



[To Say Goodbye: Grief, Mourning, and Supernatural Post-death Contact]

Minnesota State University, Mankato

IRBNet#[2329148]

Purpose

You are invited to participate in a research study in which you will be asked to describe a personal experience of visitation or contact with a deceased loved one. The goal of this research is to explore the emotional, symbolic, and social meaning of post-death contact, with a focus on how individuals experience grief and maintain relationships with the deceased. This research is being conducted by *Deborah Cobb*, a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Dr. Dennis Waskul is the principal investigator.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in this research, you may choose to complete:

- An anonymous, open-ended online survey describing your experience (approximately 10–15 minutes)

or

- An optional, in-depth interview (approximately 60-75 minutes) conducted via secure video conferencing.

The interview will be audio-recorded with your verbal consent and later transcribed. The purpose of both instruments is to gather qualitative data about your personal relationship with the deceased, your experience of visitation or contact, and how that experience shaped your grieving process. You may skip any questions and withdraw at any time.

Potential Risks

The risks of participation are minimal and no greater than those experienced in daily life. However, due to the emotional nature of discussing death and grief, you may experience sadness, discomfort, or emotional distress. You are free to stop the survey or interview at any time, request a break, or decline to answer any question.

To support your well-being, a list of grief and emotional support resources is available on the project website, postdeath.contact, or can be emailed upon request.



Potential Benefits

There are no direct or tangible benefits to participation in this research. However, some participants may find that reflecting on and sharing their experience is meaningful. The findings from this study may help researchers and society better understand how people grieve, maintain relationships, and find meaning following the loss of a loved one.

Compensation

You will not receive any compensation for participating in this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw your consent at any time without penalty. Refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with Minnesota State University, Mankato in any way.

Confidentiality

All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly confidential. Survey responses will be collected anonymously. Interview data will be stored securely by the researcher and identified only by pseudonyms. All identifying information (such as names, email addresses, and interview recordings) will be accessible only to the principal investigator and student researcher and stored securely on a password-protected computer with an encrypted data storage drive for no less than three years.

Contacts and Questions

If you have any questions about this research, please contact:

Deborah Cobb
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Minnesota State University, Mankato
deborah.cobb@mnsu.edu

The principal investigator is Dennis Waskul, who can be reached at: 507-389-5673 | dennis.waskul@mnsu.edu

If you have any questions about subjects' rights for research-related injuries, please contact the Director of the Institutional Review Board at 507-389-1242 or irb@mnsu.edu. If you would like more information about the specific privacy and anonymity risks of online interactions, please contact the Minnesota State University,



Mankato IT Solutions Center (507-389-6654) and ask to speak to the Information Security Manager.

Statement of Consent

“I have read this consent form, I fully understand the contents of this document, and I voluntarily consent to participate. I attest that I am 18 years of age or older. All of my questions concerning this research have been answered. A copy of this form has been offered to me.”

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____