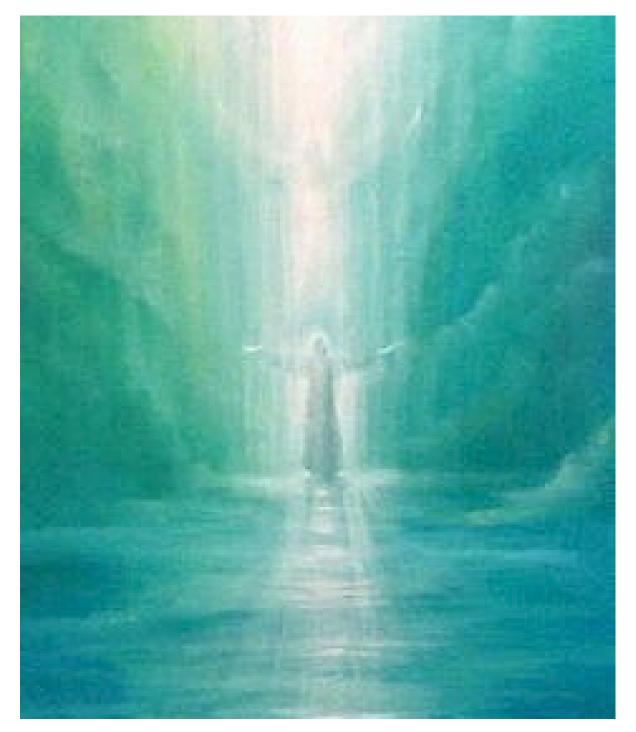
TOWARDS A CULTURAL-SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO DYING & DEATH

INSCRIBING SIGNS WITH A FINGER DIPPED IN LIGHT

COURSE DURATION: MARCH - NOVEMBER 2025



IN COOPERATION WITH THE SECTION FOR LITERARY ARTS & HUMANITIES, THE SECTION FOR PERFORMING ARTS, & THE COLLEGIUM OF THE SCHOOL OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE, GOETHEANUM

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION - TOWARDS A CULTURAL-SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO DYING AND DEATH

This work is of great importance to us, thank you for your inquiry!

StoryVision abn 654 254 494 36

Course convenors:

Iris Curteis 0487 719 476 an_lomall@bigpond.com

Irmhild Kleinhenz 0444 551 381 irmhild@pm.me

Course duration: March - November 2025

Modes of delivery:

Five 3-Day Intensives Venue: Bowra Street, Urunga 2454

Five Online Learning sessions with conversations, follow ups and questions [2 hours sessions, set dates]

Independent reading and engagement with course material

Endorsement Presentations: February 2026 Date to be confirmed

Front cover Image: Liane Collot d'Herbois ©Emerald Foundation

INTRODUCTION

Most of us do not understand how to die, how to consciously meet Death, prepared and with equanimity. Predominantly, conventional approaches to quality end of life care offer a way to relieve pain and suffering, to provide compassionate support to family, friends and carers and increasingly include information that directs the terminally ill towards voluntary assisted dying. Death, in this way of thinking, cannot be defeated, but it can be 'managed' and scheduled, and consequently, our experience of the spiritual dimension of the act of dying becomes an abstraction.

If we look to earlier times, we find images and approaches to dying and death borne by imaginations, inspirations and intuitions that held profound knowledge. The consciousness, understanding and reverence that should surround dying and death and life beyond the threshold, have been lost, silenced and 'dropped' out of the cultural-spiritual life of individuals and communities. We now need to approach this in new ways.

As course presenters, our aim is to develop a sincere, earnest relationship *with* Death, an understanding of the individual path of dying, and reverence and honoring of the actual, autonomous moment of death.

Using creative sources and insights offered by Spiritual Science, we discover death is the most sacred moment in our life; *it is entirely individual*. This insight, paired with the added knowledge that in every moment of life we experience a process of dying and becoming, allow us to focus on and develop with you the Spiritual-Cultural approaches and creative processes you can then apply with autonomy and integrity. These include visual art, music, creative speech, poetry, creative writing, oral storytelling and folktale research, eurythmy, and a deep study of anthroposophy.

All presenters work out of their professional and personal insights and spiritual understanding - we encourage you to bring your own individual spirituality to bear on course content. We will offer deeply insightful presentations to encourage you to approach dying and death in your own life and so enable you, as a Companion, to use this transformative knowledge and spiritual awareness to support those journeying towards the threshold.

