S. describes that immediately following the funeral they had to deal with a previously planned auction for their parents.

71. S. says "thank God for our husbands", they did much of the work, because they were numb.

72. S. says they worked all night after the funeral preparing for the auction. All of it happened at once, "one big bomb". S. recalls sitting on the floor crying with her family.

73. S. says she couldn't go out where the auction was, she didn't want to see people. It was a mess.

S: We, well that was another thing, I didn't want to take anything from the auction, I didn't want to take anything that reminded me of anything. Nope, I didn't want anything, clean cut, no memories. I didn't want anything. So, we didn't take anything from the kitchen, the sofa, not a thing, I don't want a thing, I don't want that memory./ So, we left, we had to clean the house, shampoo the carpet, um, we worked hard. Then we ended up leaving a bunch of dishes in the dishwasher. Luckily, my bothers wife went back to the house and double checked all that stuff./

J: So then you came home and that's when you started sleeping a lot and not being able to get out of bed?

S: Kids were in school by then.

J: So, you didn't have to get up for anything?

S: No, they got themselves ready for school, they went to school, then would come back, that's about it./

J: Do you remember lots about that time?

S: Not too much. Just that I was real depressed, had no energy, and, and , after Bill kept harping and stuff, you know, "c'mon you gotta get going, I don't like this, I don't like this person. This isn't you." You know you try to get out of it and that's when you/

J: And you said your husband suggested possibly seeing a counselor of some sort, what were your thoughts on that?

S: Well, I was talking to him, and I said well, I am talking. He said, but I am not the one who can help you and stuff and...../ I did go to counseling later but it was after the two years and it was more for, because our communication between us started going bad. And it ended up, pretty soon you know, it was just like I didn't care and stuff and but we did go to counseling together.

74. S. says she didn't want to take anything from the auction, no reminders, no memories.

75. S. recalls cleaning and leaving in a rush.

76. S. says after the funeral, kids were back in school and they got themselves up, ready, to and from.

77. S. recalls little during the days after the funeral, "I was real depressed, had no energy", husband harping saying I don't like this person and trying to get out of it.

78. S. recalls her husband urging her to see a counselor, "I am not the one who can help you." S. thought she was talking to him and that was okay.

79. S. says she and her husband went to counseling two years later because their communication was faltering. S. believes her was tired of her not doing anything along with increasing disagreements.

J: You didn't care?

S: NO!

J: And this was after two years, do you remember kind of what brought that on or what led up to that?

S: Well, I think it had to do with him just tired of me not doing nothing and stuff. And it just, you know, increasing by, increasing disagreements about the kids and stuff like that I think led up to it./

J: But it sounds like you were doing some of that, you were getting busier and you were working outside.

S: The working outside came after the two years cause I had the quilts done. So that was that and stuff but my goal orientation was done. I had finished what Sue had wanted to do. So I felt, there was nothing left to do, and I felt like, well I did it you know its done and stuff./ But I got into Charity's and stuff, making quilts for bazaars for church groups and stuff and kind of had a goal, that type of thing. Then finally, I started quilts for for kids and stuff I wanted to do. So , I got good enough that I could feel confident to do it./

J: And how did the counseling work out, did it go well?

S: Good, it went really well. Yeah.

J: And what sort of things did you learn through that?

S: I am very passive aggressive, very passive aggressive, complete passive aggressive. And things, our communication was real bad, we weren't saying what we wanted to say to each other, it was like um, he wasn't, he wasn't, he wasn't looking at me. He was looking at what I wasn't doing you know and um, it was more negative directed type of stuff. Instead of looking at some of the good stuff,/ I gained weight, um, because I wasn't doing anything and all I would do was feed my tears and that type

80. S. says her goal orientation was complete with the completion of the quilts so she felt there was nothing left to do.

81. S. says she became involved in making quilts for charity therefore had a goal. This then led to her decision to make quilts she wanted to make now that she had the confidence.

82. S. learned through counseling that she is very passive-aggressive, their communication was poor and he was focusing on the negative aspects instead of the positives.

83. S. recalls gaining weight secondary to lack of ambition, "all I wanted to do was feed my tears", she felt she had no

of thing/ and it was like I didn't have any self worth anymore. I felt I didn't have anything, I was empty. So, um, we got, I got back, I got myself back on track, started doing more together. We started dating again, um, that kind of thing./

J: Do you think all of that relates to your sisters death?

