

# Dreams and Waking Life: Interview Information to Accompany the Dream Journal of Barbara Sanders

## PREFACE

The following interview materials concern several of the main issues in the dreams of Barbara Sanders, an adult woman who has written down a little over 4,000 of her dreams over a period of about 25 years. There is a lengthy interview with Sanders and shorter interviews with four of her closest women friends.

These interviews are most useful for corroborating inferences based on a “blind analysis” where nothing is known about the dreamer beforehand. In fact, it is probably a delusion to think that anyone is “understanding” dreams or learning from them if they already know anything about the person before they begin to read the dreams. This is because the human capacity to justify, rationalize, project, and self-deceive is too great and too tempting for such a process to lead to any new insights.

The interviews covers certain topics that seem important in the dream series: animals, driving a car, music, theater, and water.

They also concern the people in her dreams that appear in either extremely negative or extremely positive roles: her parents, her siblings, her ex-husband, her children, her romantic attractions, and her women friends.

As becomes apparent on close reading, the dreamer has a disability. She is sometimes portrayed as being in a wheelchair in the dreams. However, this disability is a surprisingly small part of her dream life. Indeed, that is the first interesting finding from studying this series: her dreams relate to her feelings and concerns in relation to people, animals, and things, not to her physical condition.

Focusing on her disability is therefore a mistake and a distraction in terms of developing a better theory of dream meaning based on this rich dream series. For that reason, the nature of her disability has been removed from the dreams in which wheelchairs or medications are mentioned.

The dreamer and her close friends were asked the same questions so that the views presented by the friends can serve as the final arbiter in any disagreement between the inferences of the dream analyst and the replies by the dreamer. This methodological innovation makes it possible to overcome the impasse created in the past when such disagreements arose. If the friends agree with the dreamer, then the content analyst is wrong. If the jury agrees with the content analyst, then the dream has a “blind spot” on that particular issue.

In this study, there is mostly agreement between the dreamer and her four friends. They agree on the people towards whom she feels most negative and most positive. They agree on the rise and fall of her romantic attachment to Derek, who is the subject of 44 dreams that add up to an ideal case study within the overall series.

All the names and places in the interview and the dream series are pseudonyms. The exact dates of her birth, her marriage and divorce, and her infatuation with Derek have been removed. The dreamer is the oldest of four children. She has three children and several grandchildren.

The main characters who appear by name in the dreams and the interviews are:

- Dwight, her older brother
- Jake, her younger brother
- Lydia, her sister
- Howard, her ex-husband
- Dovre, her oldest daughter
- Ellie, her middle daughter
- Paulina, her youngest daughter
- Ginny, one of her very best friends
- Bonnie, one of her very best friends, who was interviewed
- Lucy, a very good friend, who was interviewed
- Katrina, a very good friend, who was interviewed
- Mary Sue, a very good friend, who was interviewed

## **BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

*Tell me about your early years.* I was born in [the 1940s]. We moved around frequently when I was young because Dad was looking for employment in various ways. It was not always easy at that point, and he was going to school when he came back from the war, so we lived where the college was. There was a very small one in the town where I was born. Then we moved to an itty bitty little town where he got a job as a teacher at the high school. I lived in three different houses in that little town before I was even six years old. We lived there through the third grade, and then in the fourth grade I lived in three different places.

Dad couldn't handle the teaching at the high school level, so he quit that job and moved to another state. And we lived there maybe four or five months, and then we moved back up to where my grandparents lived, and lived with them for a while in a dinky little farm town. Then we moved to what I consider my home town. I started there in the middle of the fourth grade, went up through the sixth, then we moved to yet another state for a few years. Again, he was chasing work. That particular move was a difficult one emotionally because he basically ran away from home. He just kind of had a nervous breakdown. Things were, you know, four young kids, not a lot of money, really struggling hard. He was working two or three different jobs, and he just took off. And then we came back and did the high school years at my "home town."

*Was he still teaching at that time?* Yes, he was teaching in my "home town.". He managed to work through his difficulties with his first teaching job, which was discipline of the kids in high school. He finally figured out how to do that. Then he ended up working in a foundry. He had burns all over himself from that melted molten steel, really quite a difficult time. So he did that for a while, then we moved back to my home town and he was again a teacher from then on. He settled in as a music teacher.

## **PETS AND HORSES**

*When you were growing up, did you have pets? And were these rural settings, all these different houses?* Small towns, big yards, that kind of thing. My grandparents had farms. At one point they had a dairy farm, so we'd go out and slosh around in cow pies and [laugh] meadows and all that sort of thing. So we were dealing with cows and lots of them, dogs, mostly cats for me, a lifetime love of cats. But we had a particularly wonderful little dog. So dogs and cats were pretty much our animals, yeah.

*I wanted to ask you which animals you liked the most. Cats are the favorite for you?* Yeah cats, clearly the top.  
*When you were growing up, did you learn to ride horses?* I had some experiences with riding horses, yes, but I didn't have a lot of it. I loved doing it. They scared me; they were awfully big and they had a tendency to bite.

But other than that, it was fun. I do remember a couple of incidences where we were galloping away, and it was such, out of control, but fun kind of, you know, I was just hanging on for dear life, hoping I don't fall. *But you wouldn't say you did a lot of riding or were a good rider?* No, I was not a good rider.

*But you're a good rider in your dreams.* I am, aren't I, yes. *Did you think they are pretty positive dreams, your horse dreams?* Yes, I think most of my animal dreams seem to be really positive dreams, yes. *But yet, in this case we're seeing then an example of where your proficiency in riding and your use of horses and all really doesn't reflect reality.* It's very metaphorical. It's not, it's not a real life experience. I think I have ridden horses max eight times in my whole life, you know, and I can remember the specific incidences. Somebody else held the horse, one had a tendency to bite and I was very afraid of him, and we sort of walked slowly around the pasture. Another one, that one was okay, but it got spooked by another horse that started running, so I was just hanging on for dear life. And when they did trotting, it was just disaster city, because I never learned how to do the posting.

One more thing about horses – my father became a part owner of a race horse, and for a while this beautiful race horse was in our back pasture, and so it wasn't like an animal I could ride or anything, but it was quite exquisite and I would like to look at it as it ran around, and we would go to the races and cheer for the horse. Yeah, and he was beautiful, and that was a special arena, horse racing, so he was supposed to go out there and make money. [laugh]

*Tell me more about you and dogs and puppies.* Well, I think they're cute, and we have – well, let me see – I can only remember really two or three dogs in my whole growing up time with the family, a very sweet little collie dog that we had for a number of years. And there's another one called Suzy, which is a basset hound, and I think I had maybe one, maybe two dreams of Suzy. And that was Dad's dog, and that was when I was – did I move out already? You know, it was after I was kind of grown, so I didn't have a lot of connection with Suzy.

We didn't have lots of puppies around. It was kitties.

*Where do these dogs and puppies come from that are in your dreams? Are they other people's or are they just dogs and puppies?* They're just dogs and puppies. I have no special affinity, I mean, I think they're cute, but I got bitten by a dog when I was six, or a little older, maybe seven. I was waving my report card at him because I was so excited about having my report card, and he took that as a definite challenge, bit me, and I went home crying. So I'm a little afraid of dogs actually. So the one loving puppy dog... *You're afraid of them?* A little bit, yeah, if they're big and bark at me, I'm cautious. *Was your mom or dad particularly fond of either cats or dogs or is there a preference?* Cats. *Your mom and dad are both cats persons?* Mom in particular with cats.

As a child I had a cat named Davy that I went to a friend's house and they had a barn and they had this wild little feral kitties out in the barn. And I wanted this one little kitten, and he was the feistiest little guy. He was not going to get caught. And I spent hours chasing this little thing all over the barn, and finally captured him. Did not trouble myself to ask my parents for permission to bring home this little kitty, and on top of that, I walked home when it was dark and I allowed someone to take me – oh, it was a terrible night. But here I was with this little kitty.

*How old were you?* Oh, I was in junior high at that time. So they gave me this stern lecture, but I got to keep Davy, and Davy and our dog bonded together and would snooze and take naps behind the stove together. Davy would allow me to dress him up in outfits and just sit there like that, like, "Oh God, these humans. They're so bizarre," you know. So I had a real strong connection with that little guy.

I had a little kitten that was run over and injured very badly. This was in grade school. And I was singing in the choir. We were singing "Silent Night" and I just burst into tears because my poor little kitty was dead. *The memory came to you while you were singing?* Right, exactly, and so the poor teacher didn't know what was

going on. He sent me to the principal, which scared me half to death. And he went into a long story about he had a puppy that died once. I wasn't particularly interested in hearing about his puppy; it didn't help me. And he said, "Well, you can sit here and get yourself together, and when you feel like it, you can go back and join the kids. And by that time I was done crying and wanted out of there real bad. So those kinds of memories. On the farms there were always kitty cats all over the place there.

*Would you call where you lived a farm?* Not where I lived, no. My grandmother and grandfather had a dairy farm with my Uncle Wayne and their family, and I would often on vacation go up there for a weekend or something, and it was great fun because you'd get up at four in the morning.

## **GRANDPARENTS**

*Could you tell me your feelings about your grandparents?* My mother's parents are the ones I liked the most. I liked Grandma best. Grandpa's a big guy, and a silent guy, and kinda scary. And so there was a certain amount of distance to Grandpa. But Grandma was just real sweet and loving as far as I was concerned, which is interesting because my Aunt Mary who is my mother's younger sister, hated Grandmother and felt that she was angry and spiteful and horrible and mean. And I'm going, "My Grandma?" you know, so we obviously had different experiences of this human being, and I think both of them are very real, you know. I think that she and Mary had personality conflicts from the get-go and she can be sharp.

But that's not the side that Grandmother usually showed me. She was puttering around the kitchen, she was always talking like a little bird to herself, and she'd talk to the soap operas, "Oh honey, don't do that!" She'd be ironing and watching the soap operas, and, "Oh no, he's a bad man," you know, we'd go, "Grandma, for God's sake, it's television," you know. And cooking all the time. She worked hard, she raised a big family, and I can still hear, "Llooooyd," you know, she'd be annoyed at Lloyd for whatever it was he was not doing right. So I have real fond feelings for visiting my maternal grandparents.

In fact, we visited them more often because they had some health problems, and Mom lived closest, we lived 7 to 10 miles away. They had a chicken farm, and speaking of animals, and so every weekend we would go out there when Mom helped her do some housework and that kind of thing. And I loved those visits, and really had fun, because we'd get to go out in the barn and the pasture and the meadow and dig up crawdads in the creek, you know, and stuff like that. So I loved those times, and I loved and still love more that side of the family. It's a big extended, she's got six sisters and a brother, everybody had tons of kids so we've got cousins up the wazoo, and we would meet frequently at those weekends. So family was everything to them. They didn't have a lot of social life outside of family, and so the family gatherings were their socializing time, very important. And I loved it because I had all these groovy cousins I could play with and I would tease the aunts and the uncles and they'd tease me back, and so it felt very friendly and comfortable.

*Then the paternal grandparents?* I felt more distance. There was a stepgrandfather, Floyd, who died when he was in his sixties, so I was in high school when he died. I liked Chet a lot. And my paternal Grandma is just very practical, just a big grandmotherly kind of woman. But she wasn't much of a hugger, and I didn't feel as close with them, and not even with the cousins. And so on the maternal side I still go to the reunions and will just sit there at the table and listen to the energy between my aunts. It's like a warm, inviting home around there; I like it.

## **SHOOTING AND OUTDOORS**

*Did you learn to shoot at all, or hunt, or do any outdoor stuff with your parents or grandparents?* Oh yes, my father did some fishing, and I can remember sometimes when he took me fishing with him. I remember being six years or so. But most of them were not really good experiences. I couldn't understand why he had to take a

8-9 foot pole to catch a 1-inch minnow, and you had to drag them through the trees. And one time I had a cut in my hand from, I fell on a piece of broken glass, and that was terribly traumatic.

*How about guns? Were there guns around?* Don't like guns. There weren't a lot of guns around. Now in extended family – uncles and cousins and things, you know, a bunch of rednecks and guns are part of that culture – but in my family, no. *But as far as you shooting them and shooting with them...* I did some target work when Howard and I were first starting, because he was interested in guns. He had guns all the time and loved hunting. *Did you ever do any hunting with him?* He wanted me to, and he took me out target shooting, but I balked at actually shooting animals. I have the Bambi syndrome. *Did you do much target shooting? Did you feel proficient with a gun?* Umm, no, not a lot.

## ATHLETICS

*How about athletic things growing up? Were you in any way athletic, playing sports or the swimming?* I'm terribly afraid of water, and I remember having scary experiences learning how to swim. I had to take some lessons, and I can remember being in the deep end, and the man forced me to be in the deep end, and he was standing up on the edge of the pool, and I considered myself in severe danger and that I was drowning. So I called out, "Help, help, I'm drowning," and he stood there and he looked down at me and he says, "If you just continue to stroke, you'll soon be on the side," did not lift a finger to help me. I was really angry at him. Also in the beginning swim lessons when I was in the shallow end, as I walked toward the deeper end and the water got up to about here, I simply stopped breathing. I was scared. So no, I am not a strong swimmer.

*Were you a pretty good roller-skater?* Well, actually, not too bad. I didn't do the backward things and the turny things. Mostly I went around in a circle. *I was just looking for athletic activity, because of some things in your dreams.* It's not there. I'm not an athletic type person. I don't like sports. I used to hike. I used to go on 10-mile hikes and bike hike and stuff like that in high school. *You hike around some in your dreams.* Yeah, I do. *You go through mountains and forests and so on.* Yes.

*Do you do any swimming for exercise as an adult?* I do now, but what it means is I have an inner tube and I float and I do stretch exercises, that kind of thing. *But you don't do a whole lot of swimming?* No, no, I don't. [The dreamer has many dreams in which she is in the water, a topic that is discussed in other parts of the interview.]

*Tell me about smoking, when you started and when you quit.* Ah, I started in high school. I started snitching cigarettes from my mom and dad, and my best friend Charlene, who recently died this year, started smoking, and so it was like just a fun, exciting, risky thing to do. And then I got hooked on them and for 17 years I smoked. And then I stopped in the beginning of the 1980s. *So it's now been how many years since you smoked?* Oh, let's see, almost 20 years.

[The dreamer still has a few dreams in which she is smoking.]

## MOTHER

*Tell me about your mother, who is a very frequent character in your dreams.* She's the number one female character. *Do you think they're an accurate depiction? Are there things about those dreams that surprise you?* Oh well, there are some, yes, there are a few dreams that startled the hell out of me, and I couldn't imagine, and still can't quite figure out where they came from, because they clearly aren't anything Mother would have done, so I think they're very strongly metaphorical. And then there are very typical dreams where I'm angry at her, or I feel I can't get her attention and something like that, or her criticalness.

*What was her educational background?* She comes from a redneck family, and she was one of the few that went on to college, and she did, in fact, graduate with her bachelors. And went on to social work. *Did she then have a career?* She did. She loved being a social worker. She worked for the Children's Services Division while I was growing up, when she also was exhausted and I think was having – not a nervous breakdown, but she had to take like Valium – and she would be just like zoned. So you'd come home, or she'd come home from work. We'd already been home from school. And she'd be grouchy and would get dinner done, and then she'd be in her chair and pretty soon she's nodding out. I can remember her eyes glazing over and she just wasn't home. And that was during her career time too. She tried to do both, I think, and I think that's what tore her apart.

*Is she liberal politically, as many social workers are?* She's a Democrat. [laugh] She's an isolationist and an idealist. That means she's disappointed in most people because they don't live up to her ideals. I'm not sure that she can either, but her most frequent thing that she says about everybody is, "Oh, that's disgusting, why would they dah dah," you know, because they don't live up to her ideals.

*Are her family farmers too?* Uh-huh, yeah. *Where did she meet your father?* I think it must have been at the little religious college they both attended, you know, not fundamentalists, but just your ordinary Bible-thumping....

*Do you have a sense of your mom's attitudes towards each of you separately, that is where she's more forgiving of one person or annoyed with another, more demanding of another, cut more slack for Lydia because Lydia the youngest child or any of that kind of thing?* I don't think so. I know that we were certainly brought up with the beliefs that we are all equally loved and equally treated because she really firmly believes that that should be. No, I don't think she has a particular soft spot for any one of us. I think she does love us each one for who we are. Well, if we would behave and be more like what she wanted. But I think that they chose to deliberately give Jake more attention because of his particular needs, but I don't recall feeling jealous about that, or I don't recall the other kids talking about that as a problem.

## FATHER

*Tell me about your father.* Okay, my dad. I was born during World War II and Dad was gone the first couple of years of my life, and Mom was either working or going to school and then taking, she was the sole person who took care of me. And according to the baby book, I didn't recognize Dad when he first showed up, but he jiggled some coins in my ear and I was very happy. My first memories of him are he was building a little cabin in the woods somewhere for us to live and we would go out and hang out. And we had a cat named Figaro. He was named Figaro because of the opera, and Dad's a music instructor and a musician and so on. So we'd stand out there calling our cat, "Figaro, Figaro," [operatic sound]. So it was like that. One of my first dreams, actually, or it could have been an experience that felt like a dream, or maybe I made it up – I don't know. But I remember we had an outhouse, and so when I had to go, and Dad said to Mom, "She's old enough; she can go out alone," and my mother said, "Oh no, she needs someone to go out with her." And I felt scared about going out into the dark and little white bunnies running around.

My mother was angry and exhausted much of the time, and I remember Dad as being, well on the one hand I keep saying he's gentle. There's also this sharp, angry brick wall kind of thing with my dad around mom, and a lot of harshness. He would just draw a line and get stubborn and she'd say, "I want this done this way," and of course there was just no way he was going to do it. He was fighting for his end of the control, I think, in the relationship because she's a very powerful woman. And so there was this dichotomy with them, between this gentle, kind person and this scary, angry, stubborn person. When I hit puberty, I remember being afraid of him. I remember – just to show you the dichotomy – one night, I had learned in Home Ec how to cook a full course meal, and so I created, I spent a lot of work, and created this full course meal. He came home from work and

said, "God dammit, I'm hungry. I worked hard all day. Put the food on the table and I'll eat it. I'm not going to go through this nonsense and, you know, one little thing of soup and a four-course thing." So I was very hurt by that.

And then on the other hand, I woke up sometimes with leg cramps, Charlie horses, and I'd be crying. I'd wake up being aware that I'm crying, so I'd apparently been crying for a while, and he would be the one that would get out of bed and come in and gently, you know, rub my Charlie horse so that I'd feel better. And that was nice. So there's a real strong dichotomy in gentleness and abruptness and selfishness. And he's a person who believed that we should do whatever it is that we want to do, but never really gave us direction in what to do or how to do it. So I felt sometimes like I got kind of left, you know, without a lot of support or a lot of guidance, because they strongly wanted you and had us all be independent, capable people. They didn't do that on a conscious level, but that's what came out.

I remember when it was time for me to do a summer visit right after high school with an aunt. He came to the car and gave me a little pep talk, gave me a sweet hug and a kiss, and I was so overwhelmed because it was so unusual that I didn't know how to respond to it at all. It was very sweet and very touching, but I was unable to respond back because it was like, "Oh, what is this?" you know. So he's a man who would spank me and that sort of thing, and we had a lot of arguments when I was growing up, as a teenager. I was a bit rebellious and, "If you say one more word, then you'll have to leave the table and go to your room."

And, of course, I'd be sent to my room, and so I had a lot of feeling as I was growing up of anger at my father, and I had fear of my father. And I find that kind of strange, because if anybody says what's my father like, it's, "Oh, he's this gentle kind man." And he is in many respects, and there are both of those edges, you know. I usually spent so much time blaming my mother that I really kind of didn't notice until later how my father's inability, he never protected me from my mother. Mother was always right, Mother was the one he loved and so if it was between the two of us, Mother won.

He was teaching private music lessons and doing other jobs as well just to make ends meet for the family. Then somewhere after the horse racing thing kind of went bust financially, he started, he always had the dream of starting with a startup house, fixing it up, renting it out, getting a second one and building up a string of rentals. And that's, in fact, what he has done. So he's, they're fairly comfortably off. He has a four-plex and he has various apartments and duplexes and things like that.

*What do you think his feelings are towards each of your siblings?* I believe he loves all of us. But his particular relation with each one? I know that his idea of sex education was hand them the book and run, and his idea of doing that with me was don't talk about it. So he had a lot of struggles with that, but their marriage between them, is extremely painful for me to watch. I talked to him about this recently. He was driving me back here from a, probably around Christmas, and we went past XYZ Lake, and he said, "That's where your brother Dwight was conceived." I thought, "Oh, we're going to talk." [laugh] And so he, you know, he had real fond, good memories, and we got to talking and I said, "What was that time like when you ran away from home?" And he couldn't talk to me about that.

But what he did talk about was, I said, "You know, sometimes Mom and I kind of butt heads," and he says, "I know that you and the kids kind of felt uncomfortable or bad about when we would argue and fight," he said, "But for us, I thought we were just communicating." Well, it was a war zone as far as I was concerned. I mean, they would talk through us, spend several months not talking to each other. "Tell your mother dah dah dah," "Tell your father," that kind of thing. And then when they were talking, they were yelling and very upset with each other. It was a painful time for us, I think. They have the most interesting ritual of communication with each other. They use this angry tone with each other and they're snipping at each other, and they think they're just communicating, they truly do. I'm fascinated watching it.

