

The Healing Power of Spiritual Visions

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How Premonitions of Death, Shared Dying Experiences and After-Death Communications Can Help to Heal Grief

I am a Pediatrician who has studied near death experiences for 15 years. I have learned that they teach us that there are an entire range of visions associated with death and dying which can help to heal grief.

A woman once came to visit me from New York. I was amazed to see her as I live in Seattle. I asked her how I could help her, and she replied "it has been 1041 days since my son died. I have not slept more than four hours a night since then". I felt a horrible pit of despair in my stomach. I could only think about my own five healthy children, and I felt like a fraud even pretending that I had anything to offer this woman.

I asked her to tell me more about her son and she gave me his picture. Suddenly, I was called to the hospital, which is next door to my office to resuscitate a critically ill newborn. I excused myself, and ran to the hospital. When I got there, the baby was already better and I actually had little to do.

While charting my notes, one of the nurses came up to me and asked, "who was that who came over with you? Is he a student?" I asked "what are you talking about". I was trying to find a pen, and took the picture out of my pocket. The nurse said: "that' him. He kept trying to get your attention".

SEEDS OF HEALING AT THE FOOT OF THE BED



I returned to my office and asked the mother if she had ever been contacted by her son. She said, "oh yes, after he died, for several nights he would stand at the foot of my bed and tell me he was alright, and that I should stop crying. But that was only a crazy dream, it was just something I wanted to believe. It seemed real, but it couldn't have been real".

I felt too embarrassed to share with this mother what happened to me at the hospital. Instead, I told her that before she went to bed, she should do some simple relaxation techniques and turn off her internal narrator, that constantly chattering internal voice that can often drown out other communications. I gave her a technique of tensing and relaxing one's muscles, starting at the top of the head, working down to the toes, and then returning to the head. There are many such techniques, and all equally effective.

She should then ask her son for help in healing her grief. I asked her to get a journal and write down everything she dreamed about each night, and her first thoughts on awakening. I asked her to take her journal to a grief counselor in her hometown.

The mother wrote to me later, and told me that that night was the first night she had slept well since her son died. After years of going to various grief workshops and psychics and mediums, she learned that the seeds of her own healing right were at the foot of her bed.

NORMAL TO TALK TO THE DEAD



This Mom had an after-death communication from her son. It is one of the most common spiritual experiences that we have. Medical research shows that 25-50% of grieving spouses or parents have some sort of visitation. Unfortunately, like the Mother who visited me, most people trivialize or dismiss the experiences as grief induced hallucinations, and cut themselves off from their potential to heal.

There are three broad categories of healing spiritual visions surrounding death and dying; premonitions of death, shared dying experiences, and after death visitations. Recent new

evidence in near death research strongly suggests that such experiences are real and an important part of understanding death.

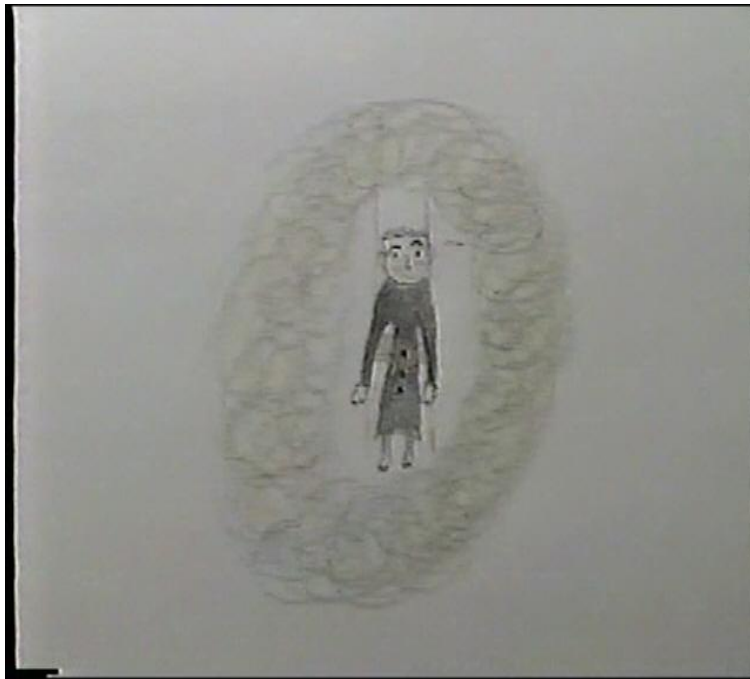
SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF PREMONITIONS

It is common to have intense feelings or even visions that someone you love will die. With one of the nation's largest organizations devoted to Sudden Infant Death research, we studied parents who had premonitions that their infant would die. We used two control groups of parents who did not have infants die, to understand what normal fears and premonitions about death were.

