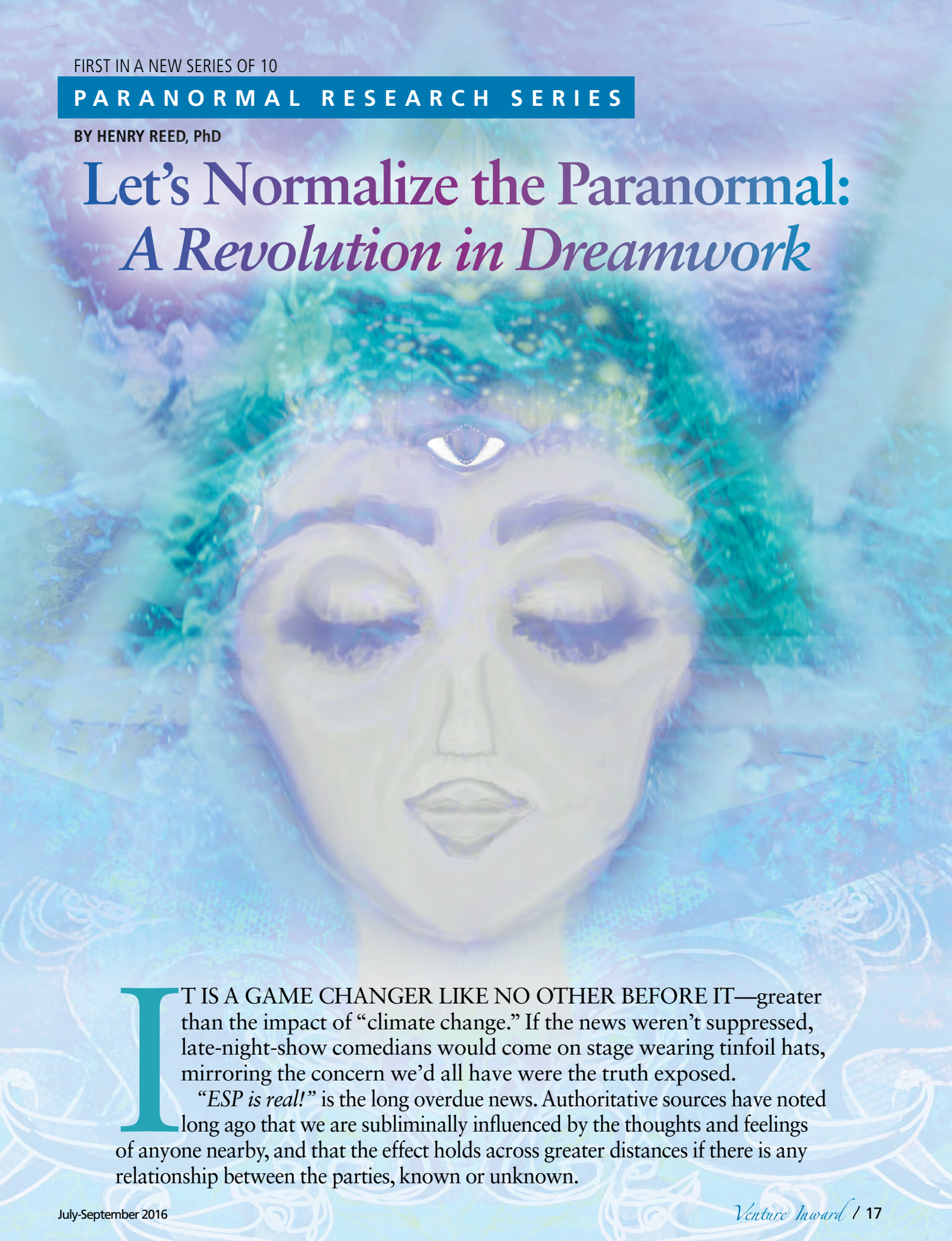


FIRST IN A NEW SERIES OF 10

PARANORMAL RESEARCH SERIES

BY HENRY REED, PhD

Let's Normalize the Paranormal: *A Revolution in Dreamwork*



IT IS A GAME CHANGER LIKE NO OTHER BEFORE IT—greater than the impact of “climate change.” If the news weren’t suppressed, late-night-show comedians would come on stage wearing tinfoil hats, mirroring the concern we’d all have were the truth exposed.

