



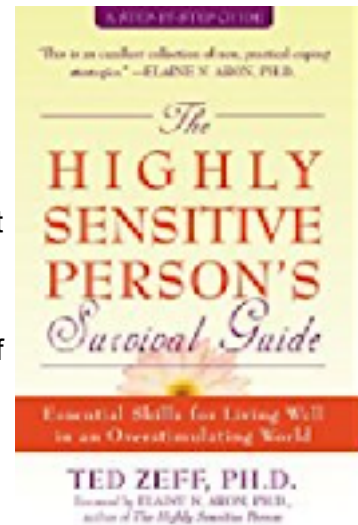
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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Ted Zeff, PhD.(2004). *The Highly Sensitive Person's Survival Guide: Essential Skills for Living Well in an Overstimulating World.***  
Oakland, CA: New Harbinger. 184 pp. \$18.95. Refs. 3 pp.

Ted Zeff, a psychotherapist and a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) himself, brings us an excellent collection of observations on what life is like for the HSP and on how to make life more understand-able, pleasant and healing. He expands nicely upon the writings of Elaine Aaron, PhD, who was the first to identify and write about HSPs. She defines this trait as including greater than average sensory acuities; emotional awarenesses within themselves and great sensitivities to the emotions of others; preferences for quiet environments, with calm and nurturing interactions with others; and discomfort with pressures of many tasks awaiting their attention and with having to adapt to busy environments. Between 15-20 percent of people are HSPs, equally divided between males and females.



Zeff points out that these sensitivities leave HSPs prone to feeling overwhelmed in bustling and boisterous environments. They may also find it hard to organize their outer-world activities when they are focused on inner awarenesses. He suggests varieties of helpful ways for dealing with such overwhelms. Preparing ahead of time and resourcing oneself with approaches for stress and anger reduction are among the most successful approaches. A morning centering routine will set the tone for your day, and an evening routine will help you sleep better.

Being gentle with yourself is one of Zeff's most important messages. He wisely advises developing positive attitudes towards yourself to prevent spiraling into frustrations and self-blame for not being as adept as the non-HSPs in dealing with the outer world. For instance, HSPs like to contemplate their options and plans before moving ahead with actions. Zeff offers varieties of suggestions for dealing with these sorts of issues.

I love Zeff's advice to be gentle with non-HSPs, whose preferences for loud environments and activities may unintentionally grate on HSPs' nerves.

It's important to feel compassion for less sensitive people. You don't want to become an "insensitive" sensitive person...

Without stating this explicitly, Zeff clearly advocates for a wholistic perspective - connecting with issues of body, emotions, mind, relationships and spirit.

We are all souls who have taken a temporary human body to learn certain lessons. When you relate to another on a soul level instead of on a transitory personality level, your relationships will improve. Inside the most insensitive and vulgar person is hidden a lotus blossom of love waiting to bud. When you nurture the divine qualities in other people by spreading kindness, the flower of higher consciousness will bloom in all your relationships. (p. 118)

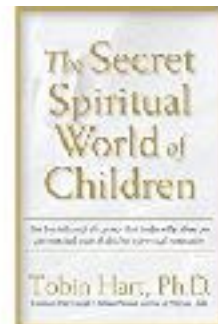
Xenophobia (the fear of what is strange or different) can create internal wars within us, as well as larger international wars. However, the more you practice feeling a sense of unity with others, the more your judgments lessen and your positive spiritual connections with everyone increases. If you accidentally poke your eye with your finger, you will comfort both your finger and your eye. You won't blame your finger (Amritswarupananda 1989). Likewise, when you experience your divine connection with all sentient beings, you will want to always help other as you would yourself. (p. 118-119)

In broader perspectives, Zeff suggests that HSPs serve to balance the collective human presence on our planet by providing greater sensitivity and healing in a world where the majority, who are non-HSPs, are sorely lacking in these qualities and threatening to destroy our planet through their self-interests and greed.

This book is very highly recommended for anyone wanting to learn and understand more about the Highly Sensitive Person.

Book review by Daniel Benor, MD, ABIHM, IJHC Editor-in-Chief

**Tobin Hart, PhD, (2003). *The Secret Spiritual World of Children: The breakthrough discovery that profoundly alters our conventional view of children's mystical experiences.*** Maui, HI: Inner Ocean. 293 pp. \$16.95. 12 pp Refs. This outstanding book explores a breadth and depth of children's spiritual experiences beyond any other book I've seen of its kind. Tobin Hart, a university professor, researcher and therapist, was alerted to these spiritual awarenesses by his daughter, Haley, disclosing at age six that she saw angels, who provided information and support for her, and guidance in helping others connect with spiritual matters. To his great credit, he accepted Haley's sharings without comment. He was rewarded with many further reports of these sorts -



from Haley and many other children and from adults who reported their childhood spiritual experiences.

He discusses many of the deep changes in worldviews that these experience offer.

- ... Materialism collapses the universe into a flatland that we call the physical plane.
- ... a spiritual worldview locates the individual in a multidimensional, sacred universe. A spiritual view does not neglect the physical, but integrates it into a larger understanding of reality - matter and spirit coexist, and maybe are even different aspects of the same thing.
- ... For a child, a worldview does not have to be carefully crafted in logic and language. It can be built from direct spiritual experience and housed in a feeling, an image, or a sense of belonging or truth.
- ... spirituality is also a process of development. (p. 9)
- ...Children can be our spiritual teachers if we pay attention. (p. 14)

Haley observes that Spirit manifests in our relationships. Children often intuit what others feel and need, and reach out to offer their caring and assistance. This is connecting with Spirit through service to others. We also connect through listening to each other through our hearts.

