We cared for my mother for several years in our home, until her passing at almost 91 years old. We were committed to doing all we could to meet her changing needs as dementia took greater hold. With the help of in-home hospice, we mastered caring for her body and staying emotionally connected to her as much as possible, of course, with the help of committed RNs and CNAs. We were fortunate to have the resources to support her in the place she loved and felt safe.

As her condition changed, we feared that her passing would not be peaceful, that perhaps her mental confusion would keep her in an extended suspended state and perpetuate suffering. We were too familiar with that experience, having witnessed a very difficult passing of our grandmother, my mother’s mom. Learning about the difficult process of end-stage dementia and the frightening risks (falls, bed sores, aspiration) highlighted the need to guard against her suffering to the greatest degree possible. She had already experienced indignities way beyond what she wanted. Being spiritually oriented, we were open to any help possible, when we thankfully happened to stumble upon Lindsay and her unique expertise. We didn’t know exactly how using a death doula could help, but we were definitely open to having additional support and guidance regarding her passing. We did know that our mother responded very well to touching and the presence of people she trusted. Maybe this was the right thing.

From Lindsay’s first visit it was clear that she was accepted by my mother; her awareness and deep sensitivity to my mother’s changing state worked to promote peace and solace during her visits. In some ways, it seemed that my mother understood Lindsay’s role, her life stage and indeed received comfort from her touch. Although difficult to define, Lindsay conducted her work without duress or demands based on my mother’s state on the day of her visit. She met my mother “where she was” in a loving, accepting way. This demonstrated total respect for her and us. The last thing we needed is to “force” anything that may add stress and anxiety.

In my mother’s case, Lindsay’s gift was being able to help us understand her emotional state, as related to her transition. Due to her advanced dementia, communication was significantly diminished, yet Lindsay was able to translate and articulate her experience to help us determine where she was with “letting go.” Lindsay helped us understand behaviors we witnessed, like seeing passed family members and the many “visits” that she was experiencing. Lindsay’s work seemed to bring clarity and understanding of my mother’s process that seemed to transcend her dementia. We greatly benefitted from Lindsay’s ability assess and guide my mother which seemed reduce apprehension and fear.

In short, Lindsay’s connection to my mother and our family helped us have insight about her unexpressed state-of-mind. Linday “plugged’ into my mother during perhaps the most intimate time in her and our lives. Unfortunately, words don’t work very well when trying to express the beauty of my mother’s transition and how Lindsay’s presence helped all of us. We highly recommend Lindsay for her loving, caring, special work.