S: Oh, definitely. So, and if there has to be a positive to her death, its that my husband and I got really, really, really close. We're, and I, I had a real hard time trusting because my first husband had affairs and that kind of thing,/ and it was like that trust and our relationship got so close that it is almost as close, not closer, almost as close as the relationship that I had with my sisters. You know what I am saying, its its like um, we have an unders....I guess more like a bonding together now where I never had that with my first husband, I never allowed that because of my sisters were there, you know, we were so close./ But um, Bill and I are real real, close, right now I trust him totally with like, um, we talk about anything and everything now, like my sisters would be./ That, that's where there is a fine line, my triplet that is living. was kind of jealous of that cause now Bill and I started being real, real, real close and she didn't like that so she had a hard time understanding it because her relationship with her husband is not that close. They are having some problems. I say go to counseling, it helps, its works. You know that type of thing, you know, but for a while she was kind of upset about that. That's the way it is./

J: How is your relationship with her now?

S: Pretty good, its just that I, I am real blunt with her, probably more blunt than I would be with anyone else and stuff so its kind of like "you can't, you got to let go of this, you got to go on with your life". You know and stuff, she still, she um, she is still struggling. She is. Her struggle is like now its turning into some criticism that isn't normal and she can't,

84. S. says she felt she had no self worth, she was empty. She got back on track, they started dating again.

85. S. says if there had to be a positive to her sister's death it would be that she and her husband became really close.

86. S. says because of her first husband, she had a difficult time with trust.

87. S. says because she was able to trust her husband, they bonded together and their relationship became almost as close as the relationship she had with her sisters, she had never allowed that before.

88. S. says she trusts her husband completely, they talk about everything, "like my sister's would be."

89. S. says her sister is now jealous of her relationship with her husband, her sister and her sister's husband are not that close.

90. S. says her relationship with her sister is pretty good however, she feels she must be blunt with her, "you got to let go of this, you got to go on with your life." S. says her sister is turning to criticism against the new wife

its like she is looking for things like she is not treating her right, she is not treating the children right, she is not giving them, she favors her own kids over his kids. You know there is always that turmoil./ And see I don't see that but then I, you know cause I guess I am giving that, I guess I am just so thankful that they have a mom again. You know, and I think that is what Sue would want is for them to have that stability in their life./

J: How has your relationship with your family including your parents changed?

S: Well, at first it was really, really, really, cool because we would be calling each other constantly. Calling each other and stuff, but um, I guess in the last 6 years and stuff it is finally not as often there is more space there because we were calling each other weekly, brother, and sister and um, well Sara was calling quite a bit and I mean I called quite a bit. The others too, not as much. But, my brother was kind of out of the house when we were little so we didn't really have a good total bonding relationship and stuff so that was. My older sister was more like a mom because she was ten years older and my mother needed help with 3 babies. So, she is more like the mother./

J: So, how did your kids do with all of this?

S: They kept asking why are you crying all the time Mom? You know, why are you crying, and they would ask dad and Bill would tell them and talk to them and stuff, like I couldn't even respond,/ I didn't even know why I was crying. All of a sudden I would be doing something in the kitchen and I would be crying. I had no control over it and I would sob you know and it was like. And I didn't understand why I was crying you know? They didn't understand either. One was four, eight and nine./

J: Do you talk about her with them now?

S: Oh, yeah, they look at the video

91. S. thinks the new wife provides stability and is thankful the kids have a mom.

92. S. says initially after the death the family called each other constantly, now the phone calls are less frequent.

93. S. recalls her kids asking, "why are you crying all the time mom?" S. couldn't respond.

94. S. recalls being unable to control her sobbing many times, "and I didn't understand why I was crying."

every now and then, we pull it out and look at it and stuff. Um, they keep in contact with the kids, write back and forth and then we also, well we were going every year but now its, they were just here. They just visited, so we are planning on going there next T-giving. So, they keep in contact./ But, its funny now, just this last year. Her kids are asking us what their mom was like and they're asking you know, I mean their questions are just phenomenal, they just ask question after question, well what was her favorite color, what was this, what did she do about that, tell us a story about mom, you know. So we would tell a story about funny things. We were mischievous when we were kids. They want to hear that. They are just hungry to hear that./

J: So how does that make you feel?

