

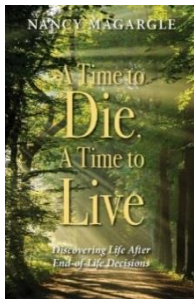
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“A Time to Die, A Time to Live” Chronicles a Parent’s Worst Nightmare: End-of-Life Decisions
You can plan for your child’s birth . . . but what about the day you remove food and water?

TURBOTVILLE, PA, April 1, 2017—The shrill, unexpected ring of the telephone shattered the silence of a lovely summer morning. It also changed Nancy Magargle’s life forever. As she learned that her beloved eighteen-year-old daughter was clinging to life in a hospital, mortally injured in a horrific automobile accident, Magargle’s world crumbled.

Little did she know that her nightmare had only begun. Nor could she imagine how the gut-wrenching decision to eventually withdraw her daughter’s life support would challenge—and ultimately strengthen—her faith.

“A Time to Die, A Time to Live—Making and Moving Beyond End-of-Life Decisions” (Carpenter’s Son Publishing—April 1, 2017) is Magargle’s story of loss, hope and redemption after her daughter’s death drove her into deep spiritual crisis. Mired in self-doubt and grief, she questioned how God could ever love her after she had made such an agonizing decision. Her guilt was compounded by a lack of understanding and support—even withering judgment—from some in her circles of faith and friends. And when an internationally recognized spiritual leader contacted her by mail, the letter’s piercing words only spiraled her deeper into paralyzing despair. But she continued her search for meaning in the face of unimaginable anguish.



Poignant and ultimately uplifting, “A Time to Die, A Time to Live” provides a lifeline to anyone gripped in the relentless cycle of grief, guilt and loss. The book also offers a series of real-life coping strategies at the end of each chapter . . . valuable lessons learned on Magargle’s hard-won journey to redemption, understanding and grace.

To learn more about the book and the author, visit www.timetolivebook.com. Magargle will be signing copies of her book at ICRS, day and time TBD, at the Carpenter’s Son Publishing booth, #517.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Nancy Magargle has written inspirational devotional pieces for *God Stories from Lancaster County* and *The Upper Room*. She has also spoken to groups across Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware and New Jersey on end-of-life decisions. With compassion, honesty and warmth, she freely shares her own life experiences with others caught in the spiritual and cultural crossfire of this issue, providing a clear path to acceptance, recovery and spiritual renewal. She and her husband, Ron, reside in north-central Pennsylvania, where they raised their four children.

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“A Time to Die, A Time to Live”

By

Nancy Magargle

Author Interview Questions

1. Why did you write this book?

We will all face loss one day. Many will face tragic loss. “A Time to Die, A Time to Live” chronicles every parent’s nightmare: end-of-life decisions. On August 25, 1993, my eighteen-year-old daughter Stacey was clinging to life, mortally injured in a car accident. But that was only the beginning of the nightmare. Over the next weeks and months, we faced many gut-wrenching decisions, eventually culminating in the decision to withdraw life support. This trauma drove me to my knees, into deep spiritual crisis, and finally into a prison of self-punishing guilt. I didn’t see how God could ever love me again after having made such an agonizing decision. My guilt was compounded by a lack of understanding and support from some in my circles of faith and friends. I wrote this book to provide a lifeline to anyone who is gripped in the relentless cycle of grief, guilt and condemnation. It is a story of love, hope, and redemption. It is my prayer that through this story others will experience God’s enduring love, complete forgiveness, and total acceptance and re-join the dance of life.

2. Reliving this experience had to be painful for you. Would you do it again? Why?

Yes, although I would never want to be faced with those horrific decisions again, nor would I ever wish this experience on anyone, God used this loss to teach me how to let go of the pain of the past, embrace the joy of the present and anticipate the future with hope. This journey led me to the very heart of God where I discovered the truth of His unconditional love for me and for all of His children. He showed me how to break out of the prison of perfectionism and a legalistic mindset and to walk in the freedom of His love.

