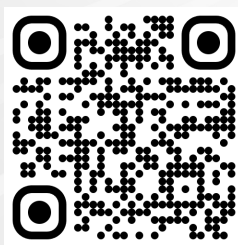




Luis Melendez

With his diverse background and extensive training, Luis approaches coaching from a holistic and integrative perspective. He combines the wisdom of hypnosis, acupuncture principles, transpersonal psychology, and spiritual ministry to create a nurturing and transformative space for clients. Luis's empathetic and intuitive nature, combined with his vast knowledge and experience, allows him to support individuals in their personal, emotional, and spiritual growth with compassion, authenticity, and profound insight.



Has Anyone Seen My Soul?

Spiritually Transformative Experiences and the Discovery of Divinity

by Luis Melendez

When I first arrived in the United Kingdom in the spring of 1997, it was courtesy of the United States Army. I could not have been more thrilled to work alongside top civilian and United States Armed Forces personnel in what was, for my occupational specialty, a rare joint military operations assignment. However, little did I realize an extraordinary spiritual journey was poised to unfold by learning the sacred art of attuning to the Spirit World. By developing this profound connection, I discovered I could receive messages or visions from spirits to comfort the bereaved, feel the emotions or physical sensations of others, and channel healing power to aid the sick.

The psychic abilities described above are widely understood “mediumship” phenomena linked to many wisdom and religious traditions, as they involve communication between the human and spiritual realms. From ancient shamanic practices to the oracles of classical Greece, from spiritual healers in Indigenous communities to the modern Spiritualist movement, the concept of mediumship has manifested in diverse forms across time and cultures, highlighting its universal recognition and enduring significance. The

wealth of psychical and scientific research bears witness to these profound religious experiences.

As a student of Spiritualism, I was captivated by Leonora Piper's remarkable ability to communicate with the spirit world through trance states, along with the incredible talents of other equally renowned mediums of the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Daniel Dunglas Home, Florence Cook, Eusapia Palladino, Mina Crandon, William Stainton Moses, and George Vale Owen. Their diverse abilities, ranging from levitation and materialization to direct voice communication and channelling of spirits and angelic beings, were integral parts of the rich tapestry of mediumship history. Witnessing modern-day mediums provide evidence of soul survival fuelled my desire to explore Spiritualism further, leading me to adopt a "rational," "scientific," and "experiential" approach to religion, which, up to that point, I didn't think was possible. The profound impact of these experiences prompted me to seek mentorship and dedicate myself to developing my mediumistic skills. In 2006, I felt prepared to answer the calling and begin serving Spiritualist churches.

The importance of academia to supplement spiritual understanding continued to evolve with my master's degree in transpersonal psychology and consciousness studies at the University of Northampton. Here, my focus shifted toward studying human potential. I became captivated by research that challenged conventional thinking, such as the fascinating findings on the brains of long-term meditators, which defied the notion of age-related deterioration. I also delved into controlled studies that measured the effectiveness of prayer interventions, comparing them to control groups of patients infected with HIV-AIDS. Additionally, I explored the realm of conscious control over out-of-body experiences, which became the subject of my thesis. This ongoing research gave me a broader perspective and deepened my appreciation for the limitless possibilities of human consciousness.

However, unbeknownst to me was the prevalence of similar and even more profound experiences happening spontaneously to

people from all walks of life, *without any intention or training*. One particular case that struck me was that of my nephew, who, upon learning about my dissertation topic, confided in me about his own distressing encounters during sleep. He had been silently suffering from unexplained body paralysis, loud whistling sounds and heightened lucidity that accompanied his episodes, leading to a growing fear for his mental well-being. Little did he realize that his experiences were precursors to spontaneous out-of-body experiences, a phenomenon famously documented by Robert Monroe and others.