S: Well, I didn't get in on all of it, I got in on part of it cause my father died this past year. They came up to the funeral with Dan. And then, they spent a week with my triplet. And on the way there, and while they were there my older sister and my triplet sister were, stayed that week with them. And the questions, Sara said the questions were phenomenal. And they, they were really lonely too, because whenever they see us they are all over us. They have to be on our laps, you know they hug us, they , they have that affection and/ they think Bill, my husband is God. He just has this, we went hunting that T-giving and he just, they seen him shoot a deer from a long distance and they think wow.. He is just like you know, I don't know. But they think he is wonderful so they like us coming./

J: Um, you had said you wouldn't of been able to do this interview had it been two years after her death, and why do you say that?

S: Cause I still had my heart up here. You know, I just, I still couldn't talk about it, very few people I talked about it,

95. S. says they continue to keep in contact with her sister's family.

96. S. says her sister's children are now asking phenomenal questions about their mom.

97. S. says her father died this past year and the kids came to the funeral, they seemed lonely and hungry for affection from S. and her triplet.

98. S. says her sisters kids love her husband, "they think he is wonderful."

99. S. recalls that she couldn't talk about her sister's death for years and only to few after that, "cause I still had my heart

up here", and the more she talked the easier it got.

the more I talk about it, the better it got, but it took me a long time to talk about it.

J: Was it just in the last year or so?

S: Oh, Yeah, probably in the last year, not too many people know about it./ You know that, of course its not a conversation piece but my good friends know and of course Bill./ I talk about it more I guess when I am dealing with loss and grief with um, the patient that I am working with and stuff when they say you don't know. Sadly, I know exactly what you're dealing with, you are dealing with that pain inside and its achy and it burns and you feel like you are going to bust because there is so much pain there./

J: Did you ever feel like you blamed anything or anyone?

S: I blamed myself, because of that night the dream. If I had only seen faces, you know I did that the first two years for sure. Because I felt like if I could only have warned her. She had called the Sunday before and she had died/.....tape cut off

J: So you talked to her two days before?

S: The day before the accident./

Sundays and Saturdays for that last two years was really difficult because Sue always called every weekend or I called her and we talked for an hour, two hours at a time, we had a heck of a phone bill. And we would talk for ages, we would just talk, talk, talk./ In fact before she died we were thinking of moving to the rural area where they were to um, be closer so our kids could be, could have more contact. Because Bill had been going through law school and decided not to continue with law school and then, and we had our jobs here but we figured well we will just move there and be closer to some family for the holiday cause we go there every holiday. We would be together anyway, I mean not every holiday. And they had some openings so she had been trying to get us to go there, either there or somewhere close. So we

100. S. says she talks to her husband and good friends.

101. S. states "I talk about it more when I am dealing with loss and grief", for example with patients. S. says she knows what they are dealing with, "that pain inside and it's achy and it burns and you feel like you are going to bust because there is so much pain there."

102. S. says she blamed herself for 2 years because of the dream, "if only I had seen faces, if only I could of warned her."

103. S. recalls talking to her sister two days before the accident.

104. S. says she and her sister used to talk every weekend on the phone for hours so weekends have been difficult.

105. S. says before she died, they were going to move closer to her sister in order to spend more time together.

could see each other. So we had been thinking about doing that./ My triplet lives only 3 hours from there and then all of us would be able to get together more often./ And then this happened, oh for a while we thought about it and then well lets just kind of, we are not going to do anything drastic, especially during this time and stuff. So, we ended up here and we ended up staying for longer./

J: Can you tell me a little more about the dreams you were having?

S: Before the accident, um, I had actually, you know, I would be dreaming and I would be in a deep sleep and it would be black. And it was and it all of a sudden, there was screeching and screaming and like, I could see things like something going around and around and around. It got more detailed as the months came up and almost at one point, almost, I almost saw a face, almost. But, I would wake up and I would just be shaking, I would wake up in a scream and I would just be shaking and stuff and wet from my dream and it was like, Bill would say what is it, what is it? I'd say, I don't know, I can't remember, I can't see anything and stuff, but it was awful, just awful./ And um, he would hold me for a while and finally I would go back to sleep and then it was like I um, I would be afraid to go to sleep and I thought what the heck is this dream all about./ Just hearing Dan's voice, shaky and as it was, I just knew what it was, he didn't even tell me. I said, um, is there something wrong, I just called to tell you that Sue is dead. And, I said what happened, and then he said car accident and I, oh shit, I wish I had seen a face. I wouldn't of done anything but, you know./ I never told anyone about the dream except Bill. Sara said why didn't you tell me, why didn't you tell me, I said, I didn't, there was no connection there./ And then of course she told me about the dream right away when she dreamt that. She finally, she didn't' sleep for two days and then when she finally

106. S. says her other triplet also lived close, then they all would of been able to get together more often.

107. S. recalls after the death, they decided "not to do anything drastic", and ended up not moving.

108. S. discusses her dreams, they got more detailed as the months came and she almost saw a face at one point, S. says it would wake her in a scream and she would be shaking.

