

Joel: What I usually do is somewhere along the line, I'm going to take a break and that's usually when I run out of questions.

Jackie: OK

Joel: Which takes me along time because I get very curious. And I'm going to kind of review my notes and think about our conversation – write some ideas down, maybe a suggestion, something to think about or try or experiment – I don't know; we'll see what's appropriate and I'm going to come back and share that with you.

Jackie: Yeah, all right.

Joel: So, it's your mom that died. When did she die?

Jackie: September 4th

Joel: Of?

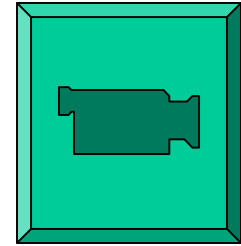
Jackie: 2006

Joel: What do you do?

Jackie: I'm a school nurse/teacher.

Joel: So you're a nurse/teacher. So you have 2 functions is that what I gather or are you teaching nursing?

Jackie: No, I have 2 functions, but for the most part I don't go into the classroom because it's covered with health education.



Joel: So when you're not nurse/teaching what do you do?

Jackie: Well, I'm a wife.

Joel: So you have a husband at home?

Jackie: Yes I do.

Joel: You're in possession of one of those. What's his name?

Jackie: Frank.

Joel: Frank. Any kids?

Jackie: Two. They're both older and married and out-of-state.

Joel: You've been successful as a parent. Hobbies, interests, things you enjoy doing

Jackie: I love sports. I love...

Joel: Watching, doing?

Jackie: Doing

Joel: Okay, what sports?

Jackie: I love tennis, I love swimming. I love to watch baseball. I can't really participate in that but I love to watch it. I like pretty much everything: hiking, biking. I like to do all those things.

Joel: And then Frank shares that with you?

Jackie: Oh, yeah.

Joel: Sounds like you guys have a good relationship.

Jackie: Right. We have a disagreement about tennis versus racquet ball.

Joel: Well, if that's the worst of your disagreements you're doing pretty good. So your husband's at home and you have 2 kids out of the home. Anybody else?

Jackie: That's pretty much it.

Joel: Friend's?

Jackie: Yeah, friends in the area: teachers, colleagues, things like that.

Joel: Great. That gives me the picture. So, well, I asked you a question on the phone and asked you to kind of suppose that our talk is going to be helpful to you. No sense doing it unless it's going to be.

Jackie: Right

Joel: And so I wanted you to think about how you would know that it's being useful to you.

Jackie: Well, the first thing I think I would ask is to stop crying as much as I cry.

Joel: OK, not crying as much as you cry.

Jackie: Right, and the second thing would be get rid of the knot and the nausea feeling I have a lot.

Joel: OK. So get rid of the knot. And what would be there instead?

Jackie: Peace. Peaceful feeling.

Joel: OK, right. And... What would Frank say if he were here and I asked him that same question about you? What would he say?

Jackie: He would agree. He would want to help me get through this process. And I really thought I could do it on my own and I really thought that at this point I should be better than I am.

Joel: OK, Umm

Jackie: But I think it's worse. As time goes on, I don't feel like I get better, I feel like I get worse. You know, I thought I need time.

Joel: Right, right. You said so he would notice that you would be getting through this process.

Jackie: Grieving process.

Joel: Right, and what would tell him...what would be the first thing that would tell him that you would be getting through this process?

Jackie: I suppose we could have conversations about my mom and me not burst into tears. That I could go through her things and not cry the whole time I was touching things. And that I could part with things that really shouldn't be there, you know what I'm saying?

Joel: Right

Jackie: Not think that I'm giving her away.

Joel: Not thinking that you're giving her away.

Jackie: Or what I have of her.

Joel: Hmmm, huh, so, are there certain things that you would be keeping; that would be kind of reminders?

Jackie: Ummm.

Joel: Yeah? Like what?

Jackie: I have her hairbrush with her hair in it in my dresser drawer. She was very eccentric in the little things that she kept. Little trinkets. So I would probably keep some of those. But part with her clothes, things like that. Things someone else could really use. I can't seem to let go or..

Joel: Let me ask...so what else would be different?

Jackie: Basically I would find peace in know that she is better off. She was suffering, she wasn't having the quality of life that she would have liked to have continued, you know?

