

BY HENRY REED, PhD



ESP: Not Just Good, But Good for Something!*

Applying Edgar Cayce's Philosophy of Intuitive Guidance

MORE THAN TWO DECADES ago, an article in the magazine *First for Women* stimulated an unprecedented number of new inquiries to the A.R.E. The article concerned the rewards and challenges of getting a reliable psychic reading, and mentioned the A.R.E. as a source for a list of psychics who had proven to be worth consulting by providing exceptionally helpful psychic guidance. The news flash from Virginia Beach that triggered this article was, ultimately, our research method.

Accurate vs. Helpful Guidance

Our method grew from our experience as A.R.E. conference attendees. As part of the Edgar Cayce Legacy conference held for many years at A.R.E. Headquarters, participants would each receive two psychic readings by members of a panel of participating psychics. We based our approach on Cayce's advice to seek more than a single source for psychic guidance.

The selection of suitable psychics for such an opportunity was therefore critical. For this task, Edgar Cayce's eldest son, Hugh Lynn Cayce, personally recruited the well-documented professional psychic, Carol Ann Liaros, and she and I collaborated to create a realistic auditioning process. Liaros had participated as a psychic in many published laboratory experiments, with good results, but felt that the meaningful test was in an "on the job" setting, being of real help to a person in need. We created that context by each writing down a set of five personal questions. These were "need-

to-know" type questions that we might genuinely pose if seeking the counsel of an excellent psychic. Liaros and I then worked independently with the list of psychics wishing to audition. We each presented our personal list of questions to all of the psychics, but worked with them in our own preferred way.

Liaros talked to the candidates on the phone, as that is how she and many psychics conduct their sessions. She would ask one of her five questions, listen to the response, give some feedback, have some discussion, and then move on to the next question. My preferred "blind target" method involved mailing my questions to them, with each question sealed in a separate envelope. My written instructions asked the psychic to respond to the question before opening the envelope; then to open the envelope, read the question, and comment on the initial response. They would record their responses on a cassette and mail it to me for review.

Thus, the candidates responded to the same two sets of questions, presented in two very different formats. Listening to several different psychics responding to the very same questions made comparisons possible. I would recognize themes that kept appearing, although in different vocabularies. My confidence in the psychics would increase when they told me something I knew to be true. Most exciting was when I'd hear something that created a spark within me, like an AHA reaction. I would feel "seen" in a new way, a way that I could recognize, now that it was pointed out. My own intuition could recognize meaningful possibilities, and after a good reading I would feel energized. It was easy to decide which psychics I'd recommend, and which ones I'd thank for

their time, but not recommend.

"Any manner or form of work of any nature [is] only given credence by the results obtained." (3744-1)

The significant finding from our approach—the news that sparked the magazine article—was that Liaros and I, when shifting our focus from who were the "good" or most "accurate" psychics to those who were the most "helpful" or "good for something," found ourselves agreeing in our evaluations, even when pursuing different questions in two different ways. Cayce's focus on results-obtained led to a new and reliable method for evaluating psychics! Something new and useful had been created out of the ideas in the readings, it attracted the attention of the general public, and set an important precedent for our subsequent research.

Phenomenon or Service?


We also focused our study on helpfulness rather than accuracy, because we already know that ESP is real. Countless laboratory studies, using a variety of methods, have accumulated an enormous amount of evidence that, beyond a shadow of a doubt, extra-sensory perception really does occur. Dream ESP, in fact, is one of the more validated methods for observing paranormal events. But what, in this context, does validation mean?

In most laboratory experiments, the evidence consists of a mathematical relationship between two known groups of data: the information contained on the target and the information contained in the perceiving participant's responses. Being "accurate," or getting it "right," means that the person's response can be matched to the

target. What's not considered, however, is that this method produces no "new" knowledge or information; it only demonstrates that the perceiver could produce a response that matched the target. The demonstration that "ESP was validated" becomes the "phenomenon." Beyond simply proving that ESP occurs, what good does it do? It can increase confidence in the perceiver as to their potential abilities, yes indeed. But what happens when attempting to validate psychic guidance in a situation where the answer is not pre-known?