These experiences, often referred to as ‘peak experiences,’ ‘exceptional human experiences,’ ‘anomalous experiences,’ and now more broadly termed, **spiritually transformative experiences** (STEs), can occur as a result of prayer, meditation, ritual, psychedelic substances, or unexpectedly and can profoundly impact individuals, unveiling hidden facets of reality and providing glimpses into higher states of consciousness. Examples of STEs include **near-death experiences** (NDEs), where individuals report encounters with bright lights and a sense of being outside their physical bodies; mystical experiences, where individuals merge with the divine or experience profound oneness; encounters with deceased loved ones or spiritual beings, visions of future events, and sudden spiritual awakenings.

Consider the case of Brian Sadler who, while sitting next to his wife, Patricia, waiting to be served lunch at a charming village pub in Norfolk in 1983, became suddenly aware of a “shimmering” and “translucent” “white cloud” object hovering at the opposite end of the bar. It stood six feet tall and three feet wide and, to his complete amazement, began moving in his direction. Traveling around the tables—and not through them, this white cloud paused directly to his front before completely engulfing him. Brian goes on to say about the experience in his self-published book, *The Meaning and Purpose to Life—The Big Jigsaw Puzzle*:

“What happened next is difficult to put into words. At that instant, I became totally ‘at one’ with the Cosmos and knew every-

thing there was to know. I knew the meaning and purpose of life. I knew the blueprint of life itself and that I (consciousness) was immortal and, in numerous forms, had always existed, and that 'death' was the great illusion of our physical world. I knew that everything from the smallest microbe to the largest galaxy is part of an incredible Cosmic Plan and that everything is linked. All is perfect and in accordance with a beautiful simplistic Law: the Law of Love.

"I knew that everything from the smallest microbe to the largest galaxy is part of an incredible Cosmic Plan and that everything is linked. All is perfect and in accordance with a beautiful simplistic Law—the Law of Love. That which we call 'evil' did not, and could not, exist at this level—neither does time as we know it. The radiation of peace and love was incredible, so much so that it was almost unbearable if that was possible. It was like a trillion volts of love—absolute bliss, total ecstasy. Earthly love is but a pale reflection by comparison."

Brian's experience is more in keeping with that of an advanced practitioner of Raj Yoga meditation, who develops the ability to quiet the mind, expand awareness, and access higher states of consciousness after many years of concentration, breath control, and self-inquiry practice. Brian's cosmic conscious experience proved overwhelmingly positive and, in his words, "life changing." However, it would come at the cost of becoming hypersensitive to the cruel and unjust conditions of life on earth, making it difficult for him to settle down into everyday life. It took Brian a few years to recover, and he describes the great difficulty of adjusting afterward as follows:

"Suppose we took a poor, lonely, filthy, starving wretch—poor in health and clothed only in rags—from the gutters of Calcutta in India and instantaneously whisked him to some luxurious paradise island. There he was bathed, healed, and dressed in the most expensive clothes, given the best of food and drink, shown unconditional love by everyone there, told that this was his real home, that nothing would be too much trouble, just to ask if he needed

anything. Imagine him being in that new environment for a few weeks and absolutely ecstatic with happiness and security.

“One day the scene fades, and he wakes up clothed once more in his rags back in the gutters of Calcutta with all the filth and stench. How do you think he would feel? And how do you think he would explain it to others? Life for him would never be the same again. Before, he would have known no better, but now he does—much better.”

Through my deep friendship with Brian and Patricia and my active participation in their philosophical discussion group for many years, I have been privileged to gain profound insight and solace by listening to the STEs shared by over 60 members. These conversations have significantly shaped my perspective, instilling in me the belief that individuals will eventually find the necessary resources and support to integrate their STEs. However, I have observed a growing number of individuals who cannot openly discuss their STEs, as they fear judgment, exclusion, and the negative labels that society may impose upon them. This chapter is dedicated to these courageous individuals who silently struggle with their experiences.

The STEs shared below hold a special place in my heart as they all come from my esteemed circle of family, friends, and acquaintances. I hope these stories will inspire readers to reflect upon their own experiences or those of others with heightened sensitivity and compassion. I also hope that by shedding light on these events, we can contribute to the eventual eradication of stigmatization surrounding STEs. Ultimately, my aspiration is that this collective exploration will prompt countless others to delve deeply into the spiritual dimension of life and contemplate its profound implications for us as individuals, as a society, and as a global community.

