

THIRD IN A SERIES OF 10

PARANORMAL RESEARCH SERIES

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The Inspired Heart: An Intuitive Approach to Higher Consciousness

For many, dreams are an incredible and unequaled source of profound mystery as well as significant revelation—not to mention a wide variety of paranormal phenomena. Can we draw from the lessons we've learned about gaining inspiration from dreaming and apply what we have learned to consciously receiving inspiration? I believe so. In this article, I will describe how we can learn from our work with dreams how to enter a state of higher awareness I call "Inspired Heart Consciousness." We will then use this method in future projects as we proceed in our campaign to "normalize the paranormal."

In my previous article (Oct-Dec 2016 VI), I described the “Dream Helper Circle” whereby friends, and in some cases complete strangers, can purposefully dream on behalf of others. These simple dream ESP experiments consistently demonstrate that people can produce dreams that provide helpful information regarding an undisclosed problem of another person in distress.

The basis of this phenomenal process lies in two well-established principles. First, altruism can stimulate people to reach out beyond their normal abilities to help others. Second, a group of individuals, by comparing impressions, can shed light onto a situation that would remain in darkness for the individual viewer.

Because this example of cooperative psychic functioning is so expressive of the Edgar Cayce philosophy, dozens of A.R.E. members are now working with me on a pilot project to create an dream circle “app.” It will provide a format that is convenient to use and that we can pass along to the general public. You are welcome to join us in this research.*

Journeying from head to heart

One significant outcome of Dream Helper Circles points the way as we research how to develop an equivalent skill in the waking state. The commonalities in the members of a group’s dreams coincide to reveal information and guidance about the target person’s dilemma. At the same time, each individual dream reflects something analogous to that same dilemma that is also relevant but unique to each individual dreamer.

This finding suggests that the helping dreamer experiences an empathy with the target person. It is as if the individual dreamer is responding, “when I tune into you, here is what it brings up in me.” The dreamer seems to recognize a personal issue that is similar to what confronts the target person and his/

her dream responds accordingly. How does this kind of intuitive empathy come about? The dreamers receive no instructions for how to dream for someone else’s undisclosed problem, so they must accomplish the task intuitively. In the vernacular, we might say, “Their hearts reach out to the target person.”

Seeing the “heart” as a metaphor for the intuitive imagination is quite common. In my book, *The Intuitive Heart*, I give many examples of such connections in our idiomatic language, as in the phrase, “I know in my heart.” Edgar Cayce confirmed this concept when he said, “*The purpose of the heart is to know yourself to be yourself and one with God.*” (281-37) This also suggests that there exists a mirroring between the individual and the whole, which is analogous to what we see in a Dream Helper Circle, where the individual dreams

apply simultaneously to both the dreamer and the target person. It is an example of the experience of “oneness” that Cayce so often lauded. Let us then begin a journey from the head, that has questions, to the heart, which has answers. We will “raise” our consciousness, not by lifting our awareness above our heads, but by building into our awareness the consciousness of an ideal of oneness.



Illustration by Henry Reed

Aware of natural breathing

We begin by learning from the most immediate spiritual activity happening within us at this very moment: the breath! Recalling Genesis 2:7, “God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” As a humble learner, very gently and quietly sneak up on the natural breathing as it transpires in the here and now. Notice that the breath has



a two-part cycle, an in-breath and an out-breath and then begin by empathizing with the feeling of the out-breath, the exhalation. It is a natural letting go. As you experience the relaxing in the out-breath, allow yourself to relax, letting go more and more. As you do so, the exhalations will last longer and be more complete “expirations.”

Little bit by little bit, as you let go more and more, you will begin to notice a shift in your experience of the breathing. The more profoundly you let go and relax during the exhalation, the easier it is to shift your experience of the incoming air, from an inhalation that you do, to an inspiration that happens all by itself. If we wanted to use an affirmation for this initial portion of our journey, we might say, “I can be aware of my breathing and let it be; I’m learning to let go and let Spirit breathe me.”

Revisiting Eden

When someone is asked to turn their attention inward toward their breathing, there is a predictable, preparatory response: taking a deep breath in. It seems like an innocent reflex, but it has immense spiritual significance. I am reminded of the moment when Adam and Eve took a bite out of the apple and would have suddenly realized themselves as individuals, separate from their environment. That self-awareness would have immediately sparked what we think of as awkward self-consciousness. The vulnerability they felt at that moment had them reach for the fig leaf and try to hide from God. They felt the need to erect a boundary for personal protection, thus blocking that natural connection.