There is a further increasingly urgent question we will explore. Our fear of death and dying has separated us from life imbued with Spirit and pushed us deeper into materialism and consequently onto a path of destruction we now know by the term of 'omnicide'. Our course is shaped by our resolve to find new approaches to dying and death not only for our own sake, but for the sake of Earth's healing and health, the sacred interconnectedness of life, and the evolution of humanity towards freedom and love. Our increasingly challenging times will provide us with opportunities to realise and to deepen our spiritual interconnectedness and responsibilities.

WHO IS THIS COURSE FOR?

This Schooling Course is a spiritual pathway to understand dying, death and rebirth. It is not a hands-on home care course as we feel these are offered by others with competence and commitment. What we offer is a process of inner development for those of you dedicated to accompanying the dying with your authentic spiritual insights through cultural and creative means. We recommend our Course if you wish to care for family and friends, your community, or consciously prepare yourself for death, are grieving a loved one, or seeking greater understanding of the journey beyond the threshold. Our Course equally provides personal and professional development if you seek greater emotional intelligence, selfawareness and lifelong learning in relation to your profession, for example: counsellors, health practitioners and therapists, carers, social- and support workers, educators, and those who wish to care for the newly deceased, such as funeral personnel and celebrants.

COURSE INTENTION:

- To facilitate a process through which participants develop their own healthy and integrated relationship to dying and death
- To educate and mentor participants who intend to become trusted Companions of the dying, and accompaniment of those who have crossed the threshold
- To enable participants to offer, where appropriate, artistic and contemplative activity for, or with, the dying and their loved-ones as ways to experience threshold crossings

TRUSTED COMPANIONS ARE OPEN TO:

- Contemplating their own life, examine their relationship to dying or near-death experiences and, through personal exchanges of these experiences, actively practice perceiving, contemplating and engaging with death
- Actively engaging in stimulating and supporting transformative change in individuals and communities
- Participate in creating a community of people who support each other on this path in service to their families, friends and communities
- Learning about current developments, insights and research in cultural-spiritual approaches to dying and death

APPLICATION OF ENROLMENT:

To honour the spiritual nature of this course and the earnest, respectful bearing required to work with dying and death, we ask that you write to us and tell us why you wish take this course: Do you wish to develop your own relationship to Death and dying as part of Life, and consciously engage with dying and death on a personal level? Are you enquiring about this course to develop your understanding of dying and death to serve your family, friends and/or community as a trusted Companion? Are you inquiring because you are interested in your professional development? Please include any experiences you have relevant to this field and send to: Iris Curteis an_lomall@bigpond.com mob: 0487 719 476

The course convenors will contact you to arrange a conversation and answer questions. We guarantee discretion in all matters of the application process.

PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS 2024

'I felt I was being worked on deeply by the content of the presentations, the artistic exercises and the wisdom of the group.

The breadth of historical, artistic, cultural and spiritual practices around death and dying.
Storytelling that took me on amazing journeys of the deep forces and elements that form and surround us on the Earth and the Cosmos and are woven into and through us over time.
Eurythmy that 'sifted" me and gave light and space within myself.
Art that enabled me to experience substance of life.
Poetry that swung open the door of my heart through the magical power of words.

- Singing and speech exercises that activated something from deep inside me and enlivened my connections within the universe through quality of sound.

It has given me fresh understanding of the journey we humans take through this life on Earth and the life between Death and re-Birth. It helped me recognise the seeds of this that I already hold in my life experiences, how these are part of my spiritual growth and the importance of nourishing them.

It was a chance to reflect on my own losses and grief and consider how I approach my own Death.

It has left me with gratefulness for this experience and a desire to not miss the chance to live and, most of all, love more completely as a servant of humankind.' 'Irmhild with her knowledge of Natural medicines, her experience in the death process with others, the laying out of the deceased, vigils, the stages and layers of the soul leaving, with a total reverence, love and respect always upheld. I have done a lot of end of life/doula study and can honestly say there is nothing like this course on the ground anywhere in Australia.'

'The storytelling, true origins of stories, voice work, and keening from Iris has connected me to many layers of my own ancestry and the place I currently live in the Centre of Australia. So many practices have been lost with regards to death, the way we deal with death within a contemporary context – a total disconnect from death, the death process and ancient spiritual practices.'