*They still do it then?* Oh yes, and he says that they're just communicating. He's in love with his wife. I remember he had a heart attack and he had a triple? quadruple? lots of bypasses, so we thought we were losing him, and for a month or two he was really down and under recovering from the surgery, and we didn't know if he'd be able to get back and dig up the fossils and do all the stuff that he loves to do. And he said to me once, he said, "It takes something like this sometimes to really know that you are loved, you know. He was referring to Mom, who's not very demonstrative about her affections. And I think he's more easily able to express his affections.

I consider him a gentleman, but at the same time, I remember butting heads with him as a teenager and we would have yelling, "Go to your room," you know, and that sort of thing, and be very angry at him. I remember being afraid of him when I was 13 or 14, came into the room once and he said, "Has your mother talked to you about the birds and bees and sex and stuff?" And I almost couldn't speak; it was just so unusual and unlike him, and such a taboo subject in our family. But he was attempting to do the fatherly thing. He was embarrassed and didn't know how to do it, but he was trying to do that. And, of course, I didn't know what to do with it and felt him just die. But other than those teenage years, you know, I've gotten along pretty well. Seems to be real proud of my accomplishments and that kind of thing.

*Is the relationship depicted fairly accurately in your mind in the dreams?* I don't know. I know he's the most frequent male character in my dreams. Yes, I do think it is fairly accurate. I remember a dream where he got angry, several dreams where he would get angry at me because I was angry at Mom, and I do remember growing up feeling that if there was ever a fight between Mom and me, Mom would win, there's no doubt he would back her. And I would see that kind of thing in the dreams. Yeah, I do think they're very accurate.

## HER SIBLINGS

*Tell me about you and your brothers. You said that Jake was one of the most problematic people in your life, in that big four or five. But you dream a lot more about Dwight. Yes. Why is that, do you think?* I like Dwight a lot better. We get along well, he's closer in age to me. He's the next one. Jake is the one after him, between my brother and my sister. *Yeah, let me have their ages now.* Dwight was like three years after me, so that would make him 46 or so. And Lydia is six years younger than I, so that puts Jake, that makes him [late 40s, early 50s].

....

Dwight is quite an intelligent individual, very interesting person. Dwight went through a breakdown due to the Vietnam War too – I mean, he had quite an unusual breakdown. He got heavy into speed, and for the first year after he returned from the Vietnam War, where he had been in one of those big fighter tanks, he didn't speak. He didn't talk to anybody. He wanted to be a conscientious objector and actually went away, went to Canada with the full intent of being a conscientious objector and moving out of the country. But he came back and the draft called him and he went. Yeah, and so it nearly destroyed him, and this man who could have gone on to at least a master's, Ph.D. in sciences, very quick, excellent mind.

*Do you worry about him?* Yes, very much. Because he's so emotionally fragile. I mean, he's, he just went inside and he was breaking apart, and I feared for him tremendously, especially after Vietnam. Totally isolated, I mean, he wouldn't even speak to us, the family, wouldn't even, couldn't even go out and get a job. Now he learned how to be a carpenter and builds houses and has his own business and runs, you know, and then he met his, Cyndi, his wife, a woman I have a difficult time being around. But I think she saved his life; I really do. So I'm indebted to that, even though it's, from the outside, it looks like a very difficult marriage. She's a very strong person and he's kind of a, a bit wimpy. [laugh] He does not deal with confrontation. *They've got a couple kids?* They do, they have two children. A boy and a girl. The girl is a few years older than Charla.

*So he's pretty stable now.* Yes, very stable now. She totally rules the roost and she gets what she wants, and he works like hell. *Does she work too?* She does actually, yes, and just recently struggled with breast cancer, so they've been, for a while they broke apart, and now they're back together. So I think that he needs that family connection to be able to survive.

*Did you worry about him when he was growing up?* Well, he was always my kid brother, and yeah, I was the protective older sister. Yeah. And we both have a quick wit, and we... *Was he in any way vulnerable or fragile growing up, though?* No, I didn't feel that protective when he was growing up. I mean, we played together and built forts, and we just got along.

*When Jake came along, what were your feelings?* Well actually I kind of resented Dwight coming along because he peed his diaper even in my crib, and I was pretty annoyed, and nobody was taking care of this situation. I can remember that. That's one of my first memories. I was three, so I'm in my crib and when he was a baby, he had to share my crib, and so I'd wake up in the middle of the night and he'd be wreaking from stinky diaper, and I remember sitting up and just glaring. I was in the same room with Mom and Dad and they're snoozing away, and just pissed as hell, you know, that this annoying, stinky baby was in my crib. And it's one of my first memories that I have. But I also, yeah, he was my companion and friend. Jake was just cantankerous from the get-go. I remember Mom looking back and saying, "We knew right away that we had a boy who just desperately needed attention." And he was paranoid, feisty, isolationist. He's never been able to hold jobs. He can't deal with other people easily. He's cantankerous, he's feisty, he's just prickly. I mean, I cannot be in the room with him longer than ten seconds and we're just going to go at each other verbally.

*In the dreams, you may have him doing something idiotic, but he doesn't seem to get under your skin in the way that, say, your mom or Ellie or Howard do.* Right, and I think that's because one of the good things about him is he's not trying to make me change. He's not trying to make me be like what they want me to be. He doesn't want anybody to change him, and he'll fight that like hell. But he also equally respects other people and their need for being who they are. So we don't have the same kind of confrontation. I mean, I have to fight for my soul when I'm around my mother, and around Howard, because they wanted me to be different than what I am. So I had to make marks, my boundaries, and it took a long time for me to do that.

And I don't have to have that kind of fight with Jake. With Jake it's bickering, it's silly stuff. It's I believe this way, you believe that way, and he is very hypercritical of Lydia in particular. I mean, that poor child, one of our family jokes is, "Lydia, quit breathing!" because he's very sensitive to sounds. If you smack your lips while you're eating, it would distress him, and apparently Lydia breathing was too loud.

*What about Jake's ex-wife?* A very neat lady, Vicky. She teaches school. She's a neat lady. She's into spirituality, and I never could understand why she hung in there with Jake because he really is probably one of the most difficult human beings to live with, but they made it work for a long time.

*Tell me about Lydia.* Lydia is a sweet, loving person who will tolerate far more than she should. So she does, in fact, tolerate him. She loves him, she's concerned about him and is thankful that he goes away and doesn't come back very often because he just nails her.

*Lydia is somebody that doesn't make a lot of appearances in your dreams.* My sister, I don't have very many dreams about her at all. She and I are very close, very supportive of each other. *Oh, you are? I never would have guessed.* Uh-huh. *Your women friends don't really know that because you don't talk about her much.* They say, "Well, she doesn't talk about her much." Yeah, I don't. *And yet you do chit-chat?* Oh, my sister and I, yeah, very close.

*The interactions in your dreams seem benign, don't seem overwhelmingly positive, but you say you're in pretty good touch with her?* Yeah. By telephone and by email now. We'll just send little letters back and forth and

check up on how our kids are doing, and she's concerned about my health. And any time I have a new health alert. So she's concerned, and I'm the older, pushy sister; she's the younger, sweet, charming sister. She was, I think, the beauty in the family. She is a gentle, kind human being who married this horrible man, truly horrible. *Tell me his name again.* His name is Doug, extremely self-centered. He put the family in bankruptcy because he wanted a boat, but wouldn't lift a finger to assist the children. He's gross, he's, oh, he's just a dreadful human.

*What is the relation of your three siblings with your parents? I mean, are Dwight and Lydia close to your parents? Is that why they stay around, or do they stay around in spite of the fact they're not close to them?* I think they love Mom and Dad. They're not as critical of Mom and Dad as I am, and that might be because I'm the oldest and therefore have a right to be critical. [laugh] No, I have picked up my mother's habit of being critical. I learned how to be negative and critical, and I feel a lot of resentment toward Mother. But when I talk it over with them, they go, "Well, you're just, you know, you've always been on her case." So they are much more forgiving and do not see what I see in the same way. So they get along just fine really with Mom and Dad.

*How do they see your dad?* Dad, all of us kind of agree, is just a gentle, okay kind of person. I carried a lot of anger and resentment in my teen years. I may have been picking up some of Mom's stuff, but in general we like Dad more than we like Mom.

*How about Jake's feelings toward them?* He is trying his best to be a good son to them. One of the things he loves to do, he's very good with electronics, and he creates little things. And he hangs out at Goodwill and finds something for 50 cents and turns it into a working electronic device. And he's trotting these home to Mom and Dad all the time in ways to make their lives a little easier. I think he's very respectful, and he gets on Mother's case too, and he'll be critical of her as well, but only directly to her.

*How is he towards Dwight?* Oh dear, they could almost not talk. There's a lot of friction. I think I'm the only one he actually is working at maintaining a relationship with him other than Mom and Dad. The others, if they're in the same room, he'll hang out for a period of time, but he doesn't go visit them or connect. With me he makes an effort to connect. He'll come over and visit me every once in a while, give me a call. Within the last few years both of us have kind of called, we will actively start the bickering and then go, "Well," you know, we'll stop each other, stop ourselves and maintain a gentler relationship with each other. It's work, but it's changing, it is working.

*So you do see Jake occasionally.* Yes, uh-huh, I see Jake more often than I see Dwight and Lydia. *How often do you see Jake, would you say?* For a while there it was about once a month, and now for the past... *Does he come to town?* Yeah, he comes to town, he's got his favorite seat at a particular tavern and drinks a little bit too much beer, and he'll drop by sometimes. He's crashed and burned on my couch, and, you know, he's very respectful that this is my place, always checking if I'm doing too much or whatever. And he's been kind enough to drive me to our parent's house and back when I'm not able to manage it physically and that kind of thing. So he's doing okay now.

## SCHOOL

*Okay, tell me about you as a student, you in school.* I liked school, I liked school. I loved reading, I caught on to it real quick. Struggled with math, didn't do well in math. In fact, my only D I ever got was in geometry. So I enjoyed school, I liked it. I don't think I applied myself very well. I mean, if I enjoyed it. I was a shy person, I would get like C's and B's and occasional A's, you know, that kind of thing. I didn't really push real hard.

*Then, when you graduated from high school, did you do any more school immediately?* When I graduated from high school, my senior year was like just an idyllic year, and suddenly school ended and they said, "What are you going to do now?" and my parents have always assumed that we were going to go to college, so I naturally

assumed that I would go to college. But I never thought what I would do when I got to college, so it was a big, scary, stressful, oh, my God, you know, my safe little world has disappeared, and it was scary. I went to the little college in my home town the first year after high school. They said at registration, "What's your major?" and I said, "What's a major?" I mean, that's how unprepared I was. I went through three majors and psychologically....

*Which were?* First it was something awful, like Home Ec, yes, it was Home Ec. And then, which is really ironic; I'm not a homemaker. *And what was the second one?* Journalism, clearly journalism because my writing, I've always loved writing. And a third one – I don't remember what the third major was...oh, Liberal Arts. And then psychologically I kind of fell apart. I couldn't handle it. I started skipping classes because I was creating phobias for myself and really getting panic attacks and that kind of thing. *So you just went there for a year or so?* One year.

*You went back to school later?* Three years later. What happened was I dropped out of school, Howard and I were talking about marriage, I worked one year, I lived back with my parents. I worked one year as a clerk typist in an insurance company. Then I got married, and I think I had my first baby and then went back. But I had to go back to night school and summer school to build my GPA. Once I got that up to where I could be accepted, then it was in school, working, raising kids, in school, working, raising kids for almost eight years.

*Did you finish a BA somewhere during that time period?* Uh-huh, BA in Education. And then I taught third grade for a year, and then I owned a yarn shop for a couple of years. Then the divorce, and then the masters. *Is it right after that that you worked in counseling?* Yeah, ten years at a community college a year after that.

## DRIVING

*When did you learn to drive; how old were you?* Got my driver's permit at 15, and Dad took me around the neighborhood. Then I got my license Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, when I was 16. We had a Volkswagen bus that I had to learn how to drive. It was horrible. Stick shift, and it's big, and especially for parking and all that sort of thing. So I probably just barely got my license by the skin of my teeth, but I did get it the first time out. Within a week we had a little fender bender situation. Another car was coming through an intersection and I didn't see him until I got hit. I liked to drive. My cousin Tyler had a groovy little red sports car, which I was dying to drive, and he finally let me try it, and he referred to me from then on as "Lead Foot."

*How old were you?* I was 17, maybe 16. *How many times did you drive Tyler's red car?*

Only once or twice. *Did you ever own any sports cars after that?* No. *Or drive any?* No. *You have a lot of red sports cars in your dreams.* I do, don't I? I believe they're metaphor, I really do. I think they have to do with risky behavior, speed, power, sexuality. I think they have to do with that. I am two things simultaneously. I am conservative and I take these little risky things, see. *So you always kind of wished you had one of these little red sports cars?* Yeah, well I remember having daydreams about being a famous writer, and I had a convertible red sports car in those fantasies, so clearly, and four on the floor, you know, with little mag wheels.

*Do you have a preference for being a passenger versus being a driver?* My control issues are strong! [laugh] I much prefer to be the driver. Lately, though, I am not minding being the passenger. *How comfortable would you say you generally are when you're a passenger in a car?* Oh no, I'm hitting the brakes, I'm doing the backseat driving. To what extent on a 1-10 scale do you consider yourself a backseat driver? I'm a backseat person, whether I'm driving or not. I always have advice for people and how they can do things better, so yes, I...*So you're pretty high on that?* I'm afraid I am.

*Do you worry much about accidents when you're driving along? Either you driving or somebody else?* Well, I prefer to drive for that very reason because when I think I am a fairly good driver, and I would much rather

have that responsibility than to, you know, it would be awful if somebody else crashed and burned. Yeah, and I have some mistrust of other people's abilities sometimes. *Did the issue come up in your marriage as to who was going to drive?* No, he drove most of all the time. In fact, at that point, I didn't feel real confident with all the freeways and I didn't like night driving. I can remember times when he'd say, "I'm going to pull over; I need you to drive," and, "Ah, wah, wah," I didn't want to. So that's a very interesting point.

Let me see if I can pinpoint when that shifted, because from up until about two-thirds of the way through the marriage, I was pretty much a passive-aggressive kind of wimpy person, but I would have my stubbornness and my strength, but I didn't own it. And it took me those years to finally get connected to who I am. And so then I can remember being afraid of being alone, going to the movie alone was oh, impossible to think of, and now I love it, just love it. So I would say that the driving thing, right along with all the other psychological stuff of being your own person.

*Were you a backseat driver when you were driving with Howard?* No actually, not very much. *Telling him how to drive, or wanting to drive, or arguing about driving?* No, we didn't have fights over that. We had lots of fights over other things, but not that.

## **THEATER: ACTING AND DIRECTING**

*Tell me about you and the theater, you and acting, you and plays.* Well, I popped out of the womb and started telling stories and writing stories when I could write, and as a consequence would want to act them out. So we did neighborhood things. I can remember, how old was I – seventh grade? I had two younger brothers and a sister and they wanted to do a neighborhood show. So I wrote this little puppet show and I helped act it and do voices and orchestrated the whole thing. So I was already doing it then. In the eighth grade I wrote my first play. In high school I tried out and got one or two small parts. In my first year of college I tried out and would have gotten the part, but I was like working part-time and full-time school curriculum, etc., etc.

Then marriage and family and going to school, so the whole acting-writing thing just kind of took a back seat, made no attempts to do that. Then got my master's, didn't involve myself with theater at that point, but at the community college I started taking acting classes. I could take classes for free because I worked there. And so I started taking acting classes. I was in the wheelchair so nobody knew what the hell to do with me because places aren't accessible, at that time they were not accessible. And the first disability play I wrote was about the theme that directors say why they can't have a person in a wheelchair. The play isn't about a person in a wheelchair, as though a person in a wheelchair couldn't be a regular person. So I went to auditions, didn't make – I made one because it was, I was Rebecca Nurse in *Crucible*, because she's an older woman. I was typecast and I looked old and bedraggled because of the disability at that point. I literally started training physically so that I could stand up out of my wheelchair long enough to walk up a flight of stairs, walk across the stage, do my speech

*In other words, they weren't going to have you on stage in your wheelchair?* Uh-huh. So at that point I said, "Okay, it's not out there for me," so I've got to create it myself. So I started writing material for people in wheelchairs, and I then had to create the venue to present it. So I created a performing group because my friends were going, "This is crazy. Nobody's doing this." So my friend Lucy, who has a beautiful singing voice, she became part of it. My friend Rochelle, she became a part of it, Michael X, and later Julia H, who does sign language. And the five of us actually got paying gigs in schools and little festivals here in town and in the big nearby city. I wrote comedy things and we did acting. We did a one-act play and we did little skits, song and dance. We danced in the wheelchair and so on. And so that was the experience of acting that I created.

*How about with directing?* I like it a lot. I like all aspects of it. Yes, I love directing. My controlling personality is perfect for it because the director is the voice. Also have to do everything. So let's see, the progression is that I started seriously working on my writing, the community college period was very productive for me. The acting started, the performing started, the writing got better. I went to a playwriting class for a while. And from that some of my things were produced at the community college. Eventually one of my pieces, a full-length play, was produced here in town. A couple of my things were produced in a little theater in the big city a few miles down the road. So I went from doing the acting to doing the writing of it and other people acted in it, and then from there it was just a real easy step to directing other people's work.

*Are there any frustrations in the theater work for you?* Having enough energy to maintain it. Each of these projects took a heck of a lot out of me, but I was wanting to do it so badly that I was quite willing to try.

## MUSIC

*Tell me about you and music in just the same way you told me about theater.* Okay. My dad is a musician and a music teacher, and so music has been part of my life. [laugh]. And so we had a small family band, and we would sing, Dad played every instrument, but piano was his major instrument. My mother played the violin, my father played the piano plus everything else, Dwight played the saxophone, Jake tried the guitar, Lydia didn't do a lot in that area. And so really the family orchestra was Mom, Dad and me, with Dwight kind of hanging in there a little bit. I can remember us driving at night over to visit or spend all day with relatives, and we'd be doing three-part harmony and singing all the old songs, and it was just a part of tradition. We had in the house a German trumpet, trombone, we had the fiddle, we had a guitar, mandolin – always a piano.

*What about you? What ones do you play?* Five of them, they're all strings. I started with the violin in the fourth grade. Well, I started with the piano in the first grade, Dad teaching me, well before the first grade it was too soon. So fourth grade started the violin, so that was my main instrument. I remember one of my instructors saying to me, "If you don't practice, I'm not going to have you as a student any more because there's no reason I have to go through this kind of torture!" [laugh] It was that lazy thing again, you know. I didn't put out a lot of effort because apparently it was not a great love of mine. I mean, music I love, but apparently not at that point. So I went to orchestra from the fourth grade through junior high, and then at 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> grade when I started high school, I dropped and didn't do orchestra any more. But, of course, it was a part of the family.

Got married, and then we started moving around, and I decided I wanted to play guitar, so I started teaching myself guitar. And then I started the tradition of singing instead of doing story time at night with the children, I would do a song time. And so I would have the guitar out and we would sing songs together, sort of trying to keep up that tradition we had in our family.

And then I picked up the 5-string banjo and then the mandolin. *How about singing?* I love singing as well, and I love harmonizing, but there's a joint right under my vocal chord, and it's been deforming over the years, and so now I get sort of a hoarse, gravelly sound when I try to sing. And sometimes what'll happen is that area gets either swollen or irritated, and it will go into a spasm, and I go, "Ahhh," and I can't get air for a while. I miss that probably more than the instruments.

*Were there any conflicts or tensions for you around music?* No, it's always enjoyable. I was frustrated that I couldn't do better than I could do. *Which was easier and most enjoyable for you – the music or the theater?* Theater. *The theater was most enjoyable?* I guessed the opposite based on your dreams, so here's the question: in your dreams, the way we've looked at them so far, the music dreams have a lot of positive emotion, and music seemed to be a solace. Yes. *But the theater dreams often have tensions. The actors don't do what you want or people often don't pay attention. The audience is talking.* Yes, and I don't remember my lines, and the audience doesn't give a damn what I'm doing up there, yeah. *Why do you think there is that contrast*

*between the theater dreams and the music dreams?* Hmm, well the level of the beauty of the music in my dreams is not the level that I can manage in real life. *It's more beautiful in the dreams?* Oh, it's exquisitely beautiful in the dreams. I can remember waking up and just being, just emotionally touched by the beauty of the music that I have dreamt. But I can't, I'm just an average music person.

*I'm very interested to hear that the music itself is beautiful,, but in your music dreams people are happy and the emotions are pretty positive, too. In the theater dreams, there's often frustration.* Well, maybe I considered theater more challenging. It is fraught with tension, I mean, there's no doubt about it. I'm always terrified I'm going to forget my lines. I have a big thing about not being able to memorize it well enough because I'm just terrified I'm going to get out there and, "Ahhh," the words won't be there, because it has happened occasionally. And so that is a real strong tension. As to the audience not paying attention, I've been fascinated with that one myself because in my dreams it seems like every audience is either miles away, or the stage is incredibly tall and I can barely see them, or they're talking and not paying any mind. And I'm quite sure that has to do with my sense of inadequacy or having the power to be able to pull people's attention. I'm excellent at attention-getting. [laugh] My friends have remarked that it's just quite amazing, "Here you are again, the center of attraction. How did you do that?" And I won't be aware that I did that.