Consider this example from an experiment in remote viewing, a procedure that has been able to demonstrate almost anyone's ESP ability. The remote viewer is given instructions; for instance, describe the surroundings at this point on the planet: 31 N 57 latitude, 35 E 11 longitude. Experimentation has proven that tasks such as these are quite doable. Spoiler alert: At that point on the planet is Mt. Moriah, Jerusalem. The average viewer can describe elements of the scene: "bright sunshine, tan color everywhere, dry feeling in the air..." The researcher can then attempt to match the viewer's report with what a camera sees at that point on the planet. What if the researcher instead asked, "What is going on there, what is the focus of events?" that might be a more difficult question, as a different kind of information is being requested. Nevertheless, someone could go there physically to see if it matched the viewer's account. However, what if the task was, "What initiative will improve quality of life there?" Now we come to a much more difficult question—but one truly worth answering—moving from identifying facts, or recognizing situations, to making suggestions. How could we evaluate the viewer's response in this case? What would we match it to? There is no existing reality to compare to the response. Any suggestion would have to be tested through actions taken. For ESP to be good for something and not just good, we must find "actionable intelligence" in the guidance, and then test it through application.

Switching focus from accuracy to helpfulness reflects a concern Cayce often expressed: Are we interested just in the phenomenon, or are we dedicated to creating something serviceable? During A.R.E. conferences and programs, Liaros repeatedly encourages people to identify practical uses for psychic ability. This will not only help



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move "paranormal" forward into public acceptance but will truly make a difference in people's lives.

"What does such information as may come through such a channel produce in the experience of individuals...does such make them better parents, better children, better husbands, better wives, better neighbors, better friends, better citizens? And if and when it does not, leave it alone!" (1135-6)

As one example of how to evaluate the "accuracy" of the results of an intuition circle, we have Mark Thurston's doctoral study of the Dream Helper Circle. He conducted the experiment through the mail, involving more than 100 dreamers, each dreaming for one of two focus people by sleeping on an envelope containing their name. To statistically evaluate the dreams for accurate ESP, Mark presented each focus person with the entire dream collection, which also contained dreams that were not intended for anyone. Each focus person had to sort through the dreams and pick out ones that seemed to describe themselves, their life situation, and especially their targeted question. Would the focus person be able to tell the difference between the ESP dreams intended for them and the other dreams not intended for them? That was the question to be answered by the statistics. One of the focus people was indeed able to identify, with statistically significant accuracy, the dreams that were dreamed for her. Thus, Mark concluded, the information in those dreams for that focus person were accurate beyond random chance. The dreams matched the reality, and thus we might conclude that there was some extrasensory perception involved.

Liaros and I tried a variation on the Thurston method on two of our online circles. In what we have called an online "Remote Empathy Circle," we obtained similar results. Members of the circle each submitted a question regarding a personal challenge. One question was chosen randomly, and the author remained undisclosed. The circle participants then used the "Inspired Heart" meditation (described in Jan-Mar, '17 *Venture Inward*) to attune to the chosen (but undisclosed) question and then spontaneously recall a personal memory that was to serve as a teaching story for the author. The participants next analyzed the memory for a personal lesson and submitted their response to the circle. Rather than compare the focus person's response to actual memories versus "control" memories, we analyzed how the different participants rated the memories. Could they recognize, from the memories shared, whether it was their own question that had been the undisclosed focus for the circle? We asked, "On a scale from 0 to 100, how would you rate this memory/lesson regarding how well it speaks to your challenge/question?"

In the first circle, the person whose question had been the focus gave an average rating of 90.5 to the memories. The other players gave an overall average of only 35.8. That difference is certainly significant. In the second circle, the focus person gave an average rating of 80.6 to the memories, while the other participants recorded an overall average of 30.2. Again, it seems that the "matching" memories are specific enough to be recognized.