'As someone who had not experienced Eurythmy or Anthroposophic work before, I found it a beautiful way to move mind, body and spirit at an unknowingly deep level.
This became apparent with my body's need to rest fully for the rest time allocated at the end of each session.
The sessions incorporated gentleness alongside strength, inclusiveness with individualism, a lightness with reverence at the forefront.
Michelle was able to read and engage the group with her grace.
It was like we were a giant bubble and ever so gently she patted us so we didn't pop.'

'I particularly liked how the true essence of Steiner was always upheld, with no watering down of the material.'

INTERNAL ENDORSEMENT AND CERTIFICATE:

To qualify for internal endorsement and certificate you will be required to complete a minimum of 90% of this course, including:

- Participation in intensives, online learning and online conversation;
- Developing your creative journal, which includes:
- Artistic work [your selections]
- Your 100-word responses to a topic in each intensive and online learning session
- Your work with your evolving questions, enter your reflections into your journal, and demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of a cultural-spiritual approach to dying and death

Your graduation will include: a 20 - 30 min presentation [on a topic we have coverd in the course]; a storytelling of a folktale or myth of your choice. Consistently working in your journal will provide you with a wealth of material and a resource for your future work.

OUR COMMITMENT

We will provide you with:

- Individual, respectful and discrete feedback
- Constructive comment on both your strengths and areas that need further development
- Responses to questions related to the specific sessions and subjects we teach in the shortest possible time and provide you with your general learning materials

COURSE FEES AND CONDITIONS

FEES

The course fees of \$5500 cover all tutoring costs, both Intensives and online, and include your course material with one exception [see p. 12]. We can offer bi-monthly payments in installments of \$1100.00 by Feb 20th, April 20th, June 20th, August 20th, and October 20th. To discuss a payment plan over a 10 month period, or to discuss financial hardship application please contact Irmhild Kleinhenz: 0444 551 381

Payable to Irmhild Kleinhenz, Iris Curteis BSB: 533000; Acc 02118934

We waive application fees, but we require the first payment [bi-monthly or monthly instalment] to be paid within two weeks of your acceptance into the course.

WITHDRAWAL AND REFUNDS

If you must withdraw for reasons of health or extreme personal circumstances [proof required] up to 21 day before commencement 80% of your payment will be refunded. If participants must withdraw from the course after commencement for reasons of health or extreme personal circumstances [proof required] the current installment needs to be honoured; 60% of the *remaining annual fee* will be returned. It will not be possible to refund individual Themes if participants withdraw.

CONTINUED ENROLMENT

Fees must be kept current [please contact us if there is a problem]. Please note: participants will not be able to attend Intensives, Online Learning or Online Conversations or receive learning materials if fees are outstanding unless we have entered into an honorable agreement.

SCHOLARSHIP INQUIRIES:

https://www.ileenmacphersontrust.com/ https://www.anthroposophyau.org.au/members/members-grants-and-funding/ https://humanwisdom.org/ligsma-kirpe-trust-fund/

COURSE MATERIAL:

The lectures and readings are generally supplied by presenters and tutors, as are the poetry, creative speech and other exercises; all art materials are of high quality and provided during the intensives.

COURSE COMMENCEMENT: 14 MARCH 2025

VENUE: BOWRA STREET, URUNGA 2454 Urunga is a sleepy coastal village located on the southern Coffs Coast at the confluence of the Bellinger and Kalang rivers aprox. 20 min from Coffs Harbour airport

> INTENSIVE ACCOMMODATION: Please contact Irmhild for recommendations: 0444 551 381

ENROLLMENTS CLOSE: <u>28TH FEBRUARY 2025</u>

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INQUIRIES: Iris Curteis 0487 719 476 an_lomall@bigpond.com

