

Maribeth Takes Listening to a Whole New Level

Transcript from a podcast with Dr. Gwen Schiada, Life on Your Terms
April 2018

Note: This conversation has been edited for readability.

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Introduction

Gwen Schiada: Hi everyone. Dr. Gwen Schiada here, and welcome to another episode of Life On Your Terms. I have a very interesting guest today. Her name is Maribeth Decker. She is a former Naval officer, who is now a professional animal communicator. She is truly living life on her terms and has really taken that first L in my seven L framework, listening to a whole other level. She truly heard her calling, and we're going to do something very special on this episode where she is actually going to do one of her communication sessions with my former pet dog Bailey. I'm not going to say any more than that. We're going to get into it, but there are so many lessons here related to creating a life on your terms.

A couple of the things that just struck me, and I'll share a few here, is the importance of clearing out the things in your life that don't serve you, and the things that keep you from being the best person that you can be.

I'm wondering as you're listening to that, what are the things that don't serve you anymore? Maybe they once did, but now they're just clutter and distraction from truly creating a life on your terms.

think about the people, the tribe that you surround yourself with. Are they a tribe of people who support you want to help you create a bigger life for yourself, a bolder life? Or are they afraid and more comfortable if you stay small? All right, let's jump right in and get started.

Maribeth, welcome to the show this morning. I am so excited to have you here, and I'm just going to share this with you. This is probably if not the most unique interview, one of the most unique. so I'm thrilled to be sharing this with our listeners today. Thank you so much for being here.

Maribeth Decker: Thank you for having me Gwen. It's pretty exciting for me too, because you're taking what I do from a totally different viewpoint than what I usually get to talk about, and I'm excited to look at it from your structure of the L's.

Gwen Schiada: We're going from the animalistic to the human, and we'll see how these things connect here. But so the viewers kind of have a sense Maribeth. Give a little bit of background about I mean, what exactly it is that you do now, and why your work is so important to you and you're so passionate about it.

Listening: From Naval Officer to Animal Communicator

Maribeth Decker: Well, if anybody's heard my story, I didn't come out of the womb talking to animals. I would like to say it, but that would be a lie, so I don't say it. It initially happened, I was in my second career. I'm a retired Navy officer, and I was working at an association, and I became a Reiki master. I noticed that my dogs were talking to me and communicating with me. Even after they had passed away, I was getting information from them. I was feeling their presence. At first I said, "Well you know, if my dog could talk, he just told me blah, blah, blah." Then I found out there were animal communicators out there. I'm like, "Whoa."

Gwen Schiada: So you'd never heard of this before.

Maribeth Decker: No.

Gwen Schiada: I don't think a lot of people have. Right.

Maribeth Decker: I was doing energy healing for people, and started doing a little bit for animals. When I learned that I actually was hearing stuff, I went and got training, and got a lot of training on how to connect, how to interpret, how to be open. And the reason I love it is ... for me, we're always dealing with a family, even if it's one animal and one person, it's a family connection. When I'm working with that animal and that person, that person's heart is so open. Even if they're mad at the animal for peeing outside of the litter box, they still love them dearly.

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Behavioral Issues

Why it's passionate for me is that in working together, many times we can solve some behavioral problems, which allows people to have more love for their animals, enjoy their relationship more. And the animals benefit because they're feeling like, "Oh, I'm back in good graces, and I'm not making people mad, and I'm fitting in."

End of Life

I help with end of life transitions. I do love that. There are doulas for bringing babies into the world, I think that's a great word for the transitioning out. We find out whether the animal is ready to go. Sometimes it's no, sometimes it's yes. We help them through the transition process, and even afterwards. There's, oh, there is so much joy in helping the animal and the person feel connected through the process, and even beyond.

Gwen Schiada: I love that. I love that. it's all phases. When they're here having the best relationship that a pet and a person can have together, or during those times of transition and even beyond, I think it's important. Maribeth, you touched on it. I want to make sure people heard it. I mean, you were a Naval officer. I just find it fascinating, and I want people to know. Because they might think, "Okay, this is some woman. She was tarot card reader, was sort of a hippie type." It's interesting when I found that out about you, I was trying to put those two things together. When you think very ... I'm married to a former Marine.

Maribeth Decker: You get it!! Hah!

Gwen Schiada: Yeah. It's (the military) very facts, structured, it doesn't seem like there'd be a whole lot of room for this sort of out-of-the-box type of work. And I think it's important for people to kind of know that ...

As you said, you didn't come into the world this way, you didn't aspire, you didn't say, "That's what I want to be when I grow up is an animal communicator."

