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BE PERFECT
AND WHAT
HER HEART
WANTS *NOW*

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HEALING MEETS
MEDICINE

WHEN A
MEDIUM IS THE
MESSENGER

OCTOBER 2015
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12 PAGE
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ARE YOU READY?

When I was 16 and co-captain of my high school swim team, I never, ever, ever missed practice. If you missed practice, you didn't get to compete, and, honestly, diving practice at the International Swimming Hall of Fame in Fort Lauderdale was some kind of heaven. Traveling to and from the aquatic center on the beach in my best friend's top-down Jeep was so much more fun than, say, going home. But one day, for no particular reason, I decided not to go to practice. My friends asked if I was sick; was something wrong? I said I was fine; I just wanted to go home. As I walked into the house, I heard...nothing. Which was weird, because I had two little sisters, a five-year-old and a one-year-old. I called out their names, and Aimee came padding out with a big smile on her face. I said, "Honey, where's the baby?" And she turned and pointed outside and said, "I think she's in the pool."

In fact, she was floating, face down, on top of the water. I ran to the patio as I yelled "Call 911" to whoever could hear, jumped in the pool, and pulled my little sister up by her ankle. She was blinking at me—blink, blink—but her body was blue. She was not breathing. Time was moving really slowly; I was trying to remember the lifesaving class I'd taken, but I just opened her mouth and squeezed her belly, and she more or less threw up what seemed like a gallon of water and started to cry. You need oxygen to cry. Then she turned bright red. She was breathing. Within minutes, paramedics were stomping through the house; my stepmother had run out of her bathroom where she'd been taking a shower; my ex-boyfriend's older brother randomly appeared at the front door, and then poof! They were all gone, off to the hospital, the siren fading as they got farther away, and I just sat there, on the picnic table by the pool, somewhat in shock. Decades later I can still conjure the same state of panic in myself when I start to think about the fact that had I walked in one minute later—just one minute, the paramedics told my father—my sister wouldn't have lived to become the beautiful, hilarious, successful soul of that branch of my family tree. Why didn't I go to practice? I hadn't broken anything, like my eardrum or my hand—diving accidents that had sent me home early before. I just didn't *feel* like going. "The Irish have a saying for that," an Irish friend told me. "God watches over babies and drunks."

I've never really looked too hard at non-evidence-based reasons things might or might not happen, but I love when science rewrites the ideas we have about what's going on with us internally and why we behave as we do. It's interesting to think that less than a decade ago, acupuncture was still considered fringy, while today it's a widely accepted pain-relief modality that's covered by many insurance policies. Which brings me to Charlie Goldsmith, a six-foot-plus Aussie Adonis who has his own thriving advertising agency, and what more than one person has called a gift for healing...by concentrating his energy on that of the ailing person. And to Chip Brown, a hard-ass reporter who writes with rigor and poetry and the kind of nuance that makes you see things more clearly. (And whose old-school belief that you can't write the story until

you actually report it warms my heart.) Chip knows his way around this world, having spent four years writing his book, *Afterwards, You're a Genius: Faith, Medicine, and the Metaphysics of Healing*. So we put Chip on Charlie—for a year—and on Charlie's quest to have the medical establishment take his healing seriously for our package exploring the *new* New Age (page 328). Another hard-core journalist, senior features editor Lisa Chase, writes about her experience with Lisa Kay, a medium a friend suggested she talk to after losing her beloved husband. It's a beautiful piece of writing on something so complex and heartbreaking that I had to start and stop several times while reading it, just to compose myself and make sure I was looking at it with the same kind of skepticism many of our readers will. I fully expect to get a barrage of criticism for these pieces; I'm also betting that we'll get as many requests from people hoping to connect with Charlie and Ms. Kay—and the seven other new age "gurus" and practitioners we highlight this issue.

One of my favorite gurus is Kung Fu Panda, who's filled with such ancient wisdom as "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." But I don't know whether it was because I'd spent the last several months working on these stories with the editors, or the fact that I'd just spent an amazing week with my family at Rancho La Puerta in Baja California, Mexico—which has, along with a vegetarian menu (I experienced such glee watching my children attempt a hunger strike but then discover that the food was not only great, but made them more energetic and less frantic), a decidedly Eastern bent, offering classes in yoga, meditation, Tai Chi, and "sound bowl healing"—that, after a lifetime of little patience for anything "New Age-y" (owing in no small part to the time I spent as a teenager on an Iowa commune with my mother's hippie friends who, like, macraméd and didn't watch TV), I became, at least for a moment, the ready student.

On our way back from Mexico, we flew to our former family homestead in the Colorado mountains to scatter my mother's ashes following her painful and harrowing death from Alzheimer's last Thanksgiving. My older sister, brother, and I, plus my mom's very close friends, her brother- and sister-in-law, and her, well, I don't know what to call him...her soul mate? Her 20-years-younger boyfriend of more than a decade who then became her close friend and confidante until the day she died? We all met in Colorado, for what I feared was going to be an excruciating and grim experience. But as we climbed the hill near our old cabin to say good-bye, I felt her with me, actually there, for the first time since her death. And I felt something I hadn't felt in a while, and that was her love. I'd come to say good-bye, but in fact I got her back. I can't explain it. But I know it's true.