A connecting bridge is to be built through spiritual science, precisely in the near future, between the living and the dead, a connecting line through which the inspiring elemental forces of those who have made the great sacrifices in our time can find their way across. [...] So that our souls may become expectant, expectant of the inspiration which will come from the dead, but which in the spirit will become especially alive. Rudolf Steiner, The Mystery of Death. GA 159/169, Dornach 1980, p. 202. we muddle through days of unwashed armpits, unbrushed hair and teeth crusty eyes still red from crying dishes piling in the sink on tables armrests bookshelves in the decaying food stink, in the reek of unaired rooms the din of midnight movies – no one watching – volume high so we can't hear ourselves rage rage against the loss the pain the fierce burn of invisible flame – solar plexus dead centre – blazing just when all light has left us and The Emptiness – that canny bastard –

wraps itself around us tight and fierce its roaring ceases

... and tucks us into the creases of indigo

like snowmelt so slowly we start to flow let go ... grow









II you are the word I cannot pronounce

> the break in the rhythm of my breath

> > the foot that misses the step

the conductor who snaps his batton mid symphony and leaves

> the dive-belt waiting to draw me deep into my own depths

I

COURSE STRUCTURE:

The course requires face-to-face and online study, participant presentations, and independent learning.

The five *3-Day Intensives* will introduce and develop both experiential and theoretical understanding of the themes in a structured, engaging, participatory learning environment. Your lecturers and tutors may set tasks, contemplative or creative practices, to guide you through the themes and material, towards independent research, reflection, short written responses and the preparation of creative presentations that further develop your skills and confidence.

The five *Online Conversations* [zoom] offered between intensives will not be recorded. In these sessions Irmhild will present on themes of Salutogenesis [see below]; we will also provide a space for discussion, questions and sharing of insights you've gained from your independent work [previous Intensive].

You will be asked to present your 100-word responses to the group, which is a good way to build confidence for your final presentation on graduating. Please note: Your attendance in the conversation is part of the course. If you genuinely cannot attend a session, please let us know, and send your 100-word response via email and contact the relevant presenter if you have questions.

COURSE HOURS: 30 hours per intensive [bi-monthly] 2 hours per online conversation and learning [bi-monthly] 2 hours independent learning [weekly]

COURSE DATES :

Five Three-day Intensives:

14 -16 March 4 - 6 April 20 - 22 June 12 - 14 September 31 Oct - 2 Nov

Please note: if you are travelling, you need to arrive on Thursday evening to be refreshed and ready to participate on Friday morning; please consider planning your departure for Monday morning. Each Intensive ends on Sunday evening at 6:15

Online Conversations and follow up:

These are delivered via zoom; we will discuss dates with you in person at the first Intensive

INTENSIVE THEMES:

All intensives include an exploration and experience of the themes through applied art: Visual Art, Eurythmy [movement art], Creative Speech [spoken word, working with breath, planetary vowels, zodiacal consonants], Poetry and Creative Writing, Oral Storytelling and Music [various modes] during the intensives.

Please note: while we reserve the right to adjust this programme should this become necessary, we will ensure to do so only with appropriate consideration and inform you at the earliest possible time.

THEME 1: THE MEANING OF THE EXPERIENCE OF DYING AND DEATH

Themes: The experience of dying and the death as an autonomous moment; different ways of dying. The challenge of pain.

The Breaking of the Silver Thread; The awakening of consciousness after death; Near-Death experiences

Online

April Online: Conversation, 100-word responses, Irmhild Salutogenesis 1: principles of health and illness

THEME 2: OUR CHANGING SPHERE OF CONSCIOUSNESS - THE LIFE PANORAMA

Care for the body after death, laying out the body and the Vigil; the release of the life body and the Tableau Coming to Grief: Keening, Laments & Funeral Rites Water Ceremony

Online

June Online Conversation and 100-word responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 2: Green Hermeticism - transformations THEME 3: ACROSS THE THRESHOLD; THE PATH THROUGH THE PLANETARY SPHERES

Earth-Near 'Dead'; Considering Organ Donation; The consciousness of the 'dead'; Moral-Spiritual Physiognomy, Spiritual Constitution – Limbs of the "dead"; Overcoming 'Omnicide' Animal, Plant & Earth Transformations; The path through the planetary spheres; the work of the 'dead'; Our Star

Online

August Online Conversation and 100 responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 3: transitions through the planetary spheres and the experience of the soul.

THEME 4 SOUL AMONG SOULS; SPIRIT AMONG SPIRITS

The relationship of the senses to the zodiacal regions and the experience of the soul. Spiritual loneliness and companionship.