## **DATING AND ROMANCE**

*Tell me about dating and teenage romance.* I was a shy person, but I had a boyfriend in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. He was my very first boyfriend. This was in another state. And he invited me to his home for dinner. It was quite a big thing. I wrote a love note that got intercepted, the teacher and, oh, you know, it was just total embarrassment. That was my first encounter. Then there was this long period of time where I mostly worshipped from afar all the popular guys, you know, that kind of thing. I remember going to a dance in junior high, just praying I wouldn't end up being a wall flower. And one guy did dance with me, so that was great. High school – let's see, when I was a junior, I went the spring dance and that kind of thing. And there was a guy named Nate who invited me out a couple of times. A guy named John took me a big show at a theater in a big nearby city, and it was quite exciting. But my first love was Darryl, and he was in my senior year. So up until then, I had occasional dates, oh God, yes, there was Gary [laugh] – oh yeah!

*Some of those names, appear in the later dreams.* Yeah, and some of them in the very early dreams, and certainly some of them, well, the Nate that shows up later is not the original Nate. So there's like a couple of dreams with him in the beginning, in the '60s. No, it was out in my teenage diary. I picked up some of my dreams from there in the '60s, yeah. So there were a couple of dreams about Nate and about John. Oh, that was a college John. But anyway, so yeah, there were occasional dates and going to the dance and, you know, that kind of thing. And then the summer before my senior year, I was hanging out flirting with Darryl and we started dating, and then started getting pretty serious and went steady. And then we were going to get married, and he was my first love. I fell in love with him.

*Was he the guy that went off to the Navy?* He's the guy that went off into the Navy. *So off he went to the Navy, and then?* Yeah, we graduated and he went off to the Navy, Howard went to a big-name university out of the state, Howard's girlfriend Shirley went to beauty school and I went to the little local college. We just spread on the wind. *So you knew Howard then?* I did. Our school lockers were close together. So he was kind of flirting with me that whole year, and I can remember going roller-skating and Darryl and Howard would actually be there, and I'd take turns roller-skating with them..

*Okay, then so he went off to the Navy and that kind of ended it?* What happened was that we decided we would not go steady, but we were still going to get married, but we could explore with other people, that kind of thing. It kind of broke my heart, and I found out in an indirect way that he, when we were going steady, he was going out with some other woman at the Navy base, and so I felt terribly betrayed. So I started going out with

Howard, and then there was a third gentleman by the name of Pete, and all three of them asked me to marry them, so it was quite a ...*But by then you didn't want to marry Darryl?* I was so angry and felt so betrayed that at that point, I don't know what it is about this, but I, when I said, "That's it, we're done. I'm dating these other guys, you know," it's like, "Oh no, please take me back, you know, and I'll be, forgive me, etc., etc." But by then I was done, I was out, and very, very angry and was not willing to trust him again. So he was going to buy the engagement ring and we were going to get married, but that's it. I wouldn't talk to him, wouldn't answer his letters back. And he wrote a couple of letters to my girlfriends, and, "Oh, you know, I've learned my lesson the hard way."

*Do you save those kind of letters?* I do have his letters, yes. I have some from Howard, I have some from Pete and I have some from, you know, so I save them. I have a box full of my memorabilia box, it has my love letters and the scrapbook from high school. *Tell me a little about Pete.* He's not in my dreams very much. He is a best friend of a cousin of mine, and I just loved his sense of humor. And it was, as I said, best friends with my very best favorite cousin. And so he started asking me out after Darryl and I broke up, and then he went into the Navy. And we would see each other when he would come back on leave, and we wrote letters back and forth, and when he asked me to marry him, I said no.

*Didn't know him that well or didn't like him?* No, of the three, I didn't know him as well. And I didn't have as strong feelings for him. My dad said to me, "Remember this, no matter what you decide to do, remember that you were asked three times." *Maybe this is the place to discuss the development of your relationship with Howard.* He was going steady with Shirley at that point. We went on double dates together, and I was in the front seat with Darryl and he was in the back seat with Shirley. *So you and Shirley were friends, or those two guys were friends?* Well, they were on the track team together. They weren't friends-friends, but I don't know how we were together.

*How did his relationship with his high school girlfriend end?* They just disappeared. I mean, he went off to school and she went to a local beauty college, and they were in two different worlds. And I don't think they were serious. And Howard was very intelligent and capable, and had quite a mind in terms of math and physics.

*So you knew Howard fairly well before you were involved with him?* Yeah, uh-huh. But I was in a fine state of denial, as I have learned through the years, in terms of our relationship. By that I mean I convinced myself that I loved him after a period of time, but when I look back, I realize it was a real major....

*After you broke up with Darryl, and were kind of through with Pete, is that when he was....* When he became to the forefront. *He was giving you a lot of attention?* Yeah, he was courting me, uh-huh. *And how long before you were married?* It was two years, yeah. A year and a half. *And when did the relationship become negative or there were always doubts?* I had a sense even at the beginning that [sigh], I started having the pains that led to my disability one week before we were married, and so interwoven in my psyche is the pain of my disability and the pain and experiences of the relationship with Howard. I think we needed each other on a whole lot of different levels.

## **DIVORCE**

*How old were you, and how old was the youngest child when this marriage ended?* I was 30, almost to the, well certainly to the month, and my children were 7, 4-1/2 and 2-1/2. And that's when I chose to leave the children with Howard, so that he was the custodial parent and I was the visiting parent. It was a mutual agreement that we came up with that felt like it was best for all parties. *Was he here at that time?* We were in another state far from here when that happened. *So did you expect him to stay there?* Yes, I did expect him to stay there, and he did for the next year or so. Then he moved to another far away state, and then he ended up in

still another state, and two of the three children still live there. So I knew there would be a lot of distance, physical distance between the girls and I.

*Did you go into therapy?* Well, I had some, not a lot, but I did some. When I was, let me see, we were already married. I was going to the university. I started having irregular heart beat, so I started having fear around that. So I went to the campus health center, and I was also in a great deal of denial about the difficulty I was having in my relationship with Howard and so I had some counseling for a short period of time. I was particularly interested in marital counseling, and they handed me a book, and said, "You and your husband take this book. It's a self-help course." And that lasted 25 minutes. He was not interested.

So that died, and then we moved to another state after I graduated, and this was like, oh, maybe eight years into the marriage. And I was just having such a hard time with the relationship that I decided I would go to group therapy. I wanted him and I to go to therapy. He wouldn't go to therapy, so I went to therapy. He thought that it was my problem anyway. So I did group therapy for, I don't know how long, at least six months I would think. And at that time he and I had our first separation so that I was exploring the possibility of actually living on my own and not being in the relationship. Then we got back together, we got on for another year or so. And at that point I was really clear, and finally worked it out so that I knew what I needed to do. And so again we had another separation with intent to divorce. And at that point he was interested in counseling, and we went a couple of times together, but at that point I was psychologically not able to try to work with the relationship. So we did a very short period of time there, and then I went through all the crashing and burning of the operations, and then I went to my master's program.

*How did the relationship unravel?* I can't say that there was any particular moment, there's no particular traumatic event or something that happened. I do remember when I was graduating from the university, we were five years into the marriage, and I remember a girlfriend of mine was breaking up with her husband, and I invited her to live with us, and people said to me, "That's dangerous. Don't do it, you know. She'll move in on your husband." And I just laughed and said, "That's okay with me." I was asking for it, you know. And I was also simultaneously unaware that I was asking for it. I mean, if somebody said, "Well, how's your marriage going with Howard," I'd say, "we have our usual troubles, you know, like anybody does." And I was totally in denial in terms of how seriously, emotionally disconnecting it was for me.

*Did he get involved with this woman?* I think so. *You never knew for sure?* Sexually I don't know if they did. I know friendship-wise they certainly did. And I actually, I do remember feeling pain because I watched him being emotionally responsive to this other person when he was unable to give that to me, and that the glue wasn't there to hold us together. It wasn't there. *Does she ever appear in a dream?* No, never in a dream. *You didn't feel any rivalry with her?* No, I really didn't.

*After the divorce, did your feelings gradually change, or did they stayed pretty much the same?* It took a lot of years of evolution, but in fact I watched myself go from extremely painful anger, hardly able to mention the word marriage or Howard without practically spitting, just being dramatic about the whole thing. That at the beginning, and the nightmares of Howard wanting me, or finding myself back in the relationship. Oh man, they were just, oh. And now I have Howard is back dreams and they're okay. I had a couple, I had a couple more even in the year 2000. He's still there. But it is changed. A forgiveness phase happened. Years and years and years, anger, anger, anger, and slowly over that time learning more about myself, how I operate, how he operates, and through the dreams themselves I was able to let go of a lot of the anger and get more in touch with the sadness, the incredible sadness of this human being who could not get beyond his extremely dysfunctional upbringing with two alcoholic, raging alcoholic mentally ill parents that, they destroyed him as far as I'm concerned.

*Why do you still have those dreams? Besides, it looked like they were becoming more benign. They are becoming more benign. But then there pops up these horrible ones, he's trying to rape you. Oh no, oh, when did that happen? That was one in the last batch you gave us. That's right, that's right. I have to think about that. But you feel they've become more benign, or they don't upset you as much? In general they're much more forgiving. "Oh, he's there." In fact, I just recently wrote one down, maybe within the last, certainly within the last month, that was just, "Oh, hi, how are you doing," just very relaxed and comfortable. It didn't feel fearful. I didn't feel, although this morning I had a Howard dream without Howard. It was a Tom dream, but he was behaving just as the Howard dreams. But I get off the subject.*

*It's not off the subject actually. In your subjective feelings, are there other people, relatives of yours that act like Howard? That you feel your relationship with them is like your relation with Howard? My mother. One of my research assistants who has studied your dreams wanted me to ask you about that because she said, "It just feels like Howard and her mother are so similar in her view."*

Yeah, I have five difficult people in my life: Howard, my mother, my brother Jake, Ellie and Charla. And these people and I struggle really hard, and I think that there are obviously differences, but I think that there is a similar pattern in all five of these people. And they are my teachers and my most difficult relationships. *I asked your friends which of your relationships cause the most frustrations, and they named the people you just did, although they don't have any sense of Jake.* No, he's not as strong. And I don't think I talk about him much. *You don't speak of him much to your women friends.* No. Actually, I have spoken of him and our struggles to maintain a pleasant relationship, but not as much, certainly, as the others.

*How do Howard and your mother link up in your mind? Oh, they're both distant emotionally. My mother is an angry, isolating person, and she also has good things too, don't get me wrong. But she and I have had a personality clash as long as I can remember. I feel that she keeps herself so distant that I didn't feel I was getting nurturing mother love. I told Mary Sue once that the love of my mother is like carrying a barbed blue baby blanket, you know, with barbs in it. It's supposed to be soft and cuddly and loving, but in fact, she was sharp and critical and negative and physically distant.*

*What kind of a person was Howard, aside from your relationship? He's an egghead. He would be a nerd. What kind of degrees did he get? Well, he got his bachelors in math, he got his masters. He was a National Merit Scholarship winner, and then he stopped school at the prestigious university, and came home, and we got married. He started back at the state university. He worked, went to school, worked, went to school, had babies, etc., etc., and then finally got his B.A. Then we went to a far away state and he got his masters in geophysics and then he was going on for his Ph.D. at still another university, when the divorce stuff started happening, and he did not complete his Ph.D.*

*What did he then do for a living? He worked in an energy company in two different states, in the geophysics part of it, and then he ended up working himself up into a vice president position and was doing very well financially for a while. And then that company went bankrupt. And he never really recovered from all of that, and ended up selling insurance and water filters for a while. So, the poor guy...*

*What kind of a father was he? On one level, very good. He did certain things better than I. He's very methodological and tidy and organized, and so he would make sure that the kids' hair was brushed well and he attended to details and kept things going. In that respect he's a very good, and I knew he would be resourceful and he would always make sure that there was money and they would get what they needed. I mean, I'd be on welfare. But emotionally they all paid that same price. He wasn't, they all three struggle with – Ellie in particular, Dovre, my oldest daughter, and Paulina, my youngest, not as much – with his lack of emotional connection to them. They know intellectually that he loves them, but they feel a lot of pain around him not being able to share in any way that they can feel.*

*What's your sense of the dreams that you have of him? How are they like and not like your relationship with him, or your waking sense of him, your waking thoughts about him?* In the earlier years the dreams were just exact experiences of my life with him, so it was real life stuff. He really did beg, and he really did try to keep me back in the relationship. He really wanted the relationship to stay. I was unable to do that. My anger at his closed emotional stuff was very strong in the dream, it was very strong in my life. When we started getting toward the softening years, the forgiveness dreams as I call them, especially in 1997....

*Was that before or after he died?* Actually they started not too long before he died. I really find it fascinating that right around the time of his death was very interesting, there were forgiveness dreams. We in real life had not together progressed that far, so it's like the dreams moved on to the next logical things. Certainly in real life I have experienced that sadness about him, about a man incomplete, a man unable to break free of the real painful stuff that he had to go through as a young man growing up with his parents. And he was unable to break through that, to make change. So the sadness would be there, but I think the dreams expressed it more vividly than I would have in real life.

*So after you were divorced, there was still a lot of tension? Yes. Did you see him much?* We didn't see each other hardly at all, but we'd talk on the phone occasionally because of matters of the kids. I had them in the summers and so on, and talking to him, hearing his voice on the phone would ruin my day. I mean, it was painful! It would just throw me back into that space. I called it the voice of the dead man. It was just very monotone, very disconnected. One time, right before we had the divorce, a friend of mine and I went to an outdoor music concert, and it was raining real bad and the rear wheel, I guess it was, was rocking off the axle. And we damned near killed ourselves. I mean, the wheel was going to fall right off, and we were sliding and fishtailing around curves, and fortunately made it. And I called him up from the gas station the next day, and my voice was shaking and I was, I said, "That was so scary. I mean, there I was and I was driving and it was dark and rain and we could have died!" And he says, "Hot damn! I knew that mechanic made an error about that wheel, and I'm going to go back and get my money back." And I said, "HELLoooooooo!" [laugh] He didn't get it. He didn't get it. And that kind of thing would break my heart.

*There's often positive emotions mixed in your Howard dreams. Why is that?* Well, I just expressed surprise, but I can readily agree that there's sadness in there. Actually I can vaguely remember now a few things like walking together in a park or something like that. *Of course, often it will start positive and then it turns negative.* Yeah, I guess, I guess I don't see that as easily as I see the negative.

*Are there any dreams about him that stand out for you, that depict your relationship with him, that you thought, "This is an incredibly accurate portrayal."* The beginning ones, I would wake up, I was back in bed with him, I'm in relationship with him, and I just am filled with just awful feelings of being trapped. "Oh God, you know," being trapped in the marriage was a strong feeling when I was in the marriage. And so there I was and I couldn't understand why I was there, but I knew I was stuck. So those are real, those depict exactly the way I felt, especially in the latter part of the marriage.

*Also, related to pain, was sex painful physically related to your disability?* Sometimes extremely, yeah. He'd be gone for like 12-24 hours working, and I was in extreme pain. I mean it was like the pain was incredible. I was extremely hungry because I could only fix these 12 pieces of toast in the morning. It was all I was able to manage. And then he'd come home and he would want to make love. And I was exhausted, I had been isolated. I wanted to talk, I wanted to eat, you know. I wanted to, you know, but he wanted to make love.

*Were there babies at that time?* This was the first year or so. No babies at that time. Okay. So he would cajole and whine and carry on. He would not let me go to sleep until, you know, and finally the classical, "Oh Christ," you know, and do it, that kind of crap. And it would hurt, and I would cry. *So the dreams where he's demanding sex were real.* Oh yeah. Howard, being unable to express love emotionally in any affectionate way, did it through sex. And so for him, at least the way he described it to me, because God knows we've gone

through this a million times (he and I trying to work out why isn't this working out?), and for him that was an expression of love, that he cared. To me it felt like he had a sexual appetite and a sexual need, and the more he would come at me to get it, because he would be manipulative, he would be extremely nonromantic and, you know, all that groovy stuff that always works, very straightforward, very pragmatic, and pushing, pushing, pushing. I'm losing my track because I'm emotionally involved here.

*Let's take a little breather and think about all this in terms of dream theory. We seem to get an excellent picture of relationships in dreams. We get an excellent picture of relationships in terms of the feel of them or the ratio of aggression to friendliness, who initiates, all of that. And yet the puzzle comes with those horse dreams, and where do all those water dreams come from? Or even your smoking dreams, when you haven't smoked for 20 years."*

## **HER DAUGHTERS**

*Tell me about your and your daughters.* I had three girls, and the births were wonderful. The raising of the children was extremely difficult because of my disability, so there was a lot of frustration and bad feelings about myself as not being able to be a good mother. I mean, I was an okay mother and all, but I had a lot of pain and emotional trauma around trying to be able to keep up with them energy-wise and so on. So those were traumatic events. Then somewhere in the middle of there I started back to school.

My most serious traumatic experience was the moment when I had to choose to leave my children with my husband as custodial person, and then I had them for the summer and Christmas breaks and things like that. And then I chose, for all kinds of good reasons, to be in the daddy role. I mean traditionally up to that time Mama took the kids and Daddy came and visited. Now I was in the Daddy role, and that has always been a painful experience, but one that my daughters and I have worked through. I think a lot of the cat dreams have to do with my daughters, as a matter of fact. So I was labeled a runaway mother because that's how they were talking about women who became feminists, who then left their families to find themselves, you know, that kind of thing. So people were looking at me along those lines.

*Tell me about the daughter who is most difficult for you.* Ellie, my middle daughter, is bipolar, which I didn't know when we were having our most difficult times. Let me back up on Ellie, if I may. When she was 14, she ran away from her dad's home with the intent of being able to convince us that she had to come live with me. She wanted very much to come live with me. So she ended up in a runaway shelter. I went there and met with the counselors and met with Howard and made the decision that she would, in fact, move out with me. I knew it was going to be hell on wheels because she was already a rebellious, difficult teenager with Howard and his second wife. With them, they had her going to a counselor; they didn't know what was going on. Nobody picked up on the fact that she was bipolar yet. They were still thinking – and I was still thinking – rebellious teenager.

A lot of hard times with this gal. So she came out to live with me, I'm teaching at the community college, she was going to high school. And it was hell on wheels. I mean, she would do her homework and then not take it to school, and so she was flunking. And then I'd get the call from the principal saying, well, we found out that she's been stealing money from a fundraising effort that they were doing for the choir. So there were lots of those kinds of things. There were lots of secretive stuff about boyfriends, and it was just really hard to get a handle on who this was, this person I was trying to raise all of a sudden. And she was in her junior year, she was running around with a man named John, who ended up being the father of Charla, who was also bipolar, and Ellie ran away from home and she was on the streets. She was sneaking back into my garage at night, and then sneaking out in the morning, that kind of thing.

I was beside myself, trying to, you know, wondering what was happening and how to get hold of her. And they came into the house and stole a credit card and some money and this and that. I called the police, the police came over. So it was an extremely difficult, traumatic time. She eventually agreed to go to counseling, so Howard and I set it up so that she was at Treatment Center where we met and had counseling. At that point she announced she was pregnant. She dropped out of school.

*She was how old at that point?* She was 16 or 17, very young. And she was in relationship with this guy John, so they lived in an apartment together all through the pregnancy. John disappeared when the baby, Charla, was born, and I was the one that was in there holding her hand in delivery. Within a month of Charla's birth, John was out of the picture, and at that point, he had been presenting himself as bisexual, and soon after that, he and his boyfriend declared that they were homosexual, and off they went. Charla can tell you precisely how many times she's seen her father. I think it's five, maybe six. She can tell you how many hours he's spent with her and what he did. So Ellie, when Charla was two, moved back in with me for a while.

*At that time she was more relational with Charla?* How do I describe Ellie relations? Ellie is egocentric and narcissistic. Whatever is important to Ellie is Ellie, and the other stuff, if she has any extra energy left over, she can occasionally be there for me or be there for Charla. Charla would wake up early in the morning, like any normal two-year-old would, and want to get out. And she would get out, and because she wasn't getting – it was like Ellie was emotionally glazed over, and Charla was desperately trying to connect with this woman. And so she would be misbehaving, noisy, she'd do anything she could to get this woman to pay attention to her. Even if it was a negative attention, it was better than nothing.

So Ellie purchased a lock and put it on the outside of Charla's door and locked it. And so in the morning Charla would be beating on the door, screaming, "Mommy, Mommy," and Ellie would sleep through. Well, I went through three days of that, and I pulled Ellie aside and I said, "If I'm in charge of her, let's unlock that door. I can't live with this." "All right, but you'd better not let her bother me." I was pissed at Ellie, I was hurting for Charla, so now it was Grandma's job, so she'd pop out of the door and she'd crawl in bed with me, and we'd talk and read stories and that sort of thing. So what I, I was the peripheral person trying to pick up the pieces around Charla. Ellie just wasn't there. She feels tremendous guilt over it, and she also keeps trying to convince herself and others that she really wasn't a bad mother. And I try real hard not to talk about being a bad mother. She's a mother with bipolar.

*How realistic are those depictions in your dreams of your interactions with Ellie?* Some of them are very realistic. When I'm angry at her for messing up my space, or if I'm angry at her for not paying attention to Charla, those are very real. That I felt. I feel strong anger. She has isolated everybody from her because of her total narcissistic, she'll connect with you when she needs something or when she's out of here, you know. So Howard's second wife dropped her years ago, and Howard dropped her years ago. The sisters have tremendous resentment and have strong negative feelings. *Does she feel any connection to either of them?* She feels rejected by all of them. And she sometimes feels rejected by me because I'm not willing to just say, "Well, you know, I understand perfectly; it's your bipolar," you know. I get pissed at her for harming Charla.