3. Did writing the book give you further insights into what you experienced? What were they?

Most definitely. Not having a medical background, I understood very little of what was happening to Stacey over those weeks before her passing. After she was gone, I poured over Stacey’s medical reports and the doctor’s notes. I also consulted at length with two of her

physicians. As I learned more, I wept at the devastation her physical body—and specifically, her brain—had undergone. With this understanding, I could begin to process the experience intellectually and emotionally, but I still couldn't complete the pain of the loss or feel connected with God. That took much more time and soul-searching. Forgiveness and grace were critical if I were to recover and live life to the fullest again.

4. Have you found forgiveness in your own heart? What about forgiveness with regard to those who openly challenged, judged and even attacked the tough decisions you had to make? Yes. Forgiveness is another key that opened my heart to receive more of God's love. If we choose forgiveness as a way of dealing with loss, God will teach us to love others as He loves them. I needed to forgive others as God forgives them, in the same way He forgives me. God waited patiently as I continued to carry the baggage of unresolved pain and crippling unforgiveness. We emotionally bind ourselves to others who offend us when we refuse to forgive them. This gives them the power to inflict the same hurt repeatedly, while we continue to relive the experience and we take on a victim mentality. What God has forgiven, I have no right to hold on to. When we release others of the obligation to treat us as we feel we deserve, we no longer relive the pain of the past. Memories of times when others have disrespected us no longer control our emotions, responses or actions. Asking for and receiving forgiveness from God are lifetime processes, each absolutely necessary in order to move ahead.

5. Did you experience additional healing or greater pain as you worked through the loss? There were moments of excruciating pain when I felt like giving up. I wondered why my daughter was dead and I was alive. That's just not the right order of things, is it? There were times when God seemed painfully absent and silent. Yet as I pressed on, I encountered God's presence on an even more intimate and enduring basis. He embossed His presence on my consciousness. The healing and wholeness I now enjoy far exceeds the pain of the past.

6. What is the one thing that you would say to someone who had lost a loved one or is facing the loss of a loved one? Don't give up or give in. Accept the help that others offer. Extend grace to yourself and to others. Grief is not a step-by-step neat process with predictable time frames to follow our progress. At the end of each chapter, I share coping strategies to help those who have lost a love one or are struggling with guilt or grief in the wake of loss. I include some concrete steps to take when loss hits. Perhaps the most important thing is to depend on God's strength, His wisdom and His truth. Loss need never rob us of our purpose for living. In fact, God promises that if we place our life in His hands, He will redeem our losses, breathe new life—His life—into us and give us new purpose for living.

7. What can someone who is grieving the loss of a loved one do to ease their guilt and suffering?

Perhaps the first and most important thing to do is to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. What does that mean? In order to approach a Holy God, we must be holy, perfectly righteous in our thoughts, motives and actions. That is impossible; no matter how hard we work at it, we will always fail. Scripture confirms that we have all fallen short of God's standard of perfection. God sent His Son to absorb the wrath that we justly deserve for our failures. Jesus Christ went to the cross with you in mind. All you need to do is agree with God that you have failed and that you

need a savior. Then Jesus steps in, and God counts His righteousness as yours. Condemnation and conviction are not the same. They are worlds apart. Condemnation is from the enemy; conviction is from God. God's empowers His children to live a life that pleases Him through the infilling of the Holy Spirit which Christ sends to us once we invite Him into our lives. So you see, you are a creation of great worth because of the work of Jesus Christ, because of His redemption, not because of anything you have done or failed to do. You can exchange the ashes of the past for the joy of the present and anticipate your future with hope.

8. What can others do for someone who is going through this type of trauma?

I will never forget the day that several of my friends showed up on my doorstep and said they were there to help in any way I needed. They ironed my husband's shirts, they cooked and they cleaned—even the bathrooms! They took turns driving me to the hospital, then sat beside me each day so that I wouldn't be alone. They didn't allow me to drop off their radar, but kept me busy teaching Bible study, leading the service organization to which I belonged, and serving on the worship team at church. They were the hands of God, the voice of God, the feet of God, always encouraging me to stay engaged with God and with others.