Joel: Let me expand a little bit on...because it's going to help me kind of get a picture as detailed as possible of this picture of you getting through this process. And I have a strange question that I want to ask you that helps me do that?

Jackie: OK

Joel: But it's a strange question. Takes a bit of an imagination.

Jackie: OK

Joel: Let's suppose that after we talk today, you're going to leave here and go back and do what you normally do. I suppose you're going to go back to school today – do some work. Get home, you and Frank will probably have dinner together maybe.

Jackie: Right

Joel: Do what you do in the evening; watch TV. Clean up. And, you'll go to sleep tonight. Right?

Jackie: Right.

Joel: And let's suppose that while you're sleeping, some miracle happens. And because of this miracle, you're getting through this process. [snaps fingers] just like that.

Jackie: That would be great.

Joel: Right, but you can't know about – not yet, because it happened over the time you were sleeping. And the only way you can know about it is the small clues tomorrow when you wake up after this miracle happens. So that's my question. What would be the small clues for you first that would tell you that this miracle happened? I'm getting through this process.

Jackie: I suppose it would be if I went into the room where I have her things stored at the moment that I would be able to put my hands on them and not cry.

Joel: Put your hands on the stuff and actually not cry.

Jackie: Right. Ummm, I would...if she popped into my head, it wouldn't be – it wouldn't bring tears to my eyes. You know because she pops into my head all day long. You know? I think those would probably...if I opened my dresser drawers and saw her hairbrush there that I would smile instead of cry.

Joel: OK, OK. Right. So, I would suppose each one of those would have something to do with your thinking differently.

Jackie: Umm [nods head]

Joel: I suppose because those kind of go together. So what would notice about your thinking that would tell you that this miracle happened? What would be the clues the? How.. when you walked into the room or when she popped into your head, what would you be thinking?

Jackie: That she wouldn't want me to feel this way.

Joel: OK

Jackie: That she wouldn't want me to feel this way. That she wouldn't want me to feel I lost a part of myself.

Joel: OK

Jackie: That she's looking down and smiling at me. Not wanting this for me.

Joel: OK. And what would she be wanting for you? How would she want you to be thinking, how would she want you to be feeling?

Jackie: She would want me to be happy. We had good times together and she still loves me and she's there.

Joel: OK.

Jackie: And she's smiling down on me and she's probably not happy that I'm crying all the time.

Joel: So, if you were thinking more about the good times you had together...

Jackie: Right

Joel: You're history with her.

Jackie: Right.

Joel: And if you were thinking about her being up there smiling down on you, how would that make a difference for you?

Jackie: I don't know, I think I would feel more peaceful. I do think I would be more peaceful. I have had, well, very few moments of peace since, but I remember having a dream one night and, I don't dream often, and in the dream, we hugged and when I woke up from the dream, I felt peaceful. I got some peace from that.

Joel: Interesting!

Jackie: We hugged and talked and I don't even remember the conversation but I know we were talking and hugging and I felt so good to be able to hug her again.

Joel: Wow! Great.

Jackie: And another time I was...a dream I was driving and I had her things in the back of the car. And, this was shortly after she passed, I need to know you're OK. I had cards she had gotten and flower vases and things like that in the back of the car, and, stupid dream, but the flower stood up – you know just stood up – and I guess that was a sign to let me know she was OK.

Joel: And that made a difference for you?

Jackie: That made a difference. A little bit, yeah.

Joel: In what way?

Jackie: And I have images of her being fine. I have images of her running as a little girl running through fields of daisies and my uncles are there and she's really enjoying herself. And I think that's great, that's what I want, but...

Joel: These moments of peace, they only happen during the time you sleep or do you actually have these during...do you have these few moments...?

Jackie: No, I've never had any during the...well my wake time.

Joel: It's usually when you're sleeping, usually because of the dream.

Jackie: Right.

Joel: Ummm.

Jackie: Well, when I woke up after those dreams, I felt more at peace, yeah.

Joel: Great. How long did that last?

Jackie: For a while, maybe through half the morning.

Joel: Excellent, Good.

Jackie: Yeah.

Joel: Good. How did you kind of maintain that for that long? How were you able to keep that going?

Jackie: I don't know. Maybe taking about it.

Joel: To?

Jackie: My husband.

Joel: And what did you say to him?

Jackie: I just told him what I dreamed, you know. I might have told my children too. And it might have made me feel a little more buoyant.

