

Metaphysics & Mystery - Online Program at <https://charleseisenstein.org/> Session 4 - Story Contributions

By Margaret Emerson

The summer before 9/11, I had a very vivid dream about airplanes flying into skyscrapers. I told my then-boyfriend (now husband) about it. When 9/11 happened, I remembered my dream, and couldn't believe the coincidence...or premonition. When I think of this now, I try to explain it away as mere coincidence. Or my brain just can't fathom that I am capable of tapping into some kind of alternate reality, so I don't have an opinion about my experience. I just know it happened, and thankfully I told someone, so I have "proof".

By Laura Fraser

Hello... between the ages of 11-13 I could see auras. (I've just realised the very word is in my name too, so that if you take away the 'L' you have aura!) first time was in a - suitably enough - religious education class. I was bored & watching the teacher & suddenly I was aware I could see a field of colours around her body. I think it was mainly orange... I remember it so specifically, where I was sitting...where she was standing. I was curious about it. Felt energised & interested by it. Then I would deliberately use this in class assemblies when bored too. All the teachers sat in a line facing us & I'd work along them all to see which colours everyone had.

I had a sense that the colours pertained to a state of being within the teacher, but that none were binding. Then one day, in the car on a weekend, (I went to a weekly boarding school), I asked my mum about it & she didn't know what I was talking about, & I had this sense of oh this is nothing & I lost faith & pretty soon, I could no longer see them, and then just forgot to try.

I remember the one necessary condition was that the person needed to be in front of a white background - a whiteboard, or a wall. More recently I've tried to see them but nothing. Before, seeing auras was as natural as a bird spreading her wings to fly, now...there are no wings to spread. At least with this faculty.

With other things. I've looked at the forum & seen stories of seeing aliveness in children's toys, trees and so on. This is so real for me & almost second nature in the way I relate to them that I wouldn't have thought to make the below comments. But I do have an increasing sense of being around me. About 10/9 yrs ago after drinking ayahuasca, I met 3 angels looking out for me. I used to refer to them for guidance, in my daily life, then stopped & I feel this was really wounding to the relationship so have recently, inconsistently, (they told me to write that!) been trying to reestablish contact. (I think my head is my biggest obstruction to this).

Trees are real beings & my friends...& since moving to the country from London 4 years ago I feel this call to devote my life's purpose to them, from them, but my head is just spinning on that one. More & more though, I'm being led by them. I have an ally, a fig tree in our garden. I go to her for guidance, solace & also joy. I hug & kiss her like a friend. My children know about her, I call her 'Mama Fig' & my son calls her 'Mama,' & they too have allies. My son who is 2, a tree in the middle of the garden, & my daughter, who's 7, hers is one of the lavender plants & the bees. She goes to it for guidance. Because of Machel Wright's book I regularly ask Deva's for guidance (my daughter will firmly ask me to ask my deva about a situation if she feels I'm being unfair & quite normally the Deva's advice is different to what I've stated as truth! - we will always go With the Deva's insight though. Eve also asks her own Deva too).

We also reach out to the Deva's in animals, - my daughter & I, & even my ex With a snake in Africa have had some pretty awesome experiences with animals as a result of communicating to their devas. I had an amazing experience with crows & my daughter in one of London's parks. Eve was 2 years old at the time & I was left keenly with the impression that they were waiting for a request, or more communication from me but I was so amazed by the whole situation It was so extraordinary, I just felt kind of dumb - & redundant in imagination with them - but what am I meant to ask you?! It felt a very charged & potent moment.

I feel the presence of my dead grandmother keenly. And more recently the presence of my father who died when I was 7 years old. I ask them for guidance. With my children we even had a breakfast once with all our dead pets and animal friends joining! Sounds morbid but it was so joyful & we could feel their presence keenly. Even my young son understood & was interacting with them.

I greet our home when I come home & talk to the rooms in our house - I think this is more recent though & inspired by a talk Charles gave in a church in east London a year ago where he spoke of buildings being living buildings. Weirdly though, after my first experience of drinking aya 10 years ago I met my first 'Tatamala' - houses that dream so that humans can

dream. The church we were drinking in was very much alive & because of my experience with it I wrote some children's stories about Tatamalas & fantoozles. The beings that live in them... but that's another story!