Ascent toward World Midnight; Between inner-life and outer-life, between Spiritual Loneliness and Spiritual Companionship

Online

October Online Conversation and 100-word responses; Irmhild Salutogenesis 4: Karmic relationships

THEME 5 YEARNING, AS A CREATIVE POWER

Awakening to new life – reincarnating; Returning through the different spheres and unbornness; Salutogenesis 5: The Sacred Privilege of the Companion Yearning, as a Creative Power; Soul's Awakening through the Holy Spirit; descent towards a new birth; The Effect of Post-death Life in our Next Incarnation; Pre-Birth Intentions

Online November Online conversation and 100-word responses

READINGS, RECOMMENDED READINGS & REFERENCES

For Irmhild's work

The Influence of the Dead on Destiny, GA 179, Rudolf Steiner.

For Iris' work [all material will be suplied]: Storytelling Articles The Liminal Space - Storytelling a Conscious Approach to Thresholds Storytelling for the Dying and the People of the Spheres Keening Article: Coming to Grief; Keening, Laments and Funereal Rites Creative Speech: Exercises, verses, etc. Anthroposophy: multiple themes

For Gillian's work [material will supplied] Various poems

For Peter's work Music Thanatology [not supplied] End of Life Report Deakin University Report: Relief of Suffering at End of Life.

Nursery Report [not supplied] Deakin University Report: The Use of Prescriptively Played Music in the Special Care Nursery both available at: https://www.reverieharps.com.au/product-page/deakin-university-report

The harp and the ferryman / Helen Cox and Peter Roberts. [not supplied] Melbourne: Michelle Anderson Publishing 2013

Description: This is a book of reverence. A book which pays homage to all of those who have been present to the healing power of music be they professional or patient. This title traces the life of Peter Roberts as he discovers the power of music in comforting those with a terminal illness and the joy he can bring to the loved ones of the dying.

EDUCATORS AND ARTISTIC PRESENTERS:

Iris Curteis, PhD, Storyteller, Social Artist, Speech Artist.

Creative Practice: I will create an intense focus on folktales and the art of storytelling, Liminal Space, the power of Story to carry listeners across thresholds and the immense benefits this offers in our understanding of Death, in the care of the dying and their loved-ones.

I will introduce you to the Art of Speech, creative work with sounds, listening/stillness, poetic metre and rhythmic breathing and an approach to *keening* as a healthy practice of individual and communal grieving.

Theory: Folktale Research, Liminal Space; Anthroposophy [multiple themes].

Tania Hungerford-Gerth, Master of Therapeutic Arts Practice

Tania Hungerford-Gerth specialises in Anthroposophy within adult education. Her expertise is grounded in extensive training across diverse fields, including the arts—with a focus on sculpture—alongside social science, biography work, counselling, and art therapy. She teaches a comprehensive range of subjects designed for aspiring and current Waldorf educators, as well as coordinating the Advanced Diploma and a variety of Professional Development courses, including Sculpture, Form Drawing, Dynamic Drawing, the development and support of the Twelve Senses, Human Development, and the Four Temperaments. Her curriculum also features critical units on Professional Communication and Conflict Resolution, Trauma Awareness and Support, and Inclusive Teaching Practices for students with diverse learning needs.

Irmhild Kleinhenz,

Irmhild Kleinhenz is a specialist in her field of anthroposophic Naturopathy and Health Care. She is an endorsed mentor for the professional pathway for prescribers. Irmhild has a focus upon the Salutogenic approach to health and illness, grounded in anthroposophy.

Michelle Nicholls, RN, Dip. Eurythmy, Dip. Eurythmy Therapy

Michelle's professional life was predominantly nursing chronic renal patients, administering Haemodialysis. She studied Eurythmy at Aurora Australis, Anthroposophical College of the Arts, in Melbourne and attended Peredur Centre for the Arts in the UK to complete the Diploma of Eurythmy Therapy. Her practical experience includes working at Park Attwood Clinic, UK, based on Anthrosophic medicine. This experience revealed the potential holistic healing practices offer, when therapeutic modalities work together for the benefit of the patient. Returning to Australia, Michelle joined The Melbourne Therapy Centre, as a practice nurse, continuing her work as Eurythmy Therapist in private practice, as well as working at the Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School. Eurythmy and Nursing are both unique in the way they require the practitioner to have the capacity to sit comfortably with a patient / client, often during extreme threshold moments in their life. Michelle has had many years of service in both areas.

Gillian Rogers, M.Ed (Steiner), Grad Dip Adult Ed., English (Hons). Cert IV Community Services, Dip. Counselling.

