

# Chapter One

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## Death Before Life

For many years I felt like there was something wrong with me. My struggles with feeling fully alive began before I was born, living in the womb of a woman who had experienced five stillborn births before she conceived me.

When I was about to be born, the doctor said to my Mother, “Mrs. Desmarais, I’m sorry to tell you, but this child is also stillborn.” Then she was given a sedative and I came into the world, unexpectedly alive.

“I never experienced such sadness and grief and then such joy and excitement in such a short period of time,” my Mother later told me. “I knew that God had some unusual plans for you because you were my miracle baby.”

It has taken me many years to feel like a miracle. A feeling of death hung around me

from before I can remember. From a very early age, I began to think a lot about death and dying. This dark, heavy feeling kept me from being able to fully welcome others into my life. The darkness surrounded me throughout my life, making friendships difficult, and, as time went on, affecting my marriage and family. I found it very difficult to feel any love from my wife and kids. They would tell me they loved me, but it would only sink in about an inch and then bounce right back out again. I could hear their words but I didn't know how to receive them, let alone how to respond to them.

I would like to share my journey from emotional death to emotional wealth in order to give you hope and help if you are experiencing any of the negative emotions that are part of life in a broken world. God has taken my hand, helped me out of my shell, and led me to a place of freedom and safety. It is from this place, not of perfection but of health that I would like to extend a hand to you and encourage you to lay your

head on the heart of the One whose love heals every wound and bridges every gap.

The most major turning point of my life was the day I gave my life to Jesus Christ, who is the bridge between us and God. He is the source of our life, our hope, and our healing. When Jesus died on the cross, He gave His life to take away not only our sins, but also our physical and emotional pains. He can heal your heart, your mind, and your body. All you need to do is open up your heart and ask Him to come in. He loves you and wants you to live in a close, loving relationship with Him.

If your heart feels broken, or if it has become numb over many years of having to protect yourself from feeling pain, I want to let you know that there is hope.

***“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”***

-PSALM 147:3

I invite you to join me on a journey from death to life. Together we will follow Christ

as He leads us out of the desert into a place of abundant life.

***“He will swallow up death forever.  
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the  
tears from all faces; He will remove the  
disgrace of His people from all the earth.  
The Lord has spoken. In that day they will  
say, “Surely this is our God; we trust in  
Him, and He saved us.”***

-ISAIAH 25:8-9

***“Death has been swalled up in  
victory.”***

-1 CORINTHIANS 15:54

***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and  
destroy; I have come that they may have  
life, and have it to the full.”***

-JOHN 10:10