Joel: Great. And when you did that, what did they do that kind of helped it continue?

Jackie: Well, my son said to me because I was going through bouts of this at night and I told him about the first dream and he said "Mom, don't you get it? That was a sign from grandma." He probably put it more in perspective than I even could, you know?

Joel: That's great. So you haven't yet found or seen these or kind of noticed these moments of peace during your waking time?

Jackie: Basically, I try very, very hard to stay busy. So I don't have to think. And when I'm busy, I don't think, but as soon as I drive or I sit down or I do anything then everything floods in. But as long as I can keep busy, and organize and do my tasks I can avoid it.

Joel: Right because you're thinking about something different.

Jackie: Correct. Or I have someone else's problems that I'm dealing with and trying help them solve. You know what I'm saying?

Joel: Right.

Jackie: And I don't have to face my own.

Joel: Right, so you're still able to do your work, still able to...

Jackie: For the most part. For the most part, yeah. I think I'm still very, very effective. I sometimes wonder I don't have the energy that I had, you know what I mean, so from that perspective I feel a little weaker.

Joel: So again, if the miracle happened...

Jackie: I would have more energy.

Joel: Yeah, How would you notice that?

Jackie: I guess I wouldn't be so tired all the time. I would feel like I could keep going. Because there are times when...I don't recall ever not feeling like I could keep going. I still have that little extra energy that I could tap into and use. I don't feel that anymore. When I get tired, I get tired. I just want to just stop.

Joel: Right, right, OK. And you do – you keep going?

Jackie: Well sometimes I don't have a choice.

Joel: So, how do you do it?

Jackie: I just try to...maybe not as slowly, not as fast, not as...

Joel: Kind of conserve energy.

Jackie: Right.

Joel: So, again what would Frank notice at this miracle? How would he know it happened to you?

Jackie: I don't know whether I said I don't cry or not talking or thinking not tear up. I don't feel so heavy hearted he would notice all of that. Because..

Joel: How would he notice it?

Jackie: I would, I guess I've always been a high-energy person.

Joel: So he would see some of the energy coming back?

Jackie: Yeah, he would see that. He would also probably see that I was a little more cheerful. Because I've always been a very cheerful person. I don't usually let things bother me. And I just haven't been able to do that anymore.

Joel: What would be the smallest change that he would notice?

Jackie: The smallest change. Oh, wow. I guess I wouldn't feel so overwhelmed when I was doing things at home.

Joel: So, how would he know that? What would he notice different about that?

Jackie: I don't know, that I would be a little better with things I have to do at home. And not complain maybe.

Joel: OK. And your colleagues at school, what would they notice different.

Jackie: I don't think they'd notice anything different other than the fact that I sometimes when the conversation turns to talking, I'll tear up a little bit but I would stop that. That would be the only thing they would notice. But for the most part, I manage to get through the school day without anyone being aware.

Joel: When is there a time when you're working in school that you get something that's close to that peaceful feeling? May not be there, but close to it?

Jackie: During the school day, I keep myself so busy I don't think about it. If I can keep myself busy and not have to deal with everything, I'm fine. And for the most part, like I said, I tend to be more of a high-energy person and I like to stay busy and I do that. Sometimes my friends will stop and they'll talk and conversations, you know, I'll tear up like that.

Joel: And so they would...

Jackie: They'll console me, yes, they console me.

Joel: So, let's do this. If I had a scale of 0 to 10 and 10 is the miracle, and 0 is September 4th. Where would you put things right now?

Jackie: Maybe on a 2 or 3.

Joel: OK, wow. 2 or 3? How come?

Jackie: Well, you know what, I don't even know if I could say 2 or 3. Because initially when she passed, of course I was very, very upset and sad but as time goes on, I mean was so busy trying to make arrangement and talk to people and do all those things I have to, but as time goes on and I recognize how much I miss her every day and it's worse actually instead of getting better which is one of the reasons that I thought by now I'd be much farther along this process, you know. And I keep thinking is there something wrong with me? Am I not getting the picture? I mean am I not able to move on? Am I stuck in a rut somewhere you know? So I'm not sure. So 2 or 3 is being optimistic.

Joel: So, let's be optimistic, what puts you up at 2 or 3?

Jackie: Because I know suddenly a reality maybe instead of a dream.

