

## **Elisabeth Transfers Russian-Speaking Skill After She Dies**

by Jane Katra, Ph.D.

In the years before Elisabeth got sick, Elisabeth's father Russell used to frequently say that the evidence of survival of consciousness after bodily death that he wanted to see was the transfer of skills learned by a dead person and communicated to and demonstrated by a living person. Elisabeth did just that, in a very creative way, about six months after she died!

Elisabeth had a very close friend named Kate, who lived in Washington State, and who never got to say goodbye to Elisabeth. By the time Kate had found out that Elisabeth was ill, Elisabeth could no longer speak and was quite weak, often in pain, and not using the telephone. Kate never felt that she had closure on her friendship with Elisabeth. She told me that she had loved Elisabeth like her own daughter, and she felt very bad that she had not been able to tell Elisabeth that before Elisabeth passed.

A few days after the memorial service and wake that we held at the home where Elisabeth had left her body, I fixed salmon and salad for lunch for Elisabeth's father Russell, her husband Mark, and myself. We had just finished cleaning up the house where Elisabeth had been sick and died. This was the first time that the three of us had ever eaten a meal together without anyone else being present. It was also the first time that we had had to sit down and relax together after Elisabeth's three and a half month long ordeal.

We had finished throwing out the old food from the fridge, cleaning up spills and stains from the carpet, and hauling all the overstuffed trash bags filled from the wake's party out to the far end of the yard to be hauled away.

I had just thrown out the dead flowers that had been sent from friends when they were bright and fresh, and I had rearranged bouquets of those that were still colorful. As the summer California sun streamed through the windows onto the kitchen's cobalt-blue tiled countertops, Mark announced that he had received a very interesting letter from Elisabeth's friend Kate. He handed me a folded yellow page of legal-lined paper, and suggested that I read the letter aloud for all of us to hear.

It was about a dream that Kate had had a few nights before, in which Elisabeth had given her a message to relay to her husband Mark. Most of the letter described dream imagery that was meant to convey Elisabeth's deep caring for her husband, but the last part of the letter told of how Elisabeth kept repeating the same nonsense syllables over and over and over again in Kate's ear. Elisabeth repeated them so loudly and purposefully that Kate was awakened from a sound sleep. Kate knew that Elisabeth meant for her to write the syllables down and send them to Mark. She found a pen and paper, and wrote the syllables down as Elisabeth continued to dictate them to her.

Here is what Kate wrote that I read aloud, all hand-written in capital letters:

YAA TEE BAA VEE SHOO.

YAA TEE BAA LOO BLUE.

YAAZ DEE YES. YAAZ DEE YES.

YAA TEE BAA VEE SHOO.  
YAA TEE BAA LOO BLUE.  
YAAZ DEE YES. YAAZ DEE YES.

Odd non-sense syllables, written by Kate, still mostly asleep at five in the morning, scribbling on a pad on her bedside table.

After I finished reading, Russell asked, “Would you please read that again, Jane? Just the sounds at the end?” I repeated the nursery-rhyme-like verses in a sing-song manner.

At which point, Russell declared, “Those aren’t nonsense syllables! That’s Russian! YAA is I, TEE is you, and VEESHOO is see. It says I see you! YAA, I. TEE is you. LOO BLUE is love. I love you! DEE YES means here.” She’s saying ‘I’m here. - I see you. I love you. I’m here!’”

A few days later I phoned Kate, and asked her if she knew how to speak any Russian. She said, “No. Why do you ask?” “Have you ever been to Russia, or heard people speaking Russian?,” I queried. “No, never,” she said.

But Elisabeth, accepted into Stanford Medical School at age 19, had thought she should be a bit older before studying to be a doctor, so she attended Stanford and earned a master’s degree in Russian language, as well as a translator’s certificate in 1981. She traveled to Russia two times in her short life, speaking Russian so well that the Soviets thought she was a native of their country. When she was 21, in 1983, Elisabeth had delivered her father’s research paper about the psychic research done at Stanford Research Institute to the Soviet Academy of Sciences in perfect Russian, making her dad hugely proud of her.

I often wonder if we would have ever discovered this “transference of skills from the other side” if the three of us had not been together with no other distractions, and if Mark had not asked me to read the letter aloud, enabling Russell to hear the syllables and realize they were Russian.

Now that I think of it, it was my idea to fix lunch for the three of us that day. But then, where did the idea come from?