Gillian has a wealth of experience teaching adolescence Creative Writing. She is dedicated to the exploration of creative processes that reflect the interconnectedness between body, soul and spirit. Her workshop approach will provide experiences that can sensitise participants to the poetic in language and aid development of a 'Poetic Soul' which can with greater sensitivity accompany those approaching the threshold. What makes poetic language different from prose? How does it create nuanced, deep understanding while working on the feeling life of listeners? Speaking, sharing and appreciating poetry will provide inspiration for the creative process of composing poetry.

Additional Tutors

Peter Roberts, Certified Music-Thanatologist

A certified Music-Thanatologist, Peter trained in this specialised discipline in Montana, USA, and has offered this form of care in Australia since 1997. This approach includes live, prescriptively played music (harp and voice) for the seriously ill, the dying, their families and friends. While the focus of the training was entirely on palliative care, Peter further developed his capacity to include convalescing patients and adapted his approach to the nurture and support of infants in the critical care nursery. 'During my studies, I learned to offer music in a careful, thoughtful manner, to express compassion and an attentive, loving presence through the music. I was challenged to consider what will work in response to the individual's needs. That means, I read patients, not music, paying close attention to their physical, psychological and emotional changes, and to play in response to these cues. I can best describe it as dancing with a stranger in the dark. As their rhythm, their rate of breathing, changes, my playing also changes. We synchronise ; it's not clear who is leading who. The effect can be profound. The movement is always from music towards a comfortable, deep silence and I leave them in the embrace of music and the beauty and gentleness of this quiet.'

Peter's musical form of care was affirmed publicly through research conducted by Deakin University, Relief of Suffering at the End-of-Life. Deakin Report; 2006 Peter and Professor Emeritus Helen Cox presented at the prestigious Mayo Clinic in the USA. The Significance of music, silence and an attentive, loving presence; Qualitative research as presented at the Mayo Clinic Spiritual Care Research Conference; Music vigils; Examples, stories, reflections and recordings Website: https://www.robertsmusic.net

2010 Peter became the co-creator of the Reverie harps [see website].

ABC TV's Australian Story: https://vimeo.com/236029945

From Music into Silence, a 2019 full-length documentary, revealing the background to Peter's musical journey was screened in cinemas across Australia and in Oregon USA.

https://vimeo.com/263142820

Pippa White has worked in palliative and home-based care for fifteen years and for eleven years and as an Anthroposophical Nurse in both general nursing and palliative care. She has facilitated many workshops on topics of dying and death gaining the respect and admiration of those working in close association with her who value her dedication and commitment. Pippa has been Irmhild's respected colleague for several years, during which they practiced and developed anthroposophic health care at the Melbourne Therapy Centre, and presented in public talks and workshops to promote a better understanding of the role of anthroposophical palliative and death care. Working in concert with Irmhild, Pippa will introduce core principles of 'laying out' and the preparation of the vigil.

PARTICIPANT'S TESTIMONIALS

As someone who had not experienced Storytelling or anthroposophical work before it was a profoundly magical experience for me. It required a new form of listening which invited me to undertake a journey into the unknown. Into something ancient, fascinating. The truth. The aliveness of the stories became apparent in the mapping & drawings I

did and in the reflective writing and the words that flowed from a well of my own inner wisdom .

Parts of me woke up with our gifted storyteller ... no one could escape. The stories connected me to life and death and deepened my connection to something greater than myself.

With time & distance & reflecting back, I can see how it all weaves together and through the stories a powerful healing transforms.

When we do eurythmy every day, I feel that my memory is better and that I can think more clearly. It feels that then I can digest and process the rest of the sessions we receive.

"... Iris and Irmhild complimented each other in all that was covered throughout the year."

'I know myself now as a whole human being with a vast cycle of life on Earth and in the Cosmos.' TESTIMONIAL- Gillian Rogers (Participant and Presenter).

There is something so clarifying in seeing that this other side of earthly life, which we call death, is in fact a revelation of the intricate moments that make up a lifetime or lifetimes. How could this not be so? And how could I have lived this vivid life, that at some time will end, without appreciating the other vast life that will open at my spiritual birth? The greatest revelation for me during this course has been entering imaginatively into the journey between death and a new birth. This living picture has been such a gift; and an inspiration to live with deeper connection to the greater cosmic reality of which I am a part.