109. S. says she would be fearful of going back to sleep, wondering the meaning of the dream, and her husband would hold her.

110. S. recalls the tone of Dan's voice, shaky and how "I just knew what it was."

111. S. recalls thinking "I wish I had seen a face" and however think she wouldn't of done anything.

112. S. says before the accident she had only told her husband of the dream, her sister questions her and S. says "there was no connection there."

113. S. recalls her sister being unable to sleep and then finally collapsing.

did collapse which.....
then...../

J: So your initial reaction to the phone call was, that you knew?

S: When I answered the Well, first I was outside, doing some stuff outside and the kids say somebody is on the phone so I went in and um, said hello and he said W: I could tell by his voice, you know I said what's wrong and he told me. Well then I said No, he said I have something bad to tell you, and then I

.....
J: How did you feel at that moment?

S: My stomach dropped, I can remember my stomach just dropping, um, there was a long pause and then I thought um, I said, I kept mumbling something and then I, / do you want me to call the rest of the family? And he said can you? And I said yeah, I will do that. So I called everybody in the family, / it was about oh, I don't know, about eight o'clock in the morning. No, it had to be after that because it happened in the morning. She was on her way in a pick-up in a flat bed to go get some wood for their deck, so it had to be like 10:00 in the morning, something like that./

J: So as you were calling your family, what was going through your mind?

S: I got to get a hold of them. I got to tell these, I got to tell these people. So I, um my brother is in um, he is an administrator in a school and he was in a meeting and the secretary said um, he can't be interrupted, and I said this is an emergency, interrupt him. And then I told him and then Paul, um, was at work and I called work and she wasn't there and then I called again and then I got her and she said that she would tell mom and dad. So, and then Sara wasn't working at that time, she was at home./

J: So, do you feel like you had processed what had actually happened?

S: Not with them, with Bill I did, we didn't really talk about it, um, we didn't talk about it among ourselves. It was just

114. S. remembers "my stomach just dropping," upon hearing the news.

115. S. says after hearing the news she took the responsibility of calling everyone in the family.

116. S. recalls uncertainty about the time of the accident and the initial phone call.

117. S. recalls thinking, "I got to get a hold of them, I got to tell these, I got to tell these people."

118. S. says she was unable to process what had happened with her family, they didn't really talk about it, "It was kind of like we were all numb.... we just dealt with it."

kind of like we were all numb, no one really said anything face to face, Sara did the phone call thing and stuff but face to face no one really talked about it, we just dealt with it./ We had so much to deal with, that and the auction, all that stuff, I mean nobody appre... quiet....all we were, we were all just numb and in shock...../

J: What sort of thing to you, did you learn anything, did it teach you anything about.....

S: Well, like I said, I guess it made Bill realize how close, he had no idea we were this close and it, it helped our relationship, his understanding of what I was going through and stuff and watching me become emotional./

J: Do you think you would deal with death a little differently now?

S: Um, I guess I, I know how to deal with death, I just didn't know how to deal, I never, ever, dreamed in a hundred years that I would lose my triplet. I had no concept of that, and it was like we came into this world together and we were going to leave this world together so to have that third gone it was like.....I had no idea that that would ever happen, I had no perception of that, I had no idea that I would ever have a death of my triplet. I never ever thought about that. Now that I have dealt with it,/ Sara and I always talk about and we always say don't you go without me, you know, don't die before me. Don't die before me, like we have any control over that. And stuff but it was like don't do that to me, you know we talked about that,/ and as far as learning anything, I think subconsciously, I am detaching so it is not as severe of a shock because I know what happened before./ She wants to move back to. But it was like, even a phone calls aren't as intense or as close as they used to be you know where we didn't have that fear before, so I think in a way each of us are preparing for that to happen, so we will be detached so it

119. S. recalls the family having so much to deal with, they were quiet, numb and in shock.

120. S. says her husband's understanding of what she was going through and being there while she was emotional made their relationship stronger.

121. S. states, "I know how to deal with death, I just didn't know how to deal..." S. says she never dreamt she would lose her triplet and she had no concept of that. "We came into this world together and we are going to leave together..."