Joel: OK, that you've finally come to grips with the fact that she's gone.

Jackie: Correct. Something I'm dreaming, that it'll pass you know. I do know in my heart that she's much, not suffering any more. So, that puts it a maybe a 2 or 3. That gives me some peace, some comfort.

Joel: Where would Frank put you on that scale if he were here?

Jackie: I don't know where he would put me.

Joel: What's your guess?

Jackie: My guess is that it makes him so sad that I'm so sad. And he would probably say a 2 or 3.

Joel: So he would put you about the same. And if I asked him how 2 or 3 is different from 0, what would he say?

Jackie: That I am able to be somewhat productive I guess.

Joel: Right, what else?

Jackie: That there are...we can have good times together.

Joel: You can?

Jackie: Yeah, while we're doing that, I put things out of mind, but as soon as I have...

Joel: Some downtime.

Jackie: Correct

Joel: So I think I have all I want to think about now. So, I want to take that break. But before I do, is there anything else that you think I should know that would be helpful or is there anything particularly that you want me to think about?

Jackie: The only thing I can think of is I don't think anybody realizes how much we struggled.

Joel: You and Mom?

Jackie: Yeah. I'm talking about things that people in today's world can even imagine. We went without running water, electricity, without any of that, so...

Compliments:

Joel: Well, I'll tell you what I think for what it's worth. I've learned from working with people here, and one thing I've learned is that there is no time frame for these things: some people shorter, some people longer. And the other thing I've learned, it's never in a straight line. It's kind of almost like doing the tango; you have to take one step back to take 2 steps forward, and the one step is often very necessary – usually very necessary. But I can understand your impatience. You want to get through this. But people have their own time. And they also have their own way of doing it. There are some common things; I'll get to those. Your mom sounds like she was a remarkable woman. And she wasn't educated but she sure knew what mattered. And you were close to Mom; you went through a lot together. She didn't give up. So I think that kind of optimism – you inherited that. Because my sense of it is that she kept plugging because she felt just around the corner things will be better. And I can understand why she was proud of you. As I said, you inherited a lot from Mom: I think your commitment, your sense of pride, knowing what counts, and the sense I have – and your optimism. I can see that's part of what Mom left you also, her legacy. And my sense of you is kind of – how do I put this – that it's like you're on the verge. I get the sense that you're on the verge. There are some things right now that tell me that.

That you can enjoy life; you do your hiking, your biking, your swimming. That you remain optimistic. After all that's why you're here. If you didn't think things could be better, you wouldn't be sitting that chair. That you can kind of envision the difference. You know how you want to be thinking and doing and feeling better. What would make a difference. That you have a nice network friends, colleagues and family that encourage you. And there are these moments of peace that you have.

Jackie: I wish they would happen more often.

Joel: Well...

Jackie: I want to hug her at night more often.

Joel: I know. Interesting, because when you said...does it happen during the day, you said "no" and then you remembered a time that it was when you were with your grandchildren. So they do happen. You talked about Mom guiding the family. Well, she's doing that through you. And you talked about getting through the grieving process. It's interesting because people... it's interesting that people have this idea that there's this process that takes place. You grieve and then you go on with life. And so it's either you're grieving, or you're going on with life. And to me, the more I work here, I realize that it's both/and. Both of those happen at the same time. And people get so focused on one that they miss the other. And so I think the most useful thing I do is tap people on the shoulder and say "You're looking in the

wrong place.” This is a problem of perspective – of viewing. I have a small suggestion that might be helpful. I don’t know, we’ll see. But I would suggest that you spend the next couple of weeks really taking a hard look at those small, brief times of peace. I’m not interested in quantity right now. I’m interested in quality. So it doesn’t matter to me if it happens a minute a day. It matters that you notice it. That make sense?

Jackie: Yes

Joel: You might even want to at the end of the day, think back and write those things down. So you can actually see them happening. You might even want to enlist your husband in watching for those too. Sometimes he may be more aware of it watching you than you might be aware of it.

Jackie: That’s possible, yeah. It’s questions I never asked him.

Joel: Might be a useful thing for you to do. See what he finds. It’s not the answer, it’s a start. We’ll see where it goes.

Jackie: That’s what I want to do. I want to start, yeah.

Joel: So, I guess the first question is do you think it will be helpful to make another time to sit down and talk?