By Clare Galloway

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=50&v=giUv5XjmJC0

By Courtney

About ten years ago, I was diagnosed with type 1 (autoimmune) diabetes as a young adult, followed by Hashimoto's Thyroiditis a few months after. With conventional medical treatment (insulin and Synthroid, an insulin pump and continuous glucose monitor), my health stabilized and I eventually adapted to a new normal. I went on to earn a graduate degree, get married, buy a house, and give birth to two healthy boys. After the birth of my second baby, my health again deteriorated. I developed ME/CFS, Fibromyalgia, and an autoimmune kidney condition that resulted in chronic kidney stones. I couldn't understand why all of this was happening to me. I followed doctor's orders, took good care of myself, ate a healthy diet, but I was riddled with daily excruciating pain and fatigue. I tried more medications than I care to list, but nothing helped, and each day brought even more misery. It was unbearable.

Fed up with the lack of true explanations and solutions conventional medical care had to offer, I embarked on a path of natural healing. Over the course of two years, I experienced a good amount of improvement through dramatic dietary changes, supplements, and meditation, but I was still dependent on insulin, Synthroid, antivirals, opiates, and an antidepressant to function. I knew I needed to go deeper to the origin of my illness to experience real healing. In researching the psychospiritual causes of autoimmunity, I came across Charles's essay "Reuniting the Self: Autoimmunity, Obesity, and the Ecology of Health". It resonated more strongly than anything else I had read about autoimmunity at the time. Chronic illness can feel very lonely and isolating, and the essay helped me view my diseases from the lens of the collective. It was no longer just MY diagnosis, MY pain and suffering, MY genetic failures, or MY misfortune. Perhaps my exquisite sensitivity and suffering were gifts meant to reflect the ways in which we ALL have strayed from our inherent beauty and wholeness through the story of separation. And maybe I was experiencing the deepest pain of separation at a dense physical level, not because I was weak or unlucky, but because I was strong, capable, and READY to learn the poignant lessons these illnesses were meant to teach while integrating them into a new state of being.

Not long after reading Charles's essay I saw a recommendation from someone I follow on Instagram for a "healer" who had the ability to help clients become aware of emotional issues and memories that were contributing to physical illness. In the not too distant past, this is something I would have quickly written off as nonsense; a typical scammer trying to exploit sick and vulnerable people. But something about him- his eyes, his voice, his presence spoke to me, and I knew that he could help me. Fortunately, he worked within driving distance from me, and I made an appointment and went to see him. I explained my story and focused on wanting to heal the fibromyalgia and CFS, because it was of course impossible to heal the type 1 diabetes. But he zeroed right in on my pancreas. He said this was the core wound, and all of the other conditions were secondary.

The healer brought my attention to a memory of when I went to visit my dad a few months before my diagnosis with type 1 diabetes. He was deep into alcoholism at the time and extremely drunk. He had always experienced his fair share of personal struggles, but I had never seen him like this. He had lost everything and was sleeping on his mother's floor. All light was extinguished from his eyes, and he was a shell of a man. The healer gently and lovingly guided me through reliving the incredibly painful experience of witnessing my father in this state. Then he posed a question:

"Is it fair to say your father was dying?"

"Yes," I replied.

"And is it possible that your love for and loyalty to your father were so strong, that you didn't want him to be alone, even in death?"

Before I could fully answer, I felt a hot, searing pain in my back, where my pancreas is located. I gasped from the shock of the sensation. Suddenly, I felt the area burst open, and I began sobbing uncontrollably. I felt a toxic sludge pouring out of my back. The healer comforted me as the energetic cyst continued to drain for several minutes. As I gathered myself, he explained that the family is an organism and that even our physical organs remain connected to each other. I was in too much of a daze to ask many more questions or to try to make intellectual sense out of what had just happened, but I knew in that moment that my perception of reality was forever changed.

I saw the healer a few more times in the months that followed, and I gained new and powerful insights with each visit. I became less obsessed with using food and supplements to control my health and more aware of the unconscious emotions that produced each physical condition. Over time, my energy increased and my pain began to dissipate. One by one, I began to shed my medications. I no longer take antivirals, opiate painkillers, or antidepressants. I am able to work again after being disabled for years. My kidney condition is resolved and I no longer have stones. I can exercise, travel, and go to social gatherings without needing to be confined to my bed for days after. I'm human and I still have days where I feel tired and run down, but I consider the fibromyalgia and ME/CFS to be in full remission.