122. S. says she and her living triplet always say, "don't you go without me, don't die before me."

123. S. says she feels she is subconsciously detaching herself from her triplet so it is not as severe of a shock.

124. S. says she and her sister are not as close as before they had that "fear". S. thinks they each are preparing, detaching so it won't be so painful.

won't be so painful. Does that make any sense to you?/

J: Yes, it does.

S: Now, its, like I switched that attachment and that bonding more with, with Bill, I know I often know where he is at and I have to um, you know its like being gone or not hearing from him and he's gone now and I miss him, I miss him a lot. And he misses, I know he misses me too because he doesn't like to go a week or without me close. Its like um, I don't know, I kind of changed that around a little bit./ But I know Sara and I, it was like it is not as intense. You know, we used to make decisions together, we used to, not as a, we always did. Run it off of Sara and see what she thinks and stuff like that. And that is why Sara is feeling left out and stuff because I don't always do that anymore...../ I guess I know I will be with her when I die, and that she is here./

J: And you say you talk to her?

S: Oh yeah, everyday everyday. I have a conversation with her. C'mon Sue lets pick the lottery numbers. Sue and I have conversations about that when we die we are going to come back and tell them what its like. You know?/

Any other questions?

J: Just about the video, at the funeral?

S: They did a snapshot and they put it into a video and the funeral place sent it to us but every snapshot that was done had the three of us and um, there was maybe one picture in that whole series, they did music to it, and um, you know some of the words to footprints in the sand verse and it was like the death of the triplet. Everything was a representation of our life as babies to um, little kids, kindergartners to big, even at high school. The pictures all portray the three of us and it was like a statement that this was the death of the triplet./ You know now we go on, each our own lives./

125. S. feels she has switched her attachment and bonding from her triplet to her husband.

126. S. says her relationship with her sister is not as intense, they used to make decisions together and now S. thinks Sara may feel left out.

127. S. states, "I guess I know I will be with her when I die, and that she is here."

128. S. says she has conversations with her deceased sister everyday.

129. S. recalls the video in the funeral, every shot was of the three of them, "it was like the death of the triplet."

130. S. states "you know, now we go on, each our own lives."

J: You said you got statements like that
as well from other people.

S: Other people were saying yeah, now,
its like the trio is dead..... /

Interview with Karen - Level 3

When S. thinks of her experience of losing her sister, her first thoughts focus on the series of nightmares she began having prior to her sister's death. S. says months before her sister's accident, she was having nightmares of a car crash. She could never identify any faces. S. talks of how her dreams became more detailed as the months went by and at one point how she almost saw a face. S. says the dreams would wake her screaming and she would literally be shaking. S. recalls being fearful to go back to sleep wondering if there was a concrete meaning to the dreams. She would wake her husband and he would hold her until she would fall back into a deep sleep. Her husband was the only one who knew of the nightmares prior to the accident. She questions herself if she should of informed more of those close to her but she says at the time "there was no connection there." S. repeatedly wishes she had been able to visualize a face even though she questions whether she would of acted upon it. S. says she blamed herself for two years because of the dream, "if only I had seen faces,..... if only I could of warned her." S. talked to her sister two days before the accident. S. describes waking up terrified intermittently from that same dream and when the phone rang the morning of her sister's death, the news reminded her so much of the dream that she really thought she was still sleeping, "oh, its a nightmare, I will wake up I never woke up." S. recalls hearing the tone of her brother-in-laws voice and shaky and knowing "I just knew what it was, I said Sue is dead." S. says it all fit secondary to the dream.

S. was the first person her brother in law called and she was then designated informant and was to call the rest of the family with the news. S. says she took that responsibility willingly and it was what she wanted. S. recalls feeling the urgency to phone the rest of her family. "I got to get a hold of them, I got to tell these, I got to tell these people." S. waited until last to call her triplet with the news, "because I knew what it would be like", and it was odd because her sister didn't believe her at first. The two of them went in search for details like when she died, the status of the other passengers, if she was in pain before she died, was she alive at any point. Although S. didn't think she would of been that thorough, she was able to get the information from her sister and that satisfied her. She questions whether if her sister hadn't been able to provide that information whether she would of gone in search of it herself.

