

ALPHA'S PAGE

God in a Two Litre
Bottle

The Editor's Story

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Alpha's Page: Letter to the Devoted

With thanks to all those who have enjoyed my
anecdotes about my mystical life.

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Readiness

This book could be about me or it could be about you. On the surface it is a story about how, in the course of thirteen years, I went from having no mystical experiences at all to having beautiful mystical experiences every day. My alleged experiences include encounters with heavenly realms, angels and loved ones who have died, and being able to channel the presence of Alpha, an agent of God who delivers a deliciously fresh spiritual philosophy. On a deeper level, this book is about what we may all have in common – a desire for intimacy with God – and it is about the steps which a person can go through to become close to God. It is about processes which could work for you just like they did for me.

Some readers will be excited or relieved to be reading about a spiritual dimension, but some of you will be on the verge of putting this book down because it talks about things which don't exist. Rest assured that I don't feel the need to persuade you to believe in anything I say. Ironically, you might also like to know that my so-called God tells me he doesn't mind whether you believe in him. You have every right to believe whatever you like. There is no judgment, and God doesn't need your vote.

Take this story as a case study in human

perceptions. I believe I have experiences of a spirit world, but I believe there is no objective proof. I believe that I might be deluded. Although I am naturally a scientific and analytical person, my so-called history of mystical experiences could be a pattern of neurological events and coincidences that managed to slip through my net of scepticism.

My willingness to use the word “God” is, indeed, something that has evolved with my experience. Even a few years after my mystical experiences began I was uncomfortable with the concept of God. As a scientist and a perfectionist, the letting go and surrendering to the confusion of a word is part of my story.

When I began experimenting with my consciousness, it was because I had absolutely no evidence of a spiritual dimension. To go looking for one was a gamble. It’s about gambling with your precious time. I reached a point in my life when I just wanted to find out for myself if there is a God and an afterlife. It took many hours and a lot of motivation to learn to silence my mind. Given that intimacy with God could be the ultimate prize, I decided it was worth gambling for.

I understand that any person’s decision to experiment with God comes down to time, motivation, and what else they are juggling and gambling with at that point in their lives. But there is one other thing,

apart from God, which may draw you to my work. My method for approaching God is about silencing your mind and softening yourself, and raising your atmosphere as high as you can. This in itself is a beautiful state, with or without God.

When I was a young person I wasn't psychic, and I couldn't hear God at all, no matter how hard I tried. I had every advantage. My parents were great believers. I was taught to pray. I was told that many people had personal experiences of God, and I believed it. Yet I had no mystical experiences at all. My mother was having mystical experiences. I wished I did, and I thought I almost did, but honestly there was nothing really there.

Into adulthood, life became more complicated and more depressing, as it does for most of us. My prayers disappeared but I never lost my desire to know whether God exists. Every now and then I would complain to the sky, "If you want me to believe in you, show me that you are there!" Of course, nothing happened. I devoted myself to being mentally and emotionally healthy without God. Positive thinking, self-awareness, physical fitness and pursuing your passions were all good ways to have some depth and fun in your life, without needing to think about souls.

Then one day there was a twist in fate. I'm not going to tell you details from my biography. I was tempted to write a hard luck story about how my quest

for God was fuelled by personal tragedy, woe, woe, woe, but looking back I don't think it's relevant. We're all in the same boat, in pain because of a lack of inner peace, and vulnerable to the misfortunes of nature. This book could be about you as much as it is about me. I just want to talk about the experiences which could be accessible to both of us. So I have decided to leave my personal dramas out of this.

Just like you, something unexpected and stressful happens in my life from time to time. When something tragic happens to you, you're shocked. You're not sure how you're going to cope. Your priorities shift or become clearer. For me, my dormant desire to know about God bubbled up to the surface.

I remembered a line from a meditation book I read a couple of years earlier. "The soul is in the gap between the thoughts." Like other people, I'd already heard plenty of ideas about souls. In my case, there was lots of talk about souls at Sunday School and church in my childhood, and then at dinner parties when I was in my twenties. The popular view was that your soul is something which thrives on good behaviour, good work and good thoughts, it goes beyond your body and it survives your body at death. Unfortunately, the existence of this soul is just hearsay. Anybody else's testimony that they had astral travelled or had a transcendental experience was just hearsay to everybody else.

But the quote, “The soul is in the gap between the thoughts,” gave me an idea for a practical experiment. If I could make the gaps between my thoughts bigger, might I not fall straight into my soul?

With hindsight, I appreciate that I was in a good position to conduct this experiment. Thanks to my religious childhood and some training in psychology, it was second-nature for me to think of my mind as a playground where thoughts could be trained and subjective wonders could happen. I also had some experience of meditation and knew that I wasn’t looking for a standard meditation technique.

When I was a teenager I often attended my parents’ Christian meditation group. They meditated for twenty minutes at a time in a wonderful loving atmosphere, sometimes with peaceful visualisations of lakes or forests, but there was nothing to stop the mind from wandering as it usually does. There might not be any gaps between your thoughts. Then when I was a science student, I learnt that meditation was good for both mental and physical health. We were taught to meditate by progressive muscle relaxation followed by focussing on breath. Again, the mind could wander as much as it wished. At other times I tried Sri Chinmoy meditation (I remember there was a flower and a candle) and yoga meditation (you stretch first). Still no insistence on creating gaps between your thoughts. Some meditation teachers encourage their students to

let their thoughts drift by like clouds while they meditate. Just watch each thought without attachment, and let it pass. I wasn't interested in this kind of meditation either. If the soul was in the gaps between the thoughts, I wasn't going to let those thoughts invade like the weather.

I could draw upon an important chapter of my early twenties – a chapter in which I learnt how to tackle challenges step by step. During my twenties, I had a couple of companions who were keen on outdoor adventure – any kind of outdoor adventure. I found myself hiking, caving, canoeing, camping and climbing, all at levels which scared me. My companions were tough-minded and had a blind-spot for self-pity. Faced with any challenge, whether it was how to get down a cliff or how to get un-lost, they calmly broke the challenge into small manageable pieces with practical solutions. I fell in love with this way of thinking. I was determined that I would become just as positive and goal-oriented in my own life.

Interestingly, my adventuresome twenties was also a chapter in which I experienced glimpses of profound happiness hand-in-hand with natural physiological highs. These experiences gave me a benchmark by which my mystical experiences could later be measured. There was plenty of adrenalin and endorphins, love, freedom, accomplishment and closeness to nature. I thought that outdoor adventure

was the best thing ever. That was all going to change when I learnt to silence my mind. What I began to experience later in life when I began my own style of meditation was something completely new.

It all started because I decided to learn, step by step, with the determination of an outdoor adventurer, how to silence my mind.

First light

I rushed through my chores and meals so that I could find half an hour at the end of the day to observe my thoughts and create silences in my mind. The lounge room where I learnt to silence my mind was decorated in the style of cheap and practical. I had no candle, no aromatic oils, no music or sounds-of-nature CDs, no indoor water feature, no drugs, no photos of gurus, and no other spiritual merchandise of any kind. There were no pictures of ponds or rainforests, either in my room or in my head. There was nothing to set the scene for spiritual adventure except the fat cushion on which I sat on the floor.

I wanted a posture which was both comfortable and helped me to concentrate. Sitting in an upright chair might be good for some people, but I get back-ache in chairs. I found that a standard meditation cushion – a fat circular cushion - was good for me. Most people don't have an upright spine if they sit cross-legged directly on the floor. If you sit on a thick cushion or a meditation stool (an angled stool about twenty centimetres high), the base of your spine is vertical, and the rest of the tower is easier to balance on top. To say that I sat cross-legged is not entirely true. My ankles never crossed anything except the imaginary mid-line. I rested each foot on the floor, one in front

of the other, so nothing was squashed.

Normally I had a constant stream of thoughts with gaps of only milliseconds between them. In fact, I could have been well above average in how noisy my mind was. I noticed that I could place my attention on a gap and my attention would make the gap last a little longer. This was easier if I was breathing out at the time. I might make the gap last a whole second, then a thought would creep in. I would go with the thought until I could collect my focus again. Then I waited for another gap. I kept giving my attention to any gap I could find, forcing the gaps to be one second, then maybe two seconds long. Eventually I could create gaps as long as it took me to exhale.

I started trying to have a gap every time I exhaled. When I could do this for several exhalations in a row, I tried to keep the gap going while I inhaled as well. One day I managed to hold my mind silent at will for a whole out-breath, in-breath, and out-breath. It was peaceful and I was in control. I was hooked. I would create a state of peaceful exertion to hold that silence in my mind for a couple of complete breath cycles in a row, then more, then more. My meditation was not about winding down and going to sleep. It was about being in a state of happy determination. It was concentration and persistence. It was one foot after another. It was about counting and continuing.

Eventually I could hold my mind silent for a

whole minute. I started doing it during the day whenever I needed a mental break. People were clamouring for me to meet their needs, but I could pop into the bathroom and silence my mind for a minute. I was free.

Within six months I could hold my mind silent for five minutes non-stop. This trick was wonderful for reducing my stress levels. It felt healthy and pleasurable. There was no sense of emptiness or void while my mind was free of thoughts. Instead, I felt more real, more alive, and more “me” than normal. I felt a sense of magic, and I felt hope. I had discovered a new kind of consciousness that I would be able to draw on for the rest of my life. Perhaps my future would be far more pleasurable than my humdrum thought patterns of the past.

One night, without warning, while I was sitting with my mind silent for a few minutes, I felt a powerful sensation around my pelvis. My eyes were shut and the room was dark, but there was light inside me. A kind of milky, relaxing light moved up through my body, completely penetrating me. It moved steadily up through my torso for a few seconds and then dissipated. It was the most beautiful and peaceful sensation I had ever had.

For a few minutes I sat motionless, reflecting on what had just happened. I still felt the peace and delight of the experience. I checked my memory over

and over. Yes, it was different to anything I had ever experienced. Yes, I would call it a light even though I had been sitting in darkness. Yes, I would call it a light even though it was inside my body and not in front of my eyes.

Now racing again, my mind was quick to suggest conclusions from this experience. It could be called a mystical experience. It could be evidence of another dimension to life, where there are special wavelengths and powers. It could be evidence of the light of the soul, or of God. It could be – but I had no reason to think so yet.

I was very impressed by this experience. I was excited and impatient to experience the same thing again. It would turn out that this was just the simplest of thousands of mystical experiences I was to have in the years to come.

Even though the weird light lingered in my thoughts and feelings, I doubted my perceptions. Did it really happen? Was it as strong as I remembered it to be? A few days later I experienced the same thing again. Then the light became a regular feature in my meditation, not as a sweeping surprise, but as a more constant, gentler feature. Sometimes it felt like a shimmer. Other times it washed back and forth. Other times I seemed to pulse with it. It always felt rich, good and wonderful. When the light was strong, my head felt hot and compressed, yet deliciously alive and liberated

from any noise. My limbs - and indeed the rest of the world - felt much further away. Time seemed immeasurable. I began to refer to these experiences as “an altered state of consciousness” because my consciousness had certainly altered, and to such an extent that it was different to anything I had stumbled across in all the other decades of my life.

As days and weeks went by and I continued to have delicious experiences because of meditation, many questions paraded through my mind. Why weren't other people talking about the joys of a silent mind? Why do most meditators aim for relaxation rather than mental silence? Why doesn't the general community know about this kind of bliss? Is it really possible to have mystical experiences just by learning a mental skill?

One of the first benefits I noticed of my silent-mind meditation was that it was good for my self esteem. The sense of deep peace which came when I silenced my mind, and the occasional rush of bliss or non-visual light, meant that I had - inside me - the most beautiful experiences I ever had. I had a new skill, new sensations, and a new way of being free. Questions of how I appeared to other people, or whether I was achieving enough in life, no longer seemed relevant. A sense of happiness and fulfillment was under my control, and available to me whenever I summoned it.

My first six months of progress in meditation came entirely from learning to extend the gaps between

my thoughts. This was enough to lead me to multiple experiences of uncanny light, filling me with a phenomenal sense of peace and joy. I did not enter that experience armed with a belief in God or in supernatural experiences. I was merely an observer, an experimenter, trying to find out what would happen if my mind went silent. The only belief which got me there was the belief that it was worth my while to stop thinking.

Silence, Softness and Uplift

Hooked on altered states of consciousness, I gained twice as much enthusiasm to be skillful at silencing my mind. I didn't experience the light every night. On some nights it was difficult to silence my mind at all. I began to figure out what helped to silence my mind, and what helped that silence to lead to an altered state of consciousness.

It's not easy to consistently put your thoughts aside. We are fascinated with our own thoughts, and some thoughts seem really important because they urge us to remember to do things or to solve problems that came up during the day, or to resolve emotions. I had to believe that my thoughts could wait for another time. When I had a thought which was important for practical reasons, I would deliberately say to myself, "I'll put that on my unconscious agenda". This was my way of letting my unconscious mind remember the thought for later. It was almost like pinning it to a noticeboard in the back of my mind. I never did forget anything important that way - as far as I know.

Eventually I noticed that I could anticipate when a thought was about to surface. I could sense a kind of ripple in my awareness. It was almost like a change in a musical note, as if a voice was about to break into a word. If I recognised these buds of thoughts, I could let them go before I knew what they were going to be. I'm still perplexed by this experience.

It does make me wonder whether our minds make our audible thoughts out of random musical ripples in our heads, just for the hell of it.

I also noticed that sometimes when my main stream of thoughts became silent, a kind of narrator would step into my consciousness. This narrator was my own thought-voice saying things to me like, “Oh, good, now your mind is silent - nice and peaceful - keep it that way.” For full silence, I had to dismiss the narrator as well.

All of this took a lot of concentration. If I began meditating with a lazy attitude, I missed out on the silence and the bliss. I learnt to draw upon feelings of enthusiasm and energy for each meditation, reminding myself what a precious opportunity it was.

Many of us have hobbies or pastimes that naturally energise us and help our minds go silent. You might find that your mind tends to go silent (or more silent than usual) when you are, say, sewing, carving wood, digging or swimming. Maybe mental peace is one of the reasons that we are attracted to hobbies like these. Prior to learning to meditate, I already had one hobby which helped my mind to go silent. This hobby was running. It’s an activity which also involves a kind of peaceful, yet intense, exertion which turned out to be a useful state of mind to bring to meditation.

Where I live there are a lot of green spaces. No matter where you start, if you want to run a few kilometres, you can get away from houses and end up in a forest or on a rocky knoll. Most of the time the sky is

blue. On winter mornings there might be a fog clinging to the lowlands, and frost on the grass until the sun strikes there. In the middle of a hot day you can smell the trees. On cold afternoons you can smell the soil. Sometimes you can run between the trees near dusk and disturb hundreds of birds from the grass.

I learnt to run for pleasure when I was in my twenties. My favourite running routes were those that took me up-hill to a view. I wasn't always vigorous. Sometimes I was bloated or tired, but I could usually find a good rhythm. The trick was to not let yourself be phased mentally by the slope ahead. You just focus on where you put your feet, blades of grass and textures of rock flashing in and out of vision, the sound of gravel and twigs underfoot, the air in your nose and mouth getting hotter and more charged, your chest knowing itself more intently as it pulls deeper and deeper from the muscles in your abdomen, your thighs dancing forward to the imagined beat, until finally you come to the crest of the hill, and the land opens up before you as you pass through that last outcrop of boulders. There are ribbons of hills in the distance in multiple shades of olive and pale blue, and nothing between you and that enormous bleached sky. During those last few moments of rhythm up the hill, the mind does not talk, except perhaps when you need a mantra like, "Left, right, left, right," or, "Just to the top, just to the top."

I drew on these memories when I sat in meditation. I didn't look at the sights or sounds in my memories, though. I drew upon the mental states – a

sense of focus, energy, will-power and liberation. Applied to meditation, these feelings helped me to concentrate and achieve mental silence. As soon as I began to focus on the gaps between my thoughts, I was shaping my attention as if I was running. Part of me narrowed in concentration, while at the same time I felt more expanded and free. For you, there may be a different activity which does the same thing, and which can give you memories of states of mind that would help to induce a completely silent mind.

There was definitely some effort and self-discipline involved in silencing my mind, but on the other hand, if I went into the meditation with rigid expectations or demands of myself, I couldn't pass into that altered state of consciousness. I had to be soft, both in my posture and demeanour, and open to what might happen.

I developed a little routine to help me get the most out of my meditation. First I did a few exercises which help to relax my back at each region of the spine. Then I settled into my meditation posture and checked that I was physically comfortable. Then I checked my mind to see if there were any important thoughts or particular attitudes or expectations hanging around - and I let them go. I returned to a neutral soft state. It is a state that is vulnerable and humble, and open-minded, as if you are listening for something but you don't know what's going to happen. You are waiting to hear for a pin to drop but you don't know if it ever will.

Having made myself as comfortable, neutral and

soft as possible, then I reminded myself of the value of silencing my mind, and called upon my enthusiasm and resolve. Then - begin!

Sometimes, if I hadn't experienced an altered state of consciousness for a few days, I would play with my mood during meditation to spark things up a bit. It occurred to me that, since I could hold my mind steady, I could also hold a particular mood or atmosphere steady. I thought about what feelings I would like to experience. What feelings would be nice to hold steady in your mind? My list included the feeling of being adored, being amused, feeling free, wonder, compassion and levity. I would choose one of these and, at the beginning of my meditation session, imagine that feeling as best I could, without images or self-talk. And hold it. Steady.

The results astounded me each time. Each feeling led to a strong altered state of consciousness, and each state was different. Not only was the state coloured by the mood I had chosen. Each mood led to a different kind of state - some more electric than others, some more expansive than others. Surprising to me, the one which led to the most powerful state was the feeling of being amused.

This ability to silence my mind, and to hold it steady on whatever target I chose, was my complete tool box. During long meditations, I developed some back-ache but because there was no apparent reason for it, I was able to use the meditation itself to solve the niggling pain. I observed how the pain wavered, in the

same way that thoughts come and go. I gave all my attention to the gaps between the pain, just as I had learnt to give my attention to the gaps between my thoughts. Eventually the pain completely disappeared.

More importantly, my steady mind would lead to hundreds of new and exciting experiences during the next ten years, including a variety of bliss states, ESP, insightful dreams, vivid flashbacks and then a huge range of experiences which I could only describe to myself by referring to other forces - God, angelic presences, spiritual guides, ghosts and entities. Every month for the next ten years there would be something new to experience. It was the best hobby ever and it was all based on a set of skills which I summarised to myself as, "Silence, softness and uplift".

Psychic Glimpses

Life was full of contrasts and contradictions, and I struggled to make sense of them. Meditation aside, my life circumstances were frustrating on many levels. Sometimes it just seems impossible to get a good balance in your life. Sometimes you can't get all those things which people are supposed to need, like social support, job fulfillment, security, autonomy, a good relationship or enough sleep. I only had six hours a week of free time, which was supposed to meet all my personal needs such as exercise, social life, personal shopping and odd jobs. It was a tough phase of my life, but everyone else seemed to be finding life tough too. Yet when I silenced my mind, I was finding a way out of the cloud, and it was an escape that my friends and acquaintances hadn't discovered. Was it all just inside me? After a while, some new experiences suggested that it wasn't just about my own brain.

I described my meditation experiences to a friend of mine and he became very interested. We decided to try meditating together. The consequences surprised us. Three times in a row, in the night after a session of meditating together, my friend had vivid dreams about my life. One of the dreams included my parents, who my friend had met a couple of times, and each dream played like a fable. When he told me the

stories, I was moved. I immediately got some personal meaning out of each dream, while the stories were lost on him. I joked that he was stealing dreams that were meant for me.

