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## A Therapist's First Encounter With Spirit Release

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### Abstract

A client came into therapy with the expectation of doing Past Life Regression work. The reason was that she and her husband were having problems. She had tried several traditional therapists and counselors to address the difficulties but was not able to make any headway. Out of frustration, she finally decided that the problem must lie in a past life. I facilitated the client moving into an altered state to begin the work. She was compliant and took direction well. As the session unfolded, we were both surprised to learn that something within her was not going to allow her to continue to follow my direction. The 'something' turned out to be the cause of her problems - a disembodied spirit that had become attached to her.

### Beginnings

I joined the Navy out of high school during the Viet Nam era, though my service outside the country was limited to the Mediterranean and going around South America. I enjoyed being on the water but not the regimentation of military life. Following my enlistment, I attended a Merchant Marine Academy and then worked as a ship's officer on the Great Lakes.

After years on the water I went through a conversion experience, of sorts. I was overtaken by a strong inclination to enter the priesthood. However, another part of me was repulsed by the dramatic change in life styles - not the least of which was celibacy. I struggled with this issue for more than a year and eventually entered the Jesuit. (Jesuits are a religious order of Roman Catholic priests) I helped to build a Jesuit High School in southern Sudan, and subsequently taught math and science there. It was a difficult two years as the country was immersed in a civil war and plagued by famine.

As my life in the Jesuits unfolded, I found that my interests and gifts were tied in with the pursuit of spirituality. I worked as a Spiritual Director for men and women in religious life and was also an Assistant Chaplain to the men on Death Row at San Quentin Prison in San Francisco, California.

My work as a Spiritual Director privileged me to witness the intimacy between the people I worked with and their continually evolving relationship with 'their' God. It became apparent to me that if I wanted to help in the best ways possible, I could only affirm their journeys but could not help by offering judgement concerning their behavior or motivations. In times of conflict, I found myself deferring to my client's right to choose rather than invoking the teachings of the Catholic Church. After eleven years in the Jesuits, I decided to leave religious life before the rift widened.

My psychological training was classically Freudian in its approach, though we were continually reminded by the administration that it was an 'eclectic' program. Spirituality was not addressed and was understood to be the purview of the different religions. Past Life Regression, Spirit Release and the like were clearly anathema and were never discussed.

I came upon Past Life Regression the same way I discovered Spirit Release work - it was dropped in my lap. I was doing Age Regression Therapy. Instead of tediously going back a year at a time trying to find the original trauma, I directed the client's psyche to take them back to where the problem began. Armed with a relatively new degree and a Catholic understanding of a single lifetime, I felt certain this was the best approach.

When my clients began going back beyond their current lifetimes, I found it unsettling. However, I could not deny the efficacy of this approach. I began to devour the literature on this topic to become more familiar with it and began to incorporate it into my practice with positive results. I took a similar approach with Spirit Release work. The literature is not quite as vast but there is a significant body of information available.

### **My clients shift my direction of work**

Several years ago a client came into my office looking for help. Little did I know that her visit was going to dramatically change the way I approach therapy from that day forward. The client was a physically attractive, 36-year old woman. She was well groomed, polite, intelligent and appeared to come from a middle-class background. For the sake of anonymity I will refer to her as Betty. She told me she had found me by surfing the Web, looking for therapists in the area who did past life regression therapy. The problem, as she explained it, was her relationship with her husband. She had been to many therapists and counselors for this problem but none were able to help her. She was now certain that the problem must lie in a past life because she had tried everything else. She told me she was coming to the end of her rope and she was certain that her husband was as well.

She was married to a wonderful man whom she loved. However, occasionally when they were having a conversation, Betty would begin to get angry for no apparent reason. Soon she would be yelling at her husband and saying hurtful things. "Most of the time," she remarked, "I don't even know what brings it on. I just can't seem to control myself. Rather than getting angry, my husband will calm me down and go through the conversation again with me. He begins by saying, this is what I said and this is what I meant by it. When he does this, I can see that I have no reason to be upset. I apologize and everything goes back to normal. Only it doesn't, really. These irrational outbursts are becoming more and more frequent and I know that they're taking a toll on the relationship. My husband is a wonderful man and I don't want to lose him." I asked Betty if she could give me any specifics on what set her off but she told me she could not remember any, except to say that they were all pretty trivial.