But my framework, the seven L's, the first L is listening. And you take listening to a whole other level. which is why I was fascinated to have you on the show. It's like, "Wow, she's really listening, and takes this to a whole other level," and that's what we want the listeners to be able to do is to listen to their own internal communication.

If you want to say a little bit more, I know you were a Reiki master, you were already kind of sort of moving in that direction in your career pathway. But it sounds like there was a pivotal event perhaps. Was it with your dog Tibor?

Maribeth Decker: It was with Tibor, yes. He's such a good guy. He started off in a tough place. He's a rescue dog. He came to us at about a year and a half age-wise. Lots of scars on this young "boy." Broken tooth, some of the skin still hasn't got hair; the hair hasn't grown back. He was in a rough place, and I won't go beyond that because we don't need to. I'm sitting next to him on the couch, and more than once I see a man standing in a suit, a thick suit, and a German Shepherd running up to the protective suit and biting the man's arm.

If you've ever seen how they teach dogs to be guard dogs or to attack, that's what I was seeing. I saw in more than once! I'm looking down at Tibor thinking, "What are you telling me?" Because he's like this really mild little dog ... "Little..." He's a 55 pound little dog. Tail wagging, loves to be loved ... that was him. I said, "I got to find out what's going on. I really, I need to know what's up with this boy." That's what really shifted me into finding out he had experienced some pretty horrific stuff through my animal communication abilities. We were able to get him from being a reactive, aggressive dog to a little softy.

Gwen Schiada: What allowed you to say, "Okay." this image and this thought just sort of came to you." What made you not just think that was a random thought, or not just dismiss it, or question, "Why am I ... " What made you go, "Wow. This is literally coming from my dog"?

Maribeth Decker: I had the previous experiences that opened me up: a couple of my dogs had communicated but I wasn't paying attention. This vision kept recurring. and there's nothing in my past experience where I could say, "Oh, that's a memory of blah, blah, blah." No. I've got nothing around guard dog training. It definitely wasn't me. I knew I had a dog with some clear fear-aggression issues. And that's when - how things happened. I knew a woman who said, "Oh, that's animal communication you're experiencing, and you need to learn about that."

Gwen Schiada: You did. Somebody kind of brought this into -

Maribeth Decker: She said, "Oh, yeah I use an animal communicator."

Gwen Schiada: I mean, that was an actual thing that you were able to confirm that, that that was a memory and event that happened in Tibor's life?

Maribeth Decker: I believe it was because it's the only explanation I have. I have the physical evidence that there was some tough stuff going on. My guess is they were trying to turn him into a guard dog, and he's a lover. He's not a mean guard dog. That's not his purpose in life.

Gwen Schiada: How does this work? I mean, we'll get into the experience, and I just want to give the listeners a little bit of a teaser that later in the show, we're going to actually do a little bit of an impromptu session.

I've sent Maribeth a photo of our beloved dog, who is no longer with us. Full disclaimer, I have never done this before. I haven't told Maribeth anything about our dog. She knows her name, and she has seen a picture. We're going to do that a little bit later in the show to see how this might actually work, but from a science, I'm curious.

Quantum Mechanics

I did an interview with somebody a couple of weeks ago, and we talked about the first L of listening. And he described it from a perspective of quantum mechanics. It's not just, "Oh, I thought of my grandmother and then she called." There is a literal science behind it.

I'm curious Maribeth, with this communication with the pets. How does it work? Is there a science behind it, what is it?

Maribeth Decker: Well, you hit on it. I was going to use the term, quantum physics because that's the only thing that seems to answer it from a scientific point of view. They're describing it as kind of like a web or a field of energy where we're all connected. And that's pretty much out of time and space.

When you figure out how to make that connection out of time and space, that's where the communication occurs. It's almost like a meditation, but a waking meditation where you're getting that information somewhere on the quantum subatomic level, there's two beings that are connecting on purpose, and sending information back and forth. Our bodies are set up to take that information in - just as my brain saw something. It was there, it was just that Tibor was sending it, and I was actually picking it up where I wasn't before.

Gwen Schiada: Maybe it was your receptivity, that honing. I mean, it seems that we truly have this ability to hone these skills. And I think people are more open to believing that person to person, right? Because I would say probably I don't know what the data shows, but that we can all say, "Oh my God. I've had this experience where I was thinking of someone, and then they called me immediately." Or you just get the strong feeling, and then it manifests somehow.

Gwen Schiada: I mean, I have had many of those experiences throughout my life. I mean, I can speak personally to that, but I think it's harder for people to go, "Oh, yeah. But person to dog, or person to cat, they don't speak English. Or they don't speak the same kind of languages that we do." I think it's harder for them to grasp or to believe that that can happen, that we could connect with anything other than another human perhaps.