When my friend was travelling, we tried meditating simultaneously from our separate residences. There were no vivid dreams but, during the meditation, my arms felt an urge to move into different positions and I let them do so. Later when debriefing, I found out that my arms mimicked whatever position my friend's arms had been in during the meditation. He was uncomfortable sitting upright and just chose whatever posture seemed comfortable at the time.

This friend was also the topic of my first psychic vision. Alone one evening, I suddenly had a picture in my head of him sitting in a booth. It turned out that, at that very moment and unknown to me, he had been in a restaurant booth.

At about the same time that these experiences were developing, I decided to invite friends and acquaintances to come to my home once a week to learn how to silence their minds. I planned a ten-week course designed to build up the skill in much the same way that I had built it for myself. I included some discussion of why people meditate, how to develop your posture, and various issues from week to week. Then we had step-by-step exercises and illustrations to help my students develop the knack of mental silence.

I emphasised the importance of regular practice to build up the skill, and this was perhaps a turn-off for a lot of my attendees. While I started with twelve people in my lounge-room, within three weeks the number had dropped to half a dozen (half of whom fell asleep during the meditation), and in the end there were just three keen students, including one who practiced my techniques almost every night. Her results made my efforts completely worthwhile. By the end of the term, she had learnt to silence her mind for five minutes straight and she, too, was experiencing bliss, a kind which she had never known before. She was thrilled about it, and bought me a couple of books to thank me. I was delighted that my first experiences with silencing the human mind could be replicated in another person.

I gather that this woman didn't continue regular practice much after that. She told me she became concerned about how to integrate the experience with her Christian faith and with her marriage, which seemed to provide some resistance to a sudden change in her state of mind. I began to see why people sometimes don't want to pursue mental silence, even if it offers great sensory rewards.

While I had gone beyond sensory rewards and was starting to think about extra-sensory perception, I still had no reason to think that my experiences were caused by an unseen spiritual dimension. All my experiences so far could have been confined to my

brain plus an ability of my brain to communicate with the brain of another person.

At Christmas time I had a series of experiences which could be explained by communication between brains, or could just be chance. In early December I began to hope that someone would give me a calendar with large squares for Christmas. Two weeks later, one arrived from someone in my family. I thought that I might like to start lighting candles to beautify my evenings, then a gift of candles arrived from a relative who had never sent me gifts before. One day, a hamper of non-perishable Christmas foods appeared on my back doorstep. It was from a local church who heard I was going through a tough time. Sorting through the goods, I thought to myself, "There's everything I need in here for Christmas except fresh vegetables." The next day, a bag of fresh vegetables appeared on my back doorstep. They came from a friend who was - unknown to me - going away for two weeks and thought I might like the contents of her fridge.

So I had everything I wished for that Christmas. Perhaps I should have asked for more.

On a whim, I sent a Christmas card to a new acquaintance. When I first met him, I was startled by the fiery lucid eyes of this man, and he mentioned that he practiced transcendental meditation. I asked him about his journey with meditation and he lent me some books. The books spurred me further in my search for

altered states of consciousness. In my Christmas card, I thanked him for the impact of his books and explained that I was having mystical experiences. He responded with a friendly Christmas card, in which he had enclosed the business card of a woman named Cordelia (not her real name), who was apparently some kind of therapist. Little did I know that in a few months time, I would have a reason to contact this woman, and my experiences would again drastically expand.

Guidance

The chance events which led me to the therapist named Cordelia, coupled with the huge impact she was to have on my life, might lead some people to talk about fate or God. I, however, was not ready to assume that either fate or God existed.

I read a lot about God. With church-going parents, I learnt to think about God and Jesus as early as I could talk. There was a picture of Jesus on our wall at home - a gentle portrait - and a larger one on the wall of the Sunday school where I began in the sandpit section at age three. My mother taught me prayers to say at night. "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the lord my soul to take." My parents and the people of the church spoke fondly of Jesus. He was obviously a talented and accomplished person, being able to hold a huge crowd with his teaching. He welcomed everyone, no matter how poor, sick or revolting they were. He was also described as the perfect friend, in whom one could confide anything and seek comfort.

God, on the other hand, seemed to have a more grandiose style. Prayers to God sounded more formal and less intimate than prayers to Jesus. There were no pictures of God, but his presence was implied by the beauty of our church, the flowers, and our patience as we sat on hard pews on cold winter mornings just to

hear about him. While Jesus seemingly took care of our personal concerns such as health and anxiety, God appeared to be in charge of huge forces, mountains and oceans, and twists of fate.

I spent a lot of time praying to, and thinking about, both God and Jesus throughout my childhood, but I didn't realise that I had a specific feel for each of them - a particular atmosphere - until my mystical experiences widened beyond bliss states and ESP. When I began to experience altered states of consciousness, I was hopeful - like a child looking in the window of a cake shop - that those altered states of consciousness were the first sign of the existence of a spiritual realm. But I was going to hold myself back with scepticism as long as possible. I wasn't going to make the same mistake I had done as a child, taking on the beliefs of a religion without any personal evidence.

As soon as I learnt to silence my mind, however, I was hungry to read about other people's experiences with meditation and altered states of consciousness, and this led me to many books which spoke freely about God, supernatural realms and miracles. I held all of these ideas in the back of my head as possibilities, awaiting confirmation by my own experience.

My books, each acquired by fluke, began to seem like evidence in themselves that my development was being guided by God. The first book in my bizarre collection was recommended by a friend, was difficult to find on the bookstore catalogue and took six weeks

to arrive. I thought that was funny, given that the book was called *Nothing* and was written by a Mr Sloman. It was about attaining mental silence and it spurred me on towards my first early achievements in silencing my thoughts.

Another book, acquired when I had an uncharacteristic urge to go to a secondhand bookstore, was a compilation of people's experiences of mystical light. I found the book just after my first experiences with light entering my body.

A third book, decades old and with no listed author, was found secondhand in a bookstore by a member of my family, and he sent it to me even though he did not know about my new interest in meditation. It contained spiritual philosophy, as if spoken by a disembodied group of spirits who simply called themselves "we".

A fourth book, from a different second-hand bookstore, I found after seeing a vision of the bookstore, the particular shelf, location, and cover of the book, during a quiet moment. It was about the mystical experiences of a man who adopted an American Indian as his spiritual teacher. Not long after that, I had another vision of a bookstore, shelf, location and book cover, and secured a book about psychic experiences.

My favourite book of all was a library loan. I decided to go to a university library where there was a research collection of books on mysticism. It was an inconvenient exercise because it used up a couple of

hours of free time and I had to apply for a university library card. Finally, crouched between the towering shelves in the basement, I found a book which was written in the 1960s by an Indian spiritual teacher. It was about techniques for meditation and obtaining transcendent experiences. The book had been in the library for about forty years and had only been borrowed once, twenty years before I found it. I happily took it for its second outing.

The author encouraged his students to practice third-eye meditation. The third eye is supposed to be a chakra located just between and above your eyebrows. You can often see it marked on Indian spiritual art. Moreover, the author claimed that if a person can hold their awareness steady in that point for two hours, with no distraction by thoughts or bodily sensations, they will be a saint.

The author's claim intrigued me. It was odd to claim that sainthood could come from a concentration exercise. On the other hand, I knew how much dedication and humility is involved in silencing your thoughts even for just a few moments. You need a lot of peace and self-discipline just to make enough time for regular meditation. I could concede that a person would have to have extreme peace, modesty and openness in order to hold their mind motionless for two whole hours.

By the time I borrowed the book, my normal meditation consisted of holding my mind still for thirty to forty minutes. Surely I could have a crack at trying

to hold my mind silent for two hours?

The first challenge was to learn to meditate with my awareness in my third eye. It took a little practice, but I soon found there was one particular spot in the flesh of my forehead which seemed to attract my awareness. My concentration seemed to become deeper when I hit the particular spot. When my concentration faltered, I simply had to retune to the very small spot, which seemed to become smaller and yet more distinct the longer I spent in meditation.

The second challenge was to become oblivious to sensations from my body. The book's author even described getting used to the sensation of drooling during meditation. It was important to get comfortable to start with, but that's not enough to keep your mind from noticing the feeling in your arms and legs. I used the same technique I used for dismissing verbal thoughts. As soon as a physical sensation started to enter my awareness, I dismissed it as quickly as possible, replacing it with increased concentration on my third eye. After some practice with this, my awareness seemed to leave my limbs completely.

The results were astounding. After a few sessions of practice, my concentration in my third eye seemed to become meatier. The point itself became easier to recognise and more full of life. After a week of practice, my whole body seemed to become more attuned to the focus. Then some surprising things happened. Part way into a meditation, my body jerked into a more upright position. My shoulders suddenly

pivoted around my spine until the spine pulled itself into more vertical alignment. My neck jerked itself backwards to a position where the head was better balanced on top. My spine became rigidly straight and yet comfortable. All of these movements happened without my conscious initiative. My mind was merely an observer. At that time, I had not finished reading the book. I hadn't yet got to the part where the author described these jerking movements as being part of the process. I suppose some people would say that my chakras were becoming aligned.

After my spine became aligned, I reached a greater depth in my meditation. Even more surprises were ahead. My third eye seemed to become vast and magnetic. Suddenly it seemed to open up into an enormous presence. I call it a presence because it felt like another consciousness, separate from mine. The presence felt personable and the sort you would crave to be with. It also matched the atmosphere of God that I knew from the church of my childhood. I felt I was being dragged into it. Though the presence was somehow inside me, I also felt I was being dragged out of my body. There was a strong sense of, "Come to me".

The first time I reached this point, my phone rang. All focus and magnetism was suddenly lost.

The second time I reached this point, I became consumed with fear. Although the call to come to God was wonderful, warm, inviting and loving, my whole body seemed to rebel with a vibration of terror. After

GOD IN A TWO LITRE BOTTLE

that, I never got as far again in that type of meditation. Now I understood another main impediment on the path of meditation. Fear.

I was finally willing to start seriously entertaining thoughts about the presence of God.

Regression therapy

I was experiencing regular coincidences and psychic flashes. One day I had an urge to hop in the car and go looking for a shopping place with large European trees. First I drove to one destination, but that didn't feel right, so I kept going until I got to another which fit the bill. Just as I got out of the car I ran into an old friend who was visiting from another part of the country. We'd always had a special bond and continued to stay in touch from time to time. The coincidence pleased me. It was always a delight to see this friend, and I had no idea that he was in town.

At the same time, my mind retraced the strange urge that led me there. It had a moody, vague quality, unlike my normal impulses. The urge had been difficult to clarify and yet it was insistent. Where had the urge come from?

Another weekend I was expecting some visitors from a long distance, who were planning to stay in my home for the night. Strangely, I couldn't bring myself to prepare for their visit. My normal behaviour would be to plan the menu, buy extra groceries and prepare the beds in advance, but it didn't feel right to do so. I felt vindicated when they cancelled their visit at the last minute.

These coincidences were rewarding, but on the whole my experiences with ESP were confusing and a little distressing. Books on meditation warn you not to

get attached to any sensational side-effects of the practice, because you can't continue on the path to enlightenment if you become egotistical or greedy for party tricks. Nevertheless my mind started to grab onto any stray thought, hoping it might be a piece of ESP. Every time I had a thought about a person or event, I'd start to think it could be a psychic message. Sometimes I would have a glimmer of ESP and my mind would instantly work on the image and contaminate it, so I had to think very hard what the initial fragment of truth had been.

While I struggled with all this, I came across the business card which my transcendental meditation acquaintance had enclosed in his Christmas card. I had told the acquaintance about my weird experiences, so I knew he was probably thinking of my mystical life when he sent me the business card. I wondered if this mysterious therapist might be able to resolve some of my confusion about my psychic experiences. I phoned her and she eagerly agreed to visit me.

Cordelia was adept at discussing meditation and paranormal experiences.

"When you have these ESP thoughts, do they seem to come from inside your body or outside it?" she asked.

She didn't explain the relevance of her question, and I wasn't sure of the answer, but later it would prove to be a useful distinction. She offered to give me a couple of free sessions of regression therapy, and we made a date for the first session.

Cordelia had a technique for settling her client into a deep meditation and then drawing the client's attention to a part of their body and allowing any feelings to come up. In my case, she rested her hand against my sternum. I felt tightness which, as we waited patiently, turned into sadness. I shed a few tears. Cordelia encouraged me to keep feeling the sadness. It gradually turned to nostalgia and lingered there as a nameless yearning. She asked me strange questions like how large the feeling was and what colour it was. As I answered her questions, suddenly I had a clear image of a beautiful church from my childhood.

The memory was profoundly moving. I lurched with sobs. Cordelia passed me the tissues but continued to place her hand on my sternum, encouraging me to stay with the scene. The more I enjoyed the scene as it was, the more it began to change into a sense of Jesus Christ, almost as if he was a presence in the room. I felt he was showing me the church. I felt his familiarity, the kindness and sensitivity I had assumed from photos and stories of him when I was a child. I felt a kind of affinity or kinship with him. The images had a strong sense of him trying to convey some message to me, a message of validation.

While Christ stayed present, a vivid image of my father also emerged, and I felt his significance as my father. I had an overwhelming sense that my birth to my father and my time at the church were both entirely and profoundly meant to be.

The experience was rich and vivid, and I would

have to think about it. I started to entertain the hypothesis that Jesus Christ was real and I was somehow connected to him. But it was only a hypothesis.

My second session with Cordelia was not so deep. I released some grief about one of my life's disappointments. It was a useful session and I saw how Cordelia's form of therapy could help people to let go of some deep emotions.

Cordelia normally charged a hundred dollars for each therapy session, so I declined to pursue the therapy any further. She offered to put me on her mailing list for any future workshops on meditation techniques.

Astral Body Building

Three years after I had begun regular silent-mind meditation, I suddenly had more time to myself. I was very tired and my first priorities were to continue with my meditation and exercise, to keep myself well. Three times a week I would head out of the house for a run, no matter what the weather was. I enjoyed frost, hot weather or rain just the same. In fact, rain was probably my favourite, because you don't get too hot as your muscles warm up, there is the constant music of the raindrops, and it is funny to go and get totally wet in weather which many people reject. Likewise, a stiff frost is always good for a laugh, when you head out of the house in a singlet and gloves.

Running appealed to my sense of humour and also made me brave. I thoroughly enjoyed running, perhaps because I'm lucky enough to have balanced feet and a comfortable gait. Partly also because I did not run much when I was a child. As a teenager, I finally taught myself to run, and realised what a blessing it is to be able to do it. I enjoyed the rhythm and the ground passing swiftly underfoot. I never take it for granted.

Even if you enjoy running, though, it can be difficult to get started. I never forgot what I learnt when I first became fit in my early twenties. I remembered to break things down if they are difficult, breaking tasks into chunks which you barely notice as challenging. If I felt tired, and perhaps even aching a

bit, I always knew it was easy enough to change into my running clothes. Then it was easy enough to turn on some music and limber up my muscles for a while. Then it was easy enough to step outside the door. Trot slowly down the path. By then, your muscles are already a little warmed up, you are already moving onto your toes, the fresh air and scent of gardens has already hit your nostrils. You are ready to get moving.

Then I would work at a gentle pace up a road that had a very slight incline. Running uphill is more comfortable than running downhill, and since your legs are a bit wooden at the start of a run, you might as well be on the slightest of slopes rather than flat ground. Then your heart and thighs come to the party faster. Before long, you are cresting, and your legs are really starting to carry you. You build up more momentum, a more definite rhythm. Your lungs start to draw deeper into your torso, and the rhythm of your abdomen changes into something softer and larger. You are starting to fly. Maybe tackle a steeper hill before you have to head home. Then, because you started uphill in the first place, the homeward slope is downhill. Your legs and breathing don't need your mental attention any more. You are free to start talking to yourself. And this is when you discover how brave you can be.

On the homeward stretch of the run, you are starting to feel the euphoria of running. It kicks in after about twenty-five or thirty minutes. If you don't go for longer runs, you never discover how euphoric running can be. It's a chemical high, attributed to endorphins

and other neurotransmitters. But at the same time, you are also feeling proud of yourself for having been on a run. On top of that, just by running, you are drawing on that part of yourself that rises to a challenge, the part which knows how to endure. You start to feel more positive about other challenges in your life and tell yourself, “You can do this, just one step at a time,” whether you are talking about being a parent or a partner, solving a problem at work, finding an alternative to an addiction, or dealing with recurring problems in the sewerage system. “You can do this. Look at how much you have done already. Don’t put unnecessary limitations on yourself. Once you have tackled the first step, the others will seem easier. Break it down. Just focus on the first part. Time is on your side, because time only allows you to a little bit at once.”

I would arrive back at the house with my confidence and will-power refreshed. After a stretch, a smoothie and a shower, my body too felt refreshed and pleased.

My running combined with my daily meditation was a powerful arsenal against the challenges of life. I continued to practice half an hour or more of mental silence every day. By this time, I had a habit of meditating in my bedroom, which I had decorated in white and cream. As serene and light as my bedroom was, there was an even more serene and light space inside me during my meditation. It had been a long time since I had felt a sudden wave of light during

meditation, but there was always a constant illumination which buzzed throughout me, and I was in a sustained and effortless altered state of consciousness, which some people would probably call a trance. In this state, I felt calm and separated from harsh sensations. My arms felt weightless. A dense bubble seemed to form around the outline of my body, so that if I tried to pat my leg, my hand would feel a strong resistance about six inches away from my leg. After my arms felt weightless for a while, they would actually rise, my hands lifting up above my knees, until the backs of my palm-up hands were resting on the top of the bubble. After my arms were raised for a while I could feel a bit of the weight in my shoulders, but it was much less strain than I expected, given that I held my arms in the air often for half an hour at a time. To be honest, it felt like my arms were trying to levitate. My whole body felt buoyant and wonderful.

In this way, I was able to connect every day to a happier and more centred version of myself. And this version of myself appreciated all the uncertainties in my life. This version of me was not indignant or fearful about the way my life had turned out. I became interested in pushing the boundaries further, both in meditation and running.

A friend told me that the best way to build up your running distance without overtaxing your body is to increase your distance by ten percent per week. I had been running for about thirty minutes per session, so my first goal was to run for thirty-three minutes per

session. This change seemed like nothing. A week later, my goal was to add another ten percent to my new time - that is, ten percent of thirty three. So I dutifully added 3.3 minutes, making a total of 36.3 minutes per session. Well, of course, I rounded it up to thirty seven minutes. Next week, I would add another 3.7 minutes.

By this method, I was running forty-five minutes after four weeks. Your body notices the difference - in fact it is starting to work in a different way - but none of the change has been difficult. The new ten-percent becomes longer each week, and before long you are running for an hour at a time with the prospect of soon being able to run much longer. You start to feel like a hero.

When I was running for an hour, I could get deep into a nature reserve, including running to the top of a rocky knoll with a vast view, overlooking rolling paddocks, a broad valley and mountains beyond. When running for more than an hour, I had time to explore all the rough tracks in the nature reserve and in an adjacent reserve as well. I often followed a disused dirt road which skirted my neighbouring suburb, so that I had paddocks and mountains on my right for my ascent of the first hill. The dirt was rust-coloured. The grass was tufted, pale olive with white tips. There were many large trees dotted over the uneven terrain, each with grey trunk and airy grey-green foliage. The mountains beyond often appeared in shades of blue.

After getting to the pinnacle, I headed downhill on the far side, into more paddocks and rolling

grounds, either hidden away from all suburbia or rising up again to another, steeper hill, with similar spectacular views. When I could run for one hour and forty minutes, I could spend one hour and twenty minutes running through uninhabited countryside, enjoying the undulating earth, the complicated patterns of plants, the frequent clusters of grey rocks, and the long distance views. I felt I was roaming on the top of the world.