## **DEREK**

*Tell me the story of your relationship and feelings about Derek, who comes into your dream life in the mid-1990s for two years, appearing in 44 dreams that could be the basis for an interesting study in themselves.* He just kind of suddenly appeared. I believe I saw him the first time at a dance improvisational weekend in Fall, 1994. I looked over and here was this good-looking guy in a wheelchair with a wonderful smile, and I remember thinking at the time, "This guy would never pay any attention to me," and just kind of let go of it. We were introduced, and that was it.

*How old is he?* He's 12 years younger than I am. *And at that time, five-six years ago, you were about 50ish, and he was in his late 30s?* Yeah, he came to my birthday party. I was involved in some theater project or dance project that he became involved in. I got invited to write a skit for a, that was September, so it was the Ban the Book Month, so we were all going to get together and do all these wonderful things about Civil Rights and humanity and so on. And I needed a disabled guy to be in this skit with me. And I had met him at the improv, as I had said, and it was some other connection and I can't remember what it was, as to why it occurred to me to connect with him. I invited him to come and be a part of this, and he agreed to do that. And so we would have meetings in my apartment – he and I and a couple of other – oh, I invited him to be in my play-writing group. That was it!

How did I get to that? So we had a play-writing group that would meet once a week, and we would critique each other's work and we'd read each other's work and so on, and so he was sort of a part of that. And one day he showed up at my door with a big grin on his face and a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and the next week he waited until everybody left and we started having this really intense talk. That was it – I was writing a play – it's coming back. I was writing a play and I was writing it based on, I had asked actors to come and improv scenes and ideas that I had, and I would take this information and go back and write the play. And he was one of the actors I invited to do that. So we had rehearsals that we were together at, and the reading of the play with the playwright group. And so everybody left and he was asking me about what I was really writing about with this play, and I said something like, "I believe we're all angels to each other," it was a very spiritual thing. And he just started grinning because that tied right into the kinds of beliefs he had, and from then on it felt like a courtship. I mean, he was warm, he was affectionate, he was very interested. We started talking. He started calling me up and we would talk about physical pain. He has an unusual nerve pain in his gut that is just, can't be touched by painkillers. I have cried pain all my life, and so we would talk pain, we would talk death. I don't know if I mentioned it or not, but he's bipolar. Badly so.

*Does a doctor say that, or is it your inference?* Doctors say it. He sees a psychiatrist, he's on Lithium, and he is paralyzed because he was in a psychotic episode and threw himself off of a precipice, a building, in India, and broke his back. And so he's a mountain climber. He's fascinating. He was a mountain climber, and a wild mountain man kind of a dude, previous to the incident. And so he wrote a sort of an autobiographical account of that experience, and he brought it to me as a writer. And we were interested in dream work together. He's a counselor; I'm a counselor. We just had so much in common. And more and more and more I was wanting to be in this person's life. I liked spending time with him.

It just escalated in terms of, my God, what is going on here? Is this a possibility of a relationship? It doesn't seem, you know, I'm twelve years older, I can't imagine that this good-looking fellow would be interested in me, but he was clearly sending me signals that he was interested in me, and I was clearly interested in him. *He may have been interested in you in terms of your mind and your work?* I do believe that it was in terms of friendship and my mind and my work and our connections, yes, but unfortunately what he did with me and with all the other ladies in his life, is that he comes across using the language of romance and love. And I think that's part of his bipolar stuff too. So I was getting strong messages. No, I was getting mixed messages, and I was real unclear about whether this was just in fact that was he was an exuberant, dramatic person who talked in the language of love.

*Did you know by then that he was bipolar?* Yeah, the third time we kind of met together to start really talking about stuff, he said, "By the way, did I tell you I'm bipolar?" And I remember saying to myself, "Of course," because I attract men who, I call it their fatal flaw, have alcoholism or bipolar or they have something like Howard, not being able to get beyond, these are good potential human beings who have a tremendous barrier, and can't get over that barrier. I'm attracted to those kinds of guys, and there he was. So when he said, "I'm bipolar," I just went, "Of course. Tell me you have a drinking problem, and we're all set," you know. God! And I remember the sense, the feeling of love was all blooming and new in me, regardless of whether he was, all my worry signals were going off and at the same time I didn't give a damn because I really liked this guy! And so I

remember just thinking, I'm not going to say no to life. If this crashes and burns as most of them have, then it crashes and burns and I have another play to write! [laugh]

And so for about a month we were talking for hours, we were connecting frequently. Were you talking about relationship? No, we were talking about pain and life and dreams and, yeah, we'd talk about love, but not about our relationship. Well yes, we did. I can remember with the candles and we're looking out the window, and he was incredibly emotionally intense, quite the exact opposite of Howard. And so the room would be just alight with all this stuff, and he was talking about loving me and relationship, using those terms. Later as I pieced it all back together, he was not talking about he and I in a sexual relationship necessarily, but as a cosmic friendship connection, soulmate kind of a thing, which is all very nice too, but I just happened to have the other feelings as well. And this was rather amazing, I feel, and embarrassing too. But I was very sexually excited by him too and he was a real turn on as far as I was concerned. And I had not been having my menstrual periods for years because of medications I take, and they started up again. And I had to go to the doctor and say, "My, this is kind of weird, after ten years this is starting up again."

And he said, "Oh, my God, you must have cancer or something," and did some testing. And I said at the time, I said, "No, I don't think it's cancer. I think it's love." [laugh] So anyway, I remember him coming to my birthday party with flowers and a special gift, and I just felt on top of the world. It was very romantic, it was very dramatic, it was wonderful. And then very soon after that I think I scared him because I did tell him that I loved him, and he immediately, I guess, pulled back, scared. And so for the next year and a half, how long was it? – I don't know, but we went to potlucks at his house, we did dream work together, we ran a peer support group for disability kids, people, together, we co-facilitated it, and more and more and more – three, four, five times a week we were doing something together.

*He didn't run so far that you didn't work together? Yeah. Did you still hang out and talk on the phone long hours? Oh yes, yes. I knew that this was not going to be a traditional relationship with sex and all that sort of thing. I think that's why the dreams, the Derek dreams, are very sexual.*

*When, after you met him, do you think you started to dream about him? When did you have sexual dreams? That would be easy to check. I couldn't tell you right now, I'm not sure, I don't remember it in that kind of sequential order. But I do know when my birthday was, and we could go and check that time period very quickly on the computer. It was very close to my birthday that I told him how I felt.*

*So the dreams become sexual there for a while, and that reflects how you were feeling? Yes.*

*And then there's a dream in which you were really unhappy, and you cried. Did that follow this disappointing realization you'd developed? We're going to have to work out a timeline of what actually happened in the relationship, and then we're going to have to go back and look at the dreams, because I don't know all the answer to that. And I don't know if they directly correlated.*

I'll go get my Derek file and there might be some things that I've written down with dates in there and see what we can do to substantiate my memory. That would make sense.

*Some of those dreams give the feeling of betrayal in that he may have done some things that were betrayals. Did he do any overt things that really hurt you? Well, he did, but his intention was not to hurt me. What he had done before he met me and continues to do now, because it's a part of who he is, is he goes from one caring woman to the other. And so right toward the beginning, while I was having all these really strong feelings of wanting to be in relationship with him – we'd go to a potluck and he was obviously moving on one of my friends, and I would see he would bring in an ex-girlfriend, or a new one, he would become interested and all this would be happening while I'm just sitting there. And so I was feeling jealous, I was feeling hurt. I also*

intellectually knew and understood that that's who he is and that's what he does, and so I didn't feel like he was, I think he was, I felt he was unconscious as opposed to being a mean and evil person.

*Is she disabled?* No. Most, if not all, of the women that he connects with are not disabled. He attracts attractive women who are able-bodied and younger, you know, his age and so on, naturally. I mean he has a certain style of woman that he is attracted to – clean-cut, natural, woman who doesn't do a lot of make-up, and she's very spiritually oriented.

What finally happened was that he chose to actively court a woman that was in the dream group, and I considered dream group sacred ground. And he inappropriately chose to let me know what was going on there in the dream group, and I just lost it. I was jealous as hell and pissed and I got very emotional and threw them out. *The whole group, or just the two of them?* No, the group at that point was just the three of us actually, that particular time. *So it was like a triangle?* Yes, in a way it was. She was kind of unconscious. She just assumed, like everybody else there, that I was just his very good friend, which I, in fact, was. But she did not, nor most people did not, understand the depths of my feelings toward him – and so I could see like the beginning happening in the dream group and then when they came as, “Oh, we went to dinner and we had a wonderful time,” what he was describing was exactly the same routine that he uses every time he's starting to make a move on a woman. She felt terrible when I started crying.

*Did she ever become dreamed about?* No, no, I don't think she did actually. So what happened was, I said, “This meeting has to stop right now. This is sacred space, and this isn't going to happen here. So you guys have to leave.” And Derek knew, he was looking at me. It was like, you know, they did in fact leave, and for days, for several days, he'd try to call, connect, talk, “let's talk about this,” and I was just full of hurt and jealousy and feeling betrayed and that kind of thing. And then he asked if he could bring a friend to help facilitate the two of us talking about this, and I said fine; we did that. And basically what he said was, because we met two or three different times to talk about it, talk through it, because what he wanted to do was to get back on track with the friendship. And what he said to me was – and it really makes sense – was, “I knew this was going to have to happen at some point, and I knew that you would feel, it would be hard. So no matter how I tried to present it to you, it wasn't going to be a good time.”

*Just because it might hurt your feelings, he's not going to change?* Right, that's what he said, yeah. And I said to him, “I completely understand that you and I do not have that kind of relationship, and that, of course, you would have relationships with other people. I just can't stand sitting here watching it. So I'm not saying you're a bad guy, you know, you didn't betray me in the usual sense because it was pretty clear at that point what our relationship was.” I wasn't expecting it to be different. It's just that it hurt so bad, that, what I've watched the other women do is they break up, get pissed as hell with him and go away, and then they come back and they become really strong, supportive friends in his life. And I knew that that was what he wanted to have happen, and I knew that that's probably the logical thing that I should do, but emotionally I couldn't do it, and I knew I couldn't do it. It just hurt too badly to be sitting there and watch him do his thing with other people. And I didn't blame him for that, I just felt it. And so with the pain that strong, I was unwilling to put myself through that, so I just simply chose not to be connected with him.

*So after this mediated session, did that clear the air, or you didn't choose to come closer after that?* Yeah, I chose not to come closer. I don't think we talked about forgiveness. There isn't anything to forgive. I mean, it's not like we were married or had any kind of statement about a monogamous relationship. So I just was real clear that, you know, you have the right to do what you did, and you have the right to continue doing what you're doing, and I just can't bear the pain of watching it. And he understood that. I remember him saying, “God, you are the most powerful woman I've ever met!” which scared the hell out of me, I was shaking. I was shaking, it was terrible. And since then we have met twice. Once maybe a year later and a mutual friend of ours was getting married. We went to the reception, I knew he'd be there. It was my intent to gauge how I'd feel seeing him again.

I wanted to see, I wanted to check out whether or not I'd kind of gotten over that, and I had, in fact. We got there and we hugged and we were happy to see each other and we chatted. And I felt good about it, and I felt good about leaving. I didn't have any problem with that.

*Do you think you dreamed about him after that?* I probably did; let me think. *When do you think the mediation happened?* It was two years or so after we first met, I have to do some digging. I will find out. *When's the last time you saw him, do you think?* I'd say about a year ago. Charla and I were in the park, and I looked up and I said, "God, that guy looks familiar." *That is only the second time you've seen him since the mediation?* Second time since the mediation. *How much time between those two meetings?* Probably a year. I know I've lived here almost three years, and we broke up on, we broke up the April before I moved here. And I moved here like in summer. So three or four or five months before I moved here we had the mediation and the break-up.

*You said, "We broke up."* Yeah, that's the way I saw it. That's the way it felt to me, but we never were together to break up. Yeah, we stopped seeing each other, let's put it that way. *Did the woman ever try to get in touch with you?* Yeah, she wrote me a letter, she apologized, she felt awful. She was a very nice woman. *Did you save that?* I probably did. I don't throw anything away. I'll have to look in the Derek file and see if it's there.

I remember meeting his brother and another relative at a potluck, and then, oh it was his mother. His mother and his brother, and I remember them talking to each other, and I remember the look on the brother's face when Derek said something or did something, and that look, I just identified with it so strongly, "There goes Derek again doing his thing." And I think this is a Derek thing that he does.

Well, I can remember, there was a certain look in his eyes. One time he called me up and he was just really down, and I went over and he was staring into the fireplace. And the pain, you could tell he was having a hard time with the pain. And he looked up at me, and the eyes, the color of his eyes changed, and a violent, scary look. And boy, I wouldn't have crossed him right then. He's told me of incidences in his life where he would get angry and beat the hell out of people, even though he's only about 5' 10" or 5' 11", and very slim.

He does inappropriate things. We went to a party together, and he was in his manic phase, and he spilled juice all over me and slapped me a little bit on my leg, and was laughing and goofing off, and he hates authority and he always has to be the rebel, the different, and that kind of thing. And so he says something to the effect of, "I hate having to apologize to you all the time," because that's what he has to do. You know, and so he will behave inappropriately, and I believe that he truly doesn't get the social, he doesn't have those boundaries that helps him understand that when you're talking love stuff on a spiritual level, but you're using the metaphor of relationship level, and on one level I really did know that that was happening. On another level I was hoping. So I probably created my own web.

*Do you dream of him lately?* No, I don't. I haven't dreamt of him for a long time.

*The only dream in the third batch where he's in there, I think he's just a walk-on. He's around and he's not an interactive, not a heavy interaction with him.* Uh-huh, he pretty much was there, and he was there big, and then he was gone.

## **SEX DREAMS: DISTINGUISHING REALISTIC FROM WISHFUL DREAMS**

*The Derek dreams bring up the question of distinguishing between dreams that are wishful and dreams that are realistic portrayals. These sexual dreams with him are basically wish dreams?* Yes. *But in other dreams a man named Nate appears, and he's been drinking, and then you're annoyed because all he wants to have is sex, but often you do have sex. Now is that a real or is that a fantasy dream?* It's real. *How do those dreams differ, do you think, just in terms of the Derek dreams are more positive? How could we tell, how could we guess the*

*answer was yes with one and no with him? Yes with Nate, no with Derek. How could we figure that out from the dreams?*

I'll have to go back and look at them, too, but the Nate dreams have a whiff of reality. But I also have dreams of being in relationship with men that I'm not in relationship with, and being, they're married and I'm concerned about how that woman will, you know, so I have things that don't happen, same theme. Maybe if we looked at the times in my life when I was sexually active and the times in my life when I'm not sexually active, and then look at the dreams and what happens there, that would be one way to do it.

*Now was Hector a lover? Hector's was a real lover. And Darryl comes into your dreams. Is this the original...? Yes, the original first love, Darryl. But does he ever actually come back into your life as a lover? No. So those are dreams of the past? I think you had some sexual dreams about him. Oh, I think I did, yes, and Darryl and Derek are often intertwined. I was deeply in love with Darryl and I was deeply in love with Darryl, and they're probably the only two that I had that kind of depth of feeling of love for, so those two got incorporated in the dreams. And I never had actual intercourse with Darryl, by the way. We were certainly in the heavy necking, petting direction, but in the late 1950's, early 1960's when you were a good girl, you didn't give it away. And so we never actually completed the act, but we were seriously sexually connected. We just didn't complete the act.*

Are there men you had a mainly strong sensual feeling towards and maybe just kissed, and then had fully sexual dreams about? More often what I had were men that I had some sexual relationships with that I didn't have strong feelings or love for, and that's particularly during the period of time when I was getting my master's and just after the divorce. So there were a fair amount of those, but I don't think there was another one like Derek.

*What percentage of your actual lovers do you feel have appeared in your dreams? I know I dream about Nate, Howard and Darryl and Hector, and Arthur's in there a little bit. So Arthur's one of them, and oh dear, Pat. Andy, I think he was in some dreams. But not everyone.*

*What about sexuality in your dreams with Ginny's husband? [Ginny is her closest friend. Ginny's husband is Ernie.] Well, you know, I watched closely because I have made love to my dad, I have made love to my mother, I have made love to Dwight. I think I married Jake. And when these things first started cropping up, I went, "Oh, my God," "I'm an evil, horrible person." But as I learned more about dream work and what this all can mean, I started feeling more comfortable about it. I did question, could that possibly have been, but I truly don't think that's even remotely a possibility.*

*What was your reaction when you had the dream where you and Ginny were married to Ernie?*

Well, that's interesting too. I've made love to him on several occasions in my dreams. *Do you think you were attracted to him?* I did find him attractive. I find him very interesting, and I don't, I would not in any conscious level contemplate anything like that because, number one, it's real clear that they are so right for each other. Secondly, we would kill each other. I mean, it would not work. But I admire their relationship. There are only two relationships I've ever seen that have ever worked in my estimation. The other is Sherry and Joel, and I don't dream about them very much. *Who are they?* They live across the country, and Sherry was my good friend. She was married to one of Howard's friends. That's how I met her. And we kind of went through the divorces together, so we ended up being roommates for a short period of time while we were all divorcing.

## **ROCHELLE: A NEGATIVE RELATIONSHIP**

*Where do you know Rochelle from? Rochelle I met as a performer when I created my follies shows. I know her through the performances, and she and I were always at odds. She's too much like me.*

*What's your relation with her like, and what's she like?* We don't really have a relationship any more. We began knowing each other, performing together in B Follies, so that was in the early '80s. She is a great deal like me, and so I didn't get along with her very well. We were arguing all the time. I admire and respect her mind and her articulateness, her ability to be a wonderful advocate for disability. She's post-polio, and she's in a wheelchair, and was post-polio as a child, so it's been a lifelong thing. She's older than I am. She's in her mid-sixties, I think. *So there was this tension. Is there also tension because of her sexuality?* Right.

*Is that the core problem, or did that come later?* Well, she came on to me after a while, and wanted, was kind of doing a courtship thing, and I was pretty up front with the fact that I was not interested in having that kind of a relationship. And so she stopped doing that kind of thing, but she talks about loving me, and so I felt uncomfortable. I'm not a very good modern woman. So I just felt uncomfortable. She occasionally calls or sends me emails or, you know, some way to connect or chat, and I'm just not willing to do a whole lot of that. She is a hard person to deal with.

## **CHUCK: A SUPPORTIVE MALE COLLEAGUE**

*Tell me about Chuck. He seemed to be the most positive male acquaintance, but he was never a romantic figure, right?* He was just a good friend. *But he could be in your mind pretty positive. Is that how you felt about him generally? Or is it just in your dreams that he's pretty much a supportive person?* Chuck? I simultaneously would be upset with him and like him, because he has a very generous heart and he took me under his wing and was a bit supportive, and he is an opinionated, biased individual. And so there were parts of him that, "Oh God, Chuck, don't talk to me like that, you know. You're being racist, or you're being biased about women and that sort of thing." But there was something about his heart that was true and good, so I would say....

*The negative side doesn't come through much, if at all, in your dreams.* Yeah, I used to get angry at him because he was very opinionated about women and he was just a basic, nice, chauvinist pig! [laugh]

## **PEOPLE WHO DON'T APPEAR**

*I want to ask you about people who don't appear in dreams. One of your friends said that Ellie's ex-husband, Jerry, has been a guy that you interact with a lot because he helps you with things and he's raising two granddaughters of yours, and apparently doing an okay job of hanging in there. Yes. What I want to ask is, do you have a positive feeling about him? Is he supportive? And do you ever dream about him?* Yes, I have very positive feelings about him. He is very supportive, and I don't think I have dreamt about him. If I have, maybe once.

*What do you think this tells us about dreams? Not about you, but about dreams?* He's a peripheral person in my life on an emotional level. I think that I dream about the people I have the most difficulty with, not the people that are...He's fixing my van, he helps me.

*But sometimes you dream about positive things?* Singing beautiful music, or I'm on the top of a mountain, and it's an absolute gorgeous.

## **CONDITIONS OF SLEEP AND DREAM COLLECTING**

*Do you think there are times, either from your medications or just your state of being, where you're sleeping more lightly? I'm wondering because sometimes the dreams are almost like daydream, like fairy tales. Do they come from the same deep sleep?*

I know what you mean, but the dreams I write down are straight from the dream world. I have on occasion woke up from a dream and then reveried on with the dream. But I rarely write that down, or if I do, I specifically say I woke up and continued the dream thinking this. So I very specifically differentiate those states.