HEARING VOICES

In 2005, Luis Rodriguez, an Emergency Medical Technician, had a profound Spiritually Transformative Experience (STE) one day during work as follows:

“My partner and I were en route to Brooklyn College Hospital to transport a patient. While driving on the Brooklyn Queens Expressway and preparing to exit at Atlantic Avenue, our ambulance approached the ramp too fast and collided with the guardrail. The impact caused the ambulance to launch several feet upward before crash landing onto the adjoining oncoming traffic lane.

“While the ambulance was in mid-air, time seemed to freeze, and this overwhelming and all-consuming sense of dread gripped me. My entire world faded to black as countless scenarios of how I would die played out in my mind. Suddenly, a clear, distinct, and monotone voice resonated within me, stating unequivocally, ‘Don’t worry, you will be fine.’ It was apparent that the voice did not belong to my partner, leading me to question if it was a figment of my imagination. Yet, I can say with exact certainty, upon hearing that voice, all fear instantly vanished.

“I was taken to the hospital, and a thorough examination revealed that my right leg was marred by deep bruises from my hip down to my knee. This discovery caused concern among the medical staff, who suspected internal bleeding. I was informed a surgeon would assess whether vascular surgery was necessary, plunging me into a bottomless pit of isolation and despair. Once again, time came to a halt, and in that instant, an inexplicable out-of-body experience engulfed me. It was as if I were an observer outside of myself, witnessing the situation as a medical staff member, facing the grim prospect of a patient—which happened to be me—potentially losing a limb. The feeling of dread was indescribable. However, shortly after that, the same clear, distinct, and monotone voice resounded again, assuring me, ‘Don’t worry, you’ll be fine.’ The out-of-body experience ended moments before

the surgeon returned to report no signs of internal bleeding to my tremendous relief.”

In 2009, Davendra Singh, a home care assistant, had a similar STE while shopping at her local grocery. In her own words, she describes the experience as follows:

“One day, I went to the grocery store. While standing in line waiting to pay, I felt a heavy presence—it was a like a fear came over me. Suddenly, I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Leave the Store—Get out Now.’ I took it for nothing. Then again, I heard the same voice say, ‘Leave Now.’ I became nervous thinking I imagined this, and then again, I heard the same voice very clearly say, ‘Get out.’ A sudden fear came over me so I left the food there and went straight home. I felt that something was about to happen there—not knowing what. The next day I heard a gunman was there, and he robbed the deli. My immediate thought was it was God that protected me.”

SEEING SPIRITS

Sales Coach Jess Reidell’s first experience seeing spirits occurred when she was a child. Here’s what she has to say about this encounter.

“When I was seven years old, I had a strange encounter where I saw two women spirits standing together in my closet. I remembered they looked similar, with one being slightly shorter than the other. They both had brown curly hair and were wearing white polo shirts. I remember my whole body stiffening up and feeling scared and paralyzed to speak or move, and I eventually went back to sleep. Fast forward 20 years, I travelled to Chattanooga, Tennessee for a personal training certification and checked in at a nearby budget hotel. While checking in, my room number was announced publicly in the lobby in the presence of several construction workers who were in a line behind me. In hindsight, I should have returned the key and have the front desk agent to try again without announcing my room number within earshot of

strangers, But I was 27 and naive, and was just hopeful that no one was paying attention and assured myself it wasn't a big deal. When I walked into my room at the cheap hotel with the outside entryway, I was shocked by how filthy and unpleasant it was considering the hotel had recently been taken under new ownership. I remember there was a cloth banner with a different hotel name hanging over the previous signage of the former hotel chain. The carpet was sticky, and the room had a funky smell, but I was determined to make the best of this experience as I was there to become a certified personal trainer so I could change careers.