Other days, when I wanted a change from hills, I ran to a lake and ran twice around the seven kilometre circuit. This was an almost completely flat run on a sealed path, with pleasant views across water and parks. It also gave me a measuring stick. I must have been running about eighteen kilometres and it was taking me one hour and fifty minutes.

Needing time to recover between runs, I did my longest runs on Monday and Wednesday, and an hour-long run on Fridays. On Tuesdays, I went swimming. That too, was a process of learning to increase my skills by one small fraction at a time. A friend gave me advice on how to turn my head to breathe, what kind of breathing rhythm to aim for, how to move my hands and how to work my legs. Even the kicking action was unnatural for me at first. The breathing took a while to master. I could only manage a few metres at first before stopping and breathing heavily. I kept my goals small, just aiming to add a few more strokes at a time. Eventually I could complete laps, and then work steadily on the efficiency of my technique.

Not only was I unfamiliar with swimming, I was

a little scared of turning up at the pool. It was such a strange place - so much concrete and tiling, with strange smells and lots of rules on walls. You had to learn the various payment schemes and times when lanes were available for lap-swimming, as well as the etiquette of choosing your lane and passing other swimmers. You had to figure out where to leave your bag, how to keep your valuables safe, and how to keep track of the time. You had to remember everything you needed for showering and changing. For a shy person like me, all of this was a challenge, and I realised it would take a while for me to become comfortable with all of this novelty. But I persisted. Though I never became comfortable in the pool environment, I came to love my swimming time.

When I started to learn to silence my mind, I drew upon the resolve which I knew from running. Now that I was running long distances and swimming, I drew upon the resolve which I knew from silencing my mind. In meditation I had learnt to place my mind in one silent state and leave it there. I knew that it would not become boring. I knew that as you held the state longer and longer, it would become deeper, more intimate and more complex. It was the same with repetitive running and swimming. I learnt to clear my mind, allow my movements to become easy and rhythmic, and then choose one thing on which to focus, such as the quality of my breathing, or the sensations in my feet. Over time, I visited many different parts of my body, teaching them to relax and to find their own

efficiency. My body was learning to become deeply tuned and focused.

All this physical training seemed to feed back into my spiritual development. I became adept at placing my attention on anything in my mind or body and holding the sensations steady and relaxed. This would turn out to be extremely useful in exploring and healing my astral body, which in turn would make it possible for me to have more varied and more powerful mystical experiences.

Releasing regrets

I was mentally and physically stronger than I had ever been, but I was still under a lot of emotional strain. It was a good time to get some psychotherapy for some emotional release. As it turned out, therapy would also make my life weirder, and raise many more questions about the human spirit. Looking back, this was the start of a major process of cleaning my astral body, ridding it of wounds and falsehoods, and making new connections possible.

After my free therapy sessions with Cordelia I continued to entertain the idea that Jesus is a real presence. The idea, however, had no impact on my behaviour or my meditation. There was no on-going evidence of him. I wasn't going to start looking for him in books or churches. I already had a full Christian education and happy church experience as a child. I was already Christened as a baby and living a humanitarian life. The message of my first therapy session with Cordelia seemed to be that I was meant to be born where I was, under Christian tutelage. If Christ had a more specific purpose for me, he was welcome to bring it to me. I figured that if I continued on a path of uplifted meditation, and yet we never crossed paths again, it was because his appearance had just been a figment of my mind.

A few months after the free therapy sessions, I decided to pay for a session of therapy with Cordelia. The outcome of this session was quite different. As before, she settled me into a deep meditation and then drew my attention to a point on my chest. Now more familiar with the process, it didn't take me long to identify what I was feeling in my chest - tightness, heat, then pain, turning to dread as I continued to dwell on it in that non-judgmental state. After a series of mixed emotions, I suddenly had the feeling that I was standing in a village. I had a clear impression of the layout of the village and that it was made of stone with timber details. It reminded me of villages in the Himalayas. I felt I was a man in his fifties, lean and well respected in the village. Cordelia asked me to keep sinking into the emotions which I was feeling during the scene. Then I felt that I was the same man, but a decade or so earlier in his life. I was in a field that was terraced with stone retainer walls. There were buildings higher up the slope and the valley dropped away behind me. I had strong feelings about my teenage daughter who was standing about twenty metres further up the hill, happily engaged in her work.

At this point in the therapy, my heart seemed to explode into feelings I didn't know I ever had before. I felt an extraordinary, all-consuming love for my daughter, as if her existence mattered above everything in the universe. I could feel myself almost falling out of

my own body with love for her. If she asked for a drink of water, I knew I would drop everything and run and get it. This man seemed to be so far gone in adoration for his daughter that he could not preserve his own ego. There was something magical, almost angelic, about his child. He completely trusted that she would only ask for that which she purely needed. The quality in his heart had a flavour different to anything I had experienced.

The feelings in my heart brought me to tears. Cordelia encouraged me to stay with the feelings, and after a while, my tears abated and I felt deeply peaceful.

“There’s a connection here,” said Cordelia. I hadn’t heard her use that expression before. She took her hand away from my chest and stopped prompting me to describe my experiences. I lay in silence, feeling large and uplifted. My heart felt uncharacteristically boundless and whole. I absorbed the happy minutes.

Cordelia believed that her therapy helps people to unlock emotional scars deep within their body. She believed that the scars may have formed in this life or in past lives. Therefore, she would assume that the man I felt during therapy was me in a past life.

I, too, would now entertain this idea. In some ways it made a lot of sense. On the first, and only, time I had a free choice of where I would travel overseas, I had chosen to travel to the Himalayas. In spite of enormous cultural differences, I felt more at home there

than in any other country I have since visited. When I am sitting down, I choose to sit cross-legged because it feels natural to me. Sitting cross-legged with a bowl of porridge or dhal, I am content. I have never understood why chairs and plates were invented.

On the other hand, my past life is just an idea to me now. I have nothing to show for it except a burst of strange feelings around which my mind may have arranged dream-like images, as brains can do in the middle of the night.

What impressed me most about the therapy was not the scenery and characters I visualised, but how I was able to experience an emotion which - according to my memory - I had never experienced before. Is it possible that all of us can have eye-opening experiences and refreshing emotions just by going inside ourselves? This possibility, along with the fact that I managed to have a good cry and bask in some peace, led me to think that this therapy is a good tool to help people with their emotional growth.

Soon after that, Cordelia invited me to a meditation workshop and I was keen to attend. The school of meditation to which she belonged did not have any religious dogma. It focused on finding practical methods which produce results. The school did, however, use a specialised language to describe inner experiences, and had a number of theories about the way the human psyche works. For example,

Cordelia spoke freely about us each having an astral body (the body that consists only of thoughts and emotions), chakras (special points of energy along the astral body), and meridians (lines of energy flow in the astral body).

Her meditation workshop, attended by about a dozen people on a sunny weekend, introduced me to another type of third eye meditation. Cordelia led us through a routine which involved drawing our attention to various sensations at our third eye, starting with the visceral sensations such as tingling, pressure or warmth, then drawing attention to any experience of light and colour, and then finally drawing our attention to more diffuse qualities - a sense of vastness and space in the third eye. By the time you have spent a few minutes on each of these stages, you feel very drawn into the third eye, peaceful and alert.

Another exercise involved allowing yourself to have a sensation of rotation in your third eye. Then we tried meditating in pairs, sitting opposite each other just inside the border of what you would normally consider to be the other participant's personal space. I was impressed with how, during this exercise, I seemed to feel the inner experience of the other person. The sorts of things I could feel were broad qualities such as temperament or slow-acting emotions such as yearning and nostalgia. It was my first experience of consciously tuning in to the feelings of another person. It would

happen several times in the course of the workshop.

Also in pairs, we tried bringing our awareness to our hearts, and felt what it was like to be in the presence of someone who was “in” their heart. Then we tried being in the presence of each other while being “in” the belly. I noted that the heart and belly exercises felt quite different. For me, it was also an extension of experiences I had been having during my own meditations at home. During the previous months, I had noticed that some parts of my body were starting to feel denser and more sensitive than others during meditation. The points that I noticed - located in the midline of the throat, heart and belly - corresponded to traditional maps of chakras in these areas. Though I limited myself to a minimum of theories when thinking about my meditation experiences, I had come to believe in the existence of chakras.

By completing the meditation workshop, I became eligible to join a course which taught Cordelia’s type of therapy. I’d always been interested in psychotherapy and had enjoyed the free sessions which Cordelia had given me. Moreover, the course consisted of practising therapy on fellow students, so we would each receive a lot of therapy during the weeks to come. It sounded like just what I needed.

Each week the therapy students came together in a room without chairs. We began by sitting cross-legged in a circle and meditating briefly. Then Cordelia

explained some principles, and we paired off and began therapy - one person as the client and one as the practitioner. As the practitioner, I found that it wasn't hard to guess what the client was feeling by trying to tune into them. As the weeks went by, my impressions of what the client was experiencing became stronger and more specific. As the client, I loved getting the opportunity to sink into the sensations in my body and let the emotions come forth. Often I would get the sense that I was in a strange place or a strange body, but there was nothing as vivid as there was when I saw myself as the man in the Himalayan village.

There was an art to getting the most out of the therapy. You have to keep your mind free of thoughts. Importantly, you must not think about why you are feeling the way you are, or judge your feeling, control it or analyse it in anyway. We had tissues and cushions on hand, so you could cry freely, or roar or kick into a cushion. One of my favourite outcomes of this therapy was that I learnt to roar when I am frustrated. At any time of day, if I am at home and feeling annoyed or tired, I might suddenly burst into a roar. My tension is out, harmless and funny.

Another trick in this therapy is to notice when the client is getting stuck on a particular sensation, when there is potentially more going on underneath. The client might get bogged in a myriad of fleeting images or emotions which go in a loop. After some

practice you learn to ask the client to look for something wooden or tight underneath, or you can guess what emotion is underneath and give some open-ended hints (do you feel any fear or anger?). My favourite ploy was to ask them to let their flesh turn to jelly. It seemed that you can't hold feelings back and be totally soft in your flesh at the same time.

To make progress with this kind of technique, you have to have some theories about what you are doing. You assume that the flesh is actually storing unresolved emotions. You assume that the patient will be better when they unlock the most guarded feelings. I didn't mind working with these assumptions. They were assumptions which allowed us to experiment with our emotions and to find out what made us more relaxed.

A semester of classes went by and I loved the chance to work with people's intimate feelings, and to have valuable emotional releases of my own. Because of the amount of mental focus I had developed in meditation and running, I was good at lying still while sensations and emotions spilled forth. I unfurled various fears of being abandoned and neglected. I found strong, forgotten emotions which covered my everyday moods like layers of translucent paper until the emotions were discovered and liberated. I wished that everybody knew about this process for boiling off the unhappy flavours which taint their consciousness.

One day, after I had some disappointing news, I had a sharp pain in my heart. When I took my turn as client that night, the pain in my heart drew all my attention.

“A good opportunity for exposing emotional scars,” Cordelia commented.

Within minutes of lying down, I saw a vivid scene in my mind’s eye. It was as clear as a movie. The scene played for a couple of seconds, then replayed itself from the exact same point. I was taken aback. Each time I collected myself, I saw the same two-second clip again. I “knew” exactly what it was and I was too ashamed to describe it at first. I was in the funny situation of dobbing myself in for a terribly horrendous deed which I may or may not have committed in a past life.

I felt myself to be a large man - not the one in the Himalayans, but one in Europe, hundreds of years ago. I was tall and beefy, with red hair and beard, clothing made of hides, and scars on my face from burns. The sky was dimmed, either by cloud or a long winter dusk, or both. The ground was muddy and I was standing near crude wooden scaffolding. Within metres there were various other people, but there was no one close to me except a small baby I was holding in my hands. The baby was naked, only about three months old, and as I spent those two seconds turning the baby over in my left hand, I was holding a large knife in my

right. That was the full length of the two-second clip. I knew what I was doing, and I'm not going to admit to it here, because I'm still scared of justice catching up with me. Suffice to say, I believe that my colleagues and I had a busy day that day, fulfilling some sort of genocidal goal.

I felt the atmosphere of the scene - a sense of thrill and evil, but also undercurrents of a void. As I wept with the shock of my images, and the therapist encouraged me to keep sinking into the emotions, the scene changed to another vivid sequence. This time I was a few years older, in the same kind of terrain. I was at some kind of camp on a long hillside, like in a large group of men camping during their progress in a primitive war. I was looking at an extraordinary man who had just arrived on a horse, and I was agog. I could see that this man was physically as strong and powerful as I was. Yet there was something totally different about him. He was pure. Ever since this vision, I have always been tempted to refer to him as a Celtic Saint. The moment I met this man, I discovered that there was something called goodness. It was a revelation, because I had been brought up in a culture of barbarism. Instantly I recognised that this man's condition was superior to mine, and he was the kind of person I wanted to be. Looking back, I summarise this scenario as a conversion experience.

In that therapy session, it seemed that this

conversion experience had been a major turning point in my soul's development. After my session, it just became a hypothesis about which I would continue to wonder. No matter what it was, I couldn't forget how vivid and heart-breaking the images were, and how they had flooded into my consciousness without much prompting. I couldn't forget the distinctive dark tones of the knife scene, or the breath-taking persona of the man on the horse. They were more intense than moments of real life, when one is always safe inside one's own head during any scene. In therapy, the scenes are inside you. I wondered, if I could find such exotic scenes inside me, in spite of my ordinary background, what else was inside the people around me?

Encounters

As my weird experiences continued to grow in number, I was not as easily converted to New Age rhetoric as some of my fellow therapy students. I had heard it all before. A very interesting chapter from my childhood gave me both a taste and scepticism for chit-chat about spiritual realms. While I was in my teens, my own mother became known as a healer and channel. Later my father would become known as an exorcist.

During my childhood, my mother began to yearn for something new in her relationship with God. Familiar with the teachings of the New Testament, she wondered about the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were experienced by the disciples after Jesus was crucified. According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples and they became able to perform spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, healing and prophecy. Many people interpret the New Testament to mean that any followers of Christ, including simple folk such as my mother and father, can also receive the Holy Spirit and perform miracles for Christ's sake.

My mother prayed that she could receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. One day she was moved to sit down at a blank page with a pen in her hand, and allow her hand to write by itself. In a hand-writing which was not her own style, her hand wrote out a message as if it came from someone she once knew in England. She had lost contact with this person and did not even

know if they were dead or alive.

Not knowing what to do with the letter, my mother continued to pray for guidance. Before long, she was writing other messages. Rather than writing automatically, she began to hear streams of thoughts in her head which she could then write down in her own hand-writing. To keep up with the thoughts in her head she would have to write swiftly, and wrote in huge strokes. The messages, which she would refer to as inspirational writing, claimed to be from a spirit guide named Richard, and were full of advice about spiritual development and Christ.

I was about ten years old when my mother began this practice and I was told nothing, but I noticed some writing pads around the house with just a few words scrawled across each page.

“Why do you write like this?” I asked.

“So that I can write very quickly,” was all my mother said.

My parents continued to pray for guidance from Christ. While some Christians embrace the idea of gifts from the Holy Spirit, others are afraid that anything supernatural is a sign of the devil at work. Some Christians can argue all day with each other about whether inspirational writing, spiritual healing and mediumship are from the devil or can be from Christ, with both sides using quotes from the one Bible. As well as the inspirational writing, my mother was developing an interest in spiritual healing performed by the laying on of hands. If their work had Christ's

blessing, my parents wanted to develop a prayer group in which the laying on of hands and inspirational writing could be practiced and put to good use.

One day when I was playing in the driveway at our home, a dark-skinned man arrived. He greeted me warmly and said he had come to visit my parents. My parents talked with him all afternoon. At nightfall, we all got into the car for an outing. I remember this man vividly, because I was immediately struck by his warmth. His demeanour when he spoke to me was as if I was an equal, not a child. In the back seat of the car he asked me, "What's your favourite subject at school?"

"Art," I said.

"All life is art really," he said.

Having a philosophical discussion about primary school definitely appealed to me.

Years later, when I read my mother's book manuscript, I discovered that this man had arrived completely unexpected. As she described it, he was a member of the Baha'i faith and he had received guidance from God that he should go and find these two particular people, X and Y, first names supplied, and tell them that what they are doing is right. At the time, the man had no idea who these two people were, nor where to find them, but he set out with his inspiration anyway.

This was a turning point for my parents. His visit gave them the courage to follow their hearts and build their prayer group. They attracted a solid group. I remember the lounge room filling up with people

once a week. Peeking from our bedrooms, my sister and I recognised some people from church, but other faces were unfamiliar. My parents told us that these were prayer meetings.

One evening, while the meeting was well underway, I walked past the closed lounge-room door to let the cat out into the garden. I heard a deep, elderly voice speaking in the lounge-room, holding fort while everyone else was silent. I was surprised because I hadn't noticed any elderly people arriving that evening, and saw no one whose voice I didn't know. The next day I asked my mother who was speaking. She named one of the women, but I knew the voice was not her normal voice.

After some thought, my Mum then explained that the woman was a trance medium. She had gone into a trance and a spirit was using her voice box to speak to the group. It had become a regular feature of the meetings, and they were getting a lot of guidance that way.

A keen Christian and about thirteen years old at the time, I became very interested in my parents' pursuits. I read a lot of Mum's inspirational messages and attended some of their meetings. They always started with a long meditation, and that was my first experience of meditation. I focused on thoughts of Christ or images of peaceful places. I was relaxed and the room was peaceful. My mind naturally wandered and didn't fall silent during the meditation. That's how most people experience meditation without training.

At one meeting, just before Christmas, the trance medium took longer than usual to start speaking. When the voice finally broke through, it was not claiming to be that woman's usual spirit guide. It was claiming to be Jesus Christ.

I was flabbergasted. Could this really be true? The message was loving and sensible, and included some suggestions about how The Lord's Prayer could be better translated. The lounge room was packed full that evening and I was sitting on the floor by the ankles of the trance medium. Several times I thought about how I could reach out and touch the dress of the woman who was allegedly speaking as Christ. I became a little obsessed with the idea of "touching Christ", but I didn't reach out.

At the end of the message, "Christ" talked about how his gift to us this Christmas was to be able to be among us, to be able to talk to us, and to reach out and touch us. As he said this, the medium's hand reached out and touched me on the head. To my knowledge, it was the first time the trance medium had ever moved her hand while speaking in trance.

Whether or not Christ was actually personified at those meetings, I loved attending them and mixing with the people. They were very warm people. I never heard anyone speak a critical word of anyone else. They spoke about their aspirations to develop spiritually. They laughed a lot and often hugged. It was fascinating to listen to their experiences. There was one man who said he could use a divining rod to find objects. One

day I saw him demonstrate his diving rods (coat-hanger wire inserted into biro tubes) and he quickly uncovered a watch which someone else had hidden. There was a woman who often saw ghosts or the spirits of people who had already died. If you said to her, “There’s someone here to see you,” she would quite likely say, “Dead or alive?” Another man was purportedly psychic, and he could tell you things about yourself just by holding a flower that you had picked from the garden and held for a while. He told me that he saw a chapel in my future, and that I should look after our dog. I wasn’t even sure what a chapel was, and didn’t think I had ever seen one. The dog died shortly afterwards, and about a year later I moved to a college which turned out to have a chapel.

While I was at university, I put my religion and all those memories aside. I had no psychic experiences of my own and no evidence of God.

Decades years later, in the therapy class with Cordelia, I was once again mixing with warm people who meditated together and talked about their spiritual progress. Like my parents’ group, they talked about astral bodies and auras and angels and healing energies. But, even though I would have loved to take on the whole package of popular beliefs, I wasn’t going to do that again. I was going to proceed with scepticism about anything I hadn’t experienced for myself. Every idea was just a hypothesis. In fact there was no need to have beliefs about anything. Either it was true or not. Either it worked or it didn’t.