*One of the things that is interesting, too, that we haven't talked about is the way in which there are some dreams that are very realistic, and some are like fairy tales. You're in a castle, or the king is after you. Right, yeah, or I'm the Queen of England. They come from the same place, from the deep sleep.*

*Do you wake up a lot during the night? Yeah, I do, more lately, in the last five years or so. I kind of wake up about 3:30 a.m. and kind of hang out and think until about 5:30, and then I go back to sleep. Do you have to get up for bathroom often? Yeah, well not as much as I used to, but once or twice a night. Now I can usually actually make it through the night without having to get up and do that.*

*What time do you fall asleep? Usually 10, 10:30. When do you think you have your first dream usually? The first dream of the night, and this is not always the case, but when I wake up in terror and it's a really scary nightmare, it is usually my first dream of the night, which is usually around midnight, one o'clock in the morning, that I have those kinds of dreams. And then usually the next set of dreams is the like 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, you know, in the morning kinds of things, and I will sometimes have two or three from that area. They are not as scary. They are much more, well sometimes they're quite beautiful and fairytale-like, as you said, and sometimes they're just stuff about the relationships that I have in my life.*

And I have noticed that sometimes when I wake up and I want to go back to sleep, I'll turn the radio on, and NPR comes on, and so sometimes I fall back asleep with NPR on and I have woken up being aware that I have incorporated material from NPR into my dream. And whenever I did specifically notice that, I wrote it down in my dream work that, so I have five or six or seven what I call my radio dreams where one time the mayor was giving his State of the City address and I wrapped a dream around it, and different things. One time my parents and I, women came in and said that we were planting marijuana in the back yard and they were accusing my parents of raising marijuana. And I was hearing their political philosophies on people who raise marijuana, and I woke up and realized they were discussing marijuana and that sort of thing on NPR. So I've, obviously the outside events will influence the dream, but the dream also captures things of my life, incorporates all of those things together. I think that's fascinating.

*How do you know that the scary dreams are happening earlier in the night? Because I wake up and look at the time, and it's 12 or 12:30. You then write them down or say them at that point? I do. How do you do that?*

Sometimes I have my laptop right there, right by my bed. Before I was writing them down in a journal, and if I was really exhausted, well the scary ones I always wrote down, but some of them that weren't as scary, I'd go, "I'll remember this," and I'll repeat it in my mind a number of times, and sometimes I do remember it and sometimes I forget them. I know for a fact I had three dreams this morning, but I only wrote one down that I could remember.

*When you were a teenager, did you write down a few dreams? I did not write very many dreams down as a teenager. A few of them. You said you retrieved something from a diary.*

From my diary. Those are my 1960 dreams [about ages 18-20] that I recovered from the diaries that are in the dream series. My father said to me once that when I was a child he thought I had a very creative imagination and I was making up stories. I would come, when I was very little, and tell him these stories. And he says, "I realize now that what you were doing, you were telling me your dreams."

*I wanted to ask you about the dream diary from 1960 or so. Did you remember you had some dreams in there when you first started writing down dreams in the mid-1970s? No, it was after I had the long series and I was*

numbering them, and I thought, "Wait a minute, I want to put all of my dreams together," and I remembered at that point that I had very likely written some down. So I went back through my diary and added those to my series.

*What were the time periods when you were keeping a daily diary?* I started when I was 16, so my junior year or my senior year, the beginning part of my freshman year at college. Then there was a short little one, my first year of marriage, somewhere in there, I'm not sure where that is. And then there was this long time of no writing and no dreams or anything written down until the mid-70s when I was going back for my Master's. That's what got me started.

*When you were keeping that diary, did you write your feelings about Darryl and Howard, so you can go back and look?* Oh yes, detailed. *How about the time before the marriage, when you were having those ambivalences? Did you write any of that down at that time?* I wrote the diary up through the first year of college, through the first term of college, and then I stopped writing. *So those diaries might have a lot of positive statements about Darryl in them?* Well, it has some about Darryl and I breaking up and deciding to go out and see other people, and how much I miss him, and why doesn't he write more often, you know, that sense of longing and that kind of thing. So that stuff I've got a little bit of, but I don't have written down when we actually broke up and when I was actually more seriously going with Howard. But I do have letters from Darryl and from Howard from that time period. I may have one letter that I wrote Darryl that I never sent. But I did not write during the marriage. I did not keep a diary. I might have kept one for a month or two.

*So, you have been writing your dreams continuously since the 1970s?* Yes. *But not keeping a diary continuously?* No, little spurts and pieces here and there. *So you wouldn't even have a year continuous of diary?* Oh well, '81 I think I have at least six months of a diary, and then I have at least a full, probably a year in my Master's program. I was pretty keen on writing down stuff. *What year was the Master's program again?* Between '75 and '77. *The reason I ask is that I think the dreams are a little more sporadic at that time.* They start around 1977.

*It might be interesting to look at a continuous diary. Say you have '81. If we looked at those dreams from '81 and then said, "Okay, do we see any connections with this diary?"* When your students wrote to me and asked me questions, they would say things like, "During this period of time when these dreams happened, did you think you were going through a difficult time?" or something like that, and I'd look at the dates, and I would go and find the diary that was, if, and it happened that those were '81 dreams, and so I was able to go to that diary and say, "Oh yeah, I remember. I was going through this." So what I need to do is pull together all my snippets and bits and pieces, I have them, but can I handily put my hand on them right now, I'm not sure.

## **DREAMS ABOUT WATER**

**The following material concerns the dreamer's feelings about water, and includes her comments on several dreams with water in them. It comes from an interview that a student research assistant did with her two years before the longer interview sessions with the dreamer and her friends**

*We are interested in your dreams with bodies of water in them. I know it might be difficult for you, but could you recall where you lived in terms of near what sort of bodies of water, like near the ocean, or did you live near a lake, and did you go to the beach a lot? Did you go boating? Did you ever have a swimming pool?* No, I'm afraid of water. The idea of drowning just terrifies me, suffocating is just, I have this sort of intuitive feeling that I must have had a past life where I keeled over dead that way. I've had an interesting dream about coming from heaven through a shower down into a lake into India and turning into this other person, of a woman who

was dying of drowning. So some psychic person I saw once – I don't have a lot of trust with that – but I played around with it a little bit – said that that was a past life segment or something. So who knows?

But in real life I'm not a strong swimmer, and I've always, I can remember in the fourth grade getting swimming lessons and thinking, I mean, if the water got this high up, I just stopped breathing. It was, you know, an emotional thing, and I thought it was a physical thing. "I don't know, the pressure of the water on my chest, I can't breathe," you know. So I was that afraid of it, and I've never, I don't trust myself to be in water deeper than me unless I have a large inner tube. So boating – I have done those things, and it's not like I have a dramatic fear of it, but I do have a very healthy respect for dangers of being in water.

And so let me see if I can get back to your original question. Okay, the dream series started kind of in the '60s, but there was just a few dreams then, and that was in my home town, which was an hour away from a coastline and some of my favorite memories are going there and parading around in the waves and playing in the sand. So I have a real strong affinity for large bodies of water. I always have. You just feel special, and I like the smell of the air and that sort of thing.

I love the rain, but not being in it. I love being in a room hearing the rain while you're nice and warm and cozy. Any of my camping experiences where we would go to lakes and my father would fish and so on, I mostly hung out and hiked and that kind of thing. I didn't do a lot of stuff in the water. So that's interesting, I think, that in real life I don't get in the water.

*But in your dreams you do.* I do, I frolic in them. Yeah, I just love those water dreams. *Have you had any other powerful or dramatic experiences with water?* Well, around that time he, the guy who was teaching the classes said, "Don't be a baby," and basically tossed me in the water, in the deep end. And so I'm floundering around and I'm looking up at him, and I know I'm drowning. And I'm not doing any of my swimming skills. And I said, "I can't reach," and I was calling for help. And he just stood there stoically looking down at me and said, "You can do it." So I remember that very clearly. It was dramatic. I also remember my mother describing the same kind of feelings around the water. She doesn't like to swim, and she doesn't like to get in the water. She has that same kind of a fear. So that's the only water traumatic experience that I can recall. See, I was too cautious. I wouldn't go out too deep or go out where the rip tides were or anything like that. I was always very careful, so I was never swept away.

*So if you had to rate the intensity of your fear of water from like 1 to 10, 10 being the most afraid, where would you put it?* Probably 6 or 7. Now I do my water exercises in the pool, and enjoy it very much. It's a heated pool, and I have my inner tubes, but I do hang right around the edge. I don't travel out there where I might suddenly drown. And I had a really fun experience doing a ten-mile river run in a rubber raft years ago. It was awesome. And I was again tossed into the raft. It was my ex-husband and his brother before we were married. I was supposed to drive the car, but they said, "You're just going to." I mean, they threw me in, and I was just going to do the first segment.

Well, I had such a blast that I wouldn't get out. I did the full 10 miles, and at the end of the river run, they had a falls, which was a good 10-foot drop, where the water would roll up like that, and I was going down and I could see I was going to be totally immersed in this broiling water. And the only thing you can do is hold on. So I held on and held my breath, and I was quite exhilarated by this experience. So it was fun, and I guess I had a life jacket on, and I didn't once during that trip really worry too much about falling out of the boat and drowning. I was just having a good time. So it's an interesting incongruity, isn't it? So I guess it's 6, because, you know, I don't suddenly clutch up and can't go in the water. I'm just very cautious around it.

*I have about half a dozen of your dreams here, and I was wondering if you would look them over with me and tell me what you can about them. I was wondering if you can possibly tell me some things happening in your life that might pertain to some of the content in the dream, or if not, your interpretation. And this dream is, I have a*

*copy for you, is #0730. I was most interested basically where it kind of starts down a couple lines, "I see a bathtub of hot water waiting."*

Ah, "I see a bathtub of hot water waiting. I just think I might. Bonnie warns me not to. I would love to just relax in the tub. And some men walk in looking for me. I crouch down into my corner more. A man tells me they need my help. His friend had a shooting accident," – my goodness, I've got to remember this one – "and he wants to be a race car driver. The man, my former lover Andy, is embarrassed and hides. I see his glasses with a bullet hole through it. I tell him if that's what he wants me to go for, do it." Okay. I was working at the community college, I have my Master's, I'm fairly secure in my life. I had bought my house, I have some kitties. And Andy is not from that era. He's from about 5 or 6 years back.

Ellie was living with me. She moved in with me at age 14, and as I now know, she's bipolar. At that time I was just having a very difficult time with an at-risk teenager, and so there was a lot of stress around that during that time. I was overworking myself. I was working hard at the community college, full-time as a counselor. I was performing, I was writing, and I was basically keeping myself way too busy and stressed out in that respect. There might be some surgery or something in there on my hand.

*Is there any connection between Andy and Ellie, in terms of qualities in their personalities.* In some respects they are. They're both extremely dramatic and they're sort of there for you and then they're gone. So there are some things that are similar. You know, I have to say something about bathtubs. If you actually looked at just those dreams, I think you'd find a lot of interesting stuff around unusual bathtubs, and one was up on a fireplace mantle while I was bathing. It's almost like there's this baptismal thing or ritual that goes on there. This feels to me like it is warm water and loving feelings, you know what I mean.

It's being able to just be relaxed in this man's arms and why don't I join with this person, you know, in this context of the water and this warm water. So this feels very – I hate to admit it – but very Freudian! [laugh] Very sensual, very connected to relationship, and yet Andy was a real gypsy rover. I mean, he was not a person you connected with in terms of relationship. So it's interesting that I choose him in that dream.

And then doesn't he have a warning? Yeah, now Bonnie is another long-time friend of mine, very steady. Bonnie and Ginny are my two very best friends, and so Bonnie would be a very good guide for me. So this part of me that is like Bonnie is telling me, "Look out," you know, and so I'm bathing in this sensuous, loving, warm thing. And then right after that there's all this violence about men too, and I'm embarrassed and I have to hide. So there's something here about it's not okay, which would be very much in keeping with my family background that says it's not okay to be huggy and touchy and comfortable, and you have to be suspicious and, you know, that kind of thing.

*I have another one, which is from 1988 actually, not too long afterward. Yes, and for the sake of the tape I have to say it's #0907.* [She then reads the first sentence of the dream.] "I am going to experience a ride and it's never been done before, so no one knows if it will work." 1988, it was right about there that I had the traumatic experience of my throat joint becoming deformed, and I would go into little throat seizures and you couldn't get air, and it's like drowning, like dying. And I had to make a decision, do I continue working, and literally work myself to death, or do I go on disability and choose that route? And I'm a hard worker, and it was hard for me to do that. And a lot of my identity's connected with being a writer and counselor and teacher, because I was pretty well known in my little community as a good teacher and that sort of thing. And so when I'm going on a ride, experience a ride that's never been done before, in a way, the first thing that hits me is I was in that place where I was having to make a decision about do I let go of this thing I've built my life to be, and what, you know, what is my ride going to be? So, that's, in that time.

[Back to reading the dream.] "I curl up in a small capsule in a rocket [laugh], it fires off, I fly up and out and over and down and land. Someone is drowning in the ocean. I reach down and can't reach their arms. I dive in

and pull them out. I pick them up and carry them to the hospital. Another man who sort of likes me comes along on my right. I notice there is a chain safety pinned to him and to me and a sign on it, 'Gay Lover.' I am surprised and then notice it is attached to the man I am carrying and not to me. Apparently we need the sign there to fool the authorities so we can get the man to help. I put him on the counter in front of the nurse. I notice I put him down gently because the surface is hard. It bumps(?) with him. I turn him over on the side and I can see water around his mouth as proof for the nurse. He starts breathing." "As proof for the nurse," that's interesting.

*So you basically saved this person from drowning.* I saved this person from drowning, yeah. And there was a lot of flying before, so I'm up in the air and flying around and I'm in this rocket and then seeing the experience, and then I'm down and I'm under and I'm in the water. If this is my unconscious, I am drowning, literally drowning in my own unconscious stuff. I'm heavy into my dream work, by the way, during these years, so that could be part of that. Okay, so I'm rescuing the masculine which is drowning, which may be Jungian?. The guy was something to me, and then there's this gay lover business, and sign so he'd get past the authorities. Hmm. Someone's drowned in the ocean. Yeah, this does feel to me like it's about my experience of literally having to let go of an identity I was very comfortable with and still miss very much.

*One of helping people?* Yeah, well, as a counselor, I really love being a counselor because I have these, I have an intuitive way of being able to see the patterns. It's like what I do with my dream work, and see the patterns, and this is helpful to people. It feels really, really good to be able to do that. I'm also a control freak, and it's really nice to be on the end that does the helping. [laugh] But that's an interesting thing because one of the sets I'm going to work on is this whole business of helping people. That crops up a lot. Okay, can't think of anything else around that dream.

*So the next one is a short one. It's #0958.* [She reads the dream.] "I am looking at images of what went wrong in our marriage. Lots of snapshots, energies. I remember the color black and helping my bad ex-husband set up a shower, tall lot of ungainly pipes between us, and get it set up and the cold water pours out of the shower head." [... taking a cold shower.] "I am fully clothed and find a small sample bottle of shampoo in my shirt pocket. I wash my hair and arms. I feel very invigorated by the shower because it was so cold. I step out and walk jauntily past my ex-husband and all the pictures. A voice – maybe my brother Jake – said, 'Now do me a favor and give him the shampoo. You can work together a little bit.' I realized I had selfishly kept the bottle which only cost 75 cents; I gave it to him." [laugh]

Interesting! A metaphor literally taken. I mean, that was literal; that's not a metaphor. Images, "I take a cold, cold shower." I am fully clothed, and I am washing my hair. And if hair is thought, and if clothing is persona, I am still masked and yet I'm trying to cleanse. And here I am, again my images of what went wrong in my marriage, so I'm clearly going through, you know, how could I have made it better. Could I have done this? Could I have done that? I'm trying to cleanse my mind. I'm going to wash that man right out of my hair! [laugh]

And brother Jake is my younger brother and he has picked up the angry manner of my mother. He's very defensive and it would not be like him to say, "Now do me a favor and," you know, give this guy a break, give him the shampoo and let him cleanse, you know, whether he needs to cleanse too. So this is quite incongruent with how he would behave in real life. So I'm real interested in the fact that it's my brother that gives me this interesting bit of information about, he's my guide literally. And being selfish or not selfish is a big issue in my life too, so I'm feeling, I guess, guilty about the fact that I am keeping to myself this cleansing agent. And a shower, there's a fair amount of showers in these too. That's a shower dream. That would be interesting too, to look at what differences there are between bath and shower dreams.

*Okay, this is #1677, from 1990.* [She reads the dream, often pausing between sentences of comment.] "I am approaching a barn. It is old, dilapidated and ugly. Inside is darkness and rotting, stinking stuff, and I'm supposed to clean up." [laugh] Boy, what a thing. "I don't want to, and as I am walking to the door, I veer away

deciding not to do it. I walk across a grassy pasture to a muddy embankment. There was one right there. I accidentally slip and fall, sliding down the embankment to a muddy area that is like quicksand," which I am deathly afraid of and have never had any experience with in my whole life, and cannot even watch a movie with people going down under quicksand because of the suffocating thing. "I am flat on my back and sinking." Oh, my worst nightmare. "Trapped, and I know there is no way out. I am as good as dead.

My sister Lydia is with me. She is already below the mud line." Oh yes, I remember this one. "I see she is still alive because her eyes open and shut. It is almost time for me to go under. I feel fear and resistance, but I don't panic. I go under and I am amazed I can still breathe. A wash of water goes over us, rising us up floating us out of the mud. I crawl out onto the grass. We get up, hugging each other, walking toward our house, which was around the left side of the barn. There are a series of Quonset huts like married student housing at the university I attended. The first one on the left is ours. It is old, the paint is peeling. I open the door and walk in. I see a blue cotton print dress on the dress form and I say, 'Hi Mama'. I realize it is a symbol of my mother. I see a movement in the bedroom. My "father" [not my real father, a fantasy one] is sick and old and in bed. I don't want to go in, but I do. His face is bumpy and old-looking and he says to me, 'I have no sons, so you will be my boy, Bucko'."

Hmm, 1990. Okay, I've gone through the crisis of becoming a person on disability, and not having my work identity. Things were going along pretty well, I think, in '90. I don't know of any traumas, although I continued working on my dream stuff, and I was working a lot on my relationships with my mother and family during that time. I find it interesting that she's not even a person; she's a symbol. Okay, so the wash of water goes over us, raising us floating out of the mud, so I'm literally saved by water. I'm raised up, is good, although quicksand has got water in it, so there's that combination of water and whatever it is that makes quicksand.

Okay, so, mud. Muddy embankment, okay, I slide down and I'm trapped, and my sister's already buried alive. Well, my stuff around that is that my sister, okay, my sister and I both ended up in dysfunctional relationships, marriage-wise. She made a choice very early that no matter what, she was going to stick it out. And I have to say I really cannot stand my brother-in-law. He's a very difficult, selfish – there's that word again – person who really makes life very, very miserable for her. And she is docile and forgiving and, you know, saintly stuff, you know, but dysfunctional. And so when I think of her already down in the quicksand drowning, I think this has to do with relationships, that she, you know, there's something about being trapped in a difficult relationship, and she has no way out. And she's just barely hanging in there, and it is the water which feels like it's, again, I think the unconscious is close to emotion. The feeling that this opening fresh stuff that literally rises you above a level of being trapped in the morass of perhaps – and I have spent a lot of my precious energy feeling angry and hurt and bad about my relationship with Howard, who incidentally died a little over a year ago.

And I have since had a lot of what I refer to as forgiveness dreams around the Howard stuff, but at this point they weren't at that level. And so it could be that I was once again going, "God, what was that like? What could I have done differently and why was it so awful and hard? You know, I mean, the barn is old, it's dilapidated, you know, it's dark, it's rotting, it's old stuff. And so I choose not to clean it up and then I slip, which is earth, mud is earth and water mixed together, so I slip and I'm trapped, and then it is the saving grace of the water that brings us both out of it. We crawl out and we're happy, and then I go back and I see my family, and my mother is a stick form, a dress form, and literally a persona without a human being inside. And my father is old and sick, so those, and this is a, you know, "You're my boy," I don't know that my father has ever, he's never said anything like that to me, but I do know that he's always very proud of my accomplishments in ways that, if we believe that masculine – whether it's in the man or the woman – is accomplishment and work and push and drive and direct and all that, I have more masculine in me than feminine. I mean, I have them both, but masculine is the part that I use in the waking world a lot. So this aspect of me is not doing well. [laugh] It's sick. "This rotting, stinking stuff." I had to clean up a lot of strange attics too in my dreams.

*Okay, here's another one. #1714.* Oh, this one is spiritual to me. [She begins to read the dream.] "I am told I must drink deep of the river." I mean, there is a spiritual metaphor. I mean, you could just hear it in a hymn, "Drink deep of the river!" And I submerge myself – such a baptismal kind of image there. And I breathe in the water deeply. Now that's exactly what I'm afraid of in real life, to breathe it in, you know, to breathe this other element of this other world into me. I love dolphins and whales, by the way. "Small white baby seals swim by. I stand up, and a man comes by taunting me, smiling." Probably a Freudian slip. "'You did the wrong thing,' he said, 'If you drink that water, you'll get dizzy and ill.' I don't know who to believe, but I feel deep down to drink is the right choice. I look up river," – oh, God, I forgot about this one – "and see a life-size crucifix of Christ floating toward me."

Oh yeah. This has got to be archetypal. This is way beyond, I think, my personal life on 9/24/1990. That's what it feels to me anyway. I'm not remembering any specific things that were happening in my life at that time, which is why off and on I keep a journal. I know during the '80s I kept a journal. So I'm getting differing opinions from people. "Don't drink the water; it's not safe. It will make you ill." And yet I know deep down intuitively that this is what I must have. "A small white baby seal swims by." The innocence, the youth, the color of purity itself in our culture is white. So I am submersing myself in water which contains wonderful newborn pure fun-loving critters. So the masculine comes in and says, "No, no, no, be careful."

So I don't know who to believe, so here I am. I'm in that predicament in my life a lot. But I'm a Libra, and we have a hard time making decisions. We take in all this input, and it's like you get opposite points of view and everything in between, and it is hard for me to get through all that stuff to find, you know, what I think. A life-size crucifix of Christ floating toward me, Religious-wise, I was raised kind of a Protestant, but my family is pretty liberal and just basically said, you know, "Choose whatever you want and believe it." So I kind of ended up with a sort of a Unitarian kind of point of view, which is that Buddha's neat, and Hindu, that's groovy, and Jewish, that's interesting, To me it's just a symbol, but I don't have a personal faith connection with Christ necessarily, although he's very much a part of my growing up value system.