We talked a little bit about the procedures involved in past life regression therapy. I wanted to make sure that Betty understood what we were going to do and that she did not have any apprehensions or unrealistic expectations. Betty told me that she had never been hypnotized before. I explained the nature of hypnosis to her and answered all of her questions. She was very calm and relaxed and appeared ready to begin work. Betty was an excellent hypnotic subject and moved into an altered state quite easily. Since this was her first time with hypnosis, I applied some deepening techniques to further enhance the altered state. Eventually, we got to a point where she was perceiving herself standing before a beautiful archway that contained a curtain of light. I told her that on the count of three I was going to ask her to walk through that archway and find herself in a different place and a different time. I further assured her that her own unconscious would pick a lifetime that would shed some light on the current problem. I began to count one ... two ...

"I don't think they're going to let me do that." I heard Betty's voice say, in a quiet, non-committal, trancelike way. I was a little taken aback because I had never experienced anything like this before. "Who is not going to let you do this?" I asked. "I don't know who they are but I don't think they're going to let me do this." she replied, again in that trance-like voice. I was stumped and not quite sure where to go from here. I was sitting there trying to think of what to do next when I heard Betty exclaim, with considerable distress in her voice, "I have a terrible headache. It hurts so much. Make it go away, Make it go away!"

I had never encountered an abreaction like this before, either, since Betty had not yet been directed to experience an altered reality. However, I did feel like I was back on somewhat familiar ground once again because I had done hypnotic work with people who had migraine headaches. I calmed Betty down and asked her to address the headache and to ask why it appeared.

Again, in that dreamy, altered-state voice I heard, "Headache, why are you here?" Then a big smile formed on her face and in a slightly surprised voice, I heard, "Oh! It's Bill!" "Who is Bill?" I asked. "He was a neighbor of mine. We were just friends but he wanted to have an affair with me. I didn't want anything to do with it. I was happily married and besides he was too unstable and had a lot of problems. He committed suicide by shooting himself in the head."

I asked if I could talk to Bill and got the surprise of my life. Betty, who was still deeply ensconced in an altered state of consciousness, slowly turned her head toward me and with her eyes still closed said, in a much deeper voice, "Who the hell are you?" It was unsettling to hear this crude interrogative coming from my very polite client. I explained that I was Betty's therapist and that she had come here seeking my help. I then asked Bill, "Do you understand that you are dead?" With a derisive attitude, he explained, "That's stupid, If I were dead would I be here talking to you?" I had to admit his logic. I then tried to get him to accept that he had no body. But apparently, from his perspective, he still did. He admitted that he had attempted to kill himself once, but it hadn't worked. However, he continued, he must have caused some damage because everything has been different since that time.

I took Bill back in his memory to the point of the attempted suicide and asked him to look behind himself. He saw his body lying on the floor in a pool of blood and realized that he had indeed transitioned. He told me that after that event people had begun to ignore him and he found that to be very frustrating. He went to see his friend Betty. When she ignored him, he grabbed her by the shoulders and intended to shake her, but instead found himself inside of her.

I asked Bill if he had seen a bright white light after he had left his body. He told me that he did but that he could not go into it because he was Catholic. I didn't quite understand what he was trying to tell me and asked him if he could clarify it for me. He told me that suicide was a mortal sin and if he went into the light he would be judged and sent to hell. So, he decided to stay where he was.

"If you are Betty's friend, why are you causing so much difficulty for her?" I asked. His answer was that he did not like being in bed with that other guy (Betty's husband). I told Bill that Betty chose to be with her husband. However, Bill still thought he could win her over if he loved her enough. Especially, since Betty's husband was beginning to exhibit signs of frustration over Bill's intervention. I finally got him to understand that Betty was not growing closer to him. "In fact," I told Bill, "she came here looking for help because your actions are making her suffer." He felt bad about that but admitted that he did not know how to leave her body.