S. felt she had to be strong. She recalls feeling her role at the time was the support person for her sister because her sister was hysterical, totally depressed, and in denial. Her sister needed her. S. says she had to be strong in the presence of other people but was able to grieve amongst her family. S. recalls how strange it was at the funeral. S. felt like everybody was watching her and her triplet and says it was very difficult. Her triplet completely lost it but S. says she did that before she came.

Upon hearing the news S. remembers "my stomach just dropping." S. says it was a shock, major shock, numbness, disbelief, feeling as if it was still the dream. S. recalls that during the first 24 hours, she was crying continually feeling as if "a part of my body was taken out because we were so close." S. says she was numb when she saw the body, it didn't look like her, she was swollen and bruised. S. recalls sobbing continuously and losing control. She believes her husband had never truly understood the bond between she and her sisters until this experience. S. was unable to control her sobbing many times, "and I didn't understand why I was crying." S. says her kids would ask her why she was crying all the time and S. wasn't able to even respond.

S. says it didn't become a reality for a long time. S. and her sister used to talk on the telephone every weekend. She wanted so badly to call after the accident but she couldn't let herself believe it, until finally she picked up the phone and dialed and her sister was not there. S. recalls going through "all the grieving processes, bargaining.... this, this, this, misbelief, and finally acceptance.

S. recalls going into a major depression. S. is unable to recall much during the days after the funeral, "I was real depressed, had no energy." S. says her husband would harp on her saying I don't like this person and try to help her. S. recalls her depression as "really bad, I wouldn't get out of bed or nothing." During this time, S. had no energy. She wanted to stay in bed and didn't care about anything. "The kids made their own meals, I did nothing." S. talks of how her kids got themselves up, ready for, to and from school. S. realized after a while that she was tired of being depressed. It got old and S. says you realize you have to get going but you can't, "you can't live like this ... I don't like it." S. recalls feeling empty, complete lack of self worth. S. gained weight secondary to lack of ambition, "all I wanted to do was feed my tears."

S. remembers little about the funeral. She remembers thinking it didn't look like her sister in the coffin and she remembers her brother-in-law grabbing her when she arrived and the two of them clinging to one another and crying. S. recalls feeling "numb" during the funeral. The church was packed, her sister had many friends. S's family having so much to deal with, were quiet, numb and in shock. S. says she was unable to process what had happened with her family. S. and her family didn't really talk about it, "it was kind of like we were all numb... we just dealt with it." S. and her family stayed separately at various homes offered by people in the community. S. believes this was probably a good thing. S. says they made it through the funeral. Immediately following the funeral, they had to deal with a previously planned auction for their parents. S. says they worked all night after the funeral preparing for the auction. All of it happened at once, "one big bomb". S. recalls sitting on the floor crying with her family the day of the auction. She couldn't go out where the actual auction was taking place, she didn't want to see people. It was a mess. She didn't want to take anything from the auction for fear of reminders and memories of the funeral and death of her sister. S. recalls cleaning after it was over and leaving for home in a rush.

S. talks of her "journey" after the funeral. Her sister was a seamstress and at the time of her death was in the middle of making quilts for each family member. S. recalls a good friend mentioning the quilting and S. thought "this is what I am supposed to do, she has it all here," and it got her motivated. Even though S. is not a seamstress she decided to attempt to complete that goal. S. says the journey started about one month after the funeral after she found her sister's book, everything was already picked out so S. knew exactly what she had wanted. She made it her mission and worked 12 hours a day to finish the quilts. S. says quilting became her therapy, she "cried through every stitch," but was able to complete them with help of her good friend. S. completed the quilts within two years. Once the quilting was completed, S. says her goal orientation was complete so she felt there was nothing left to do.

S. says when she wasn't busy she was more depressed. S. had to reevaluate and get back on track. S. recalls her husband suggesting involving herself in yard work and that really helped. Just getting outside and doing things she once enjoyed helped and kept her busy. S. says she started on antidepressants as well, "to get back some energy so I could quit crying." Months later she became involved in making quilts again, this time for

charity, therefore had a new goal. The charity quilting led into quilting specifically for herself now that she was feeling more confident.

S. says her journey not only included quilting but also getting her other triplet back on track. "I always had to give the encouragement and stuff." S. says her triplet was out of it and couldn't take care of herself at the funeral and after, she became completely reliant on her husband. S. recalls her sister being unable to sleep and then finally collapsing. S. tells of her sister's dream. Sue appears to the family, consoling them and stood especially behind Sara. Sue told her she needed to get on with her life, then she told them her husband would remarry and that the family needed to accept that. S. says her sister then went into a state of depression unable to do anything. S. recalls her sister going through denial, and becoming convinced her brother in law was having an affair while Sue was alive. It was easy for her to place blame there. S. says her sister is always the first to criticize, she is turning her pain into criticism of the new wife. S. says her relationship with her triplet is pretty good however she feels she must be blunt with her. S. tells her sister, "you got to let go of this, you got to go on with your life." S. says she and her sister talk frequently on the phone.