So I find it interesting that I use that symbol, and of course there's this whole business of suffering, isn't there? I mean, the crucifix is the symbol of suffering. If that doesn't feel like pain, I'd like to know what does, you know. Nail holes in your wrists and, you know, I mean, those are the joints and that's where I experience a lot of my pain. So that's interesting, and drinking of the water is like taking medicine. And dizzy and ill – this really feels like it's talking about my physical health as well. Yeah, I can't think of anything more.

*I have one more, #2797.* [She reads the dream.] "I'm on a raft which is really a wooden box floating on a road at some college retreat conference. This is a tourist shaman experience. I notice the sides of the box undo with the nails, and one side falls off. I broke the raft. I take it to the old woman native, she looks at me and suggests I do the shaman course. I don't really want to, but it could be fun. I go, not fully into it with my heart, mostly curious. We're floating down a river past buildings where military personnel are living, working and studying. I see one room with women military personnel in a classroom. I see strong, good-looking men walking around. Now I'm in the river, and my teacher's helper is supposed to dive and show me how to retrieve the knives he has dropped into the river. One knife is huge, a butcher knife. Another one is small, a paring knife. I watch, and then I go under water and retrieve a knife. The old woman is impressed with me. I am going to be a shaman."

Hmm. I go under the water – again this feels more like unconscious than emotions to me. And retrieve a cutting edge, "I am going to be a shaman." So it was three years ago. I should be able to remember what I was doing three years ago. Oh, Valentine's Day three years ago. Okay, Charla was living with me for six months and she was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I was doing performances, I was writing plays, and getting them successfully produced, so that was a good time in my life. Had I met Derek by then? I think maybe I had. Floating on a raft that is really a box, a container, but I break it. Break the container. Military stuff on the left side. So I'm simultaneously at a retreat where there's also this very organized military complex going on, so there's the shaman stuff, which is spiritual, and the old woman native has got to be like a, that's an archetype right there, isn't it, the old wise

woman who comes to guide me and test me. I'm being tested. She's diving under the water and retrieving something that cuts.

Hmm. I'm not fully into it with my heart, mostly curious, is important because I feel like I have a great deal of spiritual potential, and yet I really do kind of play around, so there's something here about me having the capability or the possibility of whatever. But literally looking at it from the outside, studying it from a retreat, curious about it but not really deeply into it. Margie is a co-counselor, co-worker of mine who I really admired and wanted to have as a personal friend as well as a working friend, and at one point I had surgery, she came hurriedly up to the costume room, gave me some flowers and took off and I felt very hurt by that because I felt that we were stronger friends. I mean, I was glad she brought flowers, but I wanted more time because she's a very warm, loving person, and she has this wonderful warm, loving husband and, you know, there's just a nice atmosphere to be hanging around in. But she had her own difficulties and was unable to do that, and so I got upset with her, and it was right around that time. It was before that really, but we stopped kind of, I stopped kind of connecting with her. And I can remember that as a real strong sense of rejection that she was choosing not to be a personal friend.

*And how did you resolve those feelings?* Well, what we did was, we didn't really talk-talk about it, we talked about it once and she basically said, "I can't give you what you want because I just, when people want to be close with me as a friend, I just go away. It's just what I do." And so she was trying to say it was her fault, and she very much would try to, whenever we'd meet, she'd try to, "Hi, how are you? How are things going?" to keep what we have going. And for a while I had a lot of trouble with that, and then after a while, that's fine, you know. So I let go of it

## **DISABILITY**

Tell me about the disability, when it started, its progression. Also medications, dosages, when they go up. Start with like the first hints of it.

Yeah, it was September 6, 1963 at 3:00 in the afternoon, one of those unusual sudden onset situations. *Why did you remember all of the specifics?* It was a week before I was married. It was my last day at work, I had no pain that I am aware of, although looking back, a couple of achy things, but no specific joint pains until 3:00 and it was time for coffee break. I stood up, I was wearing new high heels, to break them in for the wedding, and my feet just hurt really bad. And I thought, "Well, it must be because it's high heels and you aren't used to them." The next day my knee was hurting, the next day my hip was hurting. We assumed it was just something temporary because I've always had temporary things, nothing of a chronic nature. And so it was just an annoying thing, right smack dab in the middle of getting married. But very soon after we were married, it was real clear that it was serious. And by the time the honeymoon was happening, it was pretty serious pain. It started serious and went to very severe, and it took a whole year before we finally hit a place where the intensity level went down enough. *How soon did you go to a doctor? Was it a week, or month or ?* A month, yeah.

*And did they diagnosis it correctly pretty quickly?* Right from the get-go, which is kind of unusual. *So then did you start in on kinds of medication?* At that point we were talking Aspirin. We didn't do anything more serious than that for the first year, and then it got so bad, that the weight of the sheet on my body hurt, and I couldn't physically, I got up twice a day out of bed, to be able to walk to the bathroom and back. When Howard was on the call board at his work, he was gone for 12 to 24 hours, and I would be in the apartment alone. I would get up and fix myself twelve pieces of toast, and that was hell on wheels to manage that, and that's all I ate for 12 to 24 hours until Howard got back. So at that point we just said, "Something's seriously badly wrong here." We dropped what we were doing, moved back in with my folks.

Then we heard about a place where people with my disability hobbled in and walked out. Well, I was very leery of anything that smacked of quackery, but we were desperate, and so I went there for three weeks. I was hospitalized. And by the time I came out, they gave me daily IV's of supersaturated formula of the ingredient in Aspirin which reduces inflammation, gave me physical therapy, total bed rest, all of that kind of thing. And by then we brought the level from very severe down to a moderately active level. And from then on, it was up, down, up, down through the years. So that probably was at this point the second most severe bout, was that first year, which, of course, was a deadly time for that kind of thing to happen, because here's Howard and I [laugh]....*Starting out.*

Dealing with, yes, and struggling with marriage from the beginning and so on. And then to have that kind of severe pain and unknowingness. *When did you have to go to canes and other help things?* Well, it took me five years to even acknowledge that I had a disability because of the negative connotations. One can do a great deal with denial, around just how bad your stuff is. Well, I have joint problems, but I'm not a person with a disability. And I would be embarrassed to be around people with canes and braces and wheelchairs. I had the cultural beliefs around that very strongly in my own mind. And then somewhere, at first I did not use any devices until after the divorce. And then after the divorce was when I moved back in again with Mom and Dad, and started checking in with the Rehab people to see what I could do with my life. And then I had a major surgery where I lost one of my ankles.

I've had three or four what do they call them – reconstructive surgeries. But at that point I lost the ankle joint and they fused it. They sat me down with an occupational therapist and a physical therapist and the doctor, and basically at that point I had no income, I had no job, I had no house, I had no marriage, I had no anything – no car, nothing. And at that point, I said, "Somehow I am going to end up with a job doing something, I am going to end up with my own house, and I'm going to have transportation." Those were my major goals. I believe that is probably the low point of my life.

There I was on the couch in my Mom and Dad's house. So at that point I got a job as a manager for a department store, assistant manager, and my mother came in one day because I was having another serious difficult bout, and she had purchased a cane for me. And she marched, I remember watching her. I was up in the little cubby, and she marched down the aisle of the department store with this cane in her hand, and you knew this was a lady on a mission. And she marched up there and she said, "You have to use this," and left. And [laugh] that was the first device. I'm a stubborn person.

*What year was that?* 1973, I think. And that was the first one, and then when I had the surgery, I had to have a brace, and I remember deciding to paint little things on it so if they're going to stare at me, they'll at least see something cute, because I had a lot of image problems, you know, taking on things that indicated that I was disabled. I was still struggling with that. So that time, '73-74, that was the cane and then the brace and the first surgery. The wheelchair itself didn't come until a month before I started my job as a counselor, so I went all the way through my master's degree program with a cane and a brace, and a lot of determination. I had the second surgery, which was a plastic ankle, yes, right after I graduated with my master's program, which was in '77, very end, December of '77. Then I had one year where I was recovering from the surgery, looking for a job, that kind of thing. And then I had an allergic reaction to my meds, at that time it was gold shots.

*What's that?* It's a derivative of real gold and salts, the salts and gold. It's very odd, but it worked for eight years. But at that point I became toxic to it. What happened was I started having just an ordinary cough, and my pain was getting a lot worse and a lot worse. At Thanksgiving I went to visit Mom and Dad, and I suddenly had, I got so bad very quickly that I stayed there for the next month. What had happened, you know, the stuff where your appendix bursts – what's it called? Peritonitis, that you can die from? Apparently that happened, because I was, it was excruciatingly painful to even breathe or anything. I went down to 102 pounds.

I was dying and didn't know it, and the doctors didn't know what was wrong. And somehow I managed to survive that. So I was laying in a hospital bed in my Mom's house, wasn't eating, rolling over from one side to the other was down near impossible. It was really scary. But while I started recovering from that, oh pneumonia, I had pneumonia then too. Then my friend Ginny brought me an article, a classified saying they're looking for counselors to create a disability services unit at a community college a few hours from my home town. That was what I trained for, that's what I wanted to do. And I said, "I'm going to get this job. This is my job." And my mom went, "Oh, my God, how can you do that? You can't even dress yourself!" And, "I don't know how I'm going to do that, I'm going to figure it out." So anyway, I made Mom and Dad bring me, I made the appointment for an interview and sent the information and got accepted.

Mom and Dad drove me over to the city where the college is. Mom had to get me dressed. We rented a wheelchair, a manual wheelchair; that was my first experience in a wheelchair, was to go to my interview to get my job at the community college. I was like 102 pounds, I was on pain pills. I was absolutely stoned out of my mind, which was probably pretty good because then I was relaxed. Usually I get uptight about that kind of thing. And I wowed them and they said, "Hot damn!" and I was hired. And then I had to get an apartment. I fortunately had a friend, and this friend was Arthur [later identified as a lover as well as friend], who stayed on as kind of a personal assistant for six months. I went to work, I managed work, I came home, I laid on the couch, he brought me my food, I went to bed. That was all I did for six months because the pain was really, really bad. Then after that it eased up again, and so I was able to be more active and start doing some acting stuff that I was interested in.

*Has it been in a less painful phase in recent years, or are the medications better?* Both. The medications, the last years, I think because of a new medication. Medication-wise, I started out with Aspirin, heavy doses, like 16 Aspirin a day throughout the 24-hour period. Then we finally had to get steroids, which was Cortisone, and I'm still on that. I was always told by doctors never do that because you'll end up being on it for the rest of your life, but at that point it really was a choice of which do you want to die of? Do you want to die of, you know, you don't take the Cortisone and you can die of these things, or if you do take the Cortisone, you could have these terrible side effects and die of that. So the decision was that I would go on Cortisone, which probably has on a number of occasions saved my life.

So that was a major medical thing, then they added another drug, which used to be an anti-cancer drug, but now they discovered that it works for my disability. And then just within this year they added another one, which not only brings the inflammation down, which lessens the pain, but for the first time in years and years and years, I have a sense of energy. I had to do everything fighting against the inertia of feeling exhausted because your body is fighting a civil war inside, so it's like the body against the body, and you have no energy left. So now I feel pretty damned peppy.

*Do you think that medications, changing them up or down, relates at all to anything in your dreams? Do you have any idea.* Good question. I know I dream about the meds, but I'm concerned about the dosage of my meds in some of my dreams, because *I wonder if there's an actual effect in terms of energy levels or anything like that, that you think when you're taking higher doses, your dreams are hyper or....* Yeah, well I think it's quite the reverse. I think it shuts down the dreams. When the Cortisone, sometimes I have to go up to a very high dose for a short period of time – maybe three weeks or something – and I know that I stop sleeping as well, and so my dreams are very scattered. But I haven't noticed, the only times I have noticed that dreams were more vivid or more strange, was when I was taking pain killers, like after surgery or something like that. That definitely affects my dreams.

*In what way?* Well, Howard [her ex-husband] was a camel on the mantle – just weird, bizarre – I mean, I have lots of interesting, bizarre images in my dreams anyway, but it seems to me that they are stronger and scarier with those, when I have those kinds of medications.

*You went through three pregnancies. What was that like? Was it less or more painful during them?* No, it wasn't. When I went to that clinic, a doctor there said to me, "Don't have children. If you have children, you'll be fine during the pregnancy, but about six weeks after the pregnancy, the pain will kick back in, and how are you going to raise these kids for 18 years with the kinds of difficulties you have?" So each time I had a baby, I sent him a birth announcement, and we had this joke back and forth. He said, "Well, my understanding of zero is apparently different than yours." So in truth, he was right. The pregnancy was fine. There was no additional pain. In fact, the pain lessened because for reasons we don't understand hormonal changes like we go through in pregnancy shuts down or does something so that the disability is not as bad. He said if you could be barefoot and pregnant all the time, you'd be fine.

## **RELATIONS WITH THE FOUR WOMEN FRIENDS**

*I want to ask you about your relations with each of the women that I'm going to have a chance to talk with. How long you've known them, what the person is like, the nature of your relationship with them, any particular frustrations you have with that person, and particular joy, things that you like about them or things you don't like.*

*How did you meet Bonnie?* I met Bonnie at my first day of work at the community college. She was also starting her first day of work. She was working on multicultural stuff. We just liked each other as friends. Oh, golly, she would be the person I would call if I was really depressed over my pain or if, one time I called her up because I wanted to get dressed up really fancy, and so I got into the dress and discovered there was no way I was going to get out of the dress. It was tight, and with my various joint problems and so on. And so it was like 11:00 at night, and I'm half in and half out of this dress and I'm stuck. Who do you call at 11:00 o'clock at night to do that? You call Bonnie. She drives across town. We're laughing because it's a pretty silly situation – you're stuck in your dress, half in and half out. And she would come over and help me out. I can't tell you how many times she's come over and helped. She fixed the drapes, helps me when I'm in the middle of wanting to change things around the house. We go to garage sales together.

*When did you first meet Mary Sue?* That's what I'm trying to remember. Let's see, how long ago was that? I met her through Lucy. Lucy was one of the first that I met. And then Lucy and I were connected through the performance, and then she wanted to create a women's support group, and she brought Mary Sue into it. Previous to that I knew her professionally as an advocate. She works with Commission for the Blind. She's visually impaired herself.

*Can she see at all?* Yeah, she can see, but it's very difficult. Print matter is really hard for her, for example. So I knew her professionally as an advocate, especially working at the community college. I was creating a disability student services. And so Lucy started this women's support group and she brought in Mary Sue and she brought in Katrina. So she then became a person in the support group, and then she became a personal friend.

*What are the positives and negatives, or joys and frustrations of your relationship with her? How would you characterize your relation with her? What's she like?* She is a chosen sister. We call each other sisters of the heart. We can tell each other anything. We are totally, unconditionally supportive of each other, no matter what. So, and we don't see each other very much any more. We call each other on the phone maybe once a month, but whenever something comes up.

*With Mary Sue, how do you two interact? Who takes the lead?* Oh, we're more like two elder sisters together. I'd say I let Mary Sue take the lead.

*What are your interactions with Mary Sue like, I mean, in the real world, not in your dreams?* Very interesting. She is a hugger; I am not particularly. I had to learn how to be a hugger. In my family hugging and kissing and

demonstrative affection is not approved, as it were, so it felt uncomfortable for me. And Mary Sue is just out there. She will hug anybody any way, anyhow. She's just a very physical person. She's a masseuse, as a matter of fact. And so she's very kinesthetically connected. She's a very powerful person as well personality-wise. She's just strong and capable. The beauty of our women's support group, which was Lucy, Katrina, Mary Sue and myself, we did that for a year – now we meet quarterly to do our little special birthday potlucks, and just are very supportive of each other. That's the strongest part of our relationship.

*Tell me about you and Lucy.* Lucy is an advocate like I am for disability rights. The very first time we met, I had just started work and there was a conference we had to go to in another city. I at that time did not have a van, so I had to be taken in my manual wheelchair, which I hate with a passion because I can't control it, and somebody else does that. *That's a lot of work.* Yes, that too. I had to go in the manual, went up in, I think it was Rochelle's station wagon, a whole bunch of us – might have been Mary Sue as well. So the first time I met Lucy she had just moved here, and we were all rabble rousing our way up to the meeting place to do this conference about vocation rehabilitation. She ended up being one of the people pushing my wheelchair for me, to help me get from the hotel room to the conference place a couple blocks away. Now she walks with a cane, and at that time she didn't even have the cane.

She had glaucoma at first, so her vision is very poor. She had a little bit at that point, but not a lot. So essentially I was being pushed by a blind person. And curb cuts were not as groovy, so we had a number of interesting, laughable times as we're crashing into people and God knows what. But I got there! So that was my first encounter with Lucy, who is just a charming, flamboyant individual, loves to sing, loves to perform, loves to be the center of attention, and there we are, both of us, loving to be the center of attention. So we decided we'd do it together! [laugh] Then she started in as a student at the community college, came to me for some assistance, very quickly we connected in terms of the performance stuff. I wanted to create the Follies. I had to have some support people to have a group, so she said yeah, she sings, and so she became part of the co-founding process of the Follies. So that was how we met, and we've just been really, really close ever since.

*Any frustrations in your relationship with her?* Oh my, yes. [laugh] I didn't like her always being late. And then if you are waiting for her when she's with somebody else, she's with them, and so to drag her away to get on to your appointed rounds or to start rehearsal or whatever, she's very, she verbalizes wonderfully, but to get her to stay focused is really hard. So we struggled with that.

*When you two interact, who takes the lead?* I'm sort of like the big sister, and so kind of what I say goes, but she's a meanderer and it's awfully hard to keep her detained.

*How do you know Katrina?* She came because she was a friend of Lucy's and she was a part of the support group, so we have a lot of intimate sharing on that kind of level. She is a nonstop giver, doing a good deed. She loves to send Hallmark cards. She does special gifts. *What does she do?* Right now she works also with the Commission for the Blind, and she works going, she's out in the field, working with elderly people. *Is she visually disabled?* No, she is not.

## **INTERVIEW WITH BONNIE**

*Tell me how you came to know B.* Well, B and I actually were hired at the community college and we started the same day, so and we were both in the Counseling Department. She was hired to do the disability services and counsel with disabilities, you know, for others with disabilities, and I was hired as counselor and student employment person. *How do you two interact? What do you talk about?* Oh God, we talk about everything. B and I became very close, and we talked about our families. Her children were very small, you know, the three girls, and they were very small and would come to visit her in the summers. And B and I did lots of things together, like going out as girls do, out and playing pool. We had a few drinks.

*Tell me your sense of B in relation to the theater in terms of writing plays, acting in plays, directing plays.* B can be whatever she wants to be on stage. Her real self is a little bit more shy than she is when she's on stage, so on stage, she can become a little bit more outgoing or aggressive, more flamboyant, really be out there and be creative. When it's her real self, it's not necessarily like that. *Does she worry? Is she anxious about performing?* Well, yes, prior to her performance, she always gets really nervous. Am I going to do this, am I going to forget my lines? Especially right now, "Am I going to forget my lines?" Or, "Did I do this right?" and she has to do it perfect. And so that's right before, and you have to assure her, "Oh, you'll be fine. I know you will," because we know that she will. She will do very well.

*What do you think she's like when she's directing?* She has a picture in her mind of what it's supposed to be like, what it's supposed to look like. And so it's very hard for her to really make the changes, although when somebody suggests something, she doesn't always take it in all the time, but other times she goes, "All right," giving in but not really wanting to. But she wants to be in control, always in control. She needs to say and have the last say-so.

*What about with music? Do you have any sense of B and music and what interests her?* Oh yes. When I met B, we both like music a lot, and I learned that prior to meeting her, she actually was quite musical. She was learning banjo, she had done some other things, she had tried piano when she was younger with her father, who's a musician. And she had the dulcimer. She was still trying to pluck away at the dulcimer at the time that I met her. And she liked, she actually grew up more with classics and things like that. I didn't grow up with classics; I grew up with the Oldies, you know. And every time B and I ever traveled, we're always singing, and we're always singing the Oldies. And our favorite is Lolly Pop.

*Do you think she has as much worries around music? Does she get the same tension and concern with the theater, or is it more easy?* No, I think music is a little bit more relaxing for her. She likes jazz a lot. So she listens a little bit more to jazz when she's on her own, and some – but not as much – some R&D music. The classics I think are the ones that still kind of, so I think because she grew up with that a little bit more.

*Now you just brought up another thing that's of interest, and that's driving.* She has traveled and driven with another friend across the country, and she also had driven with the same friend all the way into Mexico. *How about you two driving?* Oh yeah, all over the country. *Who drives?* Both of us. When she's hurting, that's when I mostly do the driving. But for the most part, she used to do a lot of the driving, before she was more in the chair. *What's she like when she's driving? What's it like to ride with her?* She's crazy. In the beginning, she used to drive a little bit faster than what she does now. Now she can't because her hands are more involved, you know, they're more....*How much of a backseat driver is she?* Not really that much.