“During the first night of the training, (which happened to be at a much nicer hotel that was way out of my budget) I struck up a conversation with a fellow participant, who happened to ask where I was staying. When I told her, her face turned white, and she hastily scribbled her phone number on a piece of paper and handed it to me, instructing me to give her a call “if I needed anything.” This seemed odd, but at the time I didn't question why she would say that. Later that night, while studying for my test, the phone in my hotel room started ringing, but when I answered no one spoke on the other end. This happened a few times, so I eventually took the phone off the hook. I went to sleep and woke up at some point to see a spirit standing in the closet. Even though I had removed my contacts, I could see her kind facial expression. It appeared to be one of the same spirits I had seen 20 years ago. I was frozen, unsure of how to process this mentally. I closed my eyes, hoping she would disappear but when I reopened them, she remained. My entire body tensed up, and somehow, just like I had at the age of seven, I returned to sleep.

“In the early morning hours while it was still dark, I awoke again to hear banging on my hotel door. I was determined not to open it or communicate with whoever was on the other side of the door, as I didn't know anyone in the area and was staying alone in the room. Who has the nerve to go banging on a motel room door in the wee hours of a Sunday morning? It was unsettling. Eventually, the banging stopped. The next day at the workshop, the same girl who had given me her number asked me how my night went, and

matter-of-factly, I told her, 'I think I saw a ghost.' To my surprise, she responded by saying she didn't want to tell me this, but a couple from Canada had been abducted and murdered from that same hotel while it was under the previous ownership just a few weeks back.

"Trying to piece together these events in my mind, I came to the conclusion that this spirit had been watching over me ever since I was a child. And by her presence that evening, she was there to remind me that she will continue to do so as a protector or guardian angel. I did end up complaining to the hotel management about the disgusting room. I also expressed concern about the public announcement of my room number, which was inappropriate and had put me in a vulnerable position. I asked for my money back and was refunded a portion of it. I remember my ex-husband whispering to me in a condescending tone while I was on the phone with the customer service rep from the hotel, 'Don't tell him about the GHOST.' I saved a meme a couple of years back that still makes me laugh when I think of it, as it's so very true. It said, 'During the day I don't believe in ghosts; at night, I'm a little more open-minded.'"

SOUL IMMORTALITY AND DIVINE REALIZATION

Neil Helm, in the delicate years of his childhood at the age of 5, underwent a profound near-death experience (NDE) that would shape his life in profound ways. Here's his personal reflection on this transformative encounter:

"In August 1944, I was five years old and living on a farm/ranch along the North Dakota/Montana borders. My mother took my two older brothers (9 and 11 years-old) and me to assist a cousin (we thought of her as an aunt) in Central Montana who, as a female physician, contracted with the State of Montana to house, feed, and care for all palliative care patients. One afternoon, driving us from one hospital up into the Rocky Mountains where she maintained a TB sanatorium, my cousin turned off a rural road toward a barn-like structure, saying, "Let's take a swim." It was

a natural hot springs that the local ranchers had dammed up to keep it at 100 degrees Fahrenheit, much like a hot tub. My cousin had a key to the structure, but in 1944, there were only two small lightbulbs for the large indoor swimming area. I was frustrated to see that my cousin, mother, and older brothers could all swim, whereas I had never been swimming before. However, I thought that I could swim, so I tried, and quickly failed. I remember distinctly gulping a final mouthful of hot water and thinking that drowning in this 100-degree water was going to be painful. I mentally prepared myself to die. In an instant, a profound peace and serenity came over me.

“I had a fairly traditional NDE. I left my physical body and floated over a beautiful meadow filled with blooming flowers. I continued from the meadow across a pastoral lake and into a tunnel. I had absolutely no fear of the tunnel. I could see a light at the end of it. As I came out of the tunnel, the entire right wall was a light energy with a unique light that flowed over me like a misty waterfall. The light communicated to me, ‘I am God.’ I remember thinking or saying, ‘Yes, sir.’ After some time with the light flowing over me with feelings of complete peace, forgiveness, and love, the light communicated again, saying, ‘It is not your time.’