I told him if he thought about the light it would appear for him. He told me he could see the light now. "But I already told you why I can't go into it." I tried to encourage him, telling him that everything would be fine and that he would not be judged for his actions. To which he replied with a sneer in her voice, "I don't believe you. You would tell me anything to get me out of here." I asked him if there was anyone who had crossed over whom he would believe. "I had an aunt once who was very kind. She

never lied to me." I told him if he looked in the light he would see his aunt. Bill said that he could see her. I instructed him to ask his aunt if he would be judged. "She says that I won't be judged. She says that I will be warmly received and that I don't have to suffer anymore." "Do you believe her?" "Yes, I do." "Are you ready to go with her?" "Yes, I am." "All you have to do is walk toward her."

Betty told me she could see him going into the light. "He stopped," she said. "He wants me to deliver a message to his wife and little girl." Betty sat there for a few moments as though she were listening, occasionally nodding her head. "Yes, of course I'll tell them... He's gone."

"How are you feeling now?" I asked Betty. "I feel fine... except now I have a pain in my neck and left shoulder." Again I instructed her to address the pain and we found it to be George. She told me that George was another friend of hers who had died in a car accident. He went through the front windshield and was almost decapitated. His story was similar to Bill's. He thought he was lucky to survive the accident but was frustrated by everyone ignoring him. He finally sought out his friend Betty and when he touched her he found himself trapped inside of her.

George had been watching what was going on in this therapy session and came to the realization that he had transitioned on his own. Before we had an opportunity to inquire if he wanted to be released, he asked Betty if she could do the same thing for him that she had done for Bill. Once again we called for the light and it appeared. Quietly, she said her goodbyes to her friend and he moved off into the light.

Again, I asked Betty how she was feeling and she told me she was feeling a lot lighter. I inquired about any other pains or sensations and she told me there were none. Because it had been such an emotion-filled session I directed Betty to go to a quiet, serene, rejuvenating place of her choosing so that she might collect herself before I brought her out of her altered state. Once she had returned to the here and now we processed what had taken place in the session. Even though it was a most unusual session, Betty seemed to think that it had gone very well. I let her know that if anything else came up, I would be happy to see her again. She thanked me and left my office.

Ordinarily, that would have been the last I would hear of Betty, but this case has a Post Script. About a week later, I received a call from her. She told me that she was so happy that she just had to call and let me know how well things were going for her. She and her husband were getting along wonderfully and had not had a single blowup since the appointment.

Not long after my initial experience with spirit release, I was again doing Past Life Regression therapy with a client. This woman was 42, about 5'10" and rather hefty. When we got to the point where she should have been perceiving another lifetime, I asked, "What are you experiencing now?" I was quickly met with a shushing sound, and the following dialogue ensued.

"Pardon me?" I said. Again I was shushed.

"Why are you shushing me?"

"Be quiet, he'll find us."

"Who will?" I asked.

"That mean guy."

This turned out to be a twelve year-old girl who had died in a fire. When she saw the 'white light' she

thought it was more fire and went the other way. Eventually, she ended up in my client. The 'mean guy' was another spirit who was caught in my client as well. The girl was deathly afraid of that other spirit. We released her into the light.

"How are you feeling now?" I asked. All of a sudden, the musculature of this woman's face changed and she seemed to grow ugly. Her eyes popped open and she glared at me with intense hatred. She then jumped out of her chair and started yelling in a crazed, masculine voice, "I'll ask the questions here!" At the same time she began to flail at me with her fists. I had all I could do to grab her by both wrists and by sheer force of strength directed her back into her chair. At that moment, her face returned to her pleasant countenance and she innocently inquired, "Why are you holding my arms?"