These cases suggest that the memories

that cropped up in response to the undisclosed focus question were “accurate,” or relevant. Such success at “matching” the response with the intended target is what is meant by “accuracy”—and which strongly suggests that ESP is at work.

But more importantly, in follow-up, focus people in the Remote Empathy Circle reported generally positive comments that the circle provided useful, helpful information. The most common remark concerned the healing experience of receiving empathy, such as simply feeling “lighter,” or no longer concerned about “finding an answer.” One person noted that the answer to her dilemma was now clear, but that it would take some time before she could work herself up to following through. Sometime in the future, it will be interesting to find out how these results have evolved, to see if the experiences made a lasting difference.

The Scientific and the Intuitive

In the study of every soul that would be a channel to make known more of the mysteries of this journey of the soul, test each for that which will be constructive in thine own consciousness in the fruits of the Spirit; and the work becomes helpful to all. (5752-3)

Of the many approaches to evaluating our intuitive experiences, Cayce’s approach to obtaining and validating guidance is “scientific” in spirit, because it encourages a skepticism prior to receiving validation through our application of the guidance that comes through. Yet, Cayce’s approach is not necessarily based on the “science” of our Anglo-European materialistic mythology, which assumes a world of separate

things whose qualities and interactions can be mapped onto mathematical constructs. Rather, his approach is more akin to that of indigenous people, a “Native science.”

The Jungian perspective on the “archetypal psyche” provides an interesting linkage between Edgar Cayce and the indigenous consciousness. Jung noted that so-called “primitives” have a sophisticated worldview, one that is derived from the unconscious mind as it interacts with nature and its abundant sentient beings. Edgar Cayce seems to have attuned to that central intelligence, and so it would make sense to find parallels between his philosophy and that of the natives.

A good resource for this comparative study is the book *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* by Gregory Cajete, Associate Professor of Education at the University of New Mexico. There is a significant congruence between the essence of Edgar Cayce’s perspective on evaluating guidance and the Native American approach to science.

In the Native world, “Spirit” is the core reality, and its other name is “energy.” Everything derives from Spirit, and thus we are embedded in an energetic relationship with everything—all of creation. Whereas Western science idealizes mental constructs that provide prediction and control over nature, the Native science seeks wisdom to live in harmony with nature, which they see as the expression of Spirit in Earth. Anything we do to the world we do to ourselves, for we and the world are one.

Native Americans insist that paying close attention to one’s experiences is crucial, yet one must use *all* the channels of perception—not just the senses—including

feelings, and the intuitive imagination. Just as Cayce notes that “*truth is a growing thing*,” Native science does not assume that creation has fixed laws awaiting discovery through objective knowledge and mathematical modeling. Instead, wisdom grows with experience. Rather than making knowledge a commodity for the material marketplace, what folks actually have to offer one another are their stories. More than once did Cayce advise that referring to abstract principles or published studies is not as meaningful as speaking from our own personal experiences.

“If the self or soul self comes to depend too greatly upon external influences...then it is not self-development. And self-development in its relationship to the Creative Forces... is ever the better.” (440-12)

In this spiritually-grounded scientific method, we can appreciate the individuality of our experiential perspectives. “Research” occurs as we compare stories to draw our own lessons, and growth happens as we continue to test and apply our understanding. Cayce certainly partnered with “experts” and individual professionals, but he also relied on and participated with a circle of people with a common ideal who were sharing their experiences. The Native American viewpoint might recognize the Remote Empathy Circle as a shamanistic healing ceremony indigenous to the Cayce community.

Research methods matter when it comes to validating experiments and experiences. As Liaros and I learned (and Cayce knew), guidance can arrive via multiple methods—but what matters more is whether it helps. 🌊

*Title based on “*Be not merely good; be good for something.*” (279-1)



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