We learned that nearly 25% of the time, parents had distinct and vivid perceptions which were not seen in our control patients. Often they would write these in a journal, or tell their doctor about them.

A patient in my practice told me: When I was seven months pregnant, I was resting in bed. Suddenly, I found myself floating out of my body, looking down at myself. A lady was next to me. She glowed with a white light. "You know", she said with great care and compassion, "she can't keep the baby".

VISIONS EXPLAIN DEATH, DO NOT PREVENT IT



"I mourn terribly for my baby, but I am not angry. I felt great love and compassion from when she told me that, as if my baby's death was a part of a greater purpose and plan."

It is clear that the purpose of these premonitions is to explain death and to help parents cope. They do not, in my experience, result in any way of preventing the event. Many parents took their infants to doctors or emergency rooms, and the SIDS event not prevented.

One of my patients had a vivid dream that her son would be horribly injured in a car accident. No details which could have led to her preventing the accident were given. Indeed, she was ultimately the driver in the wreck, and it was her fault.

She told me that the meaning of her dream to her was that her mother, who had given her the news in her dream, was her guardian angel and watched over her. She said: "Without that dream, I could never have kept my family together, been a wife, and a mother to my other children, because I felt so guilty and depressed over what I did. Yet I always knew that even though it was my fault, somehow it was meant to be, and my mother would always be there for me.

WALKING WITH THE DYING



Another type of death related vision are shared dying experiences. For example, a mother in my practice told me about sitting with her sister, at their dying mother's bedside. They both fell asleep. She dreamed that she was walking down a path towards a brightly lit garden path with her sister and mother. Her mother paused at the light, and turned and said, "I must go now." She had incredible love for both of them, and seemed to indicate that she was sorry, but only she could go further.

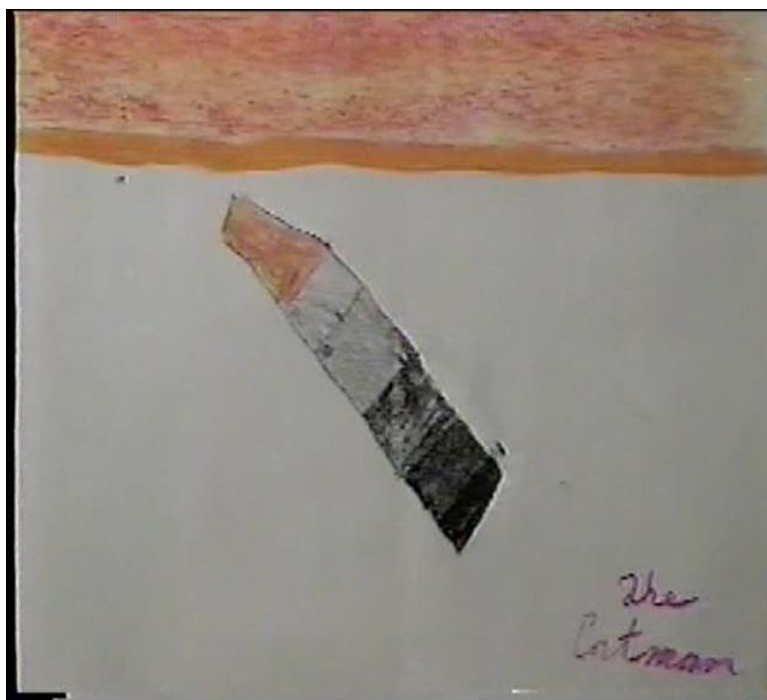
When she woke up, her mother had died. Her sister had had the same dream, with the exception that she thought they were walking along a sandy path., towards a gate and a light behind it.

Finally, there are after death visions. These often come as simple messages that someone has died and everything is alright. The night that my father died, I had turned off all the phones in

my house as I had been working hard and needed rest. This was very irresponsible of me, as I was on call for the Infant Intensive Care Unit. I cannot explain why I did it, I just remember telling my wife that I was so tired, I couldn't possible take any phone calls, that I had to sleep. My father came to me in a dream. I dreamed I was awake, and he was standing at the foot of my bed. He said: "Melvin, call your answering service". I woke up, did so, and learned my father died.

Sometimes after death communications are quite complex. I know a young man whose mother's fiance was killed in a car accident. The step-father to be often contacts the young man and they talk, usually about woodworking projects.

SCIENCE TELLS US THAT THERE ARE OTHER REALITIES TO PERCEIVE



I recognize that our society often trivializes and dismisses these experiences as not being "real" but figments of a grieving mind. It could be argued that everyone has vague fears about their baby dying, and then when it actually happens, parents embellish or invent soothing premonitions to explain the event. That is why we had two control groups on our study, to learn what normal premonitions are like. They were nothing like the vividly real premonitions that came true. For example, frequently the parents who had the premonitions that came true, brought their child to the doctor or emergency rooms on the strength of them or wrote them down in a journal. None of the control patients did that after their vague premonitions.