I didn't want to alarm her but I was scared to death and not really feeling at the top of my game. I was wishing that she were anywhere but in my office at that point in time. The entity was not released that

day as the session was over. Also, neither one of us wanted to revisit the experience. In fact, it took several weeks for us to work up the nerve to return and release that spirit. During that time, I lived in dread of what might happen and prayed to every angel and saint I ever knew for protection.

My path for learning about spirit release work has been a journey of spiritual awakening; most of the time rewarding, often confusing, and sometimes incredibly frightening. I've had to change not only the way I've looked at therapy but the way I view spirituality and the human condition. I dropped out of religion altogether as that perspective only seemed to muddy the waters.

Even with all of the reading I was doing, I still found it difficult to do the spirit release work. The biggest problem was that I had to learn a different way of doing the work with each client because of the way they described their inner experiences. There were those who were quite verbose in their reporting, which made the work easy. Some were incredibly parsimonious and would only offer material in response to a specific question. Others only reported vague impressions or sensations. Eventually, through a series of synchronistic events, I was put in touch with a woman who had psychic abilities. In her mind's eye she was able to see and speak with these entities.

We started to work together. There were several spirit helpers that we invited into every session, including: Padre Pio, a self-described ascended master who in his last incarnation was an Italian Catholic priest in the first half of the 20th Century; the archangels, Michael, Gabriel and Raphael; and many other helping spirits would often show up if they were important to the client.

Working with the psychic made the therapy go more smoothly. Occasionally, St. Michael would instruct us in ways to improve the work; usually, offering information to counter something that I had read. He would inform us that, in a few days, we would be experiencing something new and tell us how to deal with it. He would sometimes speak to us of spiritual realities that would be worlds apart from anything we had learned in church.

### **Variations on the theme of spirit release work**

When I relate stories of spirit release work, I am often asked what made the client susceptible to the spirit invasion? In truth, of the hundreds of spirit releases I done, I have only met about four people who have not had any attachments. It seems that when the energy field or aura that surrounds the body becomes weakened in any way it allows these attachments to enter. Some things that weaken the aura are abuse, low self-esteem, drugs, alcohol and trauma – to name but a few.

For the most part, spirit attachments are not a malicious act. In fact, they usually occur as an accident. When spirits make contact with the energy field of a living being, they appear to be sucked up into that

field. However, some of these spirits can strongly influence their hosts, while others simply appear to be along for the ride. Regardless, both draw on the energy of the host as they are not able to generate any of their own. On rare occasions, attachments can become possessions and physically take control of the host - as in the case of the 'mean guy' above. Possessions are temporary and usually result in a loss of memory for the client.

Personally, I believe that spirit attachment/possession is a much more convincing argument for the symptoms of a 'multiple personality.' I have never had an adequate explanation of how someone can develop ten to twenty full-blown personalities and keep them all straight. Even our phobias tend to generalize and our memories are at best questionable. It seems unlikely that one of the side effects of a lifetime of difficulties is an incredible memory. Beyond that, some of the personalities come with a physiology that is different from the client's. Finally, different personalities come in with different ages that seem to have no correlation to the client's life.

Spirit release can also dovetail nicely with Past Life Regression (PLR) therapy. Eventually, I got to a point where I did not like to do PLR without doing a spirit release first, because I found that some entities reported their lifetime as having belonged to the host. This sometimes caused confusing

overlaps in the reported chronologies of the lifetimes that presented for therapy in my office. It also had us dealing with material that did not belong to the client.

This article would not be complete without mentioning demons. Demons are real and they do cause a great deal of difficulty. When dealing with demons it is vital to have spirit helpers. However, they must be called upon to act on our behalf. They cannot interfere in this plane but they can do our bidding if they are invited. Regardless of the way demons are portrayed in the media, they can have no power over us unless we allow it. If we believe that they can harm us we are giving them tacit approval to do so through our fear.