Maribeth Decker: Maybe they're not speaking English, but they're sending us data and information, and between the both of us, we can interpret it in a way that makes sense or is meaningful. I get a lot of stuff symbolically. I can't say, "The dog just said this." Although maybe there's some cases where I'm pretty sure the dog did say that. But I'm getting the flavor, the gist, the meaning, the intention of the communication. We all, at least those of us who live with animals, we all know that they certainly have their own being and thoughts and feelings if we've ever spent any time with them. I mean, you got to give them that.

Gwen Schiada: You can see the expression in their eye. I don't know if it was literal or just from the body language, but I feel like I always knew what my dog was thinking. I was like you know ... I mean, she ... I mean literally, sometimes she would speak. I mean, "Take me to the beach, take me ... "

Maribeth Decker: Absolutely.

Gwen Schiada: You know your animal well enough. There's definitely a relationship verbal and nonverbal in some ways. And for to shift this a little bit for a moment to the human perspective, right? That back to the seven L's for a second, and that first one being listening. we have these sort of external connections that we might have with other people, or with our pets. But there's this inner voice that I find fascinating, and some people seem very well connected. Obviously, it sounds like you've honed that from this external world to this very internal.

I think that through our lives, sometimes that gets shut down, we start ignoring that, we have people in our life that discount even our external thoughts and statements that we make. We start shutting even down that inner voice.

That's when we become disconnected from even being able to create or envision a life on our terms, and we end up very far away perhaps from where we want to be.

Do you have thoughts about that? What is that inner voice? Is it the same science and things that can explain that? I know if people are religious, they may think of it as a soul. Other people think of it just as the universe speaking to them. How do you define that?

Maribeth Decker: That is such a good question. I think the universe conspires to move us in the right direction, and it gives us many opportunities to go that way. This is my belief system. I think [before I was born] I wrote down pretty much what I wanted. I had a bucket list coming into this life. There are certain things I wanted to get done. And I think I made agreements for certain things to happen, and certain people to be in my life. I always have a choice to ignore it, but I think the hint from the universe gets louder - to where, God, creator, I mean that with the upmost respect, gives you a bigger hint - a 2 by 4 - that you're not moving in the right direction, you know?

Gwen Schiada: Yeah.

Maribeth Decker: A funny story - I've been sober since '81. I was in the Navy at a training command where we were teaching people how ... This is funny... We were teaching sailors how to drink responsibly. All the sailors listening are probably falling on the floor laughing at this point. But that was our job, teaching what responsible drinking was. And I had to go to some AA meetings to be more knowledgeable. I believe that the universe has a sense of humor because I'm teaching this stuff, I'm going to an AA meeting, and then I'm going out and I'm drinking irresponsibly.

Gwen Schiada: You're not walking the talk.

Maribeth Decker: I was like, "Huh. What's wrong with this picture?" I could've ignored it, but it was, "I get it. Okay. Let's stop this behavior and move on." And I did. I got sober.

Gwen Schiada: Wow. And it was ... I think the universe does have a sense of humor.

Gwen Schiada: It is kind of a what comes first? Did you pick up on that because you were attuned to your inner voice, or did it just smack you across the face? "You need to get this, Maribeth." But somehow you paid attention.

Maribeth Decker: I do think that I was attuned. I had had a spiritual experience when I was 12 that there was a loving creator, and probably that was an opening to be attuned to what's best for me. Also, there was still a part of me that said, "Oh crap. You better clean this thing up, or it's only going to get worse."

Gwen Schiada: You have work to do. I mean, how fascinating that ... you have to first listen, get yourself organized that then you could listen even more is actually what you're doing is your life's work. You kind of had to jump over that personal hurdle before you could really hone those skills.

Maribeth Decker: What has been my task is to clear out the stuff that doesn't serve, the behaviors, the thoughts, and the beliefs that keep you from being the best person you can be - just being willing to work on that next piece of yourself that is kind of embarrassing to have.

Love (Values & Passions)

Gwen Schiada: That's a perfect segue, Maribeth. the L being listen, right? And the second L being love, which I describe as your values and your passions. Living in alignment with those, which obviously with your work, you are living your passion and what you value.

Layers

But that third L is layers, meaning those things that you have to work through to truly create a life on your terms. And those layers may be society saying, which I'm sure you got some of that, of, "You're going to do what? You're going to go from being a Naval officer to an animal communicator?" I'm sure you had some external messages that you had to deal with, but it also sounds like yeah, you had some internal layers as you just said to be able to move through ... To be able to do your life's work and be the best you possible.

Maribeth Decker: Exactly. I think possibly the internal ones were tougher than the external ones because a lot of self-judgment. "Who do you think you are?"

Gwen Schiada: Imposter syndrome.