*Who do you think are the two or three or four people that are most difficult, frustrating, problematic for B? What periods of her life?* [laugh] *Let's start with people that she grew up around.* Her mother, yeah. *What would be the contrast there with her father?* He's easier, he's easier. He was still stress, but much easier in terms of when it comes to what life is about, matter of fact, but he was easier than the mother. There's always the tension between the mother-daughter kind of thing, relationship, and it has always been difficult for B. Her mother was very controlling too. *Have you ever met her mother?* Oh yes, many times. *How do you observe that relationship?* You know, it's really hard to say. I'd say that it's, there is a loving relationship, but to me it's strained, it's a strained kind of a relationship. But there is love there, but it's kind of like held at a distance, you know, whereas for my family, my relationship with my mother was extremely good. And so I look at that relationship and I look at their relationship, I go, "Why does it have to be this way?"

*Have you ever met B's sister?* Yeah. *Have you ever seen her interact with the mom?* Yeah, it's a little more relaxing, but there's still a strain, but it is a little bit more relaxing. And I'm wondering if basically if it also happens because she's been there, closer, whereas B has been away a long time now. But there has always been that friction.

*Have you seen Dwight and the mom interact?* Yeah, I have, but not as much. Let me think. The last time I saw Dwight was.... It's a strain too. It's sort of like it was the sister and the mother too, a little bit, he wants to give in a little bit, but the mother still keeps it a little bit at a distance. Yeah, again, it's control, it's control.

*In your eyes do you think B's on her mom's case more than need be? Or do you see the mom as pretty distancing and frustrating?* Remember, I'm much later than when she was growing up with her, and for what I have seen, I wouldn't say that B was really harder on her mom. I think it all has to do with the years, you know, of the growing, that kind of thing that has been reflected, and then when B was married to Howard, the relationship that B was having with her husband again, how they felt about that, about him, I think played a big part in it.

*Who would be a second person after the mother among people that are really problematic for her?* Well, later that's Ellie. But that's later. Howard, absolutely, her ex-husband. I mean, we talked a lot about it. *Who else?* I think mom and Howard, the two majors, Ellie when she ran away, and made her way to this state. I'm trying to decide if it's her sister's husband or Jake. I'd say maybe the sister's husband.

*Tell me what Jake is like in your eyes, and then how you see that relation between Jake and B.* To me it's almost like, yeah, they're brother and sister, but it's like he comes and he does things out of obligation, not necessarily always because it's, this is a close relationship. But he's an okay guy. He has his shortcomings; we all have our shortcomings. But he does come without, he does a few things for B where I would say that maybe somebody else wouldn't do some things for her. But he doesn't go out of his way, yeah, he doesn't go out of his way.

*What do you think her relationship with Dwight is?* I think it's a good relationship, you know, and I think that any...*Does she like him better, do you think?* Oh yeah, yeah, when she talks about him, what they've done, they just, they have a few things more in common, much more in common than with Jake. *Does she have any worries or concerns about him?* Uh-huh. *What are they?* For Dwight before he married, she was really concerned for Dwight that he was extremely depressed. This was after also service. He was very depressed. He didn't date much. He rarely dated. And then he met Cyndi, and then things kind of turned around and he become a little bit happier and things like that.

*Does she talk about Lydia much?* Uh-huh, yeah. She did talk about Lydia. She is positive. She really cares for her sister a lot. She worries about her; she does worry about her. They have a lot of children, she just hates that they, you know, Doug uses the sister and abuses, you know, and then how the children have turned out. *How are they doing?* Some of them do well. Others, not too well. And I think basically it's the influence of what has occurred, you know, with Doug and....

*Who are the people who are positive for her?* Ginny, Ernie, their kids. Me and my son, and Mary Sue, absolutely her daughter Paulina. She worries a lot about her oldest, Dovre, and well, Ellie is there, but it's still more distrust. *How high's her Dad on a positive list?* He's positive, he's positive. Umm, on a scale let's see, from 1 to 10, I would think her dad is up like 8 or 9, somewhere in there.

*Tell me your version of the Derek relationship.* Okay, I always used to tease her, by saying he was a "jerk." She didn't see it that way, but I saw it that way. Many things in terms of this Derek, because it's a relationship that happened, they were friends, I think there was an association professionally at one point, and then that ended and they were just kind of friends, and it developed to a little bit more. It was a point, it would be just like she was feeling so bad. The love relationships that she had had in the past were not all that wonderful, and then there was a big dry spell in between, and I think she was basically ready for another love relationship, and she felt an attraction to Derek. He was very attentive, which was something that she needed. And I remember other relationships, it's almost like she becomes a different person, obviously again, because there's a lot of attention being paid, and especially it's a male. And being disabled also is part of this, you know, when you're disabled

and there is this stereotype, there's no romance around it that there is, he was also disabled himself. So that kind of brought it even closer, kind of made it nice, you know, really nice for her. For me in the beginning it was great, I was so happy for her that something like this would happen. And then I started seeing some other things that I didn't think was really positive, and in Derek and in trying to explain it. Anyway, she knew how I felt, but the relationship still went on, and I knew he was moving away and B was getting deeply hurt by it. There were a lot of dreams during that period of time, I remember that, a lot of dreams.

*She would tell you about them?* Some, yeah. So she'd say, "Wow, I'm dreaming about Derek."

We talked from way in the beginning of our friendship when she started with dreams, and talking about the little cats and what they'd symbolize and who they were, and we talked about that way in the beginning and all of this. And then she got so busy with, every time she got in a relationship, like especially with Derek, we rarely saw each other. We rarely ever saw each other because she either was working with Derek, performing with Derek, going to potlucks with Derek, you know, that kind of thing. "Okay, you let me know when we'll get together." But it happened in that way, and when she needed to talk, we would always get together.

And she'd not only just talk with me, but also Ginny. I would say Ginny and I would be the closest ones, that we'd really sit down and we would talk because we go back a long way. Now Ginny, I met through B, and it was when they were still, Ernie was still attending school, and they were still in their hippie stage. And so, in fact, they only had the oldest, and her younger son hadn't been born yet when I first met them. So it's with us that she talks a lot, and then I would say then she talks more deeply with Ginny. But Derek – there was a lot of happiness. She was really happy with him. She had hoped it would go to something more than what it really went to, and then she was surprised when she found out that he had a daughter, and she was happy when the daughter was visiting with him, and they would go over there together, you know, and do a potluck and things like that too. But she was very, very, very hurt with that relationship.

*Did you ever see them together?* Uh-huh, yeah, but more at the closing stage. I think I saw them maybe just once when everything was wonderful and honey kind of thing. And later there was a definite strain. And he was on the floor. He always sat on the floor. It was more comfortable for him. And B was in a chair. She was more quiet than normal. Otherwise she's always vivacious, you know, but no, she was little bit more quiet, more restrained from what she normally, reserved.

*What do you think were the turning points, when did she start to become disappointed? Was it just the way he was, or it was some particular event?* Well, he started seeing other women, when she thought he was only seeing her, because there was one other person prior to her anyway, and I think he started seeing her, and then there was one other woman that he, it appeared like he was trying to make her jealous, that's what she was saying, and I went, "No, I don't think that. It's just the way he is, that is what I saw.

*How about with Nate? How long did that last?* I met Nate. He had an alcohol problem. *He's a drinker in the dreams.* Well, he was also a drug addict. *Was he disabled?* No, no, perfectly healthy, but the alcohol problem. When they first met, Nate was in college. She was with canes, once in a while with crutches. At that time she didn't have to have the crutches as much. She had canes. And they used to drink a lot at the bars, because she was a pool player. She was an excellent pool player, from what I understand. I only saw her a few times playing pool, and when she had her own house, she did have a big pool table. And that's when I saw her play pool. *Did you play pool with her sometimes?* Uh-huh. And I only met Nate, because that relationship was still going on for just a short time when I first met her, then it ceased. She bought her first house, and that's where I met him. He came by maybe two or three times late at night. He was drunk, and it's like the relationship had ended some time ago, but B hadn't completely broken off because if he appeared, she'd let him in kind of thing. So it was like that. And it was a relationship that she had tied herself really close to, I remember that, and he hurt her again, or she tied herself to him and was hurt in the process.

*What is B's relationship with Rochelle like?* Oh Rochelle. Frustrating with Rochelle, but very creative. Creative at performances, but very frustrating when they dealt with fighting for rights, you know, for the disabled. The other one also was a very controlling kind of person, and this is a controlling person, and they bumped heads all the time. So that was, I would say that hardly ever was that one really a positive.

*What about with Lucy?* Oh yes, that was good. It was good. In the beginning, Lucy was a student, a client, back in the days when B was working. And then later a friendship was developed, and then Lucy was a part of a lot of the performances that B did, and was very creative. And then also Lucy is growing up, becoming more mature, getting more as to the things that she wants to do, things she won't do. I think there's some frustration there in when it comes to some performance, when it comes to a fighting for rights that they do together professionally. But for the most part, the relationship has been positive.

*Is Ernie all positive because of her totally positive relation with Ginny? Is he supportive of her in your eyes?* Yes, yes, has always been supportive. He's very intellectual, and very bright, extremely bright, and he always... There has been a few little things, you know, that there's been conflict, but it's been rare. Everything has been rare. *How about with the boys?* As they were growing up, she loves both of them. The only time I can really say that B has been very frustrated was with Ricardo when they were working on a project. That was extremely frustrating. It was frustrating for me too when we would sit down there and talk about it.

*Does she have any blind spots about any people or anything she does, or any issues in her life where she's convinced of one thing and you all say, "No, that's not the way it is," but there's no telling her?* Yes, I think it's generally with male relationships, she doesn't see them for what they are. She doesn't see them for what they are at the time that she starts a relationship. And she, I think that she fantasizes more in the beginning than what it is, and tries to make it what she wants it to be. And Ginny and I share that understanding about her.

*Did she meet Hector through you?* Yes, through me. B had Preston and Hector living with her on the Archie Street. They were then students and living there. They were happy times. Those were during happy times. They had good times, and then when we went to Mexico to visit them, you know, and it was Hector and his family that we stayed with. *Do you think that in any way he misled her, did she project more on?* No, because both of them, both of them came with the same realistic idea that this is just for now, and that's all there will be. And she had a good time with it.

*Do you think she was unrealistic about Nate, like not seeing his drinking?*

I think at one point she might have thought that she could have made the difference, that he would stop and the relationship would be on a better footing and something would have come of it. But that never happened, so eventually she finally learned that she had to let go of him.

*Did she see your colleague Chuck as supportive, positive, negative? How would he be used in her dreams?* Well, he can go both ways. He can be a plenty supportive person. Then when we look at it in the negative, he would not be the best because he'd be poking fun at people. He'd be poking fun at disability, people of color, and then we could stereotype him, at that point we would stereotype him as a redneck, you know, just by the way he was. But at the same time, he could be the soft puppy dog, *Was he pretty positive to B?* Yes, for the most part. For the most part he was.

*What's her relation with her oldest daughter?* Dovre is always supportive of her mom. But maybe, I think what I see is maybe that she could be more supportive of Dovre in kind of guiding her. I think that Dovre needs her in a way that she doesn't see, and much, much different than the other two girls, how she wins that support from her mother. And I think that's a blind spot that I see.

## INTERVIEW WITH MARY SUE

*When did you two meet?* It seems to me like we met in her capacity as a counselor with disabled students, and I believe when we met I was a rehabilitation teacher working with blind adults for the State Commission for the Blind. So I think that's probably where we met.

*How many years back that?* Back to at least '79, and if we met before then, I just don't remember it.  
*Characterize your relationship; how do you two interact?* I would say that we have stood in for unconditional love mother on a fairly regular basis, and it's a very much two-way street. *Supportive of each other?* Uh-huh, and we know so much about each other that there's a lot of conversations we don't have to have because we know a lot about each other's values and I would say one of the things we know a lot about each other is each other's fears. We both have very high intuitive skills that we've worked on and [laugh] have practiced on each other.

*What do you think in her dreams would be going on if you were in the dream? What would you two be doing and talking about?* I guess that either one of us would be in danger, and we would either be trying to get to the other person for some help, or the other person would know it and be trying to get to us for help. And I think there would also be some celebration. We could be dancing.

*Give me a sense of what you think theater means to her.* Oh, she's passionate about it, she loves it. She just loves the theater. *Are there any things that are frustrations or fears in the theater for her?* Oh yeah, that she hasn't been discovered, because she's been writing plays for years, and has written, she's written a number of books, and that's not theater. But she is very dramatic and she loves to act and she loves to call that out and make that a safe place for other people to be dramatic and explore characters.

*How about as a director? Do you think she likes that, directing plays?* I think she does very much, because she's in control. *Does she ever express frustrations in terms of interactions with the actors and actresses, or is she really able to deal with their eccentricities?* I think she is able to deal with problems because she's kind of a princess herself, you know. She likes to be recognized, acknowledged, appreciated, and so she sees that in other people.

*Compare and contrast her feelings about her two brothers.* I don't think that she feels as much on a par, on a comparable basis with, I feel like there's a lot of barriers between her and her brothers as far as sharing her heart. What they mostly share are needs, like "I need to have the floor fixed," or that kind of stuff, that she more takes, asks for help or gets, or they perceive that that's what she needs as help.

*Which one do you think she likes the best?* I think she's talked more about Dwight. *That's another good way I could ask it too. Who does she talk about the most, but does she talk about him pretty positively, forgiving his sins, or was she critical of him?* I don't remember her going on and on about either of them, as far as their sins. I mean, it comes up a little bit, but I think there's, I don't think she has as much invested in them as she does, say, in her relationship with her mother and dad.

*How about her sister? Would you think that it was an even more distant relation than, say, the brothers?* I'd say even more distant, yeah. *Any sense of where her frustrations are with her sister, if any?* She's kind of an incidental. I mean, there's not a whole lot there. I don't remember her ever calling her up to talk. She's never told me. If she had interaction with her sister, it was in regard to family stuff, planning a birthday party or something.

*Is there anybody else that she talks about that you would think that she has the same feelings toward or the same frustrations with as her mother?* She's talked about aunts, but actually she likes them better than her mother.

*Do you think that the death of her ex-husband has changed anything as far as her feelings?* Well, I think there's still regret that she, that there was such a lack of connection. *Do you think that over the years she gradually let go of her tensions and regrets or about him, or did it stay pretty constant?* No, I think she let go of it, I mean, because a lot of it had to do with him not accepting her disability, and she didn't accept it either. *Then her talking about him and annoyance and anger and frustration has maybe declined?* And sadness. I think sadness is in there too. Yes, I think it has, and I think a lot of that is because the kids grew up.

*Tell me about her and her children.* I think it was incredibly hard for her to leave them with him, but at least he hung in there with them. I mean, you know, he was as good to the kids as he knew how to be.

*Do you think, compared to most people, that she's more likely to take the initiative or to be more the receiver of friendship and aggression.* No, I'd say take the initiative when it comes to doing things. But when it comes to interaction with men, I would definitely say that she would, she would want to be the aggressor, but would be too afraid to. So she'd be the receiver.

*Do you think she has a stronger interest in animals than most of your women friends?* No, I don't think so. She's fairly typical on that. No, I mean, I think, that's a very interesting question. Hmm. She has animals, but I think people fascinate her much more than animals. I think she likes cats because she can watch them. She can unabashedly stare at them, you know, and get away with it, but she couldn't get away with that with people.

*What do you think her conception of her dad is? How would she portray him?* I think she feels more loved by him than probably anybody in the family. *She sees him as really very supportive then?* Uh-huh. And somehow more willing to not compare her with her siblings, whereas that's one of the characteristics of her mom, always comparing. *Does she compare her unfavorably with the siblings do you think?* I think B thinks so. I think that she probably doesn't as much as B thinks.

*Have you ever interacted much with her mother?* Not much, no. *But you have seen her and met her?* Right, and she probably thinks I'm charming because I can schmooze with her. *One comment hinted that your perception of the mom would be a little different than B's on certain things.* Right, right. *Can you think of other things where the mom might not be the monster that B often makes her out to be?* Well, one of the things that B and I share in common is our perspective on our mothers, and they're both, you know, B perceives her mother as being extremely controlling, and that's the way I perceive my mom too, and nobody could possibly perceive my mother as I do and I know that, so I know that's also true about B.

*On a scale of one to ten of controlling persons you've known, how high do you think her mother is?* Well, to B, she's probably a 15. *As you watch the interaction, do you think she's that controlling?* I really can't speak on that because I haven't seen them together enough, but I know that an inflection in her voice can just set B over the edge, where other people wouldn't even pick up on it.

*Tell me about her relationship with Derek.* She was alive, she was turned on. She was physically much more colorful. I mean she wanted to look beautiful and she wanted to spend time having people work on her hair. And she had a major fantasy going on there, and she was just absolutely fixated on this guy. *What was it that changed it?* Because it became more obvious to her that he didn't care for her as she did for him. He had a life outside of her. *What was his life outside of her?* Other people. He had other friends, he had other things to do, he had other places to go, you know. He'd go live his life and then he'd come spend time with her. But he gave to her very little.

*Did he do anything specific, like did he have other girlfriends?* I don't know if he had others, but he was a very physical guy, and so he had no problem touching or holding or, making eye contact and all those things that were extremely intimate for B and very difficult for her to do, but she was willing to risk with him. And she'd bring herself to have eye contact with him, and then he'd just turn around and make eye contact with somebody

else. And so it was a real belittling thing for her. I mean, it was like, “What am I? Chopped liver?” And I think that just happened enough times where he wouldn’t bother showing up or he’d just show equal attention or care or even more so with other people, and she finally got it.

But this relationship was a gift for her because, even if it was mostly one-sided, it gave her a taste of connection, a taste of possibility that I think she treasures very highly. And I think that he provided her, because he is manic depressive, kind of a foreshadowing of Ellie and Charla. And she could certainly be dramatic over him because he was a pretty dramatic kind of guy. I think she was really bitter when she finally caught on that he was more illusionary than real, and really disappointed.

*If you had to rank all the people in her life, who of those people annoy her the most, frustrate her the most?* Well, her mother probably is the one that pushes her buttons the quickest. Okay, and then...Hmm, probably Ellie. And then maybe Charla, and yet there’s, I mean, she pushes, she can really get to her, but on the other hand, B has much more compassion for her, and increasingly more compassion for Ellie. *Do either of her brothers push any buttons, any frustrations?* Yeah, I think so, but I can’t really separate them enough. And one thing that comes to mind that might be interesting for you to look at is that one of the ways, one of the illusions that B has used that we talked about is a sense of being wrapped up in blue barbed wire, dealing with her pain, her physical pain, and being smothered by it, and being trapped because nobody can understand what chronic pain is like unless you’ve had it. And because it is, it’s not only chronic, but it’s episodic

*What about any of her friends, any people that are in her adult life that, besides these really powerful significant others like sibs and offspring and ex-husband?* Her friendship with Ginny is such a gift because Ginny has just saved her in so many circumstances, has taken Charla for a week or a month at a time, has just been there. I guess another person that would come up as somebody who’s been an annoyance is, what’s his name, Ginny’s son, Arthur, who is working with her on the computer. It was like a double-edged sword because on one hand here’s this brilliant kid who so casually can sit down on the computer and do all this stuff so fast, but so I think there was definitely a lot of incredible frustration where there’s something that needs to get done and she’s got the drive to do it, but she doesn’t have the strength to do it.

## **INTERVIEW WITH LUCY**

*How did you two meet?* I met her because I read something in the college newspaper about somebody, she was looking for somebody to do theater with and I answered the ad and said I would do theater with her. And so she was never my counselor, although she did end up doing that with me just as a friend.

*Tell me about how she feels about the theater, what her joys and frustrations of it are.* Oh, she sparkles. She’s like a light bulb turned on. She enjoys so much being the center of attention, and deserves to be the center of attention. I think that as grownups, we’re not often allowed to feel that that’s okay, to get that. But she gets inside that feeling and loves to be there. And as far as her frustrations, I think she has had to work hard to put herself in a position where she gets that attention. All people in theater have to put themselves out there, but because of her disability, she has had to work through some other layers of obstacles to get the kind of attention that she wants.

*Does she have fear about doing well or losing lines or anything?* Oh absolutely! Yeah, I could go on. *Does she express those?* She used to always be afraid about learning her lines, and she would never go without a copy for quite a while. It took her a long time to be where she could memorize and trust herself enough to do it without a script on her lap. Even when she finally did it from memory, I think she still has a hard time trusting herself, and not giving herself enough credit for the fact that she has acquired that skill of being able to memorize, and ad lib in a performance situation.

*What she's like as a director, when she's kind of directing the play?* Oh, I always have had a good time working with her. She has very strong opinions about how she wants things done, especially when she has been the script writer, which is mostly what I've done with her, when she's been the writer. She's very nit-picky about the words. She doesn't want anything to be rewritten. She wants it just so, and she corrects me all the time if I don't remember it accurately. *Is this controlling kind of behavior?* Oh, it's controlling, and yet, as she's the writer, I accept that. I'll rebel, and stick my tongue out at her, but she's the writer, and I allow her to be in that position of director. I'll go along with it. I have, in the 20-odd years that I've known her, had very little sincere, real conflict with her, where we were ever really angry at each other.

*Why is that? Is that because you go along, or just...* I think our personalities seem to match pretty well. I'm pretty congenial, but I certainly will stick up for myself when I need to. And mostly the times that I've ever had trouble with B, there are times when I think she's a little too controlling, but I will just, let her know that I'm miffed, and then I'll go along.

