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Jersey Author Combines Shamanism with Grief Recovery in New Book

HACKETTSTOWN, NJ (April 8, 2017) - For Julie Lange Groth, suffering through the grief after the death of a loved one hits very close to home. Her 16-year old son Justin accidentally died after messing around with friends and nitrous oxide (laughing gas) around 20 years ago.

“Losing Justin flattened me,” says the New Jersey author, whose new book, “Healing What Grieves You: Four Steps to a Peaceful Heart,” marks the the intersection of grief and shamanism and how it can make one whole again. “Some days it was all I could do to keep breathing. For almost a year I was emotionally disabled, eviscerated by grief.”

To make matters worse she was beset by major financial issues at the time. In a word, her life was a mess.

“I was unable to save my business from bankruptcy and incapable of finding new employment,” she remembers. “My home went into foreclosure and my car was repossessed, but none of it mattered because Justin was gone. Meanwhile, my father was dying a slow, brutal death from colon cancer. He was buried on my birthday a year after Justin died.”

During Groth’s healing process, she discovered a spiritual practice known as shamanism, a nature-centered belief system based on the interconnectedness of all things. She was moved to begin training as a shamanic practitioner herself, and found new perspective, deep comfort and profound healing in the tools and methods she learned. Over the years, she developed a specialty of sorts: helping others deal with grief, which led her to write her new book, “Healing What Grieves You: Four Steps to a Peaceful Heart” (Cape House Books).

To celebrate the release of her book, Groth is hosting a Launch Party on Saturday afternoon, May 6, starting at 4 at the Skylands Unitarian Fellowship, Rt. 57, Mansfield Township. The event is open to the public.

“That year between Justin’s death and my dad’s was a purgatory of sorrow, doubt and confusion,” she recalls. “For the first time in my life, I understood how it might be possible for someone to contemplate suicide. I understood how a strong, intelligent, middle-class person

could decline into homelessness and hopelessness. But it was also a time of deep transformation, and ultimately birthed me into a new life of meaning, growth and joy. In my work as a shamanic healer, I have noticed that many people seek my help because they are feeling blocked, inexplicably weary, unable to make decisions or move forward in their lives.”

In many cases, Groth notes that the problem is that folks often have unresolved grief from some past loss, from death of a loved one, a divorce, loss of job, home foreclosure, etc., that lingers on far too long. Instead of dealing with the loss, they tend to “soldier on and bury feelings. But this unresolved grief, which almost everyone carries, can keep us stuck, make us sick and keep us from living our best lives.”

In her book Groth offers four steps to grief recovery. It’s not easy for many people to open themselves up and fully attend to their grief, she warns, but to do nothing is worse. In Groth’s case, as part of the book, she presents her own honest struggles in overcoming grief and her journey to make that happen.

“Synchronicity brought me many unexpected gifts and surprises during those first few years after my son’s death, and one of them was a new friend who told me about shamanism and taught me how to connect with the spiritual realms during a type of drumming meditation called journeying,” she said. “Not long after meeting her, I began my formal training with the Foundation for Shamanic Studies. What I learned and experienced was such powerful medicine for me as a grieving mother and it helped me heal on many levels.”

It’s helped others heal, too.

“When I work with people who’ve lost a child or spouse, I often hear them say things like, ‘I’ll never be happy again,’ as if something has been ripped out of them, never to return. They can’t even imagine themselves being able to reclaim joy in their lives. While it’s true that such a loss does change us in fundamental ways, grieving mindfully can also bring comfort, healing and a deeper understanding of life and our purpose in it. In my own spiritual journey through what had seemed unthinkable and unsurvivable, shamanism helped me find my way into a life of newfound meaning, self-discovery, fulfillment and happiness. What better way to honor the dead than to live a life of purpose?”

Groth’s book will help those struggling for answers to find them. Or at least put them on the path to finding them.

For more about Julie Lange Groth, visit www.julielangegroth.com. Books can be purchased directly at www.amazon.com/dp/1939129109 or www.createpace.com/6860017. Books are also available through Groth’s website.

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