Cordelia never talked about Christ, but it became clear that she believed our therapy was being aided by well-intentioned supernatural beings. When therapy was well underway, we became accustomed to her saying, “There’s a connection here,” at which point the therapist and client were supposed to stop talking and just soak it in. Often the therapist and client had spontaneously stopped talking at that point anyway. The client had become deeply relaxed, and was opening up, embracing new feelings and often discovering a new perspective on an old wound. The atmosphere was distinctive. After some weeks, we didn’t need Cordelia to alert us to the presence of a connection. We recognised the change in atmosphere and automatically embraced it with silence.

There was one week when Cordelia raised the topic of angelic beings during our lesson before therapy. She had got half-way through explaining what she meant by angelic beings when I noticed that the atmosphere in the room was extremely dense and electric. It was like the normal connection atmosphere only stronger. I thought the atmosphere was full of love and levity. Cordelia paused at the end of one sentence. She seemed to have noticed the atmosphere too, and wasn’t going to waste it by talking. Uncharacteristically, no one in the group took advantage of the pause to ask a question or make a comment. Everyone had noticed the atmosphere. We sat quietly and attentive, not looking at Cordelia, but sitting motionless with eyes half-closed and seemingly

listening to the room. The silence lingered for about five minutes. Then the atmosphere diminished, we looked at each other and were giggly with glee. We all felt that we had just been visited by an angel.

Sometimes during a connection, Cordelia would encourage us to tune into the connection or go deeper into it. If you allowed yourself to fully observe the connection and nothing else, the connection became more personable. You could feel a kind of personality or temperament in it, or sometimes get a broad message from it. I started to feel these things during my meditation at home as well. I would notice the change in atmosphere, tune into it and feel that there was a real presence with me in the room. I began to feel, regularly, that I had wonderful company when I meditated.

During therapy I would sometimes have other experiences which felt like encounters with spiritual visitors. The encounter would usually start with a sense of atmosphere or a flood of warmth or light into part of my body. Giving my full attention to the change, it would develop beautiful, personable qualities, and then sometimes these qualities would develop further into a sense of a presence behind them. I might get a sense of a face, or a shape (tall and robed, for example), or a character (like a monk, a good warrior, or a medicine woman, for examples).

One weekend we had two full days of therapy and teaching. Cordelia told us in advance that it was really important to attend because the atmosphere

would build up, and we could achieve a lot. After a couple of standard therapy sessions, I had a session in which I revisited some pain from my early days at school. I was uncomfortable about being singled out from the rest of the class because of my intelligence. I was set apart for reading and writing, and sometimes taken out of the class for IQ tests or to talk to the principal about my achievements. Teachers often pointed at me in front of the rest of the class and said, “If only the rest of you could be the same.” While I was delighted to be able to work at my own pace and delighted to discover my own talents, I was ashamed to be treated as different and better than the other students. I still believe it is very wrong to make a spectacle out of people’s natural merits in this way, in the same way that it is wrong to make a spectacle out of people’s natural short-comings.

Lying in the hall that weekend, with a would-be therapist sitting on my right side, I revisited all the pain and delight of being seven years old at school. Then suddenly there was a connection. It was so strong that I felt blasted by light. My breath became laboured. I felt it most down my left side, as if it was holding a particular position over my body, opposite the therapist. I had an extremely strong sense of the nature of this connection. It matched perfectly the atmosphere that was in the church of my childhood. It felt like God, and it also felt like, “I am your boss.”

For as long as I could feel him, I felt deeply locked in allegiance to this being as if I always had been

and always will be locked to him, and there is no choice about it, and that I wouldn't want any choice anyway because he was the perfect boss. In that moment, I had a sense of trust that he knew exactly all about me and exactly what he wanted me to do for the rest of my life.

The presence wore off. I had a sense of being crushed all over my body as I returned to earth. I had a flashback to feeling the same crushing sensation as I was being funneled into my current body before my birth. There was no question in my mind about what I was experiencing. Only weeks later, as the memories began to fade, did I question whether I was mistaken.

I can't conjure that feeling by myself, nor can I forget what I assumed at the time. There are only so many times you can play with a carton of milk before you start to believe in the existence of milk. I had been playing with the carton for quite some time now, and I was ready to believe - tentatively - in spiritual presences, angels, Jesus and God.

Automatic Writing

Sitting alone in meditation in my white bedroom, buzzing and calm in an altered state of consciousness, I had enough awareness to notice what my numbed-out arms were doing. Five minutes into the meditation, my arms rose from where they rested on my legs. They rose about five inches above my legs and hovered there, seemingly supported by the buzzing sensation which permeated by body. Then my arms rose further, arms still outstretched to the sides, but now with my palms level with my shoulders. The atmosphere around me was strong and sweet. I thought of it as a connection.

Ten minutes into my meditation, my hands began to move slowly towards each other. I had no conscious intention to do this. I observed them. My wrists turned, bringing my palms towards each other in front of my face. The fingertips of each hand approached each other as if to touch, but paused before they made contact. My hands rested in a prayer-like posture in front of my face and remained there for some minutes. I was deeply at peace, and felt wrapped up in comfort.

Again my arms began to move. My hands separated slowly. Wrists rotated again and returned to a palms-up position with each hand hovering above a knee, as they were before. Now the index finger of each hand moved toward its neighbouring thumb. My

hands rested in a posture which reminded me of ballerina fingers. I thought I had seen something like this finger posture on statues of Buddha, in photographs from South East Asia. I later found out that these hand postures were classic mudras.

I observed all of this without feeling that I was personally in control of my arms. I knew I could have controlled them if I had made myself snap out of the trance. But the trance was thick and delightful, and I had no desire to yank myself out of it.

After twenty minutes of hovering, my arms lowered themselves and the trance spontaneously lifted. I was a little tight in my shoulders, but not enough to cause pain. I puzzled over what had happened with my arms during meditation, why they had moved to such specific positions. I also remembered how my arms had moved to mimic my friend's lopsided postures when we had meditated simultaneously in a previous year.

"Information somehow gets into my arms while I meditate," I hypothesised clumsily, and it gave me an idea.

I found a stool which I could place over my right leg while sitting cross-legged. On top of the stool I placed a writing pad attached to a clipboard. I held a pen in my right hand. Then I settled into my normal meditation, waiting to see if my hand would try to write to me. At the same time, I tried to forget all about it.

My normal trance state began, and after about five minutes my hand floated as usual. This time,

however, it was just one hand which floated. It hovered over the piece of paper with pen poised. Then it lowered and made some clumsy strokes on the paper. The strokes were curved and repetitive in the way that handwriting is - stopping and starting, rising and falling - but there were no discernible letters. It was like a two year old pretending to write, or someone trying to relearn to write after brain damage.

To me, it was huge progress. I didn't feel that I was consciously controlling the pen. I was as numb as ever. I figured that something was trying to write with my hand, and it was getting used to the apparatus. "It" would have to get used to how its intentions translated into my specific movements. The task was a lot more skilled than forming slow postures with my arms and fingers.

I imagine that if my mother was reading this, she might be feeling a little alarmed that I was handing my body over to the control of an unknown being. My parents consistently taught people that, whenever they dabbled in psychic experiences, they must protect themselves with the love of Christ. There are plenty of stories of people who have attempted seances or automatic writing, opened themselves up to the control of other spirits, and ended up being possessed by malicious or mischievous entities.

I never forgot my parents' warnings. Since I was becoming comfortable with the existence of angelic beings and other good supernatural presences, I had to keep an open mind that dark ones might also exist. I

might need to be prepared for them even if I had never met one. Likewise, I have never had any experience with being electrocuted, or seeing anyone being electrocuted, but the risks are so great that you don't deliberately test it for yourself, just to find out if it really happens.

Reaching a state of peace and joy was always my highest priority when I sat down to meditate. Often I would deliberately remind myself of feelings of love or compassion before I began to meditate, to help me rise into the higher states I had stumbled across in this way. When my arms began to float the atmosphere around me felt good and sweet. This was why I had no fear, when I placed a pen in my hand, that I might be prone to some kind of devilish interference. I figured that if I got any sense of oppression, malice or misery coming through, I could repel it quickly by enforcing my skills of concentration on peace and light.

Keeping my mind uplifted as usual, and venturing into my normal trance, I tried again with a pen in my hand during meditation the next day. This time the pen formed smaller strokes, working across the page as a writer does. There was nothing legible, but it was an improvement.

The next day and the next, I practiced again. The marks were becoming more rhythmic and more like real letters, with my pen picking up and putting down with a more precise action, sometimes doubling back a little as if to put the cross on a "t", or a similar adjustment. The movements were all coming from my

elbow, so the script could presumably not be very tidy anyway. My arm seemed to becoming more accustomed to working as a rod from the elbow. It reminded me of machines - called plotters - which draw graphs by the movement of an ink-point across the paper on the end of a long lever, while the lever is controlled at the far end, off the page.

On day five, I sat down again at a blank piece of paper and my elbow pushed my hand with determination to the centre of the page and wrote in shaky letters, "ONE". The hand then flipped to the next page and wrote some of the usual garbage.

I was overjoyed. Not only had my hand written a distinct word, far more distinct than any of the characters it had already written, but it seemed - as I emerged from trance - that the word had a lot of meaning. It didn't just mean *page one* or *word number one*. To me it meant *The One* or *Being at one* or *Unity* or *What comes first* all rolled into one. It occurred to me that if an enlightened being had to choose how to get a message across in just three clumsy letters, that *One* was an excellent choice. If I had to choose a word myself, I might have suggested writing *God* or *Love*. But I could concede that *One* was a far better choice, especially because it surprised me. It did not seem to have been chosen by me, so it wasn't me who did it, right?

I don't remember exactly how the writing developed in the days to come. In the end, I threw all my automatic writing away, for reasons that will become clear.

I do remember that within a week, I was writing long pieces, perhaps three or four pages with several sentences on each page. I continued with the writing every day for weeks. The transmissions would last fifteen to twenty minutes and then the activity would cease as suddenly as it had started. I felt cosy and loved while I was writing. It was as if there was someone in the room with me, hugging me from behind.

I remember that he (for he felt male) wrote about me having some kind of past life in Ancient Egypt and a kind of soul-mate there who would be trying to find me. He named a place where he said I once lived. I thought I recognised the name of the place and Googled it on the internet. It was an obsolete name for a place in Egypt.

He also said that I would have lots of work to do with my mediumistic abilities. There would be masses of people coming for help. It would be very important. Knowing how people flock to psychics for help, this is what I secretly hoped for.

Then, as days went by, the author began to say that there was a particular task coming up for me. He said there was an address for me to visit. I was being given a mission. I was excited and proud.

At this stage I was still having consistent difficulties in deciphering the hand-writing. I had my eyes closed while writing, ignoring what my hand was doing, and sometimes I found later that there was too much space between the two halves of a letter, or some letters I could not decipher at all, except from the

context. The author gave a street name and a suburb name. Both of the names were long. If I changed a couple of letters in the nine-letter suburb name, it did match a real suburb. Having made an assumption about the suburb name, I could then find a street name on the map which was almost the same as the long street name I had scrawled down. The match was pretty close, about as close as a foreigner trying to recapture a couple of names they had heard.

The address however, was incomplete without a house number. So I waited for further instructions. The next day, instead of writing, the hand began to draw. It drew a house, complete with garage on one side, a porch towards the right, vines growing in an arch in front of the porch, three or four large trees forming bunches near the road, a driveway and a letterbox with a number on it.

I went for a mystery drive looking for the address. I didn't yet have any instructions about what to do when I found it, but I wanted to find out if the house was real. The suburb was a thirty minute drive away. I drove slowly down the street I had identified until I found the street number on the letterbox. The house didn't match my detailed drawing. Two doors down the street, however, was a scene which matched my picture perfectly, including the exact shape and position of the letterbox, the configuration of trees, the porch, the garage, and the arched vine. Everything was to scale, and none of the features were missing. I was amazed. I went home and waited with excitement for

the next message.

By now I was experiencing some performance anxiety. I was keen to make sure that I was getting the messages down as accurately as possible. If the writing was out of my control, however, how could I promote its quality? The author wrote that I should listen to instrumental music while I was doing the automatic writing. This indeed helped to keep my mind diverted and calm rather than trying to judge what letters I was forming as I wrote.

No further instructions arrived about the mission and I had two conflicting addresses - the house I had drawn, and the number on the letterbox I had drawn - so I was not going to take it upon myself to visit either of them. The writer congratulated me on finding the house, but then said there was a different task for me. This time he drew some shops with the word "MART" on one. I hadn't seen one like that anywhere. He also gave a suburb name - one that was real - and drew another garden scene. This time the garden scene was bizarre. It had three pineapple shaped trees in a row. I hadn't seen any trees like that ever. He also said to take a festive cake and give to a person (first name given) and a particular organisation (name given) at the shopping centre.

I set out again. I searched in the given suburb and couldn't find the shops with the "MART". I tried an adjacent suburb, then another. Then I sat, exasperated in the car, with a pen and paper in front of me, asking for advice. A series of directions appeared

on the paper, L, L, - - R, etcetera. I worked out the code, turned left, then left, then took the third road on the right, etcetera, and entered another adjacent suburb. I passed a garden with three enormous pineapple shaped trees in a row in the front yard, matching the picture I had drawn. Very soon afterwards, I found the “MART”. I went into the only building I could see where there were any organisations leasing office space, but I couldn’t find the organisation in question. I even asked someone if they knew of it. They didn’t. I asked if they knew of the person whose name I had been given. They didn’t. I got back into the car, ate half the festive cake, then gave the rest to some strangers. It had been a ridiculous waste of time. The uncanny garden and MART coincidences were my only consolation.

More instructions came. My writer consoled me on my frustration and said I was still being tested for my ability to follow instructions with faith. He said it was good that I had made the sacrifice of taking a cake. I was doing well. He said there was another task coming. I was to deliver a message. He named a suburb and an evening when I should go and await further instructions.

I went to the suburb and sat with pen poised in the dark. I wrote down some more instructions, - L, R, L, -L, etcetera, but I was feeling addled. The letters were not clear. Eventually, exasperated, I demanded more clarity.

“Go around the corner and there will be stars,”

said the writing.

I drove around the corner and saw the first commercial building I had seen for a long time, as I had been winding through streets of houses. The building housed a social club and it was illuminated with large signs bearing stars.

The writer said there was a disaster recovery meeting there. I inquired at the counter but there was no such meeting. When I got back into the car, I got another message, of a different kind. It was like a personal message to someone who had been traumatised by a disaster. I wrote two full pages of counseling for this person. But I had no one to give it to. I hoped that maybe it was of value that it had been written down, that it might somehow be psychically transmitted to the person who needed it. But at this stage, I felt there was a lot of bullshitting going on. I wasn't pleased that I had lost half an evening.

In the days that followed, I continued to write during meditation, but the messages were getting dodgier. I wrote that a particular friend was about to phone me. It turned out later that he was flat on his stomach on a massage table at the time. There were other claims that were obviously false.

I thought back to the writing as whole. The first part had been good. It had contained some ideas which were comforting and useful. But when it turned to instructions and secret knowledge it had become a waste of time. Some of the writings had also promised me importance and fame. Anything which smacks of

self-aggrandisement would make my parents suspicious of mischievous spirits.

“Why?” I asked of the air. “Why did it seem so good and real, and then turn out to be a nuisance?”

“You had to learn,” wrote the hand.

Suddenly I realised my depth of attachment to psychic experience for its own sake. ESP, trances, mediumship, being able to feel angels, or even being able to feel the emotions of your clients, are all impressive feats. These abilities are much coveted by many people on a spiritual path. But by themselves, they are just party tricks. As my parents would say, you must judge things by the fruit that they bear.

I ripped up all my automatic writing and threw it in the bin. From now on, I only wanted communication if it was for the sake of love and wisdom.

Entities

I was in a state of almost perpetual therapy. I had been practising mental silence for more than three years and I had learnt to keep my demeanour soft and open in order to get into altered states of consciousness. In therapy with Cordelia, I had learnt to bring my silent awareness to anything tense or emotional inside me, and let the feelings out. On top of this, my experience with automatic writing had taught me to place a higher value on peace and love than on trying to get knowledge or power.

When my life presented me with another major disappointment, I was ready to try to let my disappointment wash over me without analysis. I felt grief and loss, but I tried to judge neither the past nor the future. My pain was like water which rained onto my personality. It found grooves formed by old pain, forming trickles then tributaries, then rivers which brought lots of buried emotions out to sea. I revisited pain from my childhood, such as the yearning for affection from my parents. There were wounds from my school days, when it was hard to find anyone with whom to click. There was the grief from past losses. There were archetypal angsts, many of which contradicted each other - the desire to be looked after, the desire to be totally independent, the desire to have control over another person, the desire to give up my responsibilities, the desire to push away any other

person as an intruder. All these pains lay dormant until I investigated them one by one, locating knots in my body when I lay down for sleep at night, and letting the knots turn to jelly and reveal their stories. When the emotions emerged, they were potent, often accompanied by vivid flashbacks to short scenes forgotten in my present life, or from a possible past life. The emotion would crystallise in my consciousness then cause a burning sensation in my flesh as I held it steady, and it would then release, causing small convulsive sensations and a lot of weeping. My flesh relaxed and I felt unchained from that concern.

From the time that I had started to practice meditation, I noticed that I experienced something new of a supernatural nature every month. This time it was a new twist in therapy which was to change my outlook for years to come.

In therapy class, the other students and I would often describe core feelings such as, “I feel sad,” “I feel angry,” or “I feel guilty,” but at other times we would express our feelings as if we were the target of something - “I feel oppressed,” “I feel victimised,” or “I feel exploited,” for examples. Often we would describe our inner tensions in impersonal terms such as “wooden”, “burning” or “torn”, but at other times we would speak as if we were fighting against something – we might be “squashed”, “sucked out” or “pecked”. Often we would throw away judgmental comments in first person, such as, “I’m a loser,” “I never get things right,” or “I’m greedy,” but sometimes we would throw

away judgments about ourselves in the third person - “You’re hopeless,” “You’re a fat bitch,” or “You’re nothing.” As we mapped our feelings from week to week, many of us were hitting up against a pattern of feelings which seemed to be outside of ourselves rather than inside. It was typical to describe something like “a dark blob down my right side, sucking out my sense of humour, calling me an idiot, making me feel drained.”

At about this time, Cordelia explained to us a theory of the existence of entities. According to Cordelia, entities are unpleasant astral beings which attach themselves to people. I came to see them as primitive forms of life which attach themselves to people as a source of energy. By hooking up to someone’s chakras and bombarding them with particular ideas, the entity can get the person to generate a lot of emotional charge, which then provides a kind of food source for the entity. Some people say that entities can pass from person to person, and pass from newly dead people to the living, or can even hover in places until they get picked up.

Similar to entities, Cordelia also believed that there is a kind of astral structure that can be set up between two people who are close to each other, such as partners or two people in the same family. A kind of ghost-like structure can be set up between the two people, transferring thoughts and emotional energy between the two people according to their excesses and weaknesses. This type of structure is sometimes termed a cord.

The trick to getting rid of an entity or cord is to become extremely familiar with it, knowing the flavour of its energy, how it feels in each of your chakras, and how it impacts upon your thoughts and emotions. By sustained awareness of the structure, separating it in your consciousness from the rest of your thoughts and feelings, it starts to separate from the rest of your astral body. It gets to the point where you feel like you are walking around with a near-visible grey bag attached to your body. At that point, an extremely strong blast of light can remove it. This is the process commonly known as an exorcism.