*Okay, what other things do you two do together that you have fun doing, like you might be doing in one of her dreams?* Oh, we raise kids, we've been raising kids. I've had my two that I have now, and before that, in the 1980s when I knew her and was doing theater much more seriously with her, I had three stepchildren, and I was living with a blind man in a wheelchair and raising his kids for him and learning a lot about my life. And B was my mentor at that time. I was pretty young when I met her, and very frazzled and frustrated about my life as a visually impaired person. I didn't know how to be, and she basically took me under her wing, and taught me about follow-through and completing a task, challenged me to perform in ways that I hadn't been willing to before. I told her once I would sing and dance, but I wasn't going to act. So she wrote this part for me that was a Shakespearean soliloquy [laugh] about a woman that was so ugly that she was ready to kill herself with a silver dagger, and she wanted me to perform it. [laugh] And I did it, for B, because she is so important to me. She really challenges people to their highest level of skill and integrity. And she has been in many of my dreams in that role.

*So you have positive dreams about her?* Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Sitting in a grove of trees in her chair. *How do you think she would portray the relationship between the two of you in her dreams? What would you two be doing?. You'd be doing the theater or talking about kids, huh?* Not only about kids. It's all this about growing and being creatively adaptable. We've really learned to adapt to our disabilities together. I was quite insecure and didn't have a lot of confidence about who I was and how to be in the world, and B has provided that training, I suppose. And now I've grown up to a level of maturity where I feel like her equal, and we have gone through a lot of theater and kid-raising and disability work together. And she's still a big sister to me.

*Who are the people that frustrate her the most and make her the most annoyed in her life?*

I think B has surrounded herself with a circle of people who love and support her, and beyond that, there are many people in the community who see her disability before they see her. And she spends a lot of time trying to have people see her differently. And she gets frustrated that she has to work so hard to get through people's perceptions. And so she has become very creative at filling her life with things that support and encourage her rather than frustrate her so much

There are people in the theater world. A woman named Deirdre who supports her, but just doesn't see it enough, you know. They're friends, but she doesn't see B's expansion of what theater can be, as valid, and that frustrates her because she respects Deirdre a lot. And she really gets frustrated because she wants to be part of the mainstream theater world. And she's not ever going to be accepted completely that way, and her niche, as much as she would like to.

*In the time you've known her, has her attitude changed at all, her frustration changed, or anything changed, in her feelings about her ex-husband?* Yeah, I think she did a lot of soul searching and forgiveness, and especially then after he died. I think she feels much less anger towards him. She thought she could just hold the same sort of feelings about him and go through her process of slowly letting go of the resentments, and then he died, and she suddenly had to realize that there wasn't any point any more to hold onto it. And so I think she feels a bit sad that she never got to a place where she could really completely forgive and reconcile in a communication way. And so I think she feels a bit like she didn't have that opportunity.

She always had a feeling of this was the next best thing, because the guy she really was in love with didn't marry her. And so she really sort of just accepted her husband because he was there and that was what you were supposed to do, was get married. And so she just sort of bought that, and I think she never was really happy with it.

*What do you think her attitudes are towards her two brothers? Which one did she find most frustrating and annoying, and disappointing?* You know, I don't remember so very much about her brothers. She kind of talks about them, but not really. They haven't been significant. The fact that they haven't been significant in our conversation is kind of interesting. I don't think she feels real understood by anybody in her family, particularly her mom.

*So who would be the number one most frustrating, difficult person for her to deal with – her mom or Ellie or Charla or who?* Well, I guess it has to do with proximity, who she spends the most time with. I mean, she's been able to leave her mom behind in a way. She doesn't live with her. And the same with her daughter. And so I think she has a sense of responsibility toward raising her granddaughter that kind of goes back beyond just the fact that Charla needs somebody. It's more about B's making amends for not being there enough for her own children, because she was working through her own stuff at the time, and because she was so physically drained. She only had enough energy to really focus on herself, and that was for her own survival. And so I know she has a lot of guilt about that.

*How about her other daughters? Where do they fit in her psychic life?* They both seem to be in the same way kind of comfortable. She cares about them, she is concerned about them, but she's not concerned in the same way that she is about Ellie. She's concerned in that they, you know, they're growing up and they've got their own lives now, and she doesn't have as much time as she would like with them. They have a pretty normal relationship. There's not the traumas. I remember when Ellie first came, and I remember when Charla was born. And it was really, really traumatic for everybody, for B and Ellie alike.

*What do you think her feelings are towards her father? How does she see him?* I don't even remember hearing about him. I have very little image or understanding about him. It's the same with her brothers; I don't think he was real strong and supportive, but I don't think he was really a troublemaker in any way. I think he was just there; that's the only energy I remember about him. We haven't talked about him.

*Tell me about her feelings about Derek, and about meeting him. ..Oh shit! Oh my. Could you tell me your take on that relationship?* Oh, it was so good for her. Derek's a strong, strong personality. He really is. He's a very attractive man. And B wanted him really bad.

We were, Mary Sue and Katrina and I and B were in a support group at that time, that I had formed because I needed friends who understood. I had a baby, and suddenly all my issues with not being able to see her came up. And I tried to talk with my baby group, my mom and baby group about it, and they were all sighted women and they all were very sympathetic, which was not what I wanted at all. And so I gathered these women together, and at that time we all just seemed to need each other. And we stopped talking about my issues pretty quickly and got into all kinds of things about relationship. And B at the time was very, very fearful of getting

involved with anybody. She didn't think anybody would want her, and she was afraid that she would have to come out of her shell, and she didn't know how.

And so we all, we grew together for two years, and it was like you could walk into the room and we would meet and drop 20 stories in the elevator just like that. [laugh] And we were that deep that quick with each other. It was a wonderful, trusting, supportive group. And we did some gestalt. We'd all had a lot of therapy, and we'd all worked with each other. And so we did various kinds of techniques with each other, and depending on who needed what, we would support them. And there were times that we spent with B holding her and just supporting her and just helping her feel safe and she could come out of her shell a little at a time. And we started teasing her about half a cup of tea, would she share half a cup of tea with someone. And people started giving her tea pots for Christmas and stuff like that. [laugh] And so when she got together with Derek, it was all with that in mind that we had supported her to that point. And so we were all really encouraging and supportive of her doing that. And she allowed herself to get into this experience with this person, and observe her own patterns of falling for a guy who was dysfunctional.

She began to see his dysfunctions, and she began to see her attraction for that kind of a person, and it was a real lesson for her in previous relationships, how she had done them. But she didn't just observe it clinically and objectively, she allowed herself to get emotionally and personally involved with this person. And it was for the lessons that it could give her. And I thought she was really courageous to do that.

*Do you think she came to be disappointed because of his general way of being, or were there any specific things he did?* I suppose there were, but I don't specifically remember. Oh yes, I do. She was so immersed that she couldn't really pull herself out on her own, you know. It wasn't an objective experience. And it was too close for him, and he decided to pull away and found – I guess they actually had never really physically or any other way like that gotten involved. She was hoping that that would happen, but he found an able-bodied, beautiful girlfriend, and that really hurt her. And I don't know that he ever thought of B as his girlfriend. I think that she thought that they could create that kind of a relationship and he didn't want to go there with her. And he found somebody else. Not only did she watch the lesson and allow herself to feel it, she said, "I feel like I'm in my body for the first time in so many years." But she didn't hide afterwards. She didn't go back completely into hiding and decide never to do it again. She did acknowledge that the real world was likely not to support her having a boyfriend, that she's just physically not likely to find somebody who wants to be involved with her. And that grieves her deeply.

*He got involved with somebody else and then she realized this was....* Yeah, that she was dreaming, [laugh], that she was dreaming something that was going to happen and it really wasn't ever going to happen. And really, for her to have gotten involved with him anyway, it was like she knew he was dysfunctional, and she realized it was probably a better thing. She also had some issues about her own, about trusting her own instincts if she's going to go after somebody that's that dysfunctional. What is it about her that lets her turn on to somebody who's so dysfunctional? And so just the whole idea of shutting back down to protect herself so she wouldn't get involved with somebody that was so dysfunctional, and yet how can she open up to anybody because there's just not that many opportunities?

So it's a continual circle for her, and I see that what she's gotten involved in now, she's way busy again, you know. She spent a couple of years just being at home and writing and seeing Derek and doing things. Now she's raising Charla. She's going through a lot of serious issues with Charla, and being a single mom. Being a mom is hugely time-consuming, and being a single mom is even more so. And then her physical problems on top of that. And she's out and involved and active in the community. I don't think she's shut down like she was before.

*What is it like riding in a car with her?* Umm, she seems confident, but I always, I always worried being in a car with her. *Why is that?* Because as full of vim and vigor and mental energy as she is, her physical self, I fear

for her physical self because she's more frail than regular people. And when she's in control of the car, then I'm vulnerable too. [laugh] And I always have to deal with my issues [inability to see] about that because I'm always vulnerable in a car. I have no control in that situation. I simply can stay awake and try to keep people on task. So I worry for her because she has so much more mental energy than she has physical energy and then she pays the price later because she worked too hard.

Yet she's very much a controller, and whenever I tried to say, "B, I'm worried about your driving," or "B, are you sure you can do it?" you know, she gets very short with me.

*Does music still play a role in her life, listening or doing anything else?* I've never heard her sit around and listen to music, but she has compartmentalized, I think, her loss of music. I know that we used to sing together, and it wasn't for very long that we were able to do that. It's been a long time. Her voice doesn't allow her to any more and because of that, she has a lot of sadness, I'm sure. I don't know so much about what she used to play, but definitely being able to sing was important to her, and she stopped being able to do that. She grieved a lot. And she always encouraged me to do it anyway, but she wishes that she could participate. Her disability has progressed a lot. She used to be able to get up and do tap dances with me and balance on my shoulder, and we did several things when she was up and down and out of her chair part-time. But she can't do those things any more.

*Are there areas in her life where you think she lacks insight?* I think about her own health, she's so protective that she's in denial about it. I can't fathom why she doesn't go a little more alternative in her health care, not that she should go away from the allopathic view, but that she should embrace more things that may not, you know, like vegetables. God forbid she should eat a real vegetable sometime in her life. *She doesn't like veggies?* No! I mean, she actually had gotten to this place where she was eating them a little bit, if they were chopped up really small, you know. We were all kind of encouraging her to take that route, and then she found this Dr. Atkins' diet, just eat meat, and it was her escape.

And then, there was something else that came to mind, I think that she doesn't give herself enough credit for everything she is and has accomplished. She has a desire to get the feedback that we all want, and because she's such a unique and maverick kind of personality, whatever kind of support she's gotten isn't enough for her to see it in herself, for her to give herself the kind of - how do I say this?

*Do you think she's ambitious?* I think she's incredibly ambitious and overachieving, and it's like it's never enough. Nothing is ever enough for her to feel good enough about herself, and yet she's so wise and good and strong and able, and it's just never enough for her to make herself feel, I think that's why she goes out and does theater because she wants to make herself feel positive and beloved. And I think she knows that she has to find that inside herself; she's not going to find it mirrored outside enough to fill herself. So there's definitely an emptiness of her own right to feel loved of herself. And we all struggle with that.

*Do you think she would cop to that, or do you think she's blind to that, in effect?* She probably would cop to that, so maybe in what you were asking, that may not be exactly...I see her putting up with people's stuff because she needs them, but I don't know that that's a blind spot. *Yeah, she might still be well aware that she's annoyed with them.* Uh-huh, I think yeah, so I think she's got a pretty good grip on her interactions with people.

## **INTERVIEW WITH KATRINA**

*Let me start with a couple of questions about theater and music. What's she like when she's directing things? Are there frustrations about the theater world for her? What are the particular joys of it?* Well, I haven't so much been there when she was directing necessarily, but I've been to several of her plays that she's written, and I've seen her perform. And she's just alive performing. I saw her also perform in a comedy contest one time. It

was at a lounge where they had local comedians come. And she just takes on her character and it's so believable when she does. I've never seen her actually directing, but I've read a lot of her plays that she's written and she's read a lot of them, and we've discussed them. And when she's in her creative mode, whether it's on her computer or whether it's reading it or sharing it, she's a very different person, very different person.

*In what ways?* She's very confident, she's very confident. She's always articulate, but it seems like it's so natural for her, like it's really, really natural. It's almost like day-to-day life is more effort, and when she's writing and when she's performing, then it just flows much more naturally. I've seen her when she's got writer's block and when she's frustrated and just doesn't know where to go next. On the stage she seems like she's in her more natural state and it more just flows and just works for her. Her humor is very elevated when she's being creative that way.

*What would you guess would be going on in one of her dreams where you're in it? What are you two doing?* Oh, lots of nurturing, lots of laughing, lots of nurturing because that's what the four of us do together a lot. We're very extremely supportive of each other, and so we give each other a lot of emotional support. But we also laugh and get kind of silly too and fun, doing kind of fun encounters. And then we have this joke about, that I think she's probably dreamt about. I can't remember if she's told me she's dreamt about it or not, but we joke with B in social situations with her with dating. A few years back we were encouraging her to venture out there again, and so we would joke with her about tea, you know. We would say, "Have a cup of coffee," and she would say, "Oh, no, no, no." And I'd say, "Well have tea," and then we'd joke and say, "Well, just have half a cup of tea. A little, you could do just half a cup of tea," you know.

So I would visualize her dreaming something like that, you know, and as she would get more social, in a situation where she felt more comfortable, she would say, "It's the whole pot of tea now, not just a half a cup." And so I think anything about tea or pots of tea would have to do with her socializing, especially being uncomfortable around men that she didn't know.

*What is your take of the rise and fall of her feelings toward Derek? How did it change, why did it change?* Oh, well I think that it was always, as all new relationships are, you know, very flattering for her, very exciting to always have that new energy, you know, male energy coming her way, and to have the courage to connect with that because she had moved away from that for quite a while in her life. I think, even with all of her counseling background, she's a wonderful counselor, she really is, I mean she's helped me through some pretty tough time in my life, and I know her skills. I think it's in social situations like that, Derek was a good stretch for her. He was really, really a good stretch for her. I don't think they were actually too well suited, but I think that it was a real good stretch for her to grow into relationship, and when I think the way it kind of ended and went out, I think there were a lot of realizations in that for her that were healthy and good.

*What do you think led her to be disappointed? Were there specific events, or just his general way of interacting?* Oh, I think it was more his general way, and she became more and more aware of that, you know. Your eyes open more. It's like any romance, any romance. I mean, you go into it and you're blinded, and, you know, it's just so much chemistry and everything in the beginning.

*Tell me the people that cause her the most frustration or grief or anger, in their order of importance.* Her mom [laugh], her ex-husband. Definitely her daughter. Her granddaughter does too, but that's different. It's not the same kind. That is frustrating grief that you just can't ever break through, which is a totally different thing.

*Did you ever meet her mom?* I've met her mom once. One time she came to a play. *What's your take on her?* Very non-emotional, non-involved. This was something that, you know, if my daughter was putting on – and I have three daughters and two sons – I would have just been like gushing all over. People who are strangers were coming up to B and saying, "God, this is great. This is great," you know. And her mom's just stoic almost, and

critical, the critical stuff that B has mentioned, you could tell, came through just in little spurts, but it was very, very stoic, not any kind of excitement or pride in this show.

*Did you pick up any of the sense of control?* Sure, well that in itself is control when you're just being so rigid, so rigid, you know, and looking around, figuring out that she couldn't direct it because there's too many supportive people there, you know. It would just make her look too bad. She was directing at little things around her. But I've only met her once, so I'm not a real good person on that. But that take was pretty much like, "Oh, I would have known that was B's mother if I hadn't been introduced to her, if she was just at the table. I would have known."

*In the time you've known her, has her attitude and feelings and tensions about Howard changed any?* Oh yeah, I think so. I think she still has the basic same opinion of him, but I just don't hear her talk about it very much any more. It's not a big issue with her as it was. *Was it when you first knew her?* Oh, very much so, yes. Very much so. *Did you notice any change after he died? I mean, was that a dramatic turning point, or was it turning down?* Before that, he was turned down before that. Yeah, she did a lot of work about it. She did work in our own little support group about it, and it was sort of like it just wasn't such a big issue any more. And I think probably part of that has to do with her daughters all getting older, and her having her real independent relationships with the daughters, and him not influencing that or being really in her life to the degree that he certainly was when they were younger.

*Characterize her relationship with her middle daughter.* Well, there's so much dysfunction there, and I'm, I mean, she's mentally ill. She's really mentally ill. So it's kind of hard to describe it. It's not like you can describe a normal relationship with mothers and daughters where you have the tensions and you have the stuff, because there's a real illness there too, and B is educated about that, but it's still very frustrating for her. I think also her same thing with Ellie is almost like, it was with Howard because of her time now, it's not like they deal with each other as daily as it used to be, and Ellie used to live with her at different times. And now she's raising Charla and she has really control. I mean, she talks to Ellie and stuff, but she's really the guardian.

*What about her relationship with the other two daughters?* They live far away, and, of course, she doesn't interact with them as much. Now she's gotten closer to Paulina these last years since Paulina's gotten married and has children, and Dovre's far away. She loves them, I think she still carries a certain amount of guilt from being away from the girls, leaving the girls with her ex-husband. But there's none of the real unhappiness that goes on with Ellie, and that's with anybody who deals with Ellie, whether it were you or I or anybody, you know.

*Do you have any sense of her attitudes towards her two brothers?* Only the one, really, the one who's the carpenter, you know. I know she's probably said something about the other one, but I don't remember what it was. But the one who is the carpenter, I think she really has some admiration for him and what he does, you know, she appreciates his creativity. *So you think she's pretty positive towards him?* More so. Dwight. Because she doesn't talk about the other one, so I'm guessing that. Yeah, I don't even really know the other brother's name.

*Does she ever talk about her sister?* Some. *Positive, negative, mixed?* Kind of mixed, I would say, and she doesn't really talk about her very much either, you know, only like, "We went to Mom and Dad's and Lydia was there," but I don't really have a good hit. I don't think they have much of a relationship.

*What about her dad?* Oh, you know, she really doesn't talk about her dad much, although I think that sometimes what she has said about her dad seems like it's more, a little bit more caring. I think she sees him as just really in the background, you know. The mother is so dominant and so the dad is just sort of back here. So I don't think she has a ton of issues with her dad that I know of. *Do you think she sees him as supportive?* Oh, I

don't think she sees him as having the spine to stand up to her mother and say, "Hey, wait a minute," you know. "This is our daughter. I think she would see him just as not having the courage to do that.

*How does she see her parents treating her versus her brothers and sister? Does she see herself as really favored or disfavored?* I think she thinks that she's low on the totem pole. I think she feels she's low on the totem pole. And there was a time in her life, and I don't really know how this was, but her mother illustrated some books for children that B wrote, and so I don't know how they coordinated that. That was before I knew her.

*Are there areas where you think she has blind spots in her attitudes towards some people or some issues?* Well, I think probably in relationships with men, she has a certain naivete about her. I think of her more as like a young teenager in relationships with men in her development, you know, for as educated and as insightful in a counselor as much as she's dealt with, when it comes to her own personal life, I would say there's a certain naivete, this certain blind spot, yeah. And sometimes I think she has a blind spot as far as realizing what a powerful woman she is, because she is a powerful woman.

I think this last illness, because she had Charla, she came across a little different. She talked about dying in a real calm, matter-of-fact way. I mean, it just freaked Lucy out because they've been really close for so long and she didn't want to hear it. But I thought it was a real growth for B, that she had a plan, and to me that made me see her as feeling much stronger. It's hard to be strong when you're really, really sick. Surgery or illness that's real debilitating, it can wear you down so much. When she has surgeries and they have to put a tube down her throat to give her medication, she has such a strong reaction to that. She stops breathing, she can't breathe. I mean, it's really strange. So, but I saw some change there this last year, over the years I've known her, and this was really a real serious thing and she really, so I think that's been a blind spot in the past and it's less now.

*What would be the most positive relationships she has?* Most of her friendships are pretty positive, She's a real give and take person. She doesn't just take, take, take. She gives back too, you know. It's just effortless, you know, just sort of effortless. Her friend Bonnie, she's been close to for a lot of years, and Mary Sue and Lucy and most of her long-term friendships. Her friend Ginny, of course, is like a sister to her. She has a much more sister relationship with her best friend Ginny than she does with her own sister, that's for sure.

*Do you think, that she has positive relationships with men?* Well, she has men friends that I don't know about, because I don't know everybody. I'm not in her dream group and I don't know any of her friends in the dream group. But I know that in the writers' groups that she's been in and her dream group, she tends to form good friendships with men, those kinds of groups where there's creativity. And I'm sure she probably does in the disabled world too, but I don't know who they are. I couldn't really tell you. But in the past, you know, who she's talked about when she was doing writing classes and dream work and going to different workshops, she would have pleasant relationships with men that were in them in anything creative like that. But I don't know if she, other than Ginny's husband, who's a dear friend to her, but other than that, I don't know of any real close friendships.

*Tell me about B and her cats, and how she treats them?* She really loves her cats. Tabby is a very, very special cat to her. I'm not a big animal person myself, but I know she favors cats. She's never had a dog in the time I've known her. She loves the cats, and she's never mean in any way, you know, she seems to pet them and like them around and have a real respect of their space, if there's one that wants space.

Does photography come into the dreams at all, because she's a phenomenal photographer, and I would think that somehow...*I don't immediately have a sense of that.* She did a photo of a blue heron one time and she was able to put her wheelchair ramp down, noisy as it was, roll out in her wheelchair and do this with that heron never moving and just keeping perfect contact with her. And so I would guess that some of that vivid color and sense that she has about photography must come through for her in her dreams, whether it's portrayed to

anybody else, I don't know, but she's a really good photographer. *Thanks for volunteering that information. We will look for photography.*