“My spiritual body then returned to my physical body in the hot springs. My middle brother dove in and touched me, knowing no one was supposed to be under the water, and he pulled me to the edge of the pool. My physician cousin resuscitated me. That was a painful, somatic experience, going from the peace and serenity of being with God to the painful regurgitating of lungs full of hot water. As I lay on the edge of the springs some 30 minutes later, God came to me again and communicated that I did not need to share our experience with my conservative parents, who would call it a hallucination. God basically provided the inner knowing that I absolutely should not share my experience with my first-grade classmates as they (and their parents) would only think I was crazy by saying, ‘Let’s keep this to ourselves.’ While I pondered it often, I did not share my experience for over 30 years, not until Moody’s book in 1975 coined the term ‘near-death ex-

perience,' and others then began to understand what I had been pondering in my heart for many decades.

"The NDE aftereffects are also reflected in my successful 40-year career in conducting research in government, corporate, and academic research centers. For example, early in my career, I was guided to provide humanitarian research and services. I conducted seminal research and early development on the use of space-based communications and GPS technologies for both disaster mitigation and search-and-rescue systems. I am pleased that these systems are still in use today and have been credited with saving many tens of thousands of lives. For this initial research and development, I was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize."

EXPERIENCING MEANINGFUL COINCIDENCES

Maria Fernández, a university student, witnessed a significant coincidence on the tragic day of the Madrid train bombings, March 11, 2004. Here's her account of the event:

"I had spent months studying hard, putting all my effort into getting ready for university exams. But it seemed like everything was going wrong that day. At first, I started to feel uneasy and thought it was just my nerves acting up. I continued getting ready, but I started feeling physically unwell as time passed. I pushed forward and left home to the train station, each step became more and more exhausting, then more and more impossible. That's when I decided to turn back and go home. Later, when I turned on the TV, I couldn't believe what I saw—the train bombings had occurred.

"Since then, that experience has taught me so much about life and my purpose. I often wonder why I was spared that day. It made me realize how precious life is and how our choices can have a big impact. Now, I strive to live with intention, appreciate every moment, and make a positive difference in the lives of others."

Louise Kenny, an art teacher who worked part-time for Her Majesty's Prison Services, had a remarkable experience in 2015 that she perceives as a meaningful coincidence. Here's what unfolded:

"I had just finished an art therapy session at a residential home in the morning. After leaving the building, I went to my car, opened the passenger side door, and placed my bags inside with car keys on top. I started walking around the car (to get in driver's side) when the central locking system suddenly activated and locked all the doors.

"My spare keys were located 10 miles away, and fortunately, a kind staff member offered me a lift to my house. The delay meant I was already an hour late for other part-time work teaching art to prison inmates. Having now secured spare car keys and still determined to go to work, I proceeded before encountering heavy traffic. After sitting in traffic for nearly 45 minutes and going nowhere soon, I decided to return home and didn't think much about it.

"When I went to teach the next day, my colleagues informed me that I had been very lucky. There had been an incident at the prison the previous day. A fight had broken out, and the situation escalated, requiring many prison officers to be called to a particular wing. This left the teaching staff alone in a separate portable cabin. The two inmates I had were known to be difficult and non-compliant, requiring two officers to be always present. It would have put me in great danger if the officers had been pulled away.

"Reflecting on the events, I realized that I had owned the car for seven years and it had never locked itself before or after that day. The commute to work at the time of day in the early afternoon was typically easy and uneventful, with only occasional traffic delays of about five minutes. However, on that particular day, there was a severe accident involving emergency services, which was highly unusual for that time slot (1:30 p.m., non-rush hour).

I can't help but think that some higher force or fate prevented me from going to work that day."