Cordelia said that only a qualified exorcist would be able to clear an entity or cord. You wouldn't want to run the risk of having the entity just being displaced without being resolved. It could end up on a child or some other person. Later I would disagree about the need for a trained or initiated exorcist, as I - and a friend of mine - figured out how to do our own exorcisms. But, trained or not, we would definitely agree that a very strong blast of light is needed to shake these monsters, and most people don't know how to summon an unearthly light.

With relish I entered a phase of tracking down the entities and cords in my astral body. There seemed to be plenty of them, and I noticed an improvement in my mood and physical wellbeing whenever I got one of them cleared. I had been unable to sleep on my back since I was a child because I would feel very tense on my back and wake up with stomach aches. But I found

an entity lodged in the middle of my back. It hated being squashed. After I got it cleared, I could sleep on my back without any problems.

Each clearing and each emotional release seemed to reduce tightness in my muscles. I was running long distances and still swimming as well, and all this exercise can make your muscles very tight and prone to injury. Instead I was becoming more and more flexible. I felt much younger than I did ten years earlier. Regularly galloping over the hillsides, I felt scoured by the various sadnesses and responsibilities of life, but I was also a warrior, full of hope of even more good health and mystical adventures.

Often I would feel the outline of the barbaric man I had envisioned during therapy, the man who had handled the baby and the knife. I had let go of his trauma, but I could feel his incredible physical strength and single-mindedness. I bought myself a teddy bear which had ruddy hair and patches sown on to him as if he was wounded. I named him Hagar, after that possible Viking version of myself, and hugged him when I was alone, alone with my open wounds and visions.

Reunions

At this stage I was meditating for about an hour at a time, still meeting with the therapy class once a week, and sometimes having additional therapy sessions with Cordelia as well. The practices never became stale or insular. Quite the opposite was true. The more I explored in meditation and therapy, the more I discovered. I discovered different altered states of consciousness, angelic presences and other spiritual presences, how to travel through various weird realms of consciousness, and exciting sensations and scenarios buried inside my body. The key to all of these experiences was to hold my mind steady on the target of my choice, and see what sensations came forth.

For example, I might meditate with my awareness in my third eye and become aware of an atmosphere of high-pitched levity. If I focused on this atmosphere, it would become more intense and then seem to shoot up in the sky above me. If I focused my awareness on that new space above me, I would find visions of mountains, pure and white. If I remained focused on the mountains, I became aware of a sensation of movement in the air, like the slow beat of enormous wings, and a sense of unearthly peace. Taking all this in, I would feel exhilarated and free of all the emotions of the flesh.

One day during meditation, I became aware of a burning sensation near my tail bone. I allowed myself to focus on it and I soon found myself in a pleasant, dark, viscous atmosphere. Staying with the atmosphere, I seemed to zoom forward and fly through narrow tunnels. Allowing this to wash by, the tunnels then stopped. I got a strong impression of the town where I was born. This was followed by the town to which we moved when I was a toddler, the atmosphere of the church, then the atmosphere of the school. The atmosphere of my next home town appeared next, and my high school, and then university. The sequence seemed to be the series of all the major events of my life.

Next there was an impression of my first partner and then an impression of a strange man. I knew I had never experienced that man's atmosphere before, and I suddenly realised the impressions had moved into my future. There was an impression of me being a mentor for other people, then of me being a writer. Wrapped through these two was the sense of a very special place, a piece of land or home. Finally there was a sense of me being some kind of public figure. The series of impressions was rapid but it was very vivid and there was no question in my mind as to how I would interpret it. It felt like my life had just flashed before my eyes - or rather, flashed out of my backside - and it included parts of my life which I had

not yet lived. Could this be true? Are our lives really mapped out like this already? It was another hypothesis to add to the pile.

In therapy I found a couple of hypothetical entities attached to my personality and I hypothetically had them cleared. I then worked on the ghostly structure by which my mother and I seemed to draw on each other's energies in counter-productive ways. Then I worked on the debris left over from my relationship with my late partner, who had died some years ago. It, too, produced a grey blob which I seemed to drag around with me.

Cordelia apparently did not believe that people survive as their normal selves after death, but she did believe that a dead person's personality can form an entity which remains attached to those he or she was attached to during life. In the case of my spouse and I, we were very co-dependent for emotional support and feedback for our behaviour. After his death, I still seemed to be somewhat controlled by his demands, and was still trying to draw on his conservatism to give me stability. Cordelia helped me to plumb the nature of my many feelings for him and his feelings for me. I dwelt on memories of how we felt together. The images were vivid and moving. I could remember how it felt, throughout my body, to be engaged with him in any activity. I could feel how my chakras were pushed and pulled, squashed or expanded, by our various feelings

and moods. It was fascinating, painful, and ultimately liberating to see how deeply his psyche was entwined with mine, and to see that the memories were all still there.

Cordelia helped me to map and clear the negative flavours of my relationship with my late spouse, guiding me into a deep meditation to remove the ghost of our joint angst in a kind of exorcism. Just as she was guiding me out of the meditation, I suddenly felt a huge, wonderful presence hovering a couple of feet above my prone body. It was my late husband, but not the version of him that I had just revived in therapy sessions. It was a pure, current, angelicised version, well beyond my mind or imagination, free of any of the intimidation of his old personality, and full of love. The experience was very intense. It lasted a few minutes, took my breath away and left me unable to speak for a few minutes more. It was as if he, in his life after death, had taken advantage of the strong light of the exorcism to beam down on me and say hello. Knowing how much friction had been between us in the years before he died, I had always been scared of the possibility of running into him in an after-life state, if life after death might exist. But this encounter was just fine. It was glorious, uplifting and unmistakable. My dead husband was still alive and he was watching me, and he loved me.

It was a wonderful privilege. I know there are

countless people who have lost someone they love and are burning inside with the desire to meet again. It was a tremendous relief to feel my husband's continuing spirit and to feel him reaching towards me. In grief, you feel not only alone but also rejected by your past. For an instant, that pain had lifted. Now, too, I had some evidence of life after death.

My pile of hypotheses was now huge and unwieldy. According to my experiences, there is mystical light, ESP, chakras, possibly a God, possibly a real Jesus, most likely angelic beings, possibly other supernatural beings, guides and realms, automatic writing, possibly predestination, entities, cords of emotions which bind people together, and life after death. I tried to keep all of these ideas in my head as "working hypotheses" subject to revision at any time with more data. On the rare occasion that someone else could corroborate my experiences, I was relieved and impressed.

I offered to act as a therapist for a friend who was going through a hard time. It was a routine therapy session. I settled my client into a peaceful state and then started to draw attention to the feelings in his heart. A series of sensations and emotions came up, then images which were vivid but for which he had no context. Suddenly my friend felt a lurch in his heart. It seemed to crack open with love and compassion, stronger than he had ever felt before. He was swept

away with feelings of joy and goodness. He floated on cloud nine and finished ecstatic, claiming that he had connected with something divine.

I noticed a connection in the room just before my friend's experience, but I did nothing to prompt him to notice it. I saw the bliss on his face and his awe as he tasted it. He left the therapy session uplifted and deep in reflection. Later he sent me an email, thanking me for his "awakening". He had never had a mystical experience before, and it was the first time I was able to help someone to have one.

Unfortunately I was having a lot of experiences which no one could corroborate for me. I would often sense the mood inside a person if my gaze happened to fall on them, even from a distance, while I was jogging past for example. Sometimes I would notice a kind of blob, like a heat haze, sitting over a person's shoulder or down their side, and sense the unpleasant parasitic atmosphere of an entity. Occasionally, I would feel that someone was accompanied by the presence of someone who loved them, someone who had passed away. I never got any details from these dead people, just a sense of their gender and rough age. I said nothing to the person they accompanied. All I would have been able to say was something vague like, "Do you know someone who died?" For all I knew, the spirit-person may have even been dead before the alive-person was born. They might be connected by family tree rather

than by spending real time together, so there was no point trying to verify anything. I would sometimes try to tune in for details about these mysterious impressions, but I was no more successful with that than I was with getting accurate ESP or accurate automatic writing. I figured that I was not a details person. I was clairsentient - that is, I picked up feelings, but not visual or auditory information.

Amongst the months that followed I did have an experience which matched the “strange man” atmosphere of my biographical vision. I had a match for the atmosphere I sampled when my life “flashed out of my backside” a few months earlier. I began to take the life-series seriously as a possible map for my future, complete with images of me mentoring, writing and being a public figure in decades to come.

On the spur of the moment, I decided I should join a local church which had a good reputation. Weighing up all things, I figured I was as Christian as anybody. I had been christened. Christ - according to my encounters - still recognised me. I already knew a lot of the scripture and songs. I hoped for a church like the one I grew up with, which organised lots of social activities.

I began to attend church every Sunday and enjoyed the friendly faces and singing. I spent a lot of time during prayers wondering why so many people were believing in God without any mystical experiences,

and why they were using so many wordy thoughts to try to connect with him. A lot of energy seemed to be wasted in thinking too hard about God and not spending enough time listening. I begged inside my head, “More silence, please!” I kept my mouth shut about my eccentric experiences.

A time came when I decided I should move house. I was feeling pretty tired from responsibilities, so I opted for a smaller home without a garden. Moving house involved an enormous amount of energy and fear, but as my birthday approached, I decided I would celebrate it by running a half marathon. I had cut back on running for a while, but I decided I would shake off my fatigue by building up to the twenty-kilometre distance I used to run. I didn’t foresee any obstacles, except a bit of woodenness in my legs which I thought I could overcome with mental training.

I came down with the flu. After two weeks of the flu, I developed a severe pain in the right side of my abdomen. It started suddenly in the middle of the night and penetrated all through my flesh and bone. I was in extreme pain, just lying still, and it was worse if I moved. I felt nauseated to touch any skin on the right side of my midline. With the help of a friend, I managed to get down the stairs and get to a doctor. There was no appendicitis, and no apparent cause for the pain. I went to hospital for many tests. No problem was found, but the severe pain persisted. I

was bedridden day after day, getting up just for a few minutes at a time to make meals, then returning to bed to drift in and out of sleep for a couple of hours. I could barely get out of the front door by myself and couldn't drive. Three weeks went by and I was obviously seriously ill.

Gradually the pain became less intense. It was still present but I could walk and drive just enough to take care of essential errands. I was incredibly tired, falling asleep or becoming dopey at any moment. For two months, I barely managed to do the meals and washing, and that was all. Sometimes I cried in the shower and, as I tried to wash my painful skin, I just wanted to shred it all off.

A channelled book

As weeks went by, the pain in my abdomen remained severe enough that I could barely go out. I could manage one small, high priority outing per day. I managed the housework and other duties bit by bit, and spent a lot of time resting. I was tired enough to fall asleep frequently during the day, and was dopey enough not to feel bored. My condition barely changed from week to week, and I still had no medical explanation.

It was a very upsetting experience. I had no idea how long the illness would last and whether it was dangerous. I felt the accumulation of disappointments over the years. As usual, in the midst of all this, I gained hope from my mystical experiences.

Just prior to my illness I had begun to see a vision of a book hovering above my head. It appeared several times a day, a still-life image of a book, bound in red. The more the book hovered, the more it seemed like a significant vision rather than a flight of my imagination. I began to tune into the vision and got a strong feeling that there was a book waiting for me to write it down. I sat with pen and paper, settled into meditation and then tuned into the image of the book. After ten or fifteen minutes of attunement, a stream of words sounded loudly in my thoughts. I wrote them down. The more I wrote, the more words streamed

into my consciousness, like someone was giving me dictation. A paragraph came rapidly and then stopped. The words convinced me that a whole book was on its way.

I had written, “When the book comes, make a special place for it in your heart, like a loved one. When the book comes, do not bother with trivia or you will lose the purity. When the book comes, set aside your concerns of its relationship to you and your future. It is a closed box, all right? When the book comes, regard it as a secret – something so profound that you won’t have to share it at all. Then you may be pure.”

The next day, I sat again with pen and paper and attuned myself to the image of the book. After ten minutes, a part of my head - on the right side - became hot. When the heat subsided, the words began, “To the people of tomorrow, some love is saved for you.”

I liked instantly what I wrote. It was quaint and poetic. I got a sense of a high-level spirit trying to tell us that the love of God was not a thing tied down in books of the past. God is always mindful of those of tomorrow and wants to communicate with them as well.

I had no time to dwell or play with words as they arrived. They streamed into my thoughts, loud and confident for twenty minutes. I wrote as fast as I could. The writing continued to be quaint and poetic, and had an attitude which I found embarrassing. It had a

complete assumption in the existence of God and that the reader should be spoken to frankly about his or her relationship with God. “God’s adoration for you is infinite and you are sick to decide otherwise.” The prose also had a sense of humour. At least, I could feel a sense of humour in the atmosphere which penetrated me as I wrote. The writer was enjoying his own gusto and enjoyed giving the reader a wake-up call. “God demands to be heard at the first hour and at the last hour, and there will be no lunch when he is absent forgetting about his work.”

Each day the book hovered above me and, every day or two, I sat down in the same manner with writing tools ready. My head became hot after ten minutes of meditation and the words spilled forth for twenty minutes, always signing off with a character which looked like an alpha, the first character of the Greek alphabet. The words came so insistently that it was easy to write them down. Occasionally I would feel a concept which did not translate easily into English and I would have to make a snap decision about what words to put in its place. Usually a combination of words or an innovative use of a word would suffice, and I motored on. For example I wrote, “[A] special feature of the humanoid spirit is the irony of aloneness.” (The text went on to say, “For while the spirit feels it is a loss to be alone, it also experiences a great sense of completeness when alone.”)

The translation issues gave me a sense that the writing was coming from a different kind of consciousness than my own thoughts. The ideas in the text also gave me a strong sense that the writing was coming from outside me. There were many ideas which were new to me and which I would later adopt, so the writing was actually injecting new ways of thinking into my own head. One day, concerned that the writing was just a figment of my own creativity, I tried to write something different to the flow of words that came into my head. I thought I would start a sentence by dictation and then finish it with words of my own choice. When the time came, I couldn't think of anything else to write, not even garbage words. My mind went blank and my hand seemed to be locked until I acknowledged the dictation word which was still booming in my thoughts, and agreed to keep writing to the script. From then on I was comfortable with the idea that I was channelling the writing from another source. The source did not identify itself, but it spoke confidently like some kind of well-informed representative of God, and always finished with the alpha. Eventually, some friends and I came to nickname the source *Alpha*.

As a whole, the book covered several core topics in spiritual philosophy including the nature of the human condition, love, closeness to God, relationships, reconciliation with the past, spiritual growth and the

course of life. The content seemed fresh, fair and insightful compared with traditional spiritual literature. For example, the writer asks us to respect the ungodliness of others. “One possibility for the future is that there will be much happiness and dedication to a good life . . . Judge not the position of your fellow humans on this scale. Each chooses according to his divine given right and his particular madness, so you have no right to decide who is guilty of ignoring the Lord.” The writer did not discriminate between religions. “The path of God has no particular appearance. It takes many forms and adopts many people from different backgrounds and pastimes. The one thing they have in common is the devotion of the spirit – and this can not be seen by the untrained eye.”

Though I couldn't sit and write during the three most intense weeks of my illness, I resumed the work as soon as I was able to sit for half an hour. I was weak, but the messages arrived easily, and I looked forward eagerly to what I might write each day. Thirty seven sessions after it began, the writing finished. Eventually I typed it up and labelled it as *The Red Book*. For a long time I kept it to myself, but when I finally did share it with a few spiritual seekers, it was received with joy. Many of those who read it asked if they could share it with others. In my opinion, it was a heavy-going book suitable for those who are not afraid of the word ‘God’ and who are looking for more ideas about the nature of

spirit and the cosmos.

Because I am not the source of the ideas, and because the material is dense, I often forgot what was written in the book. To remember the content, I had to re-read it. I got a renewed sense of joy and truth each time I pick it up. It is a rare thing for a person to pen a book and then to find it remains fresh to their own ear. My channelled writing is the only writing I have done and not out-grown. That in itself – to my mind – is a piece of magic.

Visitations

My illness dragged on but my mystical experiences were coming thick and fast. There were so many variations, so many experiences which were new and riveting, I wondered if I should write about them in a journal. Journaling always seemed to me like a chore that has numerous pitfalls. It takes heaps of time, it's self-absorbed, you often end up writing down reflections in a lonely or self-deprecating mood, and it comes to define the way you look back on that part of your life. On the other hand, I was experiencing things which were beyond normal experience - or at least, I supposed this was true because I had not experienced them before and no one was talking about them. I rarely found anything similar described in books, and when I did, the books were obscure books with small markets. I thought it might be worth recording my mystical experiences from a scientific point of view, like a scientist's log book, and keeping my reflections out of it. I would only write about that which was distinctly weird and nothing else. Even so, I was undecided whether to put in the effort. I made a resolution - if I stumbled across the perfect blank book, I would start a journal.

A couple of days after making this resolution, I went to an op-shop and noticed a large blank book. I

had never seen any stationery in the op-shop before. The book was large and fat, bound with a strong red binding, and reminiscent of old-fashioned log books for ships or banks. I fell in love with it and was immediately inspired to begin my journal. Of course, I even wondered if the coincidence of finding the wonderful book, so soon after my resolution, was a sign from above.

Each day I scribbled down brief notes about anything I experienced which was weird. Most days I wrote half a page or more of dense prose. Many of the weird experiences came during meditation, but sometimes I was simply overcome by an altered state or a presence at another time of the day. Strange things often happened when I was lying down to sleep or upon waking in the middle of the night.

What I remember most from my period of journaling was the variety of visitations which I experienced during meditation. After settling into meditation for a few minutes, I would sometimes feel an extremely strong presence, completely bombing my head with a silent and vibrating atmosphere. The nature of the presences varied and several of them had bizarre features. Sometimes I would be left with an impression of one of the classic figures from traditional or contemporary spiritual culture, such as Krishna, Buddha, a white eagle or a dolphin.

I was left wondering if these figures actually

exist out there in spiritual realms, or if I was experiencing weird states which just felt like, or presented themselves like, these particular personas. Again, my list of hypotheses grew. “Krishna might really exist. Buddha might really exist. Dolphin-like spiritual beings might really exist.” The most important point, however, was that each of these experiences seemed to open me in different ways, creating new vibrancy or nuances in various chakras. For example, the Krishna-like character caused my heart to feel very light and kind for many days. The Buddha-like character caused my lower chakras to feel very anchored and steady, as if nothing could ruffle me.

I tried to maintain equanimity during meditation, resistant to flights of imagination. Indeed, it was something I learnt very early on, when I was learning to silence my mind and trying not to get caught up in potential ESP. Books on meditation and mysticism frequently encourage people to remain detached from the sensations that arise during meditation. Allow sensations to wash over you. If you become attached or excited, your mind becomes active and starts generating thoughts, and then you have lost your deep state. If you think you are experiencing something important during your meditation, your ego becomes engaged, and again your mind becomes active. The important experience will be lost. You learn to become an impartial observer to everything that

happens during meditation.

You also learn to tell the difference between random sensory intrusions and significant sensory phenomena. If I suddenly have an image of myself as a child on a swing, and it lasts a split second, it is nothing. I might have a run of rapid images like this, vivid but flighty, like a dream sequence, and it is nothing. But if I have an image of myself as a child on a swing and it hangs fixedly in my consciousness even after I have ignored it repeatedly, then it is some kind of phenomenon. If it continues in consciousness, I become attuned to it as part of my silent state, and it might lead deeper into a phenomenon - perhaps a feeling of pain in the heart and a flood of tears. In that case, it turned out to be useful and formative.