A few months ago, as I was picking up a delivery of insulin pump supplies from my front porch, a thought occurred to me. It said, "You will never again order another box of these." It felt like both a revelation and a command. Prior to my experience with the healer and the transformation of my health, I would have dismissed this as fantasy or wishful thinking. But I recognized it as the next step I needed to take to move away from technologies of control and toward a path of further reunion. I recently transitioned off of an insulin pump and am doing well on injections. I'm feeling like a human

again, and not a cyborg. I'm using less insulin, and I suspect that I have regained some beta-cell function. I remain hopeful that there will come a day when I no longer need to use any exogenous insulin. Conventional medicine says that once beta cells are destroyed, that's it; they're done. But the healer told me he sees that the cells are not dead- they're imprisoned. Regardless of what happens in the future with my health, I feel like I have already experienced the miraculous. I'm so incredibly grateful that I get another shot at living this life with vibrance and vitality.

My father recovered from alcoholism many years ago, shortly after his own father passed away from alcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. We live in different states and often go long stretches of time without speaking, but I now know that we are always connected. I hesitated to tell him this story because I didn't want to cause him any pain, but I finally felt moved to share it him last night. I was touched by how graciously and humbly he received it. He said it was "special healing medicine" for him, too.

It has been nine months since my first visit with the healer. Part of me wanted to wait until I recovered from every single illness to share my story; perhaps that would give it more legitimacy and make it (and me) sound less crazy. But my intuition has led me this far, and it's now telling me that this is the time and place to share. Thank you so much for your work, Charles. It has played an important role in readying me for the rituals that have led me back to health and wholeness.

Your friend,

Courtney

Kate H - Seeing life through my 2yo

I have had experiences myself but my daily reminder is my 2 year old's interactions with 'inanimate' things. Hugging his teddy, saying hello to the moon, kissing the steering wheel of the car to say goodbye after he's been "driving".

I could say he's just not learned the boundaries between what can and can't receive his affection, and he's mimicking or modeling observed behaviours without the appropriate application. But that's just it - he hasn't yet been taught NOT to see life in everything.

By Kirsty Heron

I was sitting in my chair in front of the computer at work, late afternoon in winter, and i was dozing lightly (i was alone in the office). I suddenly heard the voice of my boyfriend saying excitedly "i've found it, the tree i am going to make my djembe drum out of, it's an ash tree with a hollow in the middle". When i got home that evening i walked in the kitchen where he

was and the first thing he told me, excitedly, was that he had found the tree he was going to make his drum with. I stopped him there and said " is it an ash tree and is it hollow?". Of course it was.

I was excited myself about him finding the perfect wood for his drum and even more excited at the personal experience of ...what? SOMething that couldn't be explained by science? Something out of my ordinary experience and not something anyone I knew had talked to me about. I never disbelieved it. I'd heard about telepathy and here I was with the evidence of my own experience. I trust it.

Who am I when include this in my felt sense of who I am? I am someone open to things that can't be explained. I am someone ready to see the universe as alive and vastly full of (as yet) unknowns. I am someone who appreciates the stories that don't fit the current paradigm but point the way toward a more interesting [future](#).

By Sanda Ibrahim

About fourteen years ago, my best friend died from cancer. He was only thirty-eight, and it was both of our's first experience with death. A week earlier he told me he was in remission and I flew to the east coast to help support his recovery. When his sister picked me up, she told me he was dying. His brain was riddled with tumours. When I went to his room, he was a combination of shocked, curious, delighted and afraid. He was also obviously dying. I don't know how anyone could have thought otherwise - but that's a question for another time. He said he was 'going home.'

I stayed as long as I could but had to fly back to Seattle to be with my young family. I slept in his hospital bed and during our last moments together, fed him Graval and applesauce. Very reluctantly, I left. When I got onto the airplane, I pulled aside a stewardess and asked her to seat me in the back so I could quietly cry. She did and came back with some applesauce and Graval.