Sonya Garcia, a bar manager based in Florida, experienced a significant event in 2014 when she dozed off while driving. Here's how she described her experience:

"That night, I was driving home from work. I had a few cocktails earlier and was exhausted. Everything happened so quickly, and the next thing I knew, I was startled by the loud noise of what seemed like bricks being thrown at my car. I remember being in the car with the seatbelt on. It then felt like someone had forcibly pulled me out. I attempted to seek help, but due to what I later discovered was a broken hip and a shattered disc, I couldn't walk and was in excruciating pain. It was late, dark, and I was somewhere in the woods. I couldn't see any signs of people or cars in the immediate area. I thought this was the end and prepared mentally to die in my sleep.

"The next thing I remember, a man appeared and kept talking to me. I remember him keeping me awake. Not sure how long he was there, but at some point, an air ambulance arrived, and I was transported to the hospital. My parents were notified and immediately came from New York to see me. I told them about the kind stranger who had stayed with me, and they wanted to thank him. Strangely, when we checked the police report, there was no mention of anyone else being present at the scene."

EXPANDED CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNITIVE EXPERIENCES

In 1998, at the age of 50, Jean Raza, a mother of two children, had a remarkable mystical experience. Here's her recollection of the event:

"I was traveling on the tube in London, a journey that I had undertaken many times. I was absorbed in my own thoughts when the train stopped at a station, and I looked up to see where I was.

LEADING WITH LIGHT

A man entered my compartment, and as he sat down, I immediately recognized him. But it puzzled me how I knew him so well. I looked around the carriage and saw another face I recognized. This time it was a young black woman.

“I was just thinking it was an incredible coincidence when I happened to glance around the rest of the carriage and recognized all of the other passengers intimately and somehow felt a deep and loving connection with each and every one. I felt very uneasy about all of this, and panic started to set in. When the train arrived at my stop, I jumped up and made a quick exit out of the doors, not wanting to look at anyone in the process.

“I came out of the station and walked quickly down the road, and as I did so, I recognized and knew each face that passed me. I found this difficult to handle and tried to keep my eyes on the ground until I reached my destination. It took me a few days to come to terms with my experience as it had come unannounced and uninvited, but I felt so privileged to have had it. I have had this happen to me several times since and have gradually come to feel comfortable with it as well as a sense of love to all mankind.”

In her own words, Joan Carra shares the profound story of her journey—a magnificent odyssey that encompassed radiant light, profound transformation, boundless love, unwavering hope, and the liberating power of forgiveness. Here’s her vivid recollection of the spiritually transformative experiences that shaped her path:

“After I graduated from college and worked in radio in Vermont, I abruptly left when my grant to work in Public Radio was not renewed. This was before cable and the green mountains blocked the radio and television airwaves in that state.

“I was also in two car accidents as a passenger and was in a great deal of pain from whip lash and all over body aches. I came home Even though I was from New York, I was in cultural shock. My mother was dying of cancer and my father’s business in the gar-

ment industry was being transferred to China. I was also in an abusive romantic relationship.

“I felt lost and even hypnotized.

“I was in so much confusion and pain that I thought of committing suicide. I reached for the pain killers I was prescribed for my accident but the thought if I didn’t succeed and die, I would be adding more grief to what my family was going through with my mother’s illness. I kept seeing myself in a hospital bed with my mother’s eyes pleading why. Instead, I went back to my room, took out paper and I wrote a letter to God. I asked to be forgiven and asked who hypnotized me? I felt immoral and blinded in the horrible relationship I was in and I didn’t understand how I had this compulsion and obsession which I thought was love, but it was so twisted.

“Six months later while I was in bed, I experienced a light that came from the top of my window in my bedroom in my childhood home. It was from the right window. I was on the second floor so it was not from a car light passing by. Then a second one came from the window opposite me. It actually entered in between the narrow space where the two shutters met. That one came forward and hit me between my eyes. The light was all loving, forgiving and I realized the oneness of all life. I even had a connection with a spider on its path, its life was just as important as mine as well as every other living creature. I now knew there was a high Divine force, and it renewed my soul. We are all interconnected. We are all loved. We are all forgiven.

“I saw God. I started to read the Bible and renewed my faith. Six months later I had a nervous breakdown and had flashbacks of a suppressed childhood memory of sexual abuse that happened outside my home. That person even reminded me of the boyfriend I was with before my breakdown. My psychiatrist said I had to relive my trauma in order to remember it.