Releasing demons in my practice is nothing like the medieval rite of exorcism as practiced by the Catholic Church. With the help of spirit guides I direct them to look deep within themselves - past all the darkness and all of the pain - to find a spark of light. I invite them to watch the light as it grows, reassuring them that they will not be harmed by it. Eventually, they will transform into either an angel or a human being. At this point they begin to remember who they are and you can invite them to enter the light. Spiritually, there appears to be no judgment other than which we direct toward ourselves.

## **Lessons**

Since my introduction to spirit release work I have performed hundreds of them, and as I mentioned above, this work has dramatically changed the way I look at psychotherapy. My professional training has taught me to view clients as three-dimensional human beings. However, my experience has shown me that what we are truly working with is multi-dimensional spiritual beings who happen to be in a body at this point in time. The entities being released are also clients and deserving of all of the respect, patience, compassion and professionalism we can muster. They are not ghosts, they are not specters; what they are is human beings who have lost their bodies and are confused, anxious and disoriented. They are also incredibly grateful for our helping them move into the light.

The human condition does not end with what we refer to as physical death. A person's awareness of him/herself does not change one whit as a result of the death process. They may feel a release or a cessation of pain but their awareness of themselves as a three-dimensional person does not appear to change until they transition into the light. Then they are able to understand the bigger picture.

People have free will and they must choose to go into the light. However, there are many things that

keep them from making this choice. Some may be fearful of being judged. Some may not wish to leave possessions or a loved one behind. Many simply do not realize that they have lost their bodies. Whatever the reasons, there are many disembodied entities remaining in this plane. Being people, some keep to themselves and some cause problems.

I do not want to leave you with the impression that spirit release work is a magic bullet. Every spirit release session will not result in a dramatic cure. However, remarkable cures happen often enough to make this kind of work worth looking into. Let me share a few more of these cases.

A client came to me who had suffered for years with incredible abdominal pain. He had gone from one physician to another but they could find nothing wrong with him. He was given a diagnosis of severe hypochondriasis and a battery of medicines were employed to temper the pain, all to no avail. As a last resort he decided to try spirit release work. During the session, we released, among other entities, a woman who had died of stomach cancer and was too poor to get any kind of medication. At the end of the session, years of unrelenting abdominal pain had disappeared never to return.

A similar experience took place with a woman diagnosed with panic attacks. She had been under the care of a physician for many years and her symptoms were controlled using medication. Of late, however, the symptoms were becoming worse and the medication wasn't having the desired effect. The woman could no longer work and was now completely housebound. Her physician, who had exhausted every known treatment, referred her to me for spirit release work. During the session, we

released a young girl whose family farm had been attacked by Indians. The young girl had been hiding in a corncrib and witnessed her parents and brother being killed. Eventually, the Indians found her, tortured her and raped her. At the moment of her death she believed that she had escaped from her captors. Since that time she had been running and hiding, trying to avoid recapture. The young girl was healed by helping her to find the light and the client was able to return to work the following week.

One rather dramatic case involved a Dissociative Identity Disorder (multiple personality) with sixteen identities. All of these 'identities'/'personalities' were the result of spirit attachments. They were all released in a single session. The psychological work to address the original trauma still needed to be done. But that would go much more smoothly without the presence of the entities.

I would like to mention a word about addictions before I close. Many addicts of one kind or another do not choose to go into the light because they are afraid that they will not be able to get the 'fix' they believe they so desperately need. They end up attaching to addicts with a similar problem to at least be able to get their 'fix' vicariously. This is one of the reasons that addictions and addictive behavior is so difficult to treat. Regardless of how strong a client's motivation may be to get clean, there may be as many as 40 or 50 voices within encouraging them to continue with the addiction. A similar situation is often found in people with eating disorders.

### **In summary**

Spirit release work is not a panacea for all things psychological. For the most part, the greater majority of clients report feeling 'lighter' after having had a spirit released but beyond that there is little to be observed. Those who are released into the light, on the other hand, appear to derive a great deal of good from the experience. Spirit release, however, is merely a tool. A tool that may be used very affectively when added to the others in our healing arsenal.

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