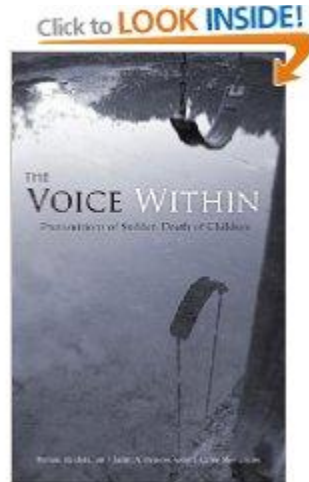


THE VOICE WITHIN: PREMONITIONS OF SUDDEN DEATH IN CHILDREN  
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FOREWORD BY MELVIN L MORSE MD FAAP



I am very proud that I was a participant in this study of Parents who had premonitions of sudden infant death and mentored them in getting this great book published. I wrote the forward to it.

This study came out of the Southwest Sudden Infant Death Research Institute.

Here is my favorite passage:

Chapter Two: In the spring of 1987, Judy Henslee, Executive Director of the Southwest SIDS Research Institute, and Carrie Sheehan, of the SIDS Alliance, attended the first SIDS International meeting in Lake Como, Italy. In the Villa Olina, amidst centuries old statuary and colonnades, they had a serendipitous exchange.

Judy described a call from Wendi, a mother of a high risk infant followed by the Institute. The story that unfolded forever changed Wendi's view of reality. "I was wide awake, working in my baby's closet, when I saw her image in a small white casket at the front of her church. The vision was horrible. I dropped what I was holding and the image went away, but recurred ten minutes later. Everyone thought I was crazy. When my daughter died, and we went to the funeral home, my baby was placed in a small white casket identical to the one I had seen. It was the only infant casket available. I knew. If I could only have done something."

To Judy's astonishment, Carrie shared a similar incident which had been relayed to her several months earlier when she visited Fran, a member of the SIDS support chapter in Omaha. It was the first anniversary of the death of Fran's infant son. She asked Carrie to accompany her to the cemetery for a memorial visit. The young mother then shared the feelings of foreboding she experienced during pregnancy. While watching a program about Nostradamus dealing with death premonitions, she had an intense feeling about her unborn child. In dreams that then followed, Fran had sensations of a baby going up in the air whom she continually pulled back to earth. In her visions, this occurred in the living room of her home. Fran's son died in the exact

location predicted in her dreams. When he died, she experienced a strong sensation of wanting to pull him back to life, but of course to no avail.

Both mothers were reticent to mention their experiences for fear they would be judged “crazy”. Guilt, anger, and confusion reinforced their thoughts that the deaths could have been prevented had they acted on the premonitions. The resultant isolation, created by the absence of any understanding of these experiences, created its own very complicated “if onlys”.

Following the trip to Italy, a question, designed to determine the frequency of premonitions, was added to the Southwest SIDS Research Institutes existing data base questionnaire which consisted of 274 objective questions.

By 1992, many SIDS and control families had responded to the request for information about their premonitions. Although it was a time of information gathering, the Institute had not begun analysis. With limited funds, over worked staff, and the never ending search for the mechanism of SIDS, analysis of objective data always seemed to be the highest priority. The study had initially become a possibility when the Board of the Southwest SIDS Research Institute gave full approval for the research. It needed, however, the full support of Dr. Richard Hardoin, the medical director and co-founder of the Institute. His strong support came. Without warning tragedy struck the Hardoin family when Rick’s mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. As his family coped with the impending loss, the importance of “faith” and the relationship between body, mind and spirit became increasingly clear. The depth of his deep personal loss with its anger, grief, love, and spiritual experience served as a strong catalyst for completion of the premonition study.

*Rick elaborates: Several weeks after Mom’s funeral, I received a phone call from Judy Henslee, my colleague and now the Executive Director at our Southwest SIDS Research Institute in Lake Jackson, Texas. She was bubbling with excitement about starting the analyze the premonition data. Of course if you know Judy, she is always bubbling with excitement. She could get an Eskimo excited about snow. When I heard that her partner I this project was none other than Carrie Sheehan, the Western Regional Director of the SIDS Alliance, another boiling cauldron personality, I could only hold my breath and ask “what is it you propose we do?”. Their recollection of the premonitions discussed at Lake Como had previously gotten my attention. Gathering data seemed like such a benign thing at the time. Now, however, came the hard part.*

*How could I, as a physician, a scientist who had prided myself in objective thinking, conduct a formal study about premonitions? This sounded like palm reading or astrology or fortune telling. Then, as I pondered the subject, I was reminded about the night of Mom’s death. Dozens of questions streaming through my mind. How could that frail, semi-conscious, dying old woman muster up the energy to sit up in bed and summon her children to her side for one last good bye? Where did that strength come from? Where did her love, her personality, and her spirit go that night when in an instant, the sparkle left her eyes? And what about prayer itself? Has anyone ever seen the God that we’re praying to? I realized that the answers t these questions and hundreds more like them are simply that there are no objective answers. You*

*cannot measure spirit or prayer or God like you can a blood pressure. These all come by faith alone. Yet they are every bit as important a part of life as muscles and blood.*

*The proposed study would never be able to answer the “who”, “why”, “where”, and “how” questions. But now I realized that didn’t matter. What we could answer were the “what” questions. What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? If enough of our parents across the country and across the world had similar experiences, I felt strongly that this study would create a cohesiveness between SIDS parents, a healing bond that could help relieve their pain and suffering. I believe this book will accomplish that goal.*

*For the first telling of the premonition stories, hundreds of others would follow. As the poignancy of the stories unfolded, they gained credibility and acceptance. As we analyzed the data provided by families who experienced premonitions, we began to understand how normal this phenomena is. Whether we are anticipating the death of an elderly parent or fearing the death of our precious child, there is an intangible something which transcends our physical boundaries and defies scientific explanation. Hopefully with further information and education, medical personnel and counselors will no longer give parents reason to doubt their own reality. Through sharing of the stories relayed to us, we feel privileged to have been able to help others recognize and accept “the voice within”.*