Right then, I felt my friend inside my body. I began making the noises he was making and felt him inside my cells. The plane was delayed in Vancouver, where we had been roommates a decade earlier. I had brought back with me various letters and items of his that I thought I'd give to our friends in due time. In a quick whirlwind, all the people to whom those items were significant showed up, and I delivered them. I felt like a puppet on a string.

The next day I went back home and immediately had to get on a boat to Victoria, BC. We were moving there and looking for schools. During a visit to a school called St. Michael's, The principal told me that St. Michael was an angel who helped send souls to heaven. After the interview, we went to a playground with the kids, and I played on the monkey bars like I did when I was seven. The light was almost blinding, and I felt weightless - I was sure he'd passed over. I called his sister, and she confirmed it.

Over the next many weeks, I felt a sense of peace, unlike anything I had ever known. The world was so beautiful. I kept testing it, running through scenarios that would destroy me today. I imagined my young children's violent death, and even that didn't disturb my tranquillity. I perceived I was in a place of freedom and indomitable truth - a higher reality, where all truly is well. It was as familiar as the truth, yet almost inappropriate in my everyday life.

I tried to speak about it, but my friends and family responded like I was delusional from grief. I felt like I was watching the human drama from the balcony and didn't mourn his death at all. He was fine, and so was I. Eventually, the 'spell' wore off, and I gradually felt myself sinking back into day-to-day life and the drama that comes with it. I've never really missed him because it's like I know him in two places, here and there, wherever that may be.

I read about near-death experiences and my 'symptoms' line up, but obviously, I didn't nearly die. Just this week, I heard the term Shared Death Experience, and that feels right. I believe that I shared his death experience - to a point.

This gift has wholly altered my understanding of my life. For one thing, I'm not afraid of death. I often long for the peace I felt then, but knowing it's an actual place has altered my sense of what's real. Even if I can't always feel all is well, I know it is. I am forever grateful to my friend for offering me a ride into a world beyond ours. Sandy

By Bar Lubaszka

Our universe is incredible. I've been inspired by the Mandelbrot set for some time now. I think it's incredible that it's random and unpredictable yet everything is somehow connected, with near exact copies of any one element spread throughout the set--at least that's how I understand it. The equation may not be 'the God equation,' but it certainly is a representation of The Inteconnectedness of our universe.

In my own life, I experience this quite profoundly in meditation. My rare moments of stillness change my entire perspective, at least in those moments and the few that follow. In them I feel connected, not alone and not scared. (I realize I'm contradicting my pessimistic outlook with this!) I feel connected to something much greater and it feels as if I Know. Now, I realize that I could be wrong--knowing is dangerous after all--but in those moments I feel as if I Know that everything is as it is supposed to be. I Know that all I need is to give up my need to control everything--and in those moments I do because it feels like the most natural thing in the world--and the universe, at every level of zoom (every dimension; every possible juncture), will take care of everything that is important. I felt it for the first time when I was ordained. I was sitting there in meditation and was suddenly flooded with the Knowing--except it was peaceful--not like a flood. I tried putting it into words at the time for some people around me. I was telling people that I knew that as long as I have faith in God (mentioning God can make some Buddhist's roll their eyes) then everything I need would be taken care of--but

nothing more. I had already given up everything as a monk, but I decided to return to a lay life, become an English teacher and move to Indonesia to find a job. I found a job and a wife and a family and more meaning to life than I ever had before.

Indonesia is a muslim majority country, and it was impossible to escape the effects of Islam on society. I was so positive about everything at the time that it was simply impossible to miss the purpose of salat--to surrender to God five times a day (because it's hard to do it all day long)... That brought me to Sufi teachings about how we can make every smallest action an expression of love towards God! My wife is muslim and although to the outside observer, we couldn't be any more different from each other, we've never had a single disagreement about spirituality, or our paths to God. It has always been so natural to practice alongside each other.

Nowadays, this Knowing is not a permanent fixture. I look for it at times and it comes to me when least expected. I don't know why it doesn't stay as it did before. But it's the answer to every question I have. Actually, it nullifies questions. It makes me fearless. Death, pain and suffering are also nullified. They are transitional and irrelevant to the beauty and sentience of The Universe. We are all in service of this One Life and so our misunderstandings don't matter. Nothing is lost and everything is for everything and everyone. We are of course not separate from God.

