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The Wellness Column

LARRICK EBANKS

on finding his voice again

Hearing Larrick Ebanks sing at the recent Beyond the Veil book launch carried a particular poignancy for me. I know Larrick, and remember the concern surrounding his long stay in hospital during the pandemic, when the post Covid restrictions made an already frightening situation harder. At one stage, there were serious concerns about his vocal cords. For a singer-songwriter, the uncertainty reached into the heart of his own identity.

Now he has a book to share, *Dancing In-Between Worlds*, and a story that reaches from the intensive care unit at Son Espases to experiences he describes as encounters beyond the physical world. But alongside the extraordinary is something deeply relatable: the difficult work of recovering, accepting help and learning how to live again.

In the winter of 2021, Larrick was busy working in a magazine office, enjoying island life and preparing for a New Year's Eve performance. A regular gym-goer and cyclist, he was accustomed to being active. Then suddenly singing left him breathless. Cycling became difficult. Night sweats, chills and exhaustion followed.

Still, he kept working. There were deadlines and people he did not want to disappoint. Eventually, his close friend Donna insisted he needed hospital care and called an ambulance. He arrived with his laptop, imagining a short stay.

Instead, his condition rapidly deteriorated. In his account, his lungs collapsed and he required intensive care, an induced coma and support from an ECMO machine. What followed was three months in a coma, five months in ICU and eleven months in hospital overall.

A different kind of awareness

While doctors worked to keep him alive, Larrick recalls experiencing a reality far removed from his hospital bed. He describes travelling through different realms, some frightening, others filled with an overwhelming sense of love. One message, he says, arrived telepathically: "This is an endurance test."

Spirituality was already part of his life, but he describes these experiences as different from meditation or dreams.

"I experienced a level of clarity unlike anything I had known before," he tells me. "I was seeing myself and my experiences in high definition, with a much clearer sense of who I am and a deeper understanding of purpose."

These are his recollections and the spiritual meaning he draws from them. Readers will bring their own beliefs and questions to his account.

What emerges particularly strongly, however, is how it changed his understanding of his relationships.

During what he calls a "life review", he remembers encountering the consequences of his behaviour from other people's perspectives.

"I saw the life I had just lived, the people I had met, those I had hurt and those I had shown kindness to. I felt what they felt," he explains.

It left him with a deeper appreciation of how words, actions and even intentions can affect others in ways we never fully realise. For him, connection and kindness became central to the life he wanted to return to.

Learning to come home

Waking from the coma marked the beginning of another demanding journey. His body was profoundly weakened, and I know something of the determination and sustained effort behind his return to singing and sharing his story. Throughout his recovery, he had the comfort of knowing that a whole community of friends and family was cheering him on. Donna kept everyone connected through a group chat, sharing updates on his progress and keeping that circle of support close, even when we could not be there in person.

Leaving hospital brought challenges he had not fully anticipated. "Trying to fit back into a fast-moving world was very challenging," he says. Among other patients, progress had been measured against people facing similar difficulties. Outside, the contrast was stark. "It was only after leaving hospital that I truly realised how ill I had been and how challenged I still was."

His first significant milestone was moving from a walking frame to two walking sticks. "It's interesting how having something taken away from you that we take for granted, like mobility, can change perspective. And then slowing regaining what I'd lost – how much more we appreciate things. Even a new walking stick gave me a wonderful new sense of freedom."

That detail stayed with me. After everything he describes experiencing, freedom could also mean being able to move through an ordinary day with a little less support.

Accepting care was another lesson. Larrick acknowledges that he has sometimes failed to reach out when he needed help, something he feels many men will recognise.

"It taught me self-worth and the importance of accepting help," he says. The kindness of those around him, including Donna and the hospital team, remains a profound part of his story. At the launch, he spoke warmly of the medical staff whose care he still appreciates.

Today, looking after himself includes keeping every check-up, resting when necessary and paying closer attention to his body. He also speaks to it with loving affirmations. His spiritual outlook sits alongside gratitude for the treatment that helped him survive.

Finding the words

Larrick's creativity has taken on what he calls "a new tone of expression". Writing became a way to share experiences he believes carried a purpose. In one moment of synchronicity he particularly treasures, Donna arrived at hospital with a writing pad and pen, without his having asked.

"I like to think the angels had a hand in that!" he says. "Donna is my Earth Angel, and I'm deeply grateful for her unwavering support, love and dedication, and for insisting that I go to hospital. Her actions helped change the course of my life."

His hope is that the book reaches curious readers asking deeper questions about life and who they are. Whether someone shares his spiritual interpretation or simply connects with the experience of rebuilding after illness, there is much to reflect on here.

For me, the most compelling part is seeing someone I know find his voice again, and hearing what he now chooses to do with it. One question he offered at the launch has stayed with me: "How do we find the ability to disagree with someone, without withdrawing love?"

It is a question that reaches far beyond a hospital bed, or the pages of a book. It asks something of all of us in the lives we live, in every day and every moment.

Dancing In-Between Worlds by Larrick Ebanks is available through Balboa Press and online booksellers. Follow @larrickebanksofficial for updates.

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A Story of survival and recovery in *Dancing In Between Worlds*