Furthermore, recent scientific advances strongly suggest that these experiences in fact are real, based on my analysis of their similarities with near death experiences. Near death research has documented that when we die, we are conscious and aware of our surroundings, even if we seem

to be comatose. We often perceive other realities, and meet the same sort of "glowing ladies" that we heard about in our SIDS study.

Theoretical physics and recent advances in mathematics describe at least two other realities, at least in theory. Mathematician Michio Kaku, in his book *Hyperspace*, states that it is not hard to scientifically describe other realities. He feels the problem is in understanding how we access or communicate with them. Physicists at Princeton University are currently working on proving the existence of as many as 10 dimensions.

ALL HUMAN BEINGS BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO ACCESS OTHER REALITIES



Recent medical research indicates that we are all born with a "sixth sense", localized in our right temporal lobe, which allows us to perceive spiritual realities. Furthermore, electromagnetic sensing organs of unknown use have also been discovered in our brains. Our temporal lobe might even be able to access universal memories stored in nature, not the brain.

I am not suggesting that mainstream medicine currently accepts all of this. These are my own speculations based on my own analysis of the scientific literature. I am stating that our ability to understand and study the human ability to have spiritual visions has rapidly progressed from pseudoscience to science in the past ten years. Studies from such seemingly unrelated areas as the National Warfare Institute, and the Brain Surgery Research Group at the University of California in San Diego have all contributed pieces of my theory that humans beings are genetically programmed to see and interact with other realities using our right temporal lobe.

EXPLAINS SCIENCE, DOES NOT CONTRADICT IT

My theory that the spiritual visions surrounding death represent nothing less than the normal function of our right temporal lobe is backed up by 100 years of research on brain function, including studies of the effects of damage to the temporal lobes, electrical stimulation studies, studies of temporal lobe epileptics, and clinical case reports I have presented in the medical literature.

It is essential to understand that there is no modern theory of how memory functions in the brain. There is also no modern theory of how brain activity accounts for consciousness.

If you think my ideas are speculative, read what Nobel Prize winner Francis Crick wrote in the Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for a Soul: "The speculations (his theory that consciousness is the result of neuronal networks) contained in this book are not a fully worked out coherent set of ideas. Rather, they constitute work in progress. I believe that the correct way to conceptualize consciousness has not yet been discovered."

Ultimately, spiritual visions contain their own truths, and do not need validation by science. Yet again and again, I encounter people who have powerful visions and intuitions, and they ignore or dismiss them as being unreal. I was the same way, I could hardly believe my father came to me when I died, and I didn't even tell my family about the experience for many years.

TRUSTING VISIONS CAN HELP WITH THE TASKS OF MOURNING

There are four tasks of mourning: 1)Accepting the reality of the loss. 2) Adapting to a new environment without whoever has died. 3)Reinvesting emotional energy in new areas, and 4)Rediscovering meaning in life. I find, in my work with grieving parents, that spiritual visions play an important role in every step of healthy grieving.

For example, premonitions can give insight that there is a pattern and meaning to life, even if that pattern is excruciatingly painful. A parent's life is destroyed when a child dies. The universe suddenly seems unfair and irrational. This often triggers a pathological search of meaning rooted in our own fears and guilty secrets. Premonitions of death remind us that there is a hope that there is a pattern to life beyond our comprehension. This can help to reestablish meaning to life.

DON'T WAIT FOR AN ANGEL IN WHITE: LIFE IS FILLED WITH ORDINARY MIRACLES

One of my professors at Johns Hopkins Medical School, Frank Oski, wrote of a spiritual vision he had as a medical student. He was deeply troubled that one of his young patients had died of a congenital heart defect, and he felt it was unfair that she died so young. That night, he suddenly woke up, as his room was lit with a bright light. A woman stood at the foot of his bed.

She told him that children who die at an early age know secrets about living that we will never know. She said that every life is important, and that it stretches our sense of humanity to care for such children who are less than perfect. She told him that every life has meaning and purpose.

Dr. Oski did not ask us to believe his story. He said that he would not believe such a story if he heard it from someone else. Instead, he asked that we simply keep our mind open to the everyday miracles in ordinary life. I was quite puzzled at this, as a woman in white at the foot of the bed didn't seem like an ordinary miracle to me.

After years of studying and listening the visions surrounding death and dying, I have finally learned what he meant. I have found that the seeds of healing grief are often overlooked, trivialized, or dismissed as being too ordinary. Things happen to us all that seem too trivial or coincidental to be important, or too fantastic to be real. These are the miracles that Dr. Oski was speaking of. It is nice that science is getting around to proving their worth, but they do not need the validation of science. They contain their own truths. If such experiences have happened to you, please contact me at

spiritualscientific@yahoo.com

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