Maribeth Decker: "You're going to share what you do, and you're going to put yourself out there for ridicule and disbelief? Does that sound like fun? Am I good enough?" A lot of self-doubt, not a lot of self-love either. I had to clear out a lot of stuff about not loving myself and who I was, and forgiving and letting go of those pieces that were unattractive.

Gwen Schiada: Which probably weren't so unattractive, but in your mind they were.

Maribeth Decker: They were pretty unattractive, but you're kind. On the outside, they would think, "Wait a second. I knew you when you were drinking, how did you become this animal communicator, which sounds glorious. I knew you when you were a Naval officer. How did you move to this?" Or even the last networking meeting I went to where people just got ... When you tell them what you do, they stop and they look at you, and you see that you've grown two heads, and you don't know where to take the discussion after that.

Double Layers

Gwen Schiada: Exactly. And you know, yours was sort of a double whammy. It would have been one thing if you went from being a naval officer to maybe you went to dental school, or something like or you became an accountant.

It's like, "Okay, wow. Major career shift," but two things that people can wrap their arms around. not only did you major shift from the Naval officer, or from people knowing you as drinking and kind of that was your identity, but then to something so obscure that people don't understand, and we know what happens when people don't understand, right? There could be judgment, or that's not credible, or I've never heard of that, it must not be real or valid.

You had the double layers. I mean, so many people would just stay small and stay safe and not take that risk. I mean, you have to have so much courage to do

that, and to come from where you were. I mean, just to share for a second with you, I know exactly what you're talking about.

When I tell people my personal story, I have a doctorate in clinical psychology. And it's interesting when people see me now with that. I'm an elected political official, and I have my doctorate, and it's like, "Okay, if they didn't know me before, it's like, 'Oh, wow. That's who you are,'" right?

Maribeth Decker: Right.

Gwen Schiada: But I also have a GED. I was a high school dropout. And yeah, I'll just let you sit with that one for a second.

Maribeth Decker: That's cool. That's really cool that you did that. Just got beyond it. My dad had a GED. He was very ashamed. We didn't hear about it for quite a while. That's amazing.

Gwen Schiada: Sometimes there's shame, but once you start to own it, it releases.

Honestly, it's just like you, it's become part of my life's work, right? Helping other people live a life on their terms. You somehow overcome that, and you learn a lot of lessons in that having an interesting, perhaps challenging path at times.

Leap

Gwen Schiada: I get exactly what you're saying, but yours being that more obscure ... you made the leap. For people listening who are like, "Oh my God," this is your job, this is a viable business. This isn't just something you do as a hobby on the side, right? that fifth L being leap. Can you share ... How did you move beyond those layers and just make the leap to say, "You know what? This is my calling, this is what I'm doing with my life."

Maribeth Decker: Each person can be seen symbolically as an animal (shares the animal's characteristics). I think my representative in this life is Turtle. I took it slow. I stayed working for the association. That was a really good bunch of people. And I started working to build my confidence in my abilities. That's just such a huge piece - where I'm getting feedback from the people confirming that what I'm doing is useful. In one session, the cat's using the litter box again, or the dog is walking politely on the leash. I'm not a dog trainer by the way, that's not what I do. I participated in animal communication group training programs, practiced, and worked with a lot of people.

Finding a tribe of people who are interested in supporting you in getting bigger, in seeing the bigger you, that was crucial. I don't think I would have done it by myself. I would absolutely not have done it without finding a group of people

who were also interested in getting bigger, and doing more, and we were supporting each other. that was crucial too.

Gwen Schiada: You talk about these basically where a lot of what we're talking about it law of attraction. And don't you find Maribeth, that the more that you do that, you step out, and you sort of make this commitment to getting bigger, popping your head out of that turtle shell, and those people tend to show up in your life.

Maribeth Decker: They do. They become friends and supporters and colleagues. You come from a place where everybody wants the best ... It's just a lovely ... We all want each other to do well. We've got each other's backs, and that is delightful. It fuels the ability to go out there and do the next thing that scares you half to death.

Gwen Schiada: And when you ... And this is what you're doing full-time. I mean, this is your business.

Maribeth Decker: It is.

Landing

Gwen Schiada: When you think about we kind of take that leap and then land, right? And we kind of look around. Land is sort of that sixth L, and we look around and we say, "Wow, okay. I've come to this plateau." We're never truly done, but we say, "All right. I've been on this journey, I've made that leap." What would you say are some of the key takeaways in terms of living your truth? I mean, you broke through some barriers to get where you are.

Maribeth Decker: Let's say the first thing that pops in my mind is that when I'm doing a session, I am closest to happy and in heaven. that's very reinforcing for me. I'm like, "Oh, this is sooooo good."

Gwen Schiada: It's telling you you're doing the right thing.