This is evidence of the interconnectedness of our universe for me. Expressing it in words makes me the crazy one of the entire extended family and my community.

With Love
Bar

By Cecilia Lucas

I've been blessed with several experiences that have expanded my sense of reality and increased my overall openness/humility, but the most "otherworldly" type experience I have had occurred when I was a teenager. I was with a friend, we were outside and drinking too much. (I do not believe that fact makes the story unreliable, because the thing that occurred had a remarkably sobering effect, actually.) I procured another bottle of alcohol that I opened by smashing the top of it against a stone planter. This led to the edges of the bottle being jagged glass, which I was not really conscious of, as a result of being too drunk. When I took a drink from the bottle, a chunk of glass came off into my mouth. As I was starting to swallow, I felt an incredibly strong presence hit my back, forcing me to spit out what was in my mouth, including the chunk of glass. While as a younger child, I had had many experiences of hearing voices (not all benevolent, and not in a way that feels similar to what people with schizophrenia describe), and had also had experiences of "spirit" presences around me, and even the occasional frightening experience in a half-asleep state of a not-necessarily-benevolent presence weighing down on me, this experience of being hit in a way that prevented me from swallowing a chunk of glass was the first time (only time, in quite this way) that I had such an extraordinarily visceral experience of a non-visible-being physically/corporeally intervening in my life. In addition to it expanding my sense of reality, I

chose to interpret the experience as evidence that there is purpose to my life, and that I need to treat it as sacred.

That said, I have some questions that have come out of this last session, and I unfortunately can't attend the Ask Me Anything session live, so I'll include them here. In a nutshell, my questions are about the interplay of choice/agency and predetermination. The concept of the infinite creativity of life has always been intuitive and easy for me to accept. The concept of predetermination has been more confusing, and something I have various kind of resistance to.

For example, I often bristle at the phrase, "Everything happens for a reason." (Which is very different than the notion that we can make meaning out of everything.) Or variations such as, "It's all part of God's plan, it's not for us to understand," etc. John Powell distinguishes the inherent suffering of life from the surplus suffering that we unevenly heap onto certain people by design. And when it comes to the latter, this notion of predetermination feels like a cruel unwillingness to engage in the work of transforming the causes and conditions that lead to such avoidable surplus suffering.

That said, learning in this session about the Mandelbrot Set brought up a lot for me around this question of predetermination. And the Buddhist teachings I've engaged in do, too, in that there is a practice of developing compassion (as well as understanding of truth) rooted in learning to recognize how everything is embedded in causes and conditions. And this is an infinitely creative process in that all actions lead to the next new set of causes and conditions for other actions.

In regards to cultivating compassion, this feels like a useful story, even as it requires drastically rethinking our common concepts of agency. However, the more stark version of this presented through the Mandelbrot Set, which emphasizes the PREDICTABILITY of the infinite creativity of life, circles me back to this deeply upsetting/unsettling set of questions around whether that means that all the surplus suffering, that feels like it should be avoidable, is actually an unavoidable part of the process; is part of the preexisting, albeit infinitely complex, design, and the issue is just waiting for it to be revealed how long some of these patterns of inflicting surplus suffering remain part of the set, so to speak.

Because interbeing itself, in my understanding of it, is not a truth that we haven't fully lived into yet. It's a truth that we are always all already living (everything impacts everything), but the precise NATURE of that interbeing is what's at stake. Right now, the nature much of our interbeing takes is that some lives are accumulating excess by extracting from others. Whereas where we want to go (I hope) is a form of interbeing defined by greater reciprocity. (Many years ago, I wrote some about that here:

<http://www.buddhistpeacefellowship.org/dreaming-of-debt-practicing-preparations/>)

But is that evolution (back) to ways of living rooted in enabling collective thriving of all beings (at least to the extent possible, in a system in which all individual lives exist at the expense of other life) already on a predetermined timeline? In a way, that could relieve a lot of anxiety around existential questions of what we should be doing with our lives, etc. and free up our energy to just trust whatever our role seems to be unfolding as at any given moment. To fully give ourselves over to playing our parts in a pre-written play, so to speak. Not necessarily a

passive process, but one with a certain flavor of surrender and trust. But does that then mean we are also trusting that the people torturing, raping, killing, exploiting, etc. are also just playing the parts that are theirs to play, and it is just an unfortunate part of the bigger unfolding of life? And that the various ways we are also complicit in all of those things are out of our control, until they're not, but that it's not really a question of our agency, it's not in our control, to change things, until the larger system has determined the change should happen?