“*ESP is real!*” is the long overdue news. Authoritative sources have noted long ago that we are subliminally influenced by the thoughts and feelings of anyone nearby, and that the effect holds across greater distances if there is any relationship between the parties, known or unknown.

Evidence for ESP is greater than the evidence for the value of aspirin, but publicly there's a position of denial because the implications are overwhelming. It would be like admitting that flying saucers had landed—nothing would ever be the same! The loss of secrecy, of individual sovereignty and responsibility, even of personal identity, is inconceivably at risk—how can society continue? We are already suffering from our inability to deal with the changes we've acknowledged, let alone those we keep at a distance.

Globalization—the emerging interdependence of all life, with its resulting loss of boundaries in many dimensions—will increase psychic interaction among humankind, regardless of our intent. What is the effect? The law of affinity suggests that like minds resonate, and the polarization between those motivated by fear and those motivated by love will intensify. I'll share more about this predicament in future essays.

Members and friends of A.R.E., with their practical study of living in “oneness,” could make an incredibly important contribution to resolving the dilemma posed by the paranormal. Those who have incorporated psychic functioning into their worldview and practical lives are in a position to normalize the paranormal. I believe we have the ability to offer something akin to the creation of Noah's ark. We've affected history before. We can do it again.



I'll share my personal version of this history. It begins when I first heard the name Edgar Cayce almost 50 years ago. It's the story of what writers later called “the modern dreamwork movement.”

I was a psychology graduate student at U.C.L.A. in 1966 when I met up with a fraternity brother from Pomona College, James Turrell, who was president of our class of 1965. James had become a practicing artist with a spacious home studio near the beach in Santa Monica. When I asked him how he found such a wonderful place, he said it was “from a dream.” I was studying dreams in school, but at that time, psychology treated dreams much like a stool sample—something you would take to a doctor for private analysis. People weren't supposed to mess with their dreams on their own. But James, on his own, was using dreams for guidance. When I asked him how he learned to do that, he revealed his secret: “Edgar Cayce.”

James was using the Cayce material to understand the light he experienced in his dreams. He wanted to share that experience in his art. I was amnesic for my dreams, but James helped me create a dream journal. My new life began when I finally remembered a dream. It was about camping in a tent on the land of an old wise man who had flying goats!

As I left California in 1970 to join the psychology faculty at Princeton University, James was creating his first artwork of light. Little did we know that his dream-inspired demonstration, titled “Iltar” from the Cayce readings, would become enshrined in art history when he received the honor of a prestigious John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur “genius award” several years later. Nor did I have any notion that my dreams were going to lead me into important things to come.

I had been at Princeton little over a year when I met Charles Thomas Cayce. It was at a conference at the Menninger Clinic in Kansas. I told him about how I was getting into hot water at Princeton because I was taking a different approach to research. Rather than using the standardized immaculate deception of the students hired to participate in the faculty's experiments, I felt more comfortable collaborating with the students in my experiments, and to good results. My students and I, for example, published in a peer-reviewed journal the first-ever study of what is involved in learning how to remember dreams. Charles Thomas told me that his grandfather had encouraged such an approach to research, and he invited me to come to Virginia Beach to initiate such a program with the A.R.E. membership.



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The Dream

On my first night in Virginia Beach, I slept at Charles Thomas's farm in Sandbridge. There I had a very interesting dream:

We are standing in front of the A.R.E. gathered together for "research into enlightenment." It is dark, and we don't know what to do. We are stumbling and bumping into each other. Suddenly, we begin to dance. Our dance forms a circle. Each dancer is holding a round sign displaying symbols. As we pass by one another in our dance, we recognize each other by these symbols. We are surprised when a fountain of sparks erupts from the center of our circle. It lights up our space and the sky above. Now we can see! We realize that the approach to research that we are seeking is expressed in our dancing.

At the time of this dream, Charles Thomas and I took it to mean that members could have fun doing research as the readings suggested. How to go about it? We decided to give it a try, so I designed a project involving dreams.

A radically new approach to dream interpretation

The Cayce material proposes that our own dreams will teach us how to interpret them. This idea is unique, radical, and highly significant. Hugh Lynn Cayce expressed the idea as, "the best interpretation of a dream is the one you apply." By testing in action an idea from a dream we create a feedback loop that produces corrective guidance from a dream that follows. What an excellent proposition to ask our members to investigate!