Maribeth Decker: It is. It is. Nothing's perfect, I'm not saying everything turns out perfectly... But every one of those sessions are beyond perfection, the place that we go together is just lovely, and what happens for the most part is wonderful. That keeps me going. That's something to show I've chosen correctly.

Caroline Myss talks about how to view things that happen to us as impersonal. Challenges happen to all entrepreneurs; we need to take them in stride, not take them personally – as if the universe is conspiring against us.

There are many things that are not easy compared to when you worked for somebody else. Carolyn said, "Life happens to everybody." It's not just me that is having the trouble with all this stuff. When it becomes challenging, I see it as impersonal, these are the things that people who go out on their own deal with.

I don't spend as much time in the "poor me" stuff. It's like, "No. This happens to everybody." And that's really key for me, because otherwise I get stuck in that, "Oh, why isn't it easier? I thought it was Field of Dreams. Build it and they will come."

Gwen Schiada: Right, right. It's so not. I mean, you're going to get the affirmation that you're doing the right thing like you said, and you have to pay attention. You have those wonderful, wonderful juicy moments that keep you going, but then yeah. It's a business.

Maribeth Decker: Remember that it's not personally happening to Maribeth, poor me, really helps me keep an even keel. THEN you go to the personal level, "Okay, what are you going to do about it, Maribeth?" Which is also more useful than being in the poor me's, the victim mentality.

Gwen Schiada: Right. I think entrepreneurs look at those things as, "This is a challenge to be solved." You take the emotion out of it. You look at it as a puzzle, a challenge to be solved, not something personally keeping you down.

Maribeth Decker: That's something I've had to learn.

Level Up

Gwen Schiada: When you look at what's next, what are you hearing, Maribeth? What are you listening to that's calling you? That seventh L is level up, right? As entrepreneurs especially, we get to these plateaus, and there's always something else, whether it's creating something, or growing, or maybe shifting. Is there something that's calling you now that you're listening to?

Maribeth Decker: I am looking for ways to, as I would say, "There's an animal communicator in every family," - and every vet's office, zoo, and every rescue organization. And actually communicating with animals - it's a part of the norm of how we make decisions around animals and what's best for them.

Because I work with people and families, that's where I'm starting. But I'm holding for the bigger vision. I'm holding for a shift in a relationship with animals where we see each other, in the best sense, different nations of peoples.

You go back to the some of the old Native American ways. Many of those tribes would call animals species the beaver people, or the bear people. There was a respect of equals rather than, "We are the masters, and we are dominant them. We do what we want to do because we get to be in charge. We're the ones in charge." I would envision a place where we start getting more horizontal in our power-sharing relationship with the many species of animals, and seeing how we can live on the planet together respectfully.

Gwen Schiada: I talk about thinking bigger. I love that. Both sides of what you just shared, but where an animal communicator is just sort of a normal part of a team. When you think of an integrated medical team, you have the different people playing different roles, and having that same kind of a structure for animals as well, and that it's just accepted that. And you're right, and the horizontal versus the vertical power. I think that's a beautiful, beautiful image. I'm with you on that.

Gwen Schiada: When you think about that Maribeth, and your life, and your journey, and the risks that you've taken, I have so much respect for your courage.

How do you personally define a life on your terms? What does that mean to you to say, "Wow, I am creating a life on my terms, living life"? And sometimes I hesitate to say that. I don't want people to think of that in a selfish way, that it's my way or the highway, but meaning that you're living in alignment.

When you say you have that sort of ah-ha moment with a session, sometimes we have those ah-ha moments in our life, right? That everything kind of gels. And when we think about that, that's when we know, "All right. I'm living life on my terms, my personal truth." How do you define that?

Maribeth Decker: I love that. That's another great question, because I'm really wrestling with that. I'm 63, and I'm like, "All right. You got a third left... 2/3s of the life is over. What are you going to do? How do you want it to look? This is it, girl."

Relationships are really important to me now. Sometimes I felt like an automaton, cog, a means to an end for an organization. Now I'm doing what it takes to nurture long-term relationships, and valuing that, because I really want people around. I want them around for the rest of my time here. I want it to be real.

Of course animals. Just stopping and being present around animals, and being a positive force. I don't know what that's going to mean, but to just holding that that's going to be part of my mission.

I want to live in a way that ... I'd like to do whatever I can to keep this beautiful place going. I'm weighing in saying, "I want a beautiful earth that grows good food, clean air, clean water, animals thrive, and people also thrive." My joke is ... I grew up Christian, so I joke that I want the biggest argument on the planet to be, "Where do we put the Christmas tree?" You know?