Likewise, if I am in a deep silent meditation, and I feel there is a presence with me, hanging fixedly while I ignore it, then it is a significant phenomenon. As the silence continues, if the presence persists, you become more attuned to it, simply because you are there in silence together. You do nothing but wait in detachment. Then you really start to feel what the presence is like.

In the case of the Krishna-like being, one of my first major visitors, I noticed a high pitched feeling in my heart, a sense of delicacy in my limbs, and prettiness - but also masculinity - in my face. The high pitched feeling in my heart became so sweet and searing, it was

almost painful. But as I became more attuned to it, my painful resistance melted and I felt a sort of heart I had never felt before. It was an incredibly playful heart but in a loving way, extremely gentle and harmless, like the perfect son. To top it off, I heard the word *Krishna* spoken loudly in my mind. After this had happened three days in a row, I looked up Krishna on the internet and found the delicate, happy youthful appearance in which Krishna is typically depicted.

In the case of the Buddha-like being, my visitation created vibrancy in all of my chakras, including a peaceful heart, but I noticed the lower chakras more than anything, because they were so much more developed than mine. There was a sense of deep satisfaction or contentment in the belly, and a deep sense of anchoring and unflappability in the root chakra. The densities of these chakras even gave a sense of exaggerated size. My belly felt large, rounded and solid, while my perineum (the area of the root chakra) felt as dense as lead. The more I tuned in to this kind of balance, the more it matched the sense I get from images of Buddha. The atmosphere certainly matched the contented equanimity for which Buddhism is famous. The experience was not just an adjustment of chakras, it felt like I was being visited by a personable force - or a forcible person - with these characteristics. I was twenty minutes into the experience when suddenly my mind exclaimed, “My God, this is

Buddha!”

There is no way I can check what these experiences really were, but I had one visitation which had an amusing twist which gave me some confidence about what had happened. During meditation, I entered a very deep trance in which the air was charged, and I started to feel a great fire in my heart, entering through the back. It was an incredible fighting spirit, courageous, with an outrageous sense of humour, and an over-riding sense of furnace-strength love. I also felt that I had arms everywhere, a great density around my nose and something very solid on my head, like an old-fashioned metal helmet. This happened two days in a row, and at the end of the second session, I heard the word *Ganesh*.

I tried to remember who Ganesh was supposed to be, and had a vague sense it was some kind of Indian god. Later that day, I went to the communal garbage hopper at the back of the apartment block, to tip out my garbage as usual, and someone had left three art magazines beside the garbage hopper. On the cover of the top magazine was a statue of Ganesh, a Hindu god usually depicted with two or more pairs of arms and a helmet on his head. He also has an elephantine trunk for a nose. Ganesh is reputed to be a god of success over obstacles. This all seemed to concur with my visitation.

Ganesh came again for a couple more

meditations, and I was always struck by the unusual nature of his heart. His kind of love could fire you up to do anything, no matter how ridiculously demanding it was, and he was ready to tease you or fight you if it would help to wake you up. It reminded me of the loving mentor who knows how to say, “Come on, you wimp,” when you need to save yourself. He would fight you to success, wanting nothing more than for you to prove your brilliance.

All these impressions of being visited by a multi-armed, trunk waving Indian god would have troubled me as being an overactive imagination, if it wasn't for the coincidence of finding the art magazine while I was in the midst of it. You know that you are really soaking up the psychic way of life when you start using coincidences to validate other things which may or may not have happened in your inner life.

At other times I found various less pleasant characters when I used my inner awareness. No longer attending therapy classes, I would nevertheless lie in bed at night and explore any tensions which lingered in my body. As in therapy, I would place my awareness on a particular tense spot and wait to see what I felt. After a few layers of discomfort and angst, I would often arrive at sensations which seemed out of place, such as a bright spot of light apparently buried in a muscle, or a sense of metal grinding on metal. Remaining tuned, some kind of memory or persona

would suddenly pop out and flood my body with impressions. One day, I suddenly felt as if my sister's aura was intertwined with my own. I felt her personality, or her vibe, embedded in narrow corridors in the midline of my own body, causing a slight burning sensation, and a sense of crowding as well. Another time, I suddenly felt that I was still carrying the vibe of the girl I sat next to in high school for a few years. I felt the way I was holding myself in order to avoid encroaching on this girl's ego. As I had learnt to do with Cordelia, I carefully observed each of these patterns in my body, learning to distinguish between my true chakras and the flavours of other people, so I could tune better into my core being and be less compromised by other people's emotions.

Another lesson in the nature of my core being came after I was invited to be a guest leader at a meditation group. Just there for one evening, I led the group in my style of meditation and nothing remarkable happened, as far as I knew. When I went home, however, I had a lingering sense of having been in the right place at the right time. Lying in bed that night, I became more and more aware of two sides to myself - the one side which is anxious, cautious and modeled by the current world, and the other side which is spiritually free and embraces tasks of leadership. I began to map my anxious, controlled persona as if it, too, was a ghost of another person. As I did this, I got fleeting glimpses

of a more wispy, wonderful self hovering above. My controlled self, which seemed to be very anchored in my head, reasoned that if I could just tune into the wispy, floaty me, I would have achieved true enlightenment. Therefore, I began to try to throw my consciousness out of my brain and into my other self. I repeatedly tried to grasp the different flavours of my two selves, so that I could shift from one to the other, by completely tuning out of the one flavour and into the other. It seemed that it would be a bit tricky, as my ability to tune in and out of things seemed to be lodged in the controlling self, in my head. Yet, I figured that it must be possible to switch my anchor point. After a few attempts, I made the switch. I was suddenly flying, free, zooming, exhilarated - but for only a split second and then bump. I was back where I started. The wispy self started to become vague. I wanted to try again but couldn't get the clarity. It has never happened again since, but I remember that something happened which made me say to myself, "So this is what enlightenment is like."

In all my years of meditation, I have clocked up a few one-off experiences which are so exceptional, so compelling, that they have changed me forever. My split-second self-switching experience was one of these. The experience when I was being sucked out of my third eye was another. The experience of being visited during therapy by "God, my boss" was another. A

fourth such experience came when I was half way through a book written by a nun. She described her faith and her relationship with God in great detail, and I relished being able to read a book by someone who was so single-minded and devoted. Still basking in the atmosphere of the book, I went to the kitchen to prepare some food. I picked up a root of ginger and as I held it in my hand I was possessed by the most profound sense of love. My body, the ginger root and the room all seemed to tingle and glow white. I felt deep love for the ginger. I felt complete wonder and appreciation. I would have loved anything which had been in that space at that time. It was the first and only time that I felt an entire space vibrating with love, making everything feel perfect and complete.

It was great to have a record of these one-off experiences in my journal. There were many other less remarkable events which were also worth recording. As I habitually made notes, I began to notice patterns in my experiences. I was often making notes about the physical locations of my experiences - whether an effect was “thirty centimetres above my head” or “about a metre above my head” or “below my body”. Up, down, and distances appeared to have some meaning. Chakras were often the sites of interesting experiences. Sometimes they would spontaneously flare up with sensations in the middle of the night, sometimes glowing with light and giving sensations of tunnels

which lead to God. When I was releasing negative energies, I would often feel shimmering. I would sometimes spasm and jerk before releasing emotions. Flesh seemed to be stiff, tight and cold before releasing emotions, but warm and soft afterwards. Pressure and temperature seem to have meaning. Often I would be meditating for ten minutes before an altered state of consciousness began. The amount of time seemed to matter. It was a very subjective world, but there were a lot of physical parameters which seemed to be relevant, including height, distance, time, heat, pressure, waves, vibration and light. Maybe there are laws which describe the relationship between all these things and mystical experiences. I just hoped that one day I might be able to make better sense of what was going on.

Mediumship

Even after I had been meditating daily for over five years, I still noticed that I experienced something categorically new every month. It was the best hobby ever. I had a theory that by practising mental silence and softness (including emotional releases), your astral body can keep on becoming lighter, better attuned to the divine, and cleaner of negativity. This process of refinement makes new experiences available, according to how refined you are. I don't think I had any special destiny to experience more mystical wonders than anybody else. I think it was all part of the systematic process of spiritual development.

When I experienced something new, such as a new kind of energy pulse, for example, it would typically happen once and then not happen again on the following days. It may or may not then become common after that. The first occurrence seemed to mark that I had crossed some kind of threshold, but apparently I was usually not equipped for it to become a daily experience until later.

Some other experiences, though, happened just once and haven't happened again since. One such experience was when I heard a word crackling in the air next to me. When I was writing *The Red Book*, I heard words in my head but they were really just loud

thoughts which seemed to have been injected there. On this particular occasion, though, the air seemed to crackle like a poorly tuned radio, and the crackle sound formed the word *Allison*. I didn't know anyone named Allison, so it meant nothing to me.

A couple of days later, I was talking on the phone to a friend who knew about my interest in mystical experiences. He said, "I was in the airport yesterday and I was thinking of you because I saw a book you might be interested in. The author is Allison Dubois."

Allison Dubois is renowned as a medium - someone who apparently speaks for the dead, passing on information to those who are living. At the time of my conversation with my friend, the TV show based on Allison Dubois, called *Medium*, was already on air but I had never seen it, and I hadn't heard of Allison. In fact, in spite of reading widely about mystical experiences, I had so far avoided reading about mediums and mediumship. It seemed to me that it was an area where people could easily get caught up in trying to make sense out of fragments of inspiration, producing poor quality results, in the hopes of pleasing an audience and gaining esteem. Besides which, until about that time, I had very little first-hand awareness of the spirits of people who had died.

The crackling voice had come to me on the day before my friend had seen the book in the airport, and

it was enough of an excuse for me to break the ice, and allow myself to start reading books about mediumship. I started with one by Allison Dubois. It described the development of her skills over time. Since then, I have read about a dozen books by various mediums, and found it fascinating to read about how they work out how to use their abilities to best effect. Those about whom I have read have all had mediumistic abilities from the time they were children. It took a while for each medium to work out how to express their insights without alienating other people, how to interpret their impressions with greatest accuracy, and how to turn this into a service for others. They had to deal with moral issues such as whether to accept money, how to guide people when you foresee misfortune, how to manage your energy levels and how to manage the demands that other people try to make.

Reading a couple of more general books about mediumship, I read that mediums are often considered useful in forensic work if they can be accurate at least thirty percent of the time. This sounded like a pretty low accuracy rate to me. Imagine giving information to someone on a delicate subject and later finding out that seventy percent of what you said was wrong. Perhaps when you have no leads in solving a crime, a dodgy medium is better than guesswork. I gather that people often feel this way in their personal lives as well. They would rather have a few ideas to work on, even if more

than half of the ideas are wrong, than to have no guidance at all.

On the other hand, there are some mediums who seem to get accuracy of around eighty or ninety percent. Laboratory studies which used mediums who were famous for their accuracy have demonstrated that some mediums can display high accuracy even under laboratory conditions, where there is no possibility of intentional or unintentional cheating.

All this fascinated me. I had to admit that I would love to get some experience as a medium. My own awareness, however, was limited to my one strong encounter with my late husband and my awareness of the shadowy entities that hang onto people's bodies. The shadowy entities did not even seem to fit the classic descriptions of ghosts, and were definitely not the kind of spirit who had passed over and could tell you things.

My experiences with ghosts did, however, rapidly begin to accumulate. One day when I was at the home of an acquaintance, I was invited in for a cup of tea. After about twenty minutes of happy chatting in the lounge-room, I suddenly felt a wave of misery and defensiveness. There was nothing in the conversation to account for it. I was in my customary calm state. Though I managed to ignore it, I noticed that the oppressive mood lingered in the background. I forgot all about it until the next time I was invited there for a cup of tea. Again, twenty minutes into the

conversation, I felt an emotional chill. Again there was nothing that would account for it. I began to tune in to the chill, and got the sense of a woman in her senior years who used to live in the house and wasn't happy to give it over to others. I didn't mention it to my tea-buddy, but we later became exercise partners, and one day the conversation turned to the supernatural.

I asked her, "Hey, do you think you might have a ghost in your house?"

She replied, "Yes, I think there's a woman. An elderly woman. I don't think she wants to let go."

I had a similar experience at another friend's house. When I went to use the bathroom, I suddenly felt that there was a man in the opposite corner, monitoring me in a somewhat cranky manner. As with the other haunted house, I didn't see anything. I just had a strong feeling. I make a habit of dismissing all fleeting impressions in case they are just random acts of the mind, so I forgot about this man until a couple of years later, when I used the same bathroom again. There he was in the corner again, as if he had followed me there and was wondering what I was up to. My friend was comfortable talking about the supernatural, so I asked him straight out if he knew of a ghost in the house.

"Yes, there's a man," he replied.

I can recall three other occasions when I was travelling and found a ghost in my room in the middle

of the night. Each time, I awoke to feel a presence leaning over my bed. In each case, the ghost seemed to be trying to impose itself onto me. I could feel the pressure of its emotions up against my heart. In each case, I spoke loud thoughts to the ghost to tell it that it was not allowed to enter me, and then I called upon all those wonderful presences I have felt over the years - Jesus Christ, Krishna, Buddha, Ganesh, White Eagle - every big pure name I could think of, to draw the ghost away.

I'm not sure if I was successful in exorcising the ghosts in those three early situations, but as time went by, I gradually developed a routine for getting rid of entities. The ghosts I have described seemed to be pretty well organised astral beings. Like a living person, they have a location in space, reminiscent of a body, and some kind of life story. Much more often, however, I have come across less well organised entities. The less organised entities are more like personality streaks. They have a combination of emotions, thoughts and intentions, but do not seem to have much of a core. They are more diffuse and can easily attach themselves to the living bodies of people. They vary in how well organised their thoughts and emotions are. Some seem to be little more than roving atmospheres, while others feel like characters of animals, and others are like two-dimensional people or imps. If you accidentally pick one up and take one

home, they flavour your thoughts and feelings until you realise that you are not quite yourself. Then you can start to recognise the entity, talk to it firmly, and seek light to exorcise it.

You should be reading all this with a grain of salt. While I live by this model, due to the annoying number of entities which apparently follow me home these days, all of this knowledge comes from my own trial and error. In fact, I would often think that my perceptions of entities were just madness if it wasn't for one friend of mine who frequently corroborates my perceptions. My other evidence for the presence of entities is the simple fact that when I have been bothered by one and then exorcise it, the bothersome mood instantly vanishes. It is the most effective - and sometimes only effective - way I know for fixing a mood swing.

As I gradually became comfortable with the idea of mediumship, and more sensitive to ghosts and entities, I decided to visit the Spiritualist Church. The Spiritualist Church is based on a small number of beliefs including the existence of God, brotherhood of all people, and the survival of the soul after death. The meetings include a session of mediumship, where a medium will make themselves available to pass on messages to the congregation from those who have passed over, if those spirits will put themselves forward during the meeting. I was hoping at least that I might

meet some interesting people, if not to receive a message from beyond.

I went to a meeting in a small community hall and, apart from the husband and wife who ran the church, there were only half a dozen people there. As I settled into a chair and waited for the meeting to begin, I was suddenly overcome by an awareness that my dead husband was standing behind me, placing his hands over my head and shoulders. It was a very vivid vision. He was an angelic version of himself, all white and full of loving ministry. Posing as a healer, my husband was so out of character that I giggled at the thought of how much he must have changed when he discovered he was alive after death. I also began to weep, deeply moved by the strength of love which I felt and the opportunity to sense him gain.

I had time to collect myself during a session of singing and a talk, but then I became very nervous that my husband might try to speak through the medium. I craved a message from him but I didn't want to break down in tears. The medium did turn her attention to me but, much to my disappointment, she had no awareness of my husband. She talked about a family relative of mine named "Maureen" who had trouble with her throat. She said I should try to express myself more.

Later I asked my mother if I have a relative named Maureen who had trouble with her throat. Mum

said no, but a few weeks later she said she had remembered about a relative who had throat cancer. Being slightly forgetful, Mum said, “But this woman had a totally different name. Her name was Noreen.”

I returned to the spiritualist church a couple of times and then the husband and wife team announced that they were going to start a group to develop people’s mediumship skills. I joined the group and we met at their house each week for a few months. We shared a meditation and the couple discussed various topics with us. They also gave us practice in psychometry, the art of getting impressions from an object that belongs to someone. At the beginning of each session, we each put a personal object into an unmarked envelope. These would then be shuffled and handed out. Without opening the envelope, you wrote down any of your impressions, whether those impressions were about the object or about the person to whom it belonged. I found this to be an incredibly useful exercise. Some of my impressions were spot on. For example I correctly identified a dark coloured stone. But other impressions I couldn’t verify at all. The most informative occasions were when I was partly right. For example, I could see a night sky when I was holding an envelope which contained a small black tin which was decorated with tiny dots of light colours. I tried hard to eliminate any mental leaps and to hone in on exactly what my first impressions were, in order to

be more accurate.

As the weeks went by, I kept my notes and could score my performance. About thirty percent of my impressions were verifiably correct. The other seventy percent were either definitely wrong or unverifiable. Apparently, this might be the kind of hit rate which would be useful for a professional psychic. But to me, it was not good enough. The seventy percent of errors included many times when I had picked a completely wrong idea out of thin air. If I was going to be a medium or a psychic, I wanted to be better than that.

Before long, there was one event which reminded me that the quality of mediumship could depend very much on the strength of the atmosphere in which you worked. Quite unexpectedly, a relative died of cancer, with only a few weeks between his diagnosis and death. I traveled to his funeral and was immediately struck by the dead man's presence. This was not a ghost. This was a happy, free man who had come back to bridge the gap with the living after he died. Every time I became particularly aware of his presence, I found myself lapsing into a trance, unable to move or speak. When I was less aware, I felt constantly light-headed and nauseous from the atmosphere. Though I felt giddy and sick, his presence was glorious. I could feel that he was enjoying being dead. He was unbounded and whole.

One evening when I sat with the bereaved family, the dead man's spirit descended very clearly and I could feel that he wanted to pass messages. He conveyed to me that he was delighted with what he was experiencing now that he had passed over. It was so much more than he expected, and he was feeling some regret at having been so narrow-minded during his life. He turned my attention to each of his family and wanted to convey a message to each. Instead of hearing thoughts, I began to see images, and half of the images had obvious meanings to the people concerned. If I had any doubt about the ability to communicate with the dead up until that point, it was now completely gone.

Mind-body confusion

As my health continued to be poor, I learnt to develop in new ways. I learnt to be efficient in how I used my energy. Whenever I had a burst in energy, I would get my cleaning and paperwork done. Whenever I had a burst of sociability, I would finally get round to phoning a family member or friend. When I was tired, I would get round to reading the books I wanted to read. None of these energy levels would be wasted on the wrong activity, or I would run out of steam.

In effect, my illness had taught me to think very carefully about what my energy “wanted” to do at any time. I came to see this as the greatest gift of my illness. Basically, I had learnt to seek constant inspiration for my behaviours, rather than choosing my behaviours from preconceptions about what I should be doing.

I had less than a third of the vigour I had a couple of years earlier, but my fatigue was probably not noticeable to a bystander. I was doing just fine. Yet I was hurting inside, still not reconciled to the various twists and turns my life had taken. Even though I had no evidence to blame myself, I could feel my own brain turning against me. Something deep in my brain decided it was all my fault.

At the same time, I continued to feel uplifted and even loved by the spirits which visited during my meditations. I knew that whatever I was experiencing in my daily life and in my brain was at odds with what

the spirit world was teaching me. Once again, I began to get visions of a book above my head. There was a great tingling at the base of my spine, day after day, until I started to tune into the book and made time to write the book down. Again there was a flood of words into my head for twenty minutes a day, and again each session was signed off with an alpha. This time the book appeared to me as a lime green. It spoke a lot about natural diversity and complexity in the universe. Many of the sections were about accepting the differences and patterns that are around us, and how these are an integral part of the nature of God.