And, if we recognize that causes and conditions are not only external, but that even our capacities for introspection, curiosity, effort, attention, etc, etc, etc, are also, to various extents, outside of our individual control, thus calling the whole notion of choice and agency into question, then what does it mean to be a responsible/accountable being? If even our capacities to be responsive, to be in relationship, are rooted in causes and conditions beyond our control?

That was a pretty long-winded question (at least compared to the conciseness we've been trained to adhere to, lol). I also have one much shorter one that is much more specific, because sometimes I think it is in digging deeply into the nitty-gritty that we start to unfold new layers:

Are you an organ donor, and what do you want to have happen with your body when you die? And why have you chosen what you've chosen in regards to this question?

With gratitude,
Cecilia

By Kristin Marie - The Rock People and An Impossible Dream

I am one who believes and experiences the universe and world as living and intelligent and interactive. Here are two stories that come to mind.

In my late 20's I had the honour of working with some indigenous shamans in Mexico over a period of 3 years. While I was consuming a bunch of peyote and doing ceremony I started to see, hear and feel the beings inside the rocks. I call them the Rock People. This happened on 5 different occasions and was all at once perplexing, heart shattering and humbling beyond belief. One of the experiences was also shared by others in my group so I was not the only one to see it. The other times, it was just me who seemed to be able to tap into this energy for some reason. One of the messages I got on one occasion was "go back and tell the people to pick us up, to hold and touch us." I got the sense the rock being wanted to remind us it was alive and by somehow holding and touching them we could give and receive information or make a connection to them that is needed. On another occasion, I became lost on a mountain and was trying to find my way back down when I could sense

the being inside this giant and most spectacular rock formation, I was overcome with a sense of love, awe and a feeling of a deep and ancient connection that is hard to describe in language. It was incredibly difficult for me to leave this rock and I had a sense if I ever tried to find it again, I would not be able.

A deja-vu and dream.....

Once when I was in Sedona, I was in a very playful, child like state of wonderment. I was walking on a trail with my husband when suddenly I had a strong feeling of deja -vu. I was able to recall that I had a dream two years prior of this very scene, the trail where I was walking. I began to tell all the details of what was going to come on the trail as we walked, kind of re-entering the dream. Then I became excited as I remembered in my dream there would be a large tree around the corner and if I walked up and went behind this tree I would find a crystal in the bark. Sure enough, I walked right up to the same tree, went around the back and found an actual crystal embedded in the bark of the tree. The only difference was in my dream the crystal was much larger and in waking life the crystal I found was small. I still have it to this day to remind me that anything is possible.

By Peggy

Story #1: What stories stay in your memories? Who has mystical experiences and why? How do you survive when your heart has been ripped out? Why do you still breath?

My story is complicated by the above questions because they involve the same story. I grew up on 160 acres of farmland. The land and the animals, the weather and the mystery – all contributed to my naïve wonder, and innocent understanding of life. I didn't have the words sacred or miraculous, just an innate sense of awe and curiosity. The quick facts – grew up, married, dealt with infertility, divorced, remarried, adopted a beautiful baby boy with a heart condition, and fell in love. There is other pertinent information involved which will be omitted to keep the story from losing focus. The child was precious and prone to infections, but typical in active boy behavior and produced many the humorous moments. When he was 10, my mother passed away; the next year my grandmother; the next year my father. The boy turned 13 and developed some heart arrhythmias but was fine. It was a stressful time as you can imagine. One Monday morning, I woke up and went back to sleep. An amazing dream happened. I was surrounded by golden light. I was moving up into the light. I was told that I needed to open my arms and reach out as I rose up. I felt the light moving into every aspect of my being for, I don't know how long, and I woke up. I felt whole and at peace in a way that I had not felt for years. It was a miracle and I relaxed into it, grateful.

The next day, Tuesday, while volunteering for an Easter program, I received a call. Your son has collapsed. They are resuscitating him. Come now. When I arrived at the hospital, I was informed of his passing. I had never fully experienced love before he came into my life. I had never experienced healing like occurred in the full body experience of golden light. I had, and will never again, experience the excruciating pain that is felt when your child is gone, in the way that death requires.