Gwen Schiada: Exactly. You know what I love, Maribeth? Nothing that you just ticked off there was material. You didn't say, "I want to be a multi-millionaire in the next five years. And I want to have this compound or whatever." I mean, everything that you just described were truly about your personal values versus society saying, "This is what success looks like."

It sounds like the further you go on this path and this journey, the more clear you've become about your true core values, and what really, really matters to you for a fulfilling life. I love that.

You're committed to listening and paying attention to those values that truly bring happiness versus maybe the things that we think might bring happiness.

Maribeth Decker: Oh and I'm all for abundance! I am. I mean, I'm loving that whole idea. I'd just like abundance for everybody. All the souls on the planet, all of this.

Gwen Schiada: Right. And you're an entrepreneur. Obviously, we all have to make money. It's not saying, "Okay, and everything will just work out." But you are an entrepreneur that's in alignment with your soul and your values, right? I think when we live that way, the universe will prevail. It will provide what we need when we are living our truth. And part of that is trusting that.

I love it. I am ... I have no doubt that you will continue. I'm not going to say will do big things, because you have already done big things, and made big leaps, and I appreciate you sharing what you have about your journey. This is such a beautiful, beautiful story.

Real-time Animal Communication Session

Gwen Schiada: Let's take a look at what animal communication means or looks like, or hears like I will say since this is audio only. And I have to admit Maribeth, I'm a little nervous. I have never done anything like this, and I won't say anymore. I don't know, because I don't want to influence. I don't know if I'm supposed to ... I don't want to skew things. But like I said at the beginning of the interview, I shared a picture with you of our dog, who is no longer with us. That's all you know.

Lead us through this next piece of basically we're doing an impromptu animal communication session.

Maribeth Decker: I've got a picture of Bailey here, and I'm looking at her. What I would usually do is look at the picture ahead of time. It gives me a bit of information. It's not just looking into the eyes, there are things that pop out at me. It's completely symbolic. It doesn't make any logical sense. Can I ask you when this picture was taken prior to her passing on?

Gwen Schiada: I believe it was about a year ... I think it had a date on it, right? It said 2015. I'd have to look.

Maribeth Decker: And she passed in?

Gwen Schiada: In February of 2016.

Maribeth Decker: Well, because I'm already feeling a little bit of sadness there. Like maybe there is just ... Let me just get quiet and listen or see what I get. It feels that that there was a move on the way out, and a little bit of sadness about leaving you. (Some of these things I get, I think of myself, like, "Well, everybody would figure that out." But I'm going to say it anyway because it's just true.) OK, there was a slowing down of the body, just a slowing down at this point. But interestingly, it feels like the thinking and the feeling was still really, really sharp. I don't know how she seemed to you, but in her inner self was very clear, and precise, and wonderful.

The next thing I do is I invite her to come in into my office. I see how she shows up – it tells me what she thinks about herself.

She didn't walk in. She actually flew in, which is to remind me that she is feeling light and free. She's three feet above the floor. I see a younger version of her to tell me that ... In Japanese, she'd say, "I am genki. (I am well)." What else? She just gave me a hug for you. She wants to give you a hug. That's a BIG hug.

Gwen Schiada: She's a big dog.

Maribeth Decker: Yeah, she's a big dog. A little bit of slobbering going on. And a big tongue, is that true? Well, obviously looking at the picture. Yes, and a big tongue. But there's a lot of love. Is there anything you want to tell her or you would like to ask her?

Gwen Schiada: You know, it was very, very difficult making the decision. We had to put her to sleep.

Maribeth Decker: Yeah.

Gwen Schiada: And you're right about her mental state. What was difficult about making that decision was mentally, she was fine, and mostly physically she was fine. But her legs being such a big dog, her hind legs really had given out.

To get into our home, you have to come up an entire flight of stairs because we live on the Chesapeake Bay. It can flood, the whole house is raised up. And I've had a lot of guilt that was she ready to go? Because I always thought, "Well, if we lived in a one-story house that was on a ground, maybe she could have lasted another year."

I mean, she was definitely in pain. It was difficult for her to even get up, she hated the winter, going outside. But I just thought, "Oh my gosh. Are we doing this too soon?" My husband and I had thoughts of, "Should we just move so she could be on a flat surface?" Because we literally could not get her up and down the stairs anymore. I mean, she weighed 165 pounds at her height, and my husband had had back surgery the month before we had to put her down. Literally, you could not lift her. It was horrible. I mean, she was literally our child. Was she ready to go? Is she okay with that?