Before breathing is called to our attention, it flows naturally, automatically, and is self-regulating. Become aware of the breath, and then suddenly breathing becomes a personal responsibility—a natural function becomes a job! When Adam and Eve bit the apple, they had to leave paradise and get to work. We ourselves commonly re-enact the creation of separation without realizing it. So what next?

From inhalation to inspiration

Letting go of the focus on inhaling in favor of experiencing inspiration involves something akin to the spiritual act of death and rebirth. Not everyone recognizes the death/rebirth theme in this approach to the breathing, but many folks report being a bit anxious about letting go. Some respond to this concern without realizing they are doing so. One woman noted, for example, that as she relaxed deeply, she was reminded of tucking in her daughter at bedtime. What is the point of tucking in the child? Think about a child's concerns about falling asleep: "Where do I go when I go to sleep? Do I disappear? When will I wake up? Will I still be me? Will you be here, Mommy?" By tucking in her child, the mother is physically communicating to the child, "you will be OK, I've got you covered!" Perhaps that woman was reassuring herself that she was safe as she released control of her breathing.

Letting go of the breath is a safe context for exploring an important issue in spirituality. Sometimes people lose consciousness rather than experience the loss of control involved in letting go into the flow. What is it like for the caterpillar to allow itself to totally dissolve into liquid before re-forming as a butterfly? We can try to imagine that, but it is hard. Fortunately, there is a tranquilizing effect as the relaxing progresses. As the muscles relax, thoughts begin to quiet, deflating the fear response. As the

pleasure of relaxing surpasses the fear of letting go, there begins a shift from the sympathetic (fight or flight) to the parasympathetic (enjoy the flow), and a drifting will occur. Will we drift to sleep and miss the transformation or will we be able to witness the dissolving of the sense of separation and the coming sensation of oneness?

The value of gratitude

Cayce advised that our first course of study be that of our "oneness." There are so many ways to imagine that reality. We can imagine creation as a single organ-

ism with its various parts exchanging energies. We can imagine our minds embedded in a larger universal consciousness. We can imagine that we are miniature clones of God.

There is, however, a rarely mentioned shadow side to the idea of oneness—questions that arise: How do we reconcile experiencing oneness

with stuff we don't like? If we surrender control of our breath, will natural breathing still take care of our needs? If we let go and let God take control, will we like what we get? The transformation processes we are learning here help link a spiritual philosophy with an embodied experience. Here it's safe to experiment and learn. Cayce's perspective is that we experience what we need to in life in order to grow, and as we mature spiritually, we can approach stumbling blocks rather as stepping stones and with a sense of gratitude as we evolve into something better. Thus, gratitude is a creative, proactive, and spiritual response to

the gamble of accepting inspirations as they come.

In my first couple of years of learning to deeply experience this shift in my perception of the breath, I would often imagine that I was in an iron lung. This image made it possible for me to experience myself as if totally paralyzed with the breath happening outside of my control. While I would feel fragile and vulnerable, I would also experience the breathing as something positive I can trust. Gradually, I then learned to trust the inspirations that come to me, letting go to the point where, instead of vulnerability, I experience a deep sense of gratitude.

Since then I've learned, through conversations with students, that if we can approach gratitude, not as a demand or expectation, but as an experiment, it is easier to notice what it feels like and what happens with it. Most folks, including myself, experience gratitude as a feeling in the chest area so it seems easy to accept that gratitude somehow awakens feelings in the heart.

There seems to be a natural progression of events in this process. I'm fond of this imagery: "The heart responds to gratitude the way a flower responds to the sun: warming, softening, unfolding, expanding, blossoming with love." It is easy to imagine the feeling of the heart reaching out to embrace everything, bringing All into the heart, becoming one with "It." I say "It" because of people's reports of what they experience. For example, among those reports contained in the "author's notes" to this article,* one person reported, "As my heart blossomed out to embrace all in love, I was surprised by a sudden shift between a wonderful 'I am loving it all,' to an amazing experience of 'It is all loving me!' I was reminded of Matthew 5:8—"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall know God"—and I just broke out in tears!"

There is indeed a spiritual drama unfolding in this process. It is a story that begins with the perceptions of a separate



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identity, culled from being unified and embedded in a larger reality. The sense of separateness and the fear that it creates meets with a tranquilizing influence that helps facilitate the necessary letting go that is required for spiritual rebirth. Finally, in the surrender to gratitude, there is the release of all reservations, and the prodigal child's return to oneness.