“I was in therapy and took a temporary office job in NYC. I worked overlooking Central Park, was taught bookkeeping and they gave me a trip to their headquarters in Scotland.

“During this time, my mother’s chemo medication was changed. One night, I got out of bed and went to the kitchen where my mother was sitting by the table. The room turned red and tilted. I had to hold on to the wall for balance. Then I saw my mother’s hair fall out and her face became a skeleton. I knew she would die soon. With this round of chemo, she lost her hair and passed just like my vision. The doctor said she died from a side effect of the medicine.

“I had a bumpy road after this, my job relocated, and I bounced around. I was reading cards, just the 9 to the Ace of playing cards, the way my aunt did for friends. My day jobs were not working out and I started to get opportunities to do readings for clients and parties. I even got in the newspapers, magazines and in books recommending my psychic work. I focused on the positive and gratitude and attracted what I needed. I guided people with that message.

“An older psychic told me, the clients do not care about predictions, they just want you to share your strength.

“And that is what I do.”

OUT-OF-BODY EXPERIENCES

In 1990, Scott Haslar, a law officer, encountered a profoundly life-altering event when he unexpectedly experienced an out-of-body experience during a highly controversial shooting incident. Here’s his unique perspective on this transformative event:

“Unbeknownst to me at the time of the shooting, I was standing on what would later be proclaimed “sacred ground” as my dark journey began. Was it just plain coincidence, or a twist of fate

that directed me to that intersection of 10th Street and North College Avenue? I don't know the answer yet. In time, I may...

"Before leaving for work that night, I had that gut feeling officers sometimes have. That feeling is hard to explain. I knew something out-of-the-ordinary was going to happen that night. Here in the big city, it was just another boring Sunday night. Despite my gut feeling, I wondered, what could possibly go wrong?... Later in the shift, the radio run was announced.

"Attention all cars, attentions all cars. An armed robbery just occurred at the Taco Bell located at 6335 East 82nd Street,' the dispatcher announced. The suspect was a black male armed with a revolver who fled the scene of the robbery in a new red Chevrolet Camaro. The vehicle was located later and stopped. However, during the stop, the driver took off at a high rate of speed after several shots had been fired.

"During the lengthy on-again, off-again pursuit that reportedly reached speeds in excess of 80 mph, the suspect was able to skillfully elude other officers and dodge vehicles in his path for miles. Yet somehow, he lost control there, crashing right in front of me as I sat in my police vehicle, blocking traffic.

"As I ran toward the scene, I saw the suspect standing outside of the vehicle, but I never saw him get out of the car. I couldn't imagine how he managed that considering the severity of the crash.

"He then ran toward the Camaro and dove head-first into the driver's side window. I could only see his back and lower half at that point. I could no longer see his hands. I saw him throwing things around, as if he was searching for something. I thought I saw cash flying as he rummaged through the front seats.

"Searching. Searching for something.

"Suddenly, he just stopped. It looked like his arms came together, as if he grabbed something. My immediate thought was that

he located the gun he was armed with during the robbery. He glanced back until he made direct eye contact with me. He began pulling himself back out of the window.

“At that moment, I thought it was him or me. I fired, and in that split second, my life changed forever.

“That moment seemed like an eternity.

“It’s hard to explain the situation from there. It’s an experience that doesn’t even make sense to me now. There, for a split second in time, I seemed to briefly come out of my body and watch the events unfold beneath me, all the while having some unexplainable understanding that I would survive.

“During my encounter with the suspect, I began to experience time in still frames and slow motion. Yet somehow, all movement within each frame seemed rapid. In that split second that I pulled the trigger, I was aware of being outside of my own body, seemingly detached or dissociated from it.

“Within that split second, it seemed, I was both observer and the observed.

“I was only aware I had fired when I noticed the smoke from the discharge of the firearm as it eerily raised skyward, backlit by the streetlamps. As normal processing of real-time events returned to me, so too did my hearing. I could hear things again that I didn’t just seconds before, like the sirens of all responding vehicles.