Maribeth Decker: Yeah. I'm getting a lot of warmth in my chest and my abdomen... let me hear how she would say it to you. She said I did pick up her sadness... Sorry. She is absolutely okay with it. She explains it this way - that she knows what she signed up for, okay? You were correct in saying it wasn't much fun for you, it wasn't much fun for her. She was at the point where she just wasn't getting a return on investment for being in this body anymore. She just sent me - let me tell you what I saw - the biggest heart, a valentine heart - to you guys, you and your husband. Bigger than her, she just sent it to you. She really loves you. And it's not in the past tense. She really loves you.

But you're right, that was no fun for her. It reminds me that death is much like a birthing as well. When I was pregnant, I was scared of childbirth, but there's a certain point where you go, "Get this baby out of me. I am ready to move on because it's just too uncomfortable." She was at that point with her body - "I need to go. It's time." She's absolutely okay. I'm feeling a lot of peace. And it is clear that the decision was made with absolute love and concern for her, and she knows that.

Gwen Schiada: That's good.

Maribeth Decker: She wants you to know that it **wasn't** the wrong time. I have met animals who are being close to being put down, and they weren't ready to go. I'm saying not every animal is ready to go. But I'm telling you that for Bailey, yeah, you did good.

Gwen Schiada: I'm happy to hear that.

Maribeth Decker: Oddly enough she tells me she's playing with puppies. I have no idea, but she's enjoying herself hanging around playing with puppies. Sort of mothering puppies.

Gwen Schiada: That's funny that you mention that because well we got her as a rescue when she was two, and she had been spayed. But we always thought that it looked like she had maybe had puppies.

Maribeth Decker: She's getting to do that here. And as I suppose, sadly enough, since there's a lot more animals than there are homes, there are probably some puppies having to be put down. If you can believe it, one of her jobs is to take care of the puppies that have had to go early... That's a fact of life. And she gets them, and mothers them. She does the mothering and lets them do their puppyhood stuff over on the other side. She says she's kind of strict, though.

Gwen Schiada: That's pretty funny. She was such a good dog. Our thing is we always said she never did anything wrong on purpose. Because she was so big, we had wood floors, and she scratched the floors, not her fault, and she would shake her head and slobber would fly on the walls. We actually called it smart like snot art. And but those were the only two things. I mean, you could leave a turkey on the

table and leave, and she wouldn't eat it. sSe never did anything wrong on purpose is what we used to say.

Maribeth Decker: She's carrying that tradition on to make sure that these are well behaved and well-mannered little pups as they grow. Even if it's the spirit world, she's still ... She's setting a good standard, a high standard.

Let me ask her if she has anything else to share. She says she may be back. I have met animals who I feel have reincarnated, even in my own family. She may be back (if you believe in that stuff). If you don't, don't worry about it. But she may come back to you. She thinks she'd like to try a smaller body next time. Not tiny, but probably something under 50 pounds.

Gwen Schiada: Yeah. I love it.

Maribeth Decker: It might be a while, though. She's having a lot of fun just enjoying life on this side.

Gwen Schiada: Well, she ruined us. We can't imagine having a better dog ever. She was truly our kid. I mean, truly our kid.

Maribeth Decker: She's showing me how delighted she was living with you – picture a dog is in a field of grass in a meadow of flowers, and running around, and jumping, and being on their back, and she's saying that living with you was like that for her. It was delightful. Just the best ... No, she said better than what she hoped for. She is truly ... She's really grateful for that. She's really happy.

Gwen Schiada: Now you're going to make me cry.

Maribeth Decker: I'm hoping that that means that you're really feeling the connection. She's been pretty busy, but if you want, she will come and stop by. It doesn't feel like she's done that much. She's just been enjoyed time with the puppies, but if you want, she might make her presence known.

Gwen Schiada: Well, we would love that.

Maribeth Decker: Okay. I'll give you a list, because it helps to put it in your mind and you notice it. You might hear a bark, feel her sitting on the couch next to you, or down at your feet. I've even had somebody tell me that they woke up to the feeling of their dog licking their face.

Gwen Schiada: No, I would take that. I'll take that.

Maribeth Decker: You might see her in a dream. A lot of people dogs, cats, and other animals in their dreams. My mother-in-law's cat used to come and sleep next to her on the bed, and she could feel him jumping up and snuggling in. All that's possible, and just be open to it. She said she will see what she can do to come on down and

say hi to you. Oh, I see her licking your hand. I don't know what that will feel like, but she just showed me licking the hand. Let me know.

Gwen Schiada: Yeah. I'd recognize it. If I felt it, I would know.

Maribeth Decker: You would know. You would certainly know that something brushes against your hand, that's what I felt. Anything else for her that you'd like to share, or-

Gwen Schiada: Just that she was the love of our life. I mean, an amazing, amazing 10 years that we had her. She was 13 when she passed away. But like I said, we got her when she was two, and we were just starting building our ... We had just built our house, and we had just gotten married, and basically got our child that we had for a decade. And forever grateful.