Then the questions, why now? Why would I be healed only to be crushed? Was this some kind of grace that allowed him to transition and left me breathing but without my heart... This story is full of so much. It breaks my heart again to tell it – and yet, life is still the mystery and the miracle. Without the wonder of that love, I would not be the same. I don't understand the rest. I don't understand why people hurt each other or why they don't understand that life must be embraced. I only know that life, in all of its manifestations, is magnificent beyond words, and I am still grateful, and I still mourn, for such is life...

Post AMA follow up by Peggy for Story #1: The conversation with Charles last night was touching, and incomplete in some ways - perhaps because of some awkwardness on my part, and I knew that there were time constraints. The process of writing the stories has allowed me time to ponder the question - why the golden light just prior to his passing. I now imagine that it was like planting a seed. It gave me an experience of wholeness even though I could not fully understand it. I was not able to bring the experience into - not really a conclusion, but a more profound healing. I think it gave me motivation to follow through with the "rest of the story" that is below. If it serves, please pass on to Charles. If you want it for the course content, that is also fine.

Months into grieving and trying to process the loss of Sean, I decided, out of a sense of desperation, to go to a Zen Center in New Mexico that I had visited many times. This time I went as a student for the 7 day sesshin with the 93 year old Japanese Roshi. His other students had spoken highly of his teaching. We were up, robed and sitting in silent meditation at 4 am and finished each night at 9 pm. I met with the Roshi twice a day with a koan. The first 24 hours the tears never stopped coming. I spoke of my struggle with Sean's absence and I was given the koan - "where are you when you are sewing". On the third day, I came in to see him as usual. He would ask for understanding on the question. This time, I had reached a place of openness - just sewing - not the motion, not the thought, not the needle - just sewing. I felt the boundaries drop away and experienced a sense of radiance and awareness - there were no boundaries, no separation, everything was All. He reached forward and

took my hands and said - "here is where you find Buddha, here is God, and here is your son. He never was in a picture or the scent of his clothes or a memory. He is here. And he was and I was at peace. This same experience happened four or five more times when in the presence of the Roshi for our daily visits. I don't know how or what he did to facilitate the "golden radiance". Something - "morphic resonance", telepathy, energy shift...? I came home after the sesshin changed. I still was aware of the huge loss but I also knew deeply that we were connected always, never separate. I felt in an altered state for many weeks after returning home. I continue to experience a sense of assurance, if you will, of our profound inter-connectedness. Participation in this course with you all has brought clarity and hope - for the more beautiful world that my heart has experienced and knows is possible.

Blessings to you all,

Peggy

Story #2: My mother, at age 62, collapsed with a ruptured cerebral aneurysm . She was able to be revived by an ER doctor that lived in her building. Had emergency surgery, multiple shunts, brain swelling, etc. Left paralyzed on left side with extremely limited cognitive function. She recognized her family and was limited to simple sentences - I'm hungry, I'm tired, etc. Six years later, there very little change although she had gotten some right side hand/arm strength improvement. I went to see her in rehab, push her wheelchair around the loop and said - I love you mom - see you next time. She said to me "oh wait, let's talk." I am surprised and think - this is going to be a short conversation - but I pushed her back into the courtyard. She proceeded to talk coherently with intact questions and responses for 30 minutes. I left in shock, my mother had returned. I cried a bit of happy tears on the way home. Before I saw her in a couple of days, she saw the Dr. and was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She passed away about six weeks later. She was never coherent after our brief courtyard experience. I have had other transcendent "Oneness, gold light, unconditional love" experiences but never something so sudden and without explanation. Her brain had suffered multiple "insults", swelling, etc. She had effectively died multiple times during her trauma, surgery, and slow physical recovery. How were her memories, her speech so gone - and so briefly back right before she completed the dying process... I could try and explain it away with "the brain is a powerful mystery and able to do things we cannot understand" and "strange things happen when we are dying", but I am okay with - who we are is not dependent on our brain, that we are more than the biology that we present in physical form, that consciousness cannot be defined in the limited understanding that mechanistic science tells us...