Ask and you shall receive

Once we have "opened" our hearts through our feelings of gratitude, we can search for the heart's wisdom. When we do, we discover that we quickly know in our hearts important personal truths that are spiritually uplifting. The oft-quoted formula, "Ask and you shall receive," proves valid in this state of consciousness. Enter it with a question or concern, and as your mouth releases a little smile, the needed answer, guidance and reassurance flows along with a release of endorphins—wisdom accompanied by a "rain of truth."

As one of our A.R.E. members participating in our "Normalize the Paranormal" campaign reported, "I entered the Inspired Heart process with some doubts about the possible value of my personal experience. I was surprised when the love flowing through my heart brought me memories of when my few simple words brought comfort and peace to others. I felt so validated."

When I engaged in the process myself, to receive guidance concerning this article, the color red seemed so integral to my experience. I found myself imagining the ruby in my grandfather's special "Sunday ring." What I see when I am wearing the ring is a polished bright red oval with a perfectly smooth, flat surface. If I take the ring off and hold it up close, I can see into the depth of the ruby and discover the beautiful design of the many facets underneath but must look closely to be able to see and appreciate it. So it is with the Inspired Heart process. It is easy to enjoy it as just another guided meditation among many, or perhaps to

acknowledge, "getting into the heart feels good, and gratitude is good!"

The HeartMath Institute, an organization dedicated to providing solutions for activating the heart of humanity, has proven with physiological measuring devices that the heart does respond to feelings of gratitude. The intuitive power of a grateful heart may depend, however, on the journey that gets us there. For example, bringing to mind something from the past that inspires feelings of gratitude might inappropriately influence the seeking of intuitive guidance. The steps of the Inspired Heart process, on the other hand, have symbolic significance and provide a meaningful path into having valid intuitions. Asking people to gratefully align themselves with the ongoing reality of natural inspiration may be akin to creating an attunement to "truth, beauty and goodness," the archetypal metaphysical values we'd want to inform any guidance we receive.

Trusting intuition

I have found that if I ask folks to think of a time when they regret not having followed a hunch, most everyone has an example we can learn from. Why didn't they follow their intuition? A common answer is that they have no trail of evidence to support the validity of a spontaneous hunch. How can they know that that it is truly intuition and not their hopes or fears? If they attempt to invoke intuition intentionally rather than having it come to them spontaneously, they also feel that they get in their own way and are just making stuff up. It's quite a predicament. Our Inspired Heart process is specifically designed to bypass these blocks.

Learning to let go of the breath and then letting it come in spontaneously is certainly relevant. It provides a subjective experience that justifies the use of the word "inspiration" to describe the spontaneous incoming breath of fresh air, and also the sudden arrival of new, creative ideas. Coming into harmony



with natural breathing may put a person in sympathy with the Oneness, which sometimes goes by the name of the common breath or vibration of Creation. Here we have reference to a very old notion of intuition—that it springs from our being as one with the entire symphony.

When we can trust the breath, and then experience gratitude for the breath that flows, we add an element of trustworthiness into the process. When we are in a state of gratitude, we have neither hopes nor fears. We have a "pure heart," one with no agendas or pre-conceptions. Perhaps that is why the person mentioned above recalled Matthew's 'Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall know God.'

I believe that the steps in the Inspired Heart process provide a valid basis for trusting in the trustworthiness of the state of mind that results. What about the practical application? To begin, practice entering this state of consciousness. Test and apply any guidance received. In the next article, I'll bring forth a fascinating intuitive exercise that is derived from the Dream Helper Circle, but happens in the waking state. While trusting in the Inspired Heart state of consciousness, this simple exercise will provide a surprisingly easy, yet revealing method of seeking intuitive guidance. It will no doubt remind you of past intuitive experiences and what you have learned from them.

*For author's notes, an audio recording of the Inspired Heart meditation, web links, and opportunities to participate in the dream circle app or our A.R.E. membership research projects "Normalizing the Paranormal" or dream helper circle, please visit Edgarcayce-intuitionschool.org and contact henry.reed@atlanticuniv.edu.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



HENRY REED, PhD, is a research psychologist by training, and the author of several books and scholarly articles describing his research developing ways of applying the concepts in the Edgar Cayce material.