At that time, many Cayce students were exploring ways of deriving insights from dreams. At Princeton, Gayle Delaney had started a study group to explore how to decipher dream symbols. Scott Sparrow and Mark Thurston, as college buddies in Texas, were learning how to form insights that corresponded to the kinds of statements Cayce made when interpreting dreams. At A.R.E. headquarters, a course on Edgar Cayce's approach to dream interpretation, "Awaken the Dreamer," was developed.



Illustration by Henry Reed of his dream at Charles Thomas's farm

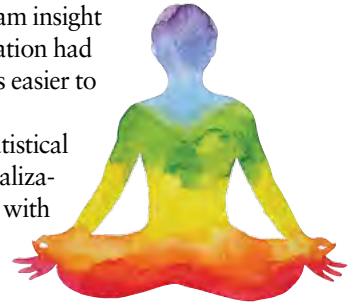
For our home-study research project, I incorporated these interpretation methodologies into a four-week experimental “dream quest.” At its core was Cayce’s basic principle of receiving guidance: in the application comes the awareness. The instruction manual outlined a weekly cycle organized like a treasure hunt: collect dreams, get an insight from them, create a plan of application to pursue for the rest of the week, record new dreams for the next cycle—each week getting closer to the treasure. The idea was to see if folks could make significant progress on some personal issue, concern, or desire by following their dreams in this way.

Hundreds of A.R.E. members participated in the project. A large number reported positive results, sharing stories of making significant discoveries and

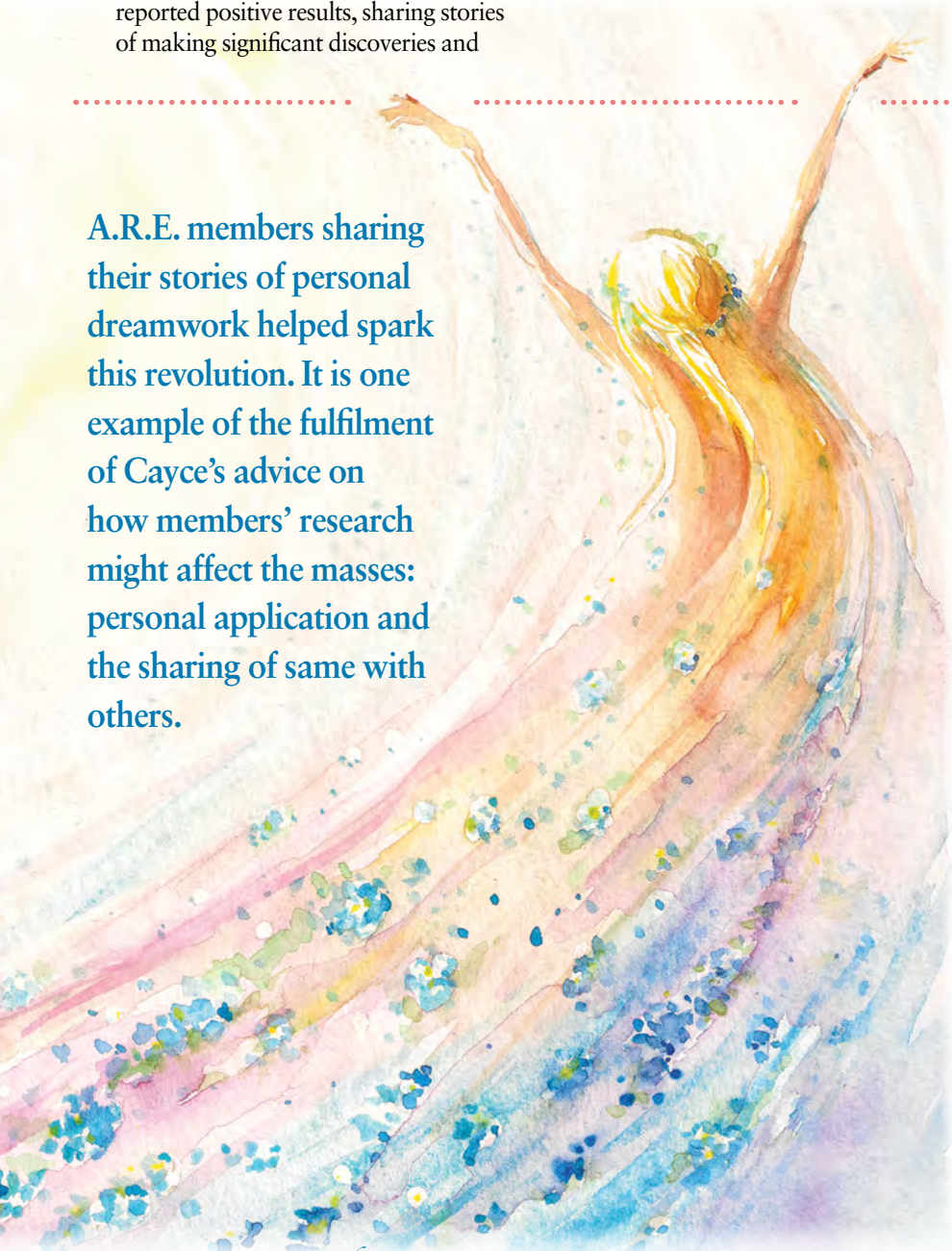
changes based upon their dreamwork. A statistical finding from this study provided important information. Participants maintained a daily log of their activities, including the practice of meditation, dream recall, the understanding of dreams, and application of dream insights.