9. If you could only give one piece of advice to those who are in a prison of guilt, what would it be?

Keep reading the Scriptures even when they seem to be dead, devoid of meaning and relevance. Listen to worship and praise music. Keep calling out to God. In the hidden chambers of our heart, the places that nobody else sees, doubt and despair lurk. We fear exposing those places and we try desperately to cover up or compensate for our inadequacies. But when I realized how passionately God loves me, how relentlessly He pursues me, His love was the key that opened the door of my heart. There he inscribed these words: I love you. I love you. I love you. His love opened the prison doors so that I could walk in freedom and joy. That same joy is available to you.

10. What would you say to friends and family members on the outside looking in on a situation similar to your own?

Be patient. Don't expect your friend or family member to be the same after a loss like this. Loss changes us. But it doesn't need to diminish us. Nor does it need to end in despair. I am stronger now than I ever was before. My faith is stronger. My marriage is stronger. My relationship with God is more intimate than I ever imagined possible. What's important is to keep dispensing huge helpings of grace and mercy. Keep praying for your friend or family member and ask God to give you wisdom in how to best extend your support and His love.

11. How has this experience affected your faith?

As I relinquished my desires and surrendered more of myself to Christ, I discovered my greatest enemy was not those who opposed me or who stood in judgment of me. My greatest enemy was myself. For a long time I didn't realize my error. I had been listening to voices other than those of my Savior for years, including my own voice, my own self-loathing, even my propensity to punish myself. Confessing this sin, I gradually learned to shut out all the other voices and only listen to God. He convinced me of His love and His concern for me and the length to which He had gone, and would go, to take care of my daughter and my own needs. His love lifted me from my heart's ashes to the heights of heaven's joy. When I focused on His love for me in this way, I

knew nothing could separate me from the love of God embodied in Christ Jesus. God searched my heart. He knew my imperfections. In spite of my sin, He declared His love for me. All He asks of any of us is to love him back.

12. Where can we find your book?

“A Time to Die, A Time to Live” is available for purchase through any bookstore, or if you're more of a digital person, the book is also available as an e-book through services like Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble's NOOK and Apple's iTunes. You can also purchase directly from me by way of my website: timetolivebook.com. If you contact me directly, I'll sign a copy and add a personal note if you specify that in your comments to me.

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Business Ink

Telling Your Story

Gail Fallen

Business Ink

Media and Public Relations

gail@mesanetworks.net

What People Are Saying about “A Time to Die, A Time to Live”

“It was years ago I first learned about Stacey’s story—little did I know how intimately involved I would become in both her life and death. Stacey Magargle taught me many lessons, not the least of which is that God is utterly sovereign over the decisions we make. I also learned the painful lesson of learning to think—and think hard—before speaking. I am so glad to now see ‘A Time to Die, A Time to Live’ in print, and I hope as you read that you, too, will learn timeless lessons about life and death, care and compassion, and how we can best support each other through the toughest of times. The book you hold in your hands is a deeply personal look into the heart of Nancy, Stacey’s mother—I pray that in these pages, you will see how deep and wide a mother’s love will go when faced with impossible choices. And that, perhaps, is the best lesson of all.”

—Joni Eareckson Tada, Joni and Friends International Disability Center

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“‘A Time to Die, A Time to Live’ is the story of a mother’s journey through the deep grief of losing a child. Magargle invites you into an authentic journey of grief that offers insights into the universal search for God in the midst of suffering and loss. She leads you to the very bosom of God, a place each of us longs for, peace in the shelter of His Wings, comfort through a more intimate knowledge of God.”

—Reni Weixler, MA, LPC, CPC, Licensed Professional Counselor

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“I find Nancy’s message compelling reading as a story of her faith, of Stacey’s life, of a life-and-death struggle, and of tensions in her life and marriage. Articulate and poignant, she chronicles the dilemmas and the pain that accompanied each significant step. I was drawn into the experience. At almost every turn, it kept me asking, ‘What happens next?’ Thank you, Nancy, for sharing your message—a gift from God that you give to your readers.”

—Pastor David Martino, Community Mennonite Fellowship

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“Masterful writing, inspirational, faith-strengthening—a volume which should be on pastors’ and counselors’ desks everywhere. Includes useful Coping Strategies.”

—F. Berry, Professor, Church Leader