Maribeth Decker: She's showing me herself in your arms as a baby, as like a puppy in your arms. That's telling me that she felt the same way. She absolutely felt the same bond of being your child, even if she's all grown up. Still that's the kind of bond she felt with you guys, too. She's really good right now. She's just light, and airy, and happy.

Maribeth Decker: It's kind of like the Disney movie, 101 Dalmatians is what she's said to me..

Gwen Schiada: I love it. Thank you. Thank you so much for that. I'm glad this isn't video, because people would see that I have tears in my eyes right now, which would be okay. Which would be okay, but I really, really appreciate you doing that.

Maribeth Decker: I'm glad to do it. It was wonderful. And I just want to thank you, Bailey for coming and connecting here. It's great.. My heart's very warm, and it's the afterglow of doing this kind of stuff.

Gwen Schiada: I feel like that too. It's like, "Whoa. That was kind of ... Takes you away for a second."Thank you. Maribeth, thank you so much.

Maribeth Decker: You're welcome.

Life On Your Terms

Gwen Schiada: Two last things I want to ask you. If you have advice for someone who wants to create a life on their terms, right? Whether they want to become an animal communicator, or they're being called to something else, and they're just not sure how to make that leap, how to get started, what would be your one piece of advice to help someone just get started on creating a life on their terms?

Maribeth Decker: I would look for the doors that open and the doors that close. If you have your intention to do it, more forward in the direction you think you want to go.If the door opens up, go for it. If the door closes, say, "Well, let me move a little bit." I had some doors close on me that I thought I really wanted to do. If those doors

didn't close, I wouldn't have been open to an intuitive hit that led me in this direction.

Listen to those intuitive hits that don't make sense. "Oh. I just got an intuitive hit that I should do this." Try it out. See how it goes. Does it light you up? Go another direction and see what happens. Maybe it just doesn't work out. Pay attention to which way you're being led, pushed, guided, directed.

Gwen Schiada: I love that. Often I feel like in life we're pushing, pushing, pushing. "This is what I want." And sometimes we get so firm, so planted in that, and that we just ... It's like, "Nope. I know what I want, and nothing ... " And of course, you do have to work hard for what you want.

But what I'm hearing you saying is pay attention. Don't just trample through. Pay attention to the signs, what the universe is also telling you or showing you.

Maribeth Decker: Particularly for those of us who are listening and saying, "You know, I really want to do the best thing in this lifetime." Then I think that you will get the signs. You will hear it, you will see it or feel it. You might get the 2X4 a couple times. I've had that more than once in my life that says, "Hell no."

Gwen Schiada: And sometimes You think, "But this is what I really want." And what I find interesting is sometimes you get what you want, but it might not look like what you thought it was going to look like.

Maribeth Decker: Right.

Gwen Schiada: I've always been passionate about interviewing people, but I didn't imagine five years ago I would be doing a podcast and doing it that way. sometimes things ... You have to be open to maybe what it'll look like too, right? How it'll manifest.

Maribeth Decker: Right, because mine started as ... Actually, I started massage, and then energy healing, and then ... Which it was just like a river meandering. And then all of a sudden the boat stopped, and I got off at animal communication. At least that's how it feels to me. It's like we had to do some movement. I didn't picture that at the beginning.

Gwen Schiada: Right. But those things led you and prepared you for this.

I love it. That is fabulous, fabulous advice. I know people may be interested in learning more or reading more about your story about your work, or wanting to contact you directly to have you do some work with them and their animals and their family. What is the best way for people to reach you?

Maribeth Decker: Through my website, sacredgrove.com.

Gwen Schiada: I think you have some great materials on there too that people can just get right from your site as well. And this has been special, and unexpected in so many ways. And as you said at the very beginning of the interview, "Hmm. How does animal communicator connect to the seven L process?" And in some way, in so many ways, there's beautiful connections and symbolic ways and literal ways, and I appreciate you sharing in such an authentic way your story, your work, your life's lessons. Truly, truly appreciate your time today.

Maribeth Decker: Thank you. And thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk in this way. It's just been glorious actually. And getting to talk to Bailey is like, "Woo hoo."

Gwen Schiada: That was the icing on the cake. Thank you for doing that. The rest of my day is going to be warm. You mentioned the word warm, and I do. I feel warm inside, and that was just extra special. Extra special gift. Truly the best to you, Maribeth. Thank you, thank you so much. Well everybody, thank you again for joining me on another episode of Life On Your Terms at <http://www.loytinnercompass.com/>.

Please visit the website at L-O-Y-T inner compass and share your comments, questions, or suggestions for future topics. And until next time, I hope you are inspired and have the courage to live life on your terms.