Tallying their observations revealed that meditation improved dream recall. More important was the finding that applying a dream insight improved dream recall even more than meditation! Application had the additional benefit of making the next morning’s dreams easier to understand—immediately, without “interpretation.”

The participants’ personal stories, combined with the statistical results demonstrated, without a doubt, a very important realization: Ordinary people can form a constructive relationship with their own dreams, without needing the aid of a professional counselor. What is essential is that the dreamer applies the tentative insights for further testing. Someone later remarked that this project “rescued dreams from psychotherapy.” Such a finding has tremendous implications for the introduction of dreams and their perspective into our culture.



A.R.E. members sharing their stories of personal dreamwork helped spark this revolution. It is one example of the fulfilment of Cayce’s advice on how members’ research might affect the masses: personal application and the sharing of same with others.



Feedback from participants pointed to the revolutionary cultural potential of being able to share dreamwork publicly. Some had dreams of a magazine devoted to dreams. I had a dream that followed up on my dream of the research dance, suggesting a parallel to a Native American community ritual, the Sun Dance, and its archetypal relative, the May Pole dance. Fred Davidson, who was president of Atlantic University at that time, and who had personally experienced the power of the “dream quest,” agreed to sponsor a publication devoted to dreams. Because of its dream background and intent, we named the publication *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*.

We invited people to sleep on the subscription form to see how dreams would respond to the idea of having a publication devoted to ordinary people sharing their dreamwork. Subscriptions and accompanying dreams came back in great numbers. Atlantic University published six issues in three years, from 1976 to 1978. Most of the authors were folks who had stories to tell about how they used their dreams to help with issues of health, creativity, relationships, and so on. Many of the dreams that subscribers had about the implications of a public journal devoted to dreams proved prescient of today’s cultural challenges.

News of this unique publication spread beyond A.R.E. members. There were many folks working on their own with their dreams and they were eager to submit articles about their discoveries. It got the attention of dream psychologists and psychotherapists. There was momentum to establish an organization devoted to dreams. With the help of Cayce fan Robert Van de Castle, then at the University of Virginia, and several others, the International Association for the Study of Dreams (IASD) was established. Gayle Delaney, who had since graduated from Princeton with a thesis on dreamwork, was the organization's first president (Scott Sparrow served more recently as president). The official history of the formation of IASD gives credit to the *Sundance* journals as being a significant

impetus and inspiration to start the organization.

The *Sundance* journals made way for a new magazine, *Dream Network Journal*, to continue the momentum for almost 40 more years. In an interview published there, I described a simple effect of the “dreamwork movement.” Before this change in attitude toward dreams, if someone said at a party, “I dreamed about a snake!” folks would snicker, make a joke, and change the subject. As a result of this movement, the response might now be that someone would reply, “What kind of snake was it?” It’s a simple shift, but quite significant, one that leaves the door open rather than slamming it shut. Commercial evidence of this change is that, when our story begins, in the 1960s, there was only one published book written for dreamers—Elsie Sechrist’s *Dreams: Your Magic Mirror*, based on the Cayce readings—whereas today there are hundreds.

A.R.E. members sharing their stories of personal dreamwork helped spark this revolution. It is one example of the fulfillment of Cayce’s advice on how members’ research might affect the masses: personal application and the sharing of same with others. The principle would apply to the mission of normalizing the paranormal. What kind of applicable research might accomplish such a goal?