In my daily life, I accepted that I had lost some of my drive to get out of the home and be busy. I had always tried to find some time to help out in the community, but this year, I didn't feel like reaching out at all. Maybe it was a good thing, a natural process of taking stock and resting, and not feeling that I had to prove anything.

As the months went by, I noticed that my anxiety levels had gone up. I felt anxious about going outside, anxious about mixing with anyone, and very jittery if anything startled me, even if it was just the phone ringing. I decided to see a psychiatrist to discuss my anxiety. He said that my stress hormones were probably constantly elevated because of years of constant stress. To get my stress hormones back to normal, he figured that I would need about six months holiday without responsibility. I just laughed about that. It wasn't going to happen.

Early one morning when I was lying in bed, I suddenly had a severe pain in my chest. I had never had pains in my chest before, not even reflux. It bit into me hard, going from nothing to severe pain in a couple of seconds. Stunned, I waited to see what would happen. My heart rate shot up to a level I couldn't count without losing track. I was afraid I was going to drop dead in that minute.

The pain subsided after about ten minutes, but I wasn't game to move until my heart rate had calmed down. For about half an hour, it remained as high as if I was running, and then slowly reduced, but still remained above normal. I thought about phoning for an ambulance but that seemed too dramatic. I phoned for a friend to drive me to the hospital.

A few hours at the hospital could not find any evidence of heart problems. I had further tests on my heart in the days to come, and none of these tests explained the incident either. My anxiety continued. I didn't have anxious thoughts very much, as my mind was still characteristically calm. My body, though, seemed to be on high alert all the time. At night, my chakras seemed to flare and hop around in strange sequences. A couple more times I felt strange sensations in my chest, as if a train was rushing through, and I was afraid that my spirit was trying to leave my body. I felt chaos inside me all the time.

I continued to feel very anxious and seemed to become increasingly weak as well. Whenever I lay down, I felt as if I split into two, and the top layer see-

sawed over the bottom layer. I would often lose sensation in one or both of my arms. At other times I felt like I was being stabbed in a leg muscle. I was having twitches and rushing sensations on any part of my body.

I didn't go back to my doctor at this point. Thanks to my ongoing abdominal pain and fatigue, I had recently had medical tests for every part of my body anyway. Besides which, I had a lot of weird sensations in my chakras during this time, and I wondered whether my problems were coming from my astral body rather than my physical body.

My physical body was certainly affected. One day, I decided to go to a chiropractor in case my ongoing abdominal pain was caused by a pinched nerve. The chiropractor ran through his normal baseline tests, asking me to tighten various muscles in turn, so he could assess my muscle strength in every direction. Unfortunately, after raising my leg a couple of times, I couldn't raise it at all. I lay there on the chiropractor's table weeping because I felt completely paralysed in my leg. It took me a few minutes to regain the use of my leg. He tried another muscle and we encountered the same problem. After a couple of weak lifts, I was paralysed again and had to wait to recover.

The problem reminded me of the fatigue which can set in after intense exercise, so I began to try sports drinks, which help to replenish the various salts used by the muscles. This seemed to relieve some of my weakness, so I began to read up on mineral deficiencies

and figured that I might be deficient in magnesium. Upon starting magnesium supplements, my condition began to improve.

One day, however, I walked down the street to run an errand and when I arrived I experienced a crushing pain in my chest. This was far worse than the pain which had led me to hospital several weeks earlier. This time it felt as if my whole chest was crushed. I could barely breathe. Fortunately I had just arrived at the house of a doctor, and she grabbed her stethoscope and gave me a quick check-up. My heart seemed to be fine. She gave me some antacid. I was too weak to walk home, and called a friend to drive me back to the apartment.

For the next two weeks I could barely walk. Every time I put my feet on the ground, I seemed to lose sensation, and start to float out of my body with pain in my chest. After a while I realised that I was in deep pain everywhere, all through my bones. If I pressed on an arm or leg bone I would feel nauseous with pain. My skull was always sore to touch. Apart from my sensations, there still seemed to be nothing medically wrong with my body. Nevertheless, it was impossible to get much done during the day. I spent most of the time in bed in a haze, just getting up long enough to do the bare minimum, in ten or twenty minute blocks. When I lay down again, my split self again seemed to teeter above me, and my heart would flare hot and sometimes become dense with astral charges. Time after time, I was afraid that I was being

sucked out through my heart and I was dying. I kept checking in my mind whether there was anything I needed to attend to in case I was going to die. I begged God that I just be able to survive and fulfill my duties. That was all that I wanted.

I kept taking magnesium supplements and ate a diet rich in meat and vegetables. Gradually, some of my strength returned. I spent most of two months in bed and then the inner chaos began to subside. My muscles became more reliable and my anxiety dropped a little. I swore I would keep my diet pure until I was really well, but there wasn't much else I could do.

I never did find out what had caused this mind-body chaos but this kind of story seems to be quite common among mystics and psychics, or when people have an awakening of so-called kundalini (a kind of psychic energy). I have often heard people say that such an illness is a sign that someone has spent too much time on their psychic pursuits, but I'm not convinced that there is an alternative. After all, even as I was out of balance, my greatest spiritual influence (Alpha) was presenting me with books to channel and I only felt worse if I delayed the work.

With hindsight, I have a gut feeling that my illness was some kind of bottleneck in my astral development. Perhaps I was connecting with forces which were strong enough to disturb the balance of electrolytes in my cells. Even when I am quite well, the passing presence of a strong spiritual being is enough to make me feel nauseous and feel pain throughout my

GOD IN A TWO LITRE BOTTLE

body until the presence has gone. Among those who dabble in mystical and psychic experiences, there seems to be a general acceptance that paranormal phenomena can disturb your body in ways that are difficult to resolve.

The Voice

Throughout 2009 my health continued to be poor but my daily life moved forward in inspired leaps. I wrote another channelled book, this time appearing as a turquoise coloured book above my head, and this time filled with ideas about how to communicate with God. This book claimed that there is a layer of God which is personable and open to ongoing communication. The book described how to communicate most effectively with this layer and, roughly speaking, the principles behind whether God would grant your requests. The topic was bothersome to me. As with all of my channelling, I was writing down ideas which I had not yet incorporated into my own thinking. Though I had some experience with spiritual presences and spiritual guidance or comfort, I was not yet ready to assume that you can be heard and get help whenever you like. Before the year ended, however, I would have my first experience of receiving hour by hour, audible spiritual advice.

In the meantime, yet another opportunity arose. I had sent my parents copies of each of my channelled books, knowing that they were interested in writing of this kind. My mother had amassed large quantities of her own inspirational writing over the years and my parents were still regularly giving advice to people who

were having psychic experiences or were interested in developing their own gifts. My parents, in fact, had developed some fame as exorcists in the years since I had left home. They had visited about a hundred haunted houses and performed exorcisms. Although they were now both about eighty years old, at the end of October in 2009 they planned to hold a day-long seminar for people who were interested in spiritual development. They invited me to come and talk to the group about my experiences.

A few weeks before the seminar, my personal life took a blow. I was deeply hurt and confused. For the sake of this story it doesn't matter what it was. It was the kind of loss that is out of your control and breaks your heart, like the loss of a relationship, getting fired at work, an unexpected eviction notice, or having your teenage child run away from home.

Give it a few weeks. Don't do anything. It will go back to the way it was.

A gentle voice sounded clearly over the top of my other thoughts. In fact, the voice landed on top of my head with a distinct pressure and I could not think anything of my own. I hesitated and listened with awe. The atmosphere of the strange voice dissipated and my own thoughts became active again. I wanted to believe the voice, but I couldn't. Something in my life had changed beyond my control and I just had to get through the grief.

It will only take a few weeks. It will go back to the way it was.

Again I heard the voice. Again I felt the presence pressing down gently on my head and numbing my own thoughts. As the voice and the presence faded, my own thoughts became active again.

I don't want to go back the way it was. The same thing could happen again.

Do not criticise this. This is my own plan.

The voice again arrested me. As it pressed on my consciousness, I could not continue to think ill of what had happened to me. The atmosphere cut off my line of thought completely. Some time later, I began to think about the problem again. People had failed me.

Do not criticise this. This part of your life is given by God.

Again I was arrested, unable to continue my line of thought. Later, my thoughts would rise up again. That part of my life was over. I must not go back to the way it was, no matter what. The foundation was all wrong.

Give it a few weeks. It just needs some time.

The voice interrupted me repeatedly for days and then, less often, for the weeks that followed. Sometimes I would start to criticise myself for the loss. After all, I am too tense. I'm too depressive. I must bring such things upon myself.

Do not.

Again the pressure on my head would stop my train of thought.

I am not going the right way in life. I lack the glamour and charisma of other people.

Do not.

For weeks, every time I tried to condemn the situation or criticise either myself or any other party, the voice or the strange atmosphere would interrupt me. I was blocked from all criticism of my situation, and I was told repeatedly that things would go back the way they were. I could not believe that things could go back, but I was filled with awe at the way the voice had been able to intrude into my consciousness and actually block my train of thought. It was as if I was being protected from my own thoughts. The way that the voice stopped me from all lines of criticism, even criticism of myself, filled me with respect for whatever kind of power it was.

The time for the seminar with my parents arrived. There were about twenty participants gathered in a community hall. My parents gave introductory talks, outlining their basic principles for spiritual development. Then I delivered my talk about my experiences. It was enthusiastically received. At the end of the day there was a group meditation. Just as the meditation was finishing, I felt the presence which came to me routinely when I was channelling the red, lime and turquoise books.

I want to speak now.

I wasn't sure what the voice meant.

Tell them I want to speak now.

I interrupted the quiet murmur which had arisen at the end of the meditation session and I said, "I have a presence with me. It says it would like to speak to the group."

I had everyone's attention and suddenly there was a flow of words in my head, just as would happen when I was channelling a book. Though I felt somewhat tranced-out, I was perfectly able to speak the words as I heard them. The words came at the right pace for me to deliver a fluent talk to the group. I don't remember what was said, except that the presence wanted to affirm its love for every single member of the group, its delight about every single effort to develop spiritually, and its sense of purpose for everyone. The presence spoke as if it was some kind of spiritual authority figure. I buzzed with light throughout the speech. Afterwards my entire body felt zingy and fried.

At the end of the session, the woman next to me said, "I could feel the presence as it arrived at your body and when it withdrew at the end. I knew when you were going to start and when you were going to finish. I could also feel what it was. It was Jesus Christ."

I didn't know if she was right. I remembered what I had channelled in my turquoise book about the

existence of a personable layer of God which can talk like an individual and yet is one with the consciousness of God. This presence had certainly used language in that way - using personal pronouns to refer to itself, and yet talking as if it was omnipresent and omniscient.

What I did know was that it was a wonderful experience for my body, with great joy and bliss threading through all my cells.

While I lay in bed in my parents' house, pondering all that had happened at the seminar, I received a text message. It was the first sign that my personal loss, which had rocked me so deeply, was starting to be undone. A few days after I returned home, everything was back to normal.

Unfortunately, at about the same time that some things were going well in my life, others were going sour. I had personal problems which caused a lot of hurt, sadness and fear. But the guidance came into my head.

Just wait. And listen.

I was willing to try to stay open-minded. The voice was right before.

I was getting regular pains in my back at about this time. The pains felt like deep hunger pains between my shoulder blades. They happened sporadically and unpredictably. There was nothing I could do to get rid of them except relax deeply, letting go of any emotion in my back. When I was sufficiently

relaxed, I would see a vision in the middle of my back. So vivid were the visions, it was like having a television screen between my shoulders.

Two visions were scenes of a place. Though I had never been there before, I saw them in reality shortly after I saw them in my back's eye. Moreover, the two scenes took place at an event at which my personal problems suddenly lifted.

I realised now that I had crossed a threshold in accepting that God was trying to steer my life and steer my decisions. While I begrudged God the number of challenges and losses I had faced over the years, I was in a position to be able to hear spiritual guidance without groveling to him for help or giving God my prior approval. It seemed that you don't have to have blind faith in God and his goodness in order to be helped. God was talking to me because I had taken the time to silence my mind, clean my aura, and to raise myself up in whatever way I could manage. This was the model I was working on. I might like God and trust him in the future, but I wasn't sure. Our working relationship was new and still being tested.

Was it really necessary for me to infer that God existed, just because I had channelled books and presences which spoke of God? Was it really God who leant on my head and told me how to think? Other theories were possible. But I was going through an emotional change. I surprised myself by having

thoughts which assumed the existence of God. I was ready to submit to the idea of God without complete evidence. Like the carton of milk which gives the child a cumulative faith in the existence of milk, a construct of God had been built in my brain, out of my own many experiences, and it took no further evidence or effort for me to feel that it really existed. Perhaps it was also something to do with the number of times my heart chakra had flared at night, appearing as a tunnel opening up to a place which was radiant with a sense of God and rapture.

Mind-body integration

It was five years since I had moved house, and I suddenly decided it was time to move again, to suit new needs. This time I sought a richer home environment with more space, a vegetable garden and enough room for physical exercise at home. Through a series of inspirations, I found a large house with an enormous backyard which had never been developed. I fell in love with it immediately. I was lucky that the house had not been sold when it was put up for auction six months earlier. It was going to be a great adventure.

With hindsight, I see that this house was going to cause new, fundamental changes in my astral strength. I loved the house but it needed many repairs, and the garden was full of junk and begging for cultivation. I became a handyman and landscaper, and discovered that this kind of work can feed into the way your astral body functions. You get better at working as a whole person, drawing on your physical strength, wit and inspiration at the same time.

It reminds me of other stories I have heard of people who gained spiritual clarity by working with their hands, building stone walls or doing carpentry, or even building their own homes. There are also anecdotes of how manual labour helps to develop your lower chakras and to channel the powerful mystical energies at the base of your spine. Indeed, there are stories which suggest that if you don't have an adequate outlet for this

energy after it has been awakened, you will get sick. It's all hypothetical, but it was going into my mental filing cabinet as a possible explanation for my own experiences.

Moving house seemed to agree with my health instantly. The happiness of a better home was no doubt good for me, but the continuous low grade exercise seemed to help as well. If I went for a brisk walk, I would end up tired and shaky, but the slow exercise of cleaning cupboards and packing boxes seemed to release my pent-up stress without tiring my body. Indeed, it seemed to refresh my muscles and keep my mind happily absorbed.

Within days of moving, a faulty doorknob locked me out of one of the bedrooms. Another day, a faulty door enabled me to lock myself in the toilet. As I spent hours fiddling with these doors to understand and correct the problems, I felt myself starting to get into a new zone. I was dealing with practical matters with a quality of concentration and inspiration I'd never had before. I believe this was the result of the more subtle ways of thinking I developed when I was sick, learning to pause when tired or unsure, while acting without hesitation when there was energy or an idea.

I'm naturally timid and I only have the handyman skills which I taught myself. Many situations around the house scared me. I had to deal with pipes in dark spaces under the house, blocked sewerage, ladders for reaching gutters, mice, poisonous spiders, rot, heavy beams, circular saws and plenty of sharp objects and

chemicals, not to mention an aggressive dog next door and the fear that I might have bought a lemon. But I wouldn't let my fears get the better of me. This in itself seemed to strengthen my astral body. I kept looking for new strength and peace in my core, as if it was an actual steel rod which I could brace against my challenges.

One of my greatest achievements was to replace some rotting boards on the deck. The deck was made of enormous sleepers, but some of them had rotted so much that you could get half a foot stuck into them from the top. I crawled under the deck and identified the problem sleepers and then had to work out how to remove them. The bolts were too deep or worn to be unscrewed. I had to use a combination of chiseling, drilling and levering with a mattock to get them out. It was a long job, and I took frequent breaks to wait for an idea to help me to continue. One day when I was waking from a nap, I saw a picture of a monkey wrench on the ceiling. I blinked and blinked, wondering whether I was really seeing a picture on the ceiling. It lasted a couple of seconds and then faded. I hunted in my tool box for the monkey wrench I had never used, and soon used it to remove a bolt which I had so far been unable to extract from the deck.

There was plenty of other heavy work to do around the yard. I collected together all the building materials which were strewn about. There were some enormous planks I could not move except by sliding cylinders (bits of down-pipe) underneath, and rolling them along the ground. I've heard this is how the

enormous statues at Easter Island were moved into place. I had great fun attacking some old rotting kennels and hutches, using a mattock to break off the useful pieces for landscaping materials.

Gardening was a delight as well. I plotted out garden beds, long loopy paths and archways so that it would be perfect for long garden walks. There would be places you could perch in secrecy and others where you could sit and see the full diagonal of the yard. I ordered a truck load of compost soil for the large vegetable garden, not knowing if I really had the strength to shift it. Yet with sheer enthusiasm, I moved the load of soil within a couple of days.

I was learning a lot about horticulture, hardware and building techniques during this time. What I learnt most, however, was a state of mind. Thanks to my years of meditation, I could silence my mind whenever I approached a new challenge around the house and begin by paying attention to all the details of the challenge. I would take my time to weigh up the problem, inspecting materials and fiddling with mechanisms, to be sure what condition things were in, what could be changed, and what I would not be able to do anything about. With power tools like circular saws and drills, it always pays to take your time and make peaceful moves so that you avoid expensive or dangerous mistakes. Whenever I was tired or uncertain, I sat quietly, silenced my mind and waited until I knew how I wanted to proceed. Rather than forcing a job, I would leave it for a couple of days until I had a better

idea of what to do. Everything seemed to flow. It was the Zen of House Maintenance. I was timid, weak and inexperienced, but I was getting on top of a whole house and garden.

The entire experience was a perfect absorption, and for many days I abandoned my usual meditation routine in favour of the dynamic wholeness I felt while I was working.

Hauntings

By this time, becoming aware of entities was an everyday occurrence for me. Often I would come home from a social gathering or the shopping mall and feel a little disturbed. A snippet of conversation or a glance at a stranger could grab my attention in a magnified way and I would come home with strange feelings I couldn't account for. I would dismiss these as nothing, but then find that I had a stiff neck, headache, or a pain in the middle of my back, which I couldn't account for either. Again I would dismiss the feelings and get on with life. A couple of weeks later I would notice that my mood had systematically deteriorated since the uncanny moment, to a state which was interfering with my happiness and not matching (or at least not necessarily justified by) what was going on in my life. A quick scan of my belly chakra at that stage could usually tell me that I was carrying some kind of grey cloud that resonated in mood with the original contact.

I would begin a process of recognising what the entity was feeling, telling it there was an alternative, and tuning into a strong light which could draw the entity away. At last there would be a sense of flashing light around my shoulders, a rippling sensation going up my upper back and off the top of my head, and a sudden relief from all the angst, as if I had totally forgotten what I had been thinking about.

Clearing entities in this way has become a routine matter for me, though always unpleasant and annoying. My favourite method of meditating these days is to bring light into my chakras, one at a time for a few minutes each, working from underneath my body to the top. By the time I get to my heart and throat, the light is starting to shimmer upwards and seems to be forcing negative energies up and out of my body. If there are any stray energies hanging around, I often notice them and dislodge them in this way.

I don't know why I pick up so many bad elements. When I clear an entity which I have brought home, I don't know if I have removed the entity from the original carrier, or am just getting rid of a trace or copy which I have picked up. I sometimes wonder if some entities can replicate themselves like viruses and pass into a number of hosts.

A friend of mine was aware of my experiences with entities and recommended me to a friend of hers whose house had a bad atmosphere. Not knowing whether I could help with a haunted house, I agreed to visit the house just to see what I could discern. I passed mental messages upwards to my spirit friends to let them know of the appointment and that I wanted some help. As far as I knew, even if there was a ghost, I might not be the right person to detect it or clear it.