S. says she and her living triplet always say "don't you go without me, don't die before me." S. says their relationship is not as intense. Where they used to make decisions together, now that happens less frequently. S. and her sister are not as close as before they had that "fear". S. believes they each are preparing, detaching from one another so it won't be so painful if ever it happens again. S. feels at times she is subconsciously detaching herself from her triplet so it is not as severe of a shock. S. feels she has switched her attachment and bonding from her triplet to her husband and believes her sister is jealous of her relationship with her husband.

S. says although her parents were real emotional, they accepted her sister's death better than S. and her triplet. S. says initially after the death the family called each other constantly, now the phone calls are less frequent. S. believes, "I know how to deal with death, I just didn't know how to deal..." S. says she never dreamt she would lose her triplet and she had no concept of that. "We came into this world together and we are going to leave together.." S. says her birthday is hard for her and her sister, they talk and memories rush in, only wishing Sue were there with them. S. recalls the video in the funeral, every shot was of the three of them, "it was like the death of the triplet."

S. says the only one who really knew what she was going through was her husband because they would talk about it endlessly. S. says her kids knew she was upset and how much it affected her but not like him, "we got real close." S. recalls difficulty with the issue of trust secondary to her first failed marriage. S. overcame her issues with trust and because she was able to trust her husband, they bonded together and their relationship became almost as close as the relationship she had with her sisters. S. had never allowed anyone to get as close as she felt to her sister's before. S. says she trusts her husband completely, they talk about everything, "like my sister's would be."

S. recalls everything her husband did during the experience of having lost her sister. S. remembers how good her husband was on the way to the funeral, "he listened to me bawl and cry..." She recalls how each of their husbands did so much of the work in preparation for the auction because they were all numb. S. says her husband's understanding of what she was going through and being there while she was emotional

made their relationship stronger. If S. would have to come up with anything good that happened during this time it would be that she and her husband became very close.

S. says during the experience she relied heavily upon her husband. S. recalls him urging her to see a counselor. S. thought this was unnecessary because she was talking with him. S. remembers her husband saying, "I am not the one who can help you." S. was enveloped by depression and her husband was tired of his futile attempts to get her going. He wanted her back and then the tension started. The two of them decided to go to counseling two years later because their communication was faltering. S. believes again he was tired of her not doing anything along with the increasing disagreements. S. learned through counseling that she is very passive-aggressive. Their communication was lacking and her husband had started focusing on the negative aspects instead of the positive aspects. S. says the counseling helped their relationship tremendously.

S. says they continue to keep in contact with her sister's family. S. believes it was truly a tragedy for her sister's family, leaving young children behind and how traumatic that was. S. recalls prior to her sister's death they were going to move closer to her sister and her family in order to spend more time together. S. says her other triplet also lived close and they all would of been able to get together more often. S. says they continue to visit her brother-in-law however it is strange going into her house and her not being there. S. thinks her brother-in-laws new wife is amazing, bringing stability to the home, caring for and loving the kids. S. says they were spoiled by all the attention, people feeling sorry for them, but the new wife doesn't let them get away with anything. S. is thankful the kids have a mom. S. accepts the marriage, "I think it was meant to happen." S. says she and the new wife are close and have a good relationship which is kind of like sisters. S's parents accepted Dan remarrying, they had been very worried about the kids and this put their minds at ease. S's sister however, does not accept it and continues to battle with the marriage and being able to trust this new woman.

S. tells of her fathers death this past year, her niece and nephew coming to the funeral. The kids seemed lonely and hungry for affection from S. and her triplet. S. says Sue's kids are asking phenomenal questions about their mom.

S. recalls having good friends during this experience. S. remembers even though she didn't want to see anybody or do anything, her friends got her going. Now S. is grateful to those friends. S. recalls it was a month before she could go back to work but she still couldn't talk about it and she had a hard time looking at people. S says she was "afraid they would ask.... and I didn't want to share." Many of her coworkers didn't know her well enough to know of the accident and for this S. was grateful. S. was too emotional to share her experience. S. recalls it taking two years before she could finally say Sue is dead and even today it is difficult. S. says it was difficult to talk about because "I still had my heart up here." S. believes the more she talked about it the easier it got. S. found "I talk about it more when I am dealing with loss and grief." For example, when S. works with people who have dealt with loss she knows what they are dealing with, "that pain inside and it's achy and it burns and you feel like you are going to bust because there is so much pain there."