“It was finally over. I was still alive.”

SEEING JESUS

As Alexandra Leclere underwent craniosacral therapy for the first time, she was unexpectedly thrust into a realm of mystical wonder. The experience left an indelible mark on her psyche. Here’s her reflection on this extraordinary occurrence:

“Gradually, I began to feel very mellow. After about 30 minutes, Hilarion was standing behind me, and I ‘saw’ Jesus Christ appear next to me, his sacred heart emanating a beautiful white light. He seemed to be offering me his heart and the beautiful light. I was overwhelmed. Jesus had long dark hair, a beard and a moustache, and was wearing a blue robe over a red tunic. He seemed to be surrounded by white light. The sight of him was so extraordinary that I was speechless. I felt encompassed by his light. My heart seemed to connect with his, and I entered a state of amazing bliss. I was calm and happy. Everything was perfect in the glory of that light.

“Are you alright?’ Hilarion questioned me. ‘I see Jesus,’ I whispered. ‘He’s offering me his sacred heart.’ ‘Oh,’ Hilarion caught her breath. ‘That’s remarkable,’ she said with feeling. ‘Do you see him?’ I whispered. ‘No, I don’t,’ she answered. I could say no more. I wanted to stay forever in that beautiful presence of Jesus. It was pure, unconditional love. It seemed as though nothing else existed. Exhausted by the experience, I finally closed my eyes to rest. When I opened them again, Jesus was gone. I’m not Catholic, so I had no reason to imagine Jesus with his sacred heart. The image I saw wasn’t even one that was familiar to me. I was astounded and transformed. The feeling of serenity, love, and well-being was overwhelming. It was beautiful and all-encompassing.”

FINAL THOUGHTS

The spiritually transformative experiences presented in this chapter, in conjunction with the vast wealth of knowledge amassed over 150 years of psychical and scientific research on subjects such as mediumship, out-of-body experiences, psi phenomena, meditation, spiritual healing, the power of prayer, near-death experiences, end-of-life experiences, reincarnation, and mystical or unitive experiences presents compelling evidence supporting the existence of the soul. These extraordinary, unique, and profound encounters offer undeniable glimpses into elevated states of consciousness and a deep connection to something greater than ourselves.

In light of Occam's razor, a principle that favors simplicity and minimal assumptions when considering competing explanations, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the concept of the soul provides a coherent and elegant framework for understanding the nature of these experiences. This perspective recognizes that one aspect of our being belongs to the spiritual realm, while the other aspect belongs to the earthly realm, with the physical body serving as a vessel for the soul. By adopting this viewpoint, we can explore the profound implications of the soul's existence and its evolutionary journey, shedding light on the interconnectedness of our spiritual and earthly experiences.

Imagine, for a moment, if this understanding were widely accepted—viewing the human being through the lens of the soul's evolution. In such a world, it becomes apparent that psychic abilities are not mystical or supernatural phenomena at all but skills we have forgotten over time. They are inherent in human nature and await rediscovery and remembrance. Recalling past lives or reincarnation experiences, developing psychic abilities such as clairvoyance or telepathy, harnessing the power of thought to heal ourselves, or consciously inducing out-of-body experiences to explore the mysteries of the universe would be recognized as natural and valuable skills, just like any other.

Furthermore, the proliferation of spiritually transformative experiences could also be interpreted as a profound awakening of humanity, a sign of a more significant shift in consciousness that various wisdom traditions throughout history have predicted. These traditions, not limited to Christianity alone, have foretold the reappearance of enlightened beings, such as Christ, who would guide humanity toward a new era of spiritual understanding and unity. The abundance of spiritually transformative experiences could indicate that this future event draws closer as more individuals awaken to the truth of their spiritual nature and the interconnectedness of all beings. It is a time of great potential and possibility, where the integration of spiritual experiences becomes a catalyst for personal and collective transformation, leading us toward a more enlightened and harmonious world.

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