Inspired by Edgar Cayce’s far memories of the Temple Beautiful in ancient Egypt, we



might gather at one of James Turrell’s light-art installations for some special experiments in accessing the superconscious mind. For example, as we are showered in light, we could make heart connections with one another so that we might experience ourselves surrounded and filled with light and love. Using inspirational writing, we might channel ideas about how to share this revelation with others. It might be a new kind of “rave” that could have wide popular appeal.

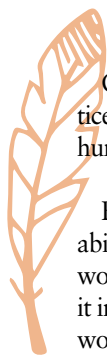
Inspired by the Native Americans’ use of their Sun Dance to effect new possibilities, perhaps we can use Facebook to stimulate dreams which, when collectively applied, would result in our society’s acceptance of the creative use of psychic abilities to improve life on our planet. We might create an “app” that would enable anyone to seek intuitive guidance immediately from a large number of people. [Ed. note: We have a dream group on Facebook: “Dream Interpretation with Edgar Cayce’s A.R.E.,” as well as an app called *Edgar Cayce’s Dream Dictionary*, both linked from EdgarCayce.org/dreams]

The boundary between the spiritual and the psychic is but one of perspective.

Spirituality pertains to the idealization of oneness while the psychic pertains to the soul, or the individualization of oneness. Each needs the other in order to fulfill our destiny.

We can look one another in the eye, for example, and think, “There goes God!” That is an act of conscious attention to the sensory experience of another’s face accompanied by an affirmation. The actual felt experience of oneness and connectedness with the other person, however, comes from within. The experience of oneness is an intuitive response, not a sensory one. We can act as if we are one, which fulfills the spiritual *intent*. The blessing of the *experience* of oneness is a gift of the intuitive heart.


We can discover how the psychic perspective makes a positive difference in our lives. Study group members can be a tremendous resource for inspiring stories. Carol Ann Liaros, selected by Hugh Lynn Cayce to be the first psychic to serve in our training programs because of her research background, has helped countless folks in the Cayce community learn how to make ESP practical. The ‘Edgar Cayce Wayshowers,’ graduates of the training programs, have proven ability to discuss how they’ve used psychic ability to improve their lives. An A.R.E. compendium of cooperating psychics would also be a significant resource in our efforts to discover ways to make ESP useful. Atlantic University students are developing communication and leadership skills to share



Cayce's idealism in contemporary practices and vocabularies. We are wealthy in human resources for this mission.

BEYOND LEARNING to use psychic ability practically to get ahead in the world, we also need to learn how to use it inspirationally to help create a better world. To do so, we must deal with the emotional and social ramifications of psychic oneness. Here is where spirituality has a big role to play. For example, I've published research conducted in the Cayce community demonstrating that the psychology of intimacy is as important, if not more so, than the psychology of brain waves. Interacting in a world of psychically perceived oneness brings up many challenges regarding personal boundaries. How to share of ourselves and yet be true

to our needs? What to make of our individuality? How to deal with secrets, competitiveness, shame, guilt, fear, and all our other favorite sins of separation that tend to make us want to build walls instead of bridges? What I call the "Fig Leaf Factor" has powerful roots in our spiritual history and is not easy to overcome. There are significant issues here. I believe that A.R.E. members, collaborating, can use their spiritually enhanced psychic abilities to come up with workable answers to these challenges. Sharing with others our personally applied answers and approaches will help normalize the paranormal.

Send me your ideas (see below). Let's find out what we light we can create together through our research dance. 

—For most everything mentioned in this article, there is more information and resource material available at edgarcayce-intuitionschool.org/VI-1



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.

Join Henry for his online mentored group:

Sep 14-Oct 11: **NEW! Dream Questing: Discovering Psychic and Intuitive Dreaming.** Visit EdgarCayce.org/online.



You Are Invited to Participate in Pilot Studies



The research we anticipate aims to reveal latent talents and develop methods for using these talents to the best effect for all concerned. Our goal is not so much to see if "Edgar Cayce was right," but rather to explore the implications of his ideas. It will be helpful to have pioneering-minded folks who can support this work and help me in the early stages of pilot testing these new methodologies.

There is a need for individuals to pursue solitary experiments, face-to-face groups of individuals to explore new modes of interaction, as well as individuals who can collaborate with others at a distance.

If you are inclined to explore and learn, email me (henry.reed@atlanticuniv.edu) and let me know of your interests.