Children come to their parents to learn and also to teach lessons. These sorts of understandings come from within an awareness of reincarnation, supported by memories of children, and/or of their parents, of their previous lives.

The unfolding of our lives may include personal confusion and interpersonal conflicts. Hart offers a range of suggestions for how to understand and deal with these sorts of issues.

Throughout the book, Hart shares wonder-full cameos of children's spiritual awarenesses and experiences. These bring to life a breadth and depth of ways we can help our children, as they can often help us, to broaden and deepen our connections with spiritual dimensions of our lives.

One of the most important overall takeaways from this book is that the unfolding of the children's spiritual awarenesses are usually best facilitated by parental explorations of their children's reports about their spiritual perceptions and their understandings of these. When parents keep a gently accepting, interested and open-minded attitude, encouraging children to share what they experience and understand about their perceptions, there can be wonderful lessons for all.

For further reading to appreciate research that has been done on intuitive awarenesses I recommend Dean Radin's *Entangled Minds*, and my book on Personal Spirituality.

## References

Benor, D. J. *Healing Research, Volume III – Personal Spirituality: Science, Spirit and the Eternal Soul*, Bellmawr, NJ: Wholistic Healing Publications 2006. *Research on NDE, OBE, spirit survival, reincarnation, spiritual awareness.*

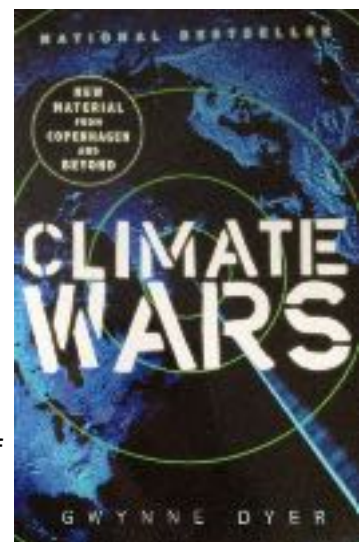
Radin, Dean. *Entangled Minds: Extrasensory Experiences in a Quantum Reality*, New York: Paraview Pocket Books/ Simon & Schuster 2006.

Book review by Daniel Benor, MD, ABIHM, IJHC Editor-in-Chief

**Gwynne Dyer, PhD. (2008). *Climate Wars*. Vintage Canada/ Random Canada.**

This book is a MUST READ for anyone interested in climate change, and in how humanity has created it and is failing to deal with it. While the causes of climate change are evident - primarily in the uses of fossil fuels - the abysmal failure is due to the inactivity of governments to deal with it in ways that might avert the end of most life on our planet as we know it today.

Gwynne Dyer's PhD is in war studies from the University of London, and has taught at the Canadian Forces College and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He served in the Canadian, American and British navies. He is the author of the bestselling *War*, and the writer and host of the Oscar-nominated NFB-CBC TV series *War*.



This book is a morbidly fascinating GOOD READ as well. Dyer builds his case systematically, bookmarking our global failures in climate negotiations that have occurred, that were scheduled to occur following publication of this book, and making educated speculations about the possible outcomes of future climate negotiations.

The first global gathering to address these issues was the Kyoto Conference in 1997. Here, the delegates

...did succeed in establishing the principle of the “common but differentiated responsibility” of all countries for the health of the atmosphere, and indeed, of the biosphere. No country has the right to disregard the effect of its emissions on other countries (although in practice, of course, some did). Kyoto was not a wasted effort, and its lack of ambition was largely due to ignorance about the true scale and speed of the emissions problem.

The science has advanced rapidly in the intervening years, however, and we now have much better numbers. They are quite daunting. (p. 200-201)

The Kyoto Protocol, signed by 195 countries, with legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries.

Dyer discusses possible successes in starting to apply the principles for curbing emissions and limiting global heating resulting from the Kyoto Protocol. But he then speculates on the negative outcomes if the major emitters of greenhouse gasses failed to comply with their promises. He presents scenarios of these consequences, considering the demonstrated failures with the Kyoto Protocol, and then makes educated speculations on the successes or failures of future global climate summits in coming years, after the publication of this book. His predictions regarding the failures at Kyoto have clearly materialized, along with further failures he foresaw following the The Paris climate conference of 2015.

Dyer wisely features military assessments of the states of current climate problems and of likely future climate changes. While politicians carefully avoid mentioning anything that might be alarming to their voters, not wanting to be seen as the bearers of pessimistic, bad news, the military are actually tasked with making predictions on issues that stand to influence national security. For instance, when they can see trends of rising ocean levels that will flood some of their airfields, they need to plan for dealing with these threats to their preparedness. So they don't hesitate to discuss the politically inconvenient truths about the impending threats of climate change.

Dyer discusses a broad spectrum of options for decreasing greenhouse emissions, few of which are being considered or implemented. He then examines the consequences of failures in stopping the rapid rise in global temperatures, which are based on archeological evidence of such occurrences in the past. The end result is that the oceans are taken over by sulphur-based bacteria and sulphur gas is released into the atmosphere. This leads to the extinction of most oxygen based organisms and end of life as we know it today on our planet.

Dyer's analyses are carefully considered, well documented and engagingly presented. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in global climate change

An additional question needing examination is, “Why is humanity suiciding in so many concerted, creative ways?” My personal belief is that this is due to a PTSD in the collective consciousness of humanity (Benor, 2015).

#### Reference

Benor, Daniel. (2015). Healing the Collective PTSD of Humanity. *International J Healing & Caring* 15(2), 1-26.

Book review by Daniel Benor, MD, ABIHM, IJHC Editor-in-Chief

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**P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099**

**Phone (609) 714-1885 Fax (519) 265-0746**

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