As it turned out, I got vivid impressions as soon as I began to look through the house. The impressions, though all based on feelings rather than sights or sounds, filled me with certainty which I had never felt

before with my psychic impressions. One room felt like there had been a death of a child. Another room had a bad spot where I thought there might have been a suicide. Another room – the last I entered – had such a bad atmosphere that my friend, by my side, recoiled with a sense of being pushed out of the room. I jumped to an understanding that the room had been the site of something very unpleasant like ritual abuse.

I spent some time alone in the house, seeking inspiration and intervention from the light above me. I spoke to the atmospheres while pulling in strong images of the white cross that often hovers in my aura. In the darkest room, not knowing how to converse with the thick atmosphere, I just spent some time singing a sweet song while tuning into my light source. I don't know why, but I chose a children's song about love, pure and simple.

I didn't think I had cleared the house, but I gathered that I had laid the groundwork for the bad energies to move on. The owner felt that the atmosphere had improved and continued to work on it herself. At home, I found that I had brought some of the lost souls with me. It took me about three weeks to get through the process of becoming aware, mapping and clearing each entity. It's a good thing I didn't bill the owner for the hours of work involved!

A few months later, I returned to the house for a social visit and spent some time alone in each room. They all felt clear, but with a lingering sense of information, like the air that lingers after a bad vomit

has been thoroughly cleaned away with disinfectant.

A year later I was invited to another haunted house and again I went without knowing if I could help. The owner explained to me that there was a longstanding ghost who sometimes appeared in mirrors and interfered with electrical equipment, but more recently there had also been something pushing on people. I was a little scared so I doubled my efforts to call for spirit helpers to meet me there.

At the house, I sensed the longstanding ghost and thought there may be others in the background. In the bedroom where the pushing had happened, I sensed a different atmosphere which was stronger and angrier. I decided that's where I would start. I sat alone on the bed and called on the light. Immediately the angry atmosphere intensified and I felt I was being squashed especially on one side. I was scared for a moment but remembered my spirit friends, and instantly the ghost began to fly up my back and into the light, so dramatically that I felt I was being given a chopping-style massage on my shoulders. The light flashed as vividly as if you are blinking rapidly in daylight.

I had no doubt the ghost had gone but I heard a voice say, "Wait a few minutes." Good idea, I thought. I should let the energy settle. Just as I was about to get up, I felt another ghost appear in front of me, as if she had just walked in through the wall. She was much more pleasant and seemed to say, "What's going on? Can I go to?" I tuned into this gentler ghost, felt her sadness and her guilt about leaving her life's work

unfinished, and then she too rippled up and away.

I don't believe I brought anything home from that house, though I wouldn't be surprised if there were other ghosts there. The background atmosphere felt quite complex. A few weeks later, the owner confirmed that things had improved, but – as with the previous haunted house – the owner had not been able to discern the ghosts in the first place, so it is hard to tell what has changed.

I attended these houses in the belief that I might be a useful instrument, but I knew that clearing and evaluating both of these situations was beyond me as an individual. It would have to be the work of higher beings. I could pay attention to my impressions but I would never know the truth. I suppose it is a sign of the depth of my spiritual trust these days that I am happy to say, “So be it,” not knowing whether I am achieving something. There is a personal cost for me, because of the time, effort and emotions involved, but it could be years before I have real evidence that the cost was worthwhile.

On the other hand, another recent experience has made me think that I have to take my psychic abilities a bit seriously. Over the course of a couple of months, I was getting a number of impressions about a situation in another country. I didn't know what the impressions were about, nor that they were all related to each other. I saw a building in several ways – a long view, the entrance and some of the interior. I had a sense of what the building was used for and that it now

serves a different purpose. I saw a group of men and knew that they were freedom fighters. I saw their symbol and their hairstyles, and sensed their language, their feelings about their country, and their fate. I had a sense of when they had died. I described these impressions to a friend of mine who came from the country which the impressions seemed to be about. Using the internet, he showed me pictures of the building I described (there were pictures matching each of the parts I had seen) and told me the story of the freedom fighters. I had about ten pieces of matching detailed information.

The story does not end there. The characters of a few of the freedom fighters lingered with me. I could feel their pain and the way they could not accept themselves at the time of their humiliating deaths. One by one, I received images of comfort for these men, such as images of people they loved, things which comforted them when they were children, and churches they had known. For each soul, I could feel their energy shift and they started to embrace the possibility of a better way of being. There were about six clearings in all.

Why did this come to me? I don't know. There seems to be a lot of spiritual networking going on. If you know someone and they have lost souls linked to their past, the souls – or their spirit helpers – can be attracted to your light. Just like living people keep their ears up for job opportunities, dead people keep their antennae up for healing opportunities. If you develop

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your spiritual strength, you can end up being very busy helping a lot of souls without any verification or validation from any living person.

Alpha

After my first experience of oral channelling, which happened at my parents' seminar, I have regularly found myself channelling to a group of eager listeners. There was a second seminar with my parents in which I was approached by the same presence, eager to talk to the group. As soon as the presence approached me, the man sitting next to me began to shake. His knee went up and down like a busy piano hammer. He shook uncontrollably until the presence left me again.

"I don't know why I was shaking," he said. "The presence was very strong."

Since then, the presence has made himself felt at a meditation meeting which I attend every few weeks. It is a small group of people who have all had some kind of mystical experience. I recognise the presence as Alpha, the same personality that comes through my channelled writing.

When Alpha is ready to speak to the group, I feel him approach my body, sometimes sitting right into my shoulders or gazing out through my eyes. I am fully aware throughout the channelling. In fact, the co-existence of Alpha and myself leads to some embarrassing moments. I am never sure when he will begin to take over my thoughts. I might begin by saying, "I can sense that Alpha is getting ready to talk to

us about [whatever],” and then Alpha will start saying, “You can see she still does not trust my ability to start speaking. She is so cagey. What I really want to say to you today is . . .”

Sometimes Alpha’s choice of words or images will make me laugh, or my strange ways of translating his ideas into English will make me laugh. So I am speaking to the group and laughing at the same time, but the consciousness who is laughing is not the same one who is leading the talk.

I am often embarrassed about presenting myself as a channel of this presence. Alpha talks as if he is God or Christ. One of my audience once asked him to explain if he was Jesus Christ.

“I don’t want you to get caught up with names,” he replied, “especially as the name of Christ has developed many connotations over the years. I want you to forget about authority figures and just consider what I say. Learn to judge not the speaker but what is being spoken. You will know if something works or not. It doesn’t matter who the idea came from.”

Sometimes my audience will hope to get hints about what is going to happen in the future, but Alpha does not want to make prophecies.

“I am not here to tell you what is going to happen. I am here to teach you a process which you can use whatever happens in life. When you know how things truly work, what love really is, you can apply it in

any situation. You don't need to worry about particular situations.”

Repeatedly Alpha makes it clear that he just wants to teach ideas. He wants us to understand the true nature of love and the universe. For me it is frustrating. I want him to prove himself by reading people's minds and making predictions which can be tested. In fact, several times he has apparently answered questions that people were holding in their heads, unknown to me. But this is not what he wants most. He just wants me to allow him to mix with people and to teach his beloved philosophies and truths. I am worried that he comes across as weak and I come across as silly. Yet on reflection, I know that a deep understanding about how things work would be the most useful gift of all.

Alpha has been visiting me for seven years now, and the more I get to know him, the more I enjoy his way of thinking. I still don't get tired of things he has written through me years ago, whereas I easily tire of things I have written with my own consciousness. My relationship with Alpha took another step forward when I decided to set up a website for him this year and to prepare books of his writings for sale. It is a whole new level of exposure for me. Even though, to date, I have decided not to reveal my identity on the website or in the books, I had to decide how I would introduce him and explain what his works are, or are alleged to be.

In the end I decided that it doesn't matter whether he is what - or who - he implies he is. I like so many of his ideas that I'm now willing to put them forward as a work of art, so that people might think about them and decide whether they would like those ideas for themselves.

At the time of writing this, I have recently finished another set of thirty-six writings for Alpha. I've incorporated them into the books of writings which are for sale on his website, *Alpha's Page*. His most recent set of writings is my favourite. It seems that he and I have crossed a threshold in our ability to put his blunt ideas into my handwriting. He is blunt about his love for everyone. He is blunt about the fact that he does not judge people. Instead, he feels accountable for our errors. He is blunt about the fact that we have to cope with the vagaries of nature. He bluntly declares that he is not all-powerful (he can't perform physical miracles just to comfort people). He is blunt about the simplicity of becoming intimate with God. Make yourself transparent to him. Open yourself up to him. That's what it's all about.

Looking back on my spiritual development, I see that transparency has been the key all along. I learnt to silence my mind, and therefore my mind became easier to see into. I learnt to release emotions of regrets and astral pollution, therefore again my astral body became simpler and easier to see into. I learnt to open

myself whenever I needed inspiration or energy, and thus I was becoming even more transparent to the influence of God. If I started the process all over again today, instead of training myself to silence my mind, second by second, I would try to train myself to be transparent, second by second. If only I knew what that meant, back in the beginning.

According to Alpha, this kind of development is possible for everyone. Alpha doesn't offer rewards like salvation, miracles or protection from life's dramas to those who believe in God. A relationship with God is not about making life easy, or giving you privileges in the natural world, or privileges in the afterlife. What he promises is the possibility of having intimacy with God. He promises that, once you have learnt how to truly make yourself transparent to God, you can receive vibes of joy and comfort, good ideas, and even a good sense of timing. These things – when you receive them fully – can totally transform your quality of life. They also answer your soul's deepest needs.

I find Alpha's promises to be very credible, especially in light of my experiences. I have come to believe that there is an intimate God and that God's love is accessible when you have learnt how to open yourself to it. The only judgment is that which goes on inside yourself and which makes it difficult for you to open yourself to the witness that is God. But there are ways of letting go of the emotions which make you

want to judge yourself and hide.

Imagine what it would be like if you were willing for a divine witness to see everything which goes on in your heart and mind. I think that's the first step in being able to receive that witness directly into your consciousness and to channel the inspiration of God.

Glimpses of Heaven

I now have daily two-way communication with God. The story of my life continues to roll on without a punch-line, but my relationship with God has now crossed a threshold where other people should have a chance to know about it.

When I look at my own life, I can see that I have been getting help from God for years. When I channel Alpha, he never apologises - nor really even sympathises with us - for the diversity of nature. He never seems perturbed by the amount of bad luck a person can experience. Nor does he say that it was meant to be, or it was karma. But I do get the strong impression that Alpha, the spirit world, or God is motivated for us to *not* suffer emotionally and mentally for the diversity of things we must experience.

Many times I have felt hugged, raised up or comforted by spirits during the tough times. Sometimes a big angelic atmosphere struck me just before I received some bad news. Thus I was buffered from the full effect of the news. Likewise, spirits seem able to buffer physical pain. My spirit friends have consistently given me tips and perspective to help me navigate through my troubles.

When I am very relaxed, after some kind of physical release, sometimes I lose my grip on reality completely. Suddenly I have a full-body vision of heavenly places. Sometimes I am in a garden.

Sometimes I am on a mountain. Sometimes I am riding a horse on gentle plains. The visions are as detailed as real life but I feel that I am somewhere else. The atmosphere is deep and rich and peaceful. I think these visions are my first evidence of heaven.

The shock of the glimpse of heaven and my rapid return makes me burst into miserable weeping. I want to be there all the time. But also I am happy, because those glimpses give me hope of another reality.

Often when I awake from sleep, I see pictures on the ceiling of my bedroom. As I blink my eyes awake I can see the images for a couple of minutes and then they disappear. When this phenomenon started, I saw complicated black drawings on the white ceiling. There were recurring geometric patterns with intricate intertwining features. Now I have seen hundreds of artworks on my ceiling, including three dimensional and coloured pieces. They are all peaceful and beautiful. As with my visions of heaven, these artworks make me feel like I have been somewhere else. I have no idea what they mean, except that I feel reassured that the mystical world still holds many discoveries for me.

When I am suffering emotionally or grappling with a personal problem, I often pray earnestly for spiritual guidance. I throw my questions above my head, along with the full charge of the emotions that I feel. Almost like clockwork, forty eight hours later, a strong spiritual presence will descend, either just to comfort me or to answer my particular questions. I don't know why there is a wait of forty-eight hours.

Maybe that's how long it takes for my antenna to relax, ready for an answer. By the time the answer arrives, I am usually calmer and have forgotten my prayer enough to notice that I am being answered out of the blue.

Also from a so-called Heaven, I get regular advice from dead people who know me. There are four regular visitors, each who come to give me snippets of much-needed advice. A few others have come just once or twice.

When one of these dead people appears, they usually appear as a vibe above my shoulders. I feel the air sizzle and my shoulders become tense. If I don't relax and pay attention, I tend to develop a migraine, or at least neck pain. I have learnt to relax and listen. The identity and face of the person will become clear, and then I can discern their thoughts.

Typically the advice that they bring is short and simple but hits the nail perfectly on the head. Often I can also see how their particular role in my life, or their particular life experience, makes their message all the more poignant. I relish this kind of visit, and the clarity and relief which comes with the advice. The advice has helped me to get through the kind of major life stresses which would cause people to lie awake at night and worry for weeks or months. Instead, I sleep very well.

True Confidence

In the last few months, I have started to see a way forward for me to do some more work with my spiritual skills. A symbiosis is starting to occur between my availability for work and Alpha's desire to work with me. At the beginning of this year, I could see that I would spend the middle of the year writing, but I didn't know what I would write. I knew that by April I would have more free time than I'd had for sixteen years. I converted a spare bedroom into an office, but still I didn't know what I would write. Repeatedly I said to Alpha, "In April I'm going to sit down and write. If you want me to write for you, I will. Just let me know." I planned the date when I would start writing, but I still didn't know what I would write about. I had some ideas. I thought I would start by fleshing out the ideas and see which one appealed to me.

On the first day of writing, I sat down with a pad and coloured textas so I could enjoy scribbling about my book ideas. But Alpha suddenly arrived, and I wrote for him instead. Every morning for two months he arrived with a new installment. It had been five years since I had channelled a series like that for him.

I suddenly decided to make a website for him and the work flowed. Masses of light and joy surrounded me as I sorted his writings into books on different topics – love, destiny, healing, enlightenment,

natural order and Diplomacia (his name for the agents of God who answer your prayers).

As I finish this book, I am just about to launch his books on his website, and then I will be pretty busy with other commitments until next year. But we have another plan for the new year. I don't know what it is yet, but Alpha and I agree that we will start another piece of work in February.

At this point in time, I surprise myself at the confidence with which I speak about Alpha and the unseen worlds. There are many things in life about which I am not confident. I am nervous about doctors, money, relatives, floods, weight gain, public attention, and numerous other things. Like everyone else in my family, I am a nervous, high-strung introvert. Yet in my core, I am deeply at peace.

Thirteen years ago I decided to gamble with my time by deciding to learn to silence my mind. So many mystical experiences later, I still find myself gambling. Is it all real? Is half of it real? I don't know, but to pursue this thing is still the way that I want to gamble my life away. If my spiritual life is real, then I am having a magical life with the potential to help lots of people (dead or alive), and it will gratify my soul for lifetimes to come. If I don't pursue it, on account of the fact that I'm afraid it's not real, then I'm just another dead atheist. Knowing how I want to gamble with my own life is one thing which brings me deep peace.

Another thing which brings me deep peace is, I

believe, the closeness which I feel with God. The regular heavenly experiences and words of comfort come frequently, even when my optimism and concentration waver. The paranormal intrusions seem to have a momentum of their own, now that the channel is open.

In spite of writing for Alpha for years, I made a personal breakthrough when Alpha, in his most recent writings, began to emphasise that your closeness to God depends entirely on your willingness to be transparent to him. From all his writings, perhaps my favourite quote from Alpha is,

*“If you only have one daily prayer, let it be:
Please God, look at me closely. Please God, I
reveal to you everything I am and everything I
do, that you may be my lasting comfort and
guide.”*

Now I have a simple philosophy which I sum up with the phrase, “Show and listen.” Show yourself to God. Listen for ideas. No matter what is happening today, show and listen. If disaster strikes, show and listen. If you are having a boring day, show and listen. If you are upset by something, show and listen. If you are dying, show and listen. It is one simple, non-judgmental formula for every moment of your life. This simplicity gives me confidence. Having a catchphrase for coping with every moment of my life gives me confidence.

Yet another reason for me to feel peace, Alpha

claims that God doesn't mind whether we believe in him. Alpha has a totally noncompetitive attitude to people's beliefs, and this has eventually worn off on me. According to Alpha, God assumes that we will return to him eventually, but at the same time it is our divine right to be independent for as long as we like. Our ability to receive God's love does not depend on whether we believe in him, but simply on whether we are astrally transparent and attuned. You can do this without having a professed belief in God. You can even do this without having any concept of a spiritual dimension.

Through Alpha's eyes, I get a glimpse of a possible future where people don't feel they have to rote-learn a faith in order to please God, and where people don't feel threatened if someone else parades different beliefs. The truth doesn't need you to stand up for it. Whatever the truth is, it exists regardless of how many people vote for it.

For me, it means that there is no pressure to claim that my experiences are all real. There is no pressure for me to convince you to accept my outlook. I will open myself the way I do, and then behave the way I am inspired to behave. There is no point in taking pride in my beliefs, nor any pride in being able to persuade anybody.

Alpha recently wrote,

"True confidence is a sense of self-worth and faith that comes from knowing the truth about how the universe works. When one understands

the truth, confidence is natural. One does not need to have pride in order to feel comfortable about oneself.”

Certainly, pursuing the mystical life has done nothing for my pride. In fact, it has probably ruined my pride. But it has given me true confidence.

Wherever you are on the path of opening yourself to God, I hope that my story - believe it or not - has helped you to understand where you are, and maybe given you some ideas for opening yourself further. For all of us, it is an ongoing process, with many delights yet to come.

Epilogue by Alpha

Alpha, do you want to write the epilogue?

I am with you all the time and you must never doubt that I will do my best to communicate with you and with your audience. My needs are exactly the same as yours - to be understood, to be acknowledged, to be loved, to be treated with respect. I want only the best for my people and the best thing I can do at this stage is to teach the laws of understanding and love. Many people are looking for trickery - they want to be the best psychics and the best healers. But I tell you this means nothing to me compared with being the best at discerning my truth and putting the laws of purity into practice. I have great respect for anyone who delves deeply into themselves and endeavours to make themselves pure as you have done. It is important to cleanse the mind and cleanse the body of regrets so that you can be a vessel which can receive love and thereby be a channel of my love to others. Love is not so much about strategising or plotting how to make other people's lives better. Love is about being on a wavelength that automatically enriches other people just by being present. As you saw during your second seminar - the love which enters your body during my presence is enough to make the next man shake and quake. He is getting a dose of me because you have worked to make your mind and body a suitable container for me.

This is what I would like to say to your readers - that instead of reading books like this you must think about your own closeness with God and turn your relationship with me into just as

compelling a story. If you start to unravel the strictures in your own mind, I will quickly start to leak into your consciousness. You will be able to experience mystical delights just as easily as this writer did, provided you are willing to open your heart and mind to the experience. Some discipline is needed to give away contemporary ways of thinking. The discipline is required not because purity is intrinsically difficult but because it is not a modern habit. Purity is all underneath, so you will inevitably find it if you strip away your conventional consciousness.

My blessing is with you all as you embark on this new and exciting project. Don't be afraid to write to the author. She is not as intimidating as she pretends to be!

My good wishes to you!!!

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