S. talks of certain times which are more difficult than others. S. and her sister used to talk every weekend on the phone for hours so weekends have become difficult. S. says the month of August is a difficult month secondary to many crises, first failed marriage, month of sisters death, and her fathers stroke. There are also certain places which trigger

emotions or a funny feelings. Memories or anything that reminds S. of her sister will trigger tears, for example books, recipes she had given her, or letters sent.

S. talks of a spiritual component to her experience of sudden loss of her sibling. S. says she always feels her sister's presence, "I feel she is here, I talk to her everyday." S. carries her obituary around because she doesn't want to ever forget the day she died. S. has frequent conversations with her deceased sister every day, this helps S. to move forward in her own life. S. says "you know, now we have to go on, each our own lives."

Interview with Karen - Level 4

Upon reflection of sudden loss of her sister, S. immediately recalls the concrete facts about the series of nightmares prior to her death. She conjures up details of the dreams and the phone call verifying her intuition. S. "knew" of the death before notification. S's ambivalence about decisions made led her to what ifs and blame placing. If only's abounded. Beliefs prevailed of the possibility of changing the outcome.

S. became the family informant, feeling the need to be strong. S. labeled herself the "support" person for her sister and readily rendered encouragement. Details were sought about the accident itself. S's inability to grieve in front of others allowed her the solace she desired. She searched for the energy to endure through the rituals of the dead. S. felt as if she was on display at the funeral while wanting desperately to have sole ownership of her grief.

Upon hearing the news S. begins to endure a sense of intense pain and suffering. S. blurts out adjectives yet never pinpointing one that satisfies the intensity of the emotions. S. reflects of the relationship and bond with her deceased sister, so close that she was aching "feeling as if a part of my body was taken out". Words like shock, numbness disbelief were easily spoken. S. not wanting verification of the death, using avoidance techniques, yet simultaneously in need of verification. S. at times using textbook answers recalling "all the grieving processes, bargaining... misbelief, and finally.... acceptance.

S. states inability to recall emotions during and days after the funeral. It was a blur. S. became very depressed with feelings of worthlessness, lack of control over her life, lack of motivation, ambition and energy, inability to care about the future, her own life or the life of her family. S. felt empty, consumed by her loss.

S., on a quest for avenues that would lead her back to an acceptable existence while allowing easily accessible memories of her deceased sister, began a personal "journey". This led her to interest in her sisters hobby, an interest she had not held previously. The journey consisted of many steps, S. needing encouragement with each. She would fall off the track just to be boosted back on again. Business kept her sane but did not allow her to deal fully with the emotions that were so prevalent in her life. Two years went by S. trying to help her sister come to acceptance, trying antidepressants, and keeping busy through yard work, yet only time itself appeared to truly be the variable which allowed some healing to take place.

S. began to detach herself preventing further painful situations. The intensity of her sister diminished with both S. and her sister pulling away. A new sense of "fear" which S. had not had before prevailed. S. feeling a sense of disbelief, the concept of death not uncommon in S's life but unheard of in S's family especially a death of a sister. "We came into this world together and we are going to leave together."

S. relied heavily on her husband as supporter, counselor, and friend. S. switched her bond and attachments from her sister's to her husband. The experience brought S. and her husband much closer. The reliance on her husband however created tension. S's husband's futile attempts to get her going in order to get her back created tension and frustration. S. felt she had to do it herself and rejected outside help.

S. was fortunate to have supportive friends who became motivators and pushed her into getting out of bed and living again. S. finds difficulty in talking about the experience with others who are not as close. S. prefers to keep closed off, says she is better now. For the first two years after the accident, S. could not talk openly, could not even confront her pain, there was too much pain. Although it continues to be difficult, S. is able to open up some. It continues to ache, but it is not as it was before when her body was filled with pain to the point it was not tolerable.

Spirituality plays a role in S's experience of sudden loss. S. believes in the continued presence of her sister. S. believes her sister's spirit lives on, she is able to have daily conversations with her. The idea of the continual presence of her sister allows S. to move forward with her own life.

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