Story #3: Upon reflection, my current story is built on many evolving experiences - some traditional and some "mystical"... The individual stories of non-traditional experiences opened up my consciousness and acceptance of "something more" that oftentimes refuses to be defined in available languages. It started, I am imagining, as a search for communion, for connection, for a story beyond separation. At the core, however, is a love of life - and I mean all life - which includes trees and rocks and rivers and clouds and kittens and fireflies, etc. I admit a less than honest appreciation for ticks and mosquitoes and infectious diseases - however, I can see the interconnections and importance to the diversity of life! I think that being open to the mystery outside of the rational is important; that questioning and welcoming of wonder and mystery into your life is important; that letting go of "expectations" and just being fully present is important. I read at statement once - "a leaf does not have to believe in photosynthesis in order to be green" just as we do not have to believe in a consciousness/reality beyond our understanding in order for it to be authentic... Enjoy the journey, life will happen because that is what it does!

By Rachel Wakefield - Some impossible things

This one happened a few months ago. I was getting ready to read a library book that I wanted to take notes on, so I took a piece of paper from the scrap paper box and folded it in quarters to use as a bookmark that I could write on. This paper happened to be left over from a lesson about the Arabic writing system that I taught at our homeschool co-op, and had the word "salam" (peace) printed in large Arabic script. After I had folded it in quarters with the writing facing inward, I could feel there was something in there. I opened it up and there were four seeds. I immediately felt like I was going crazy and started coming up with explanations. The seeds must have been stuck to the paper before I folded it - but then how could I not have noticed them as I was flattening and smoothing the paper as I folded it? They look like apple seeds - yes, the kids must have left an apple core in the scrap paper box. But there was no apple core, and they never chew the core down to the seeds anyway.

So I go back and forth between thinking the seeds were already stuck there and thinking that something magical happened. A third possibility that scares me is that I'm crazy. Who am I when I accept that something happened that can't be explained? I'm both fearful and joyful - because it means I don't understand anything at all, and that anything can happen. Until now I hadn't dared think too much about it or consider what it might mean, but it just occurred to me: I was given four seeds of peace. Maybe the four seeds represent the four children in my family. Maybe I was given the job of nurturing these seeds of peace.

If the seeds were already stuck there, the world feels safe and predictable, and I'm a logical person, a careful thinker and not crazy at all. This feels comforting, but it also feels sad. To have felt the possibility of magic and then decided it's not real.

This next story happened to my husband and he shared it during the online Space Between Stories course that Charles did in 2015, but I thought I'd share it again here because it gives me chills every single time I think about it. This one doesn't have any plausible rational explanation that I can think of. It seems like proof that the world doesn't operate the way we think it does.

When he was ten he was building a robot from a kit, but was missing one of the robot's wheels. He was obsessed with finding it and even called the company repeatedly to see if he could order it, but it wasn't available. One night he had a dream that he stopped at a yard sale with his mother, and that he wandered off and crawled under a table on the left and then made his way through various junk piles until he came to an area that was not part of the sale. There was a barrel there and he reached in and at the bottom of the barrel was his robot part. A few weeks later he stopped at a yard sale with his mother and immediately recognized it from the dream. Literally thousands of details were identical to the dream: the set up, the things for sale, the various pieces of junk. He sort of reentered his dream and went under the table on the left and around the junk piles, found the barrel, reached in and pulled out his robot part, exactly the one he needed.

By Mirjam van der Zee

I really love this concept of prophetic speech. I know it personally, but I tend to use it more towards the past, which has consequences for the future too. Among other things I am a massage therapist, and I 'see' energy 'vains' (like electricity) going from the start of things, through the universe(s), through stars and planets, all grouped in a specific way for each of us - like astrology vains. A lot of earthly illnesses are caused by knots or tightness in those energy vains. Sometimes I can untangle those knots or tightnesses. This might take away the illness, or at least the pressure to get worse - sometimes the body parts are beyond repair.

And I do meditations in which people go into their past - they travel along the maternal line for example, to solve or heal or communicate about karmic stuff. When you truly heal something in your familyline or your mental/emotional/psychic realms, it will also be solved for your children.

And I know how to enter dreams, to get more info or to change things. I don't do this often, hardly ever. Stories are there for a reason, I think. But I know, both from my own experience and from what I have seen with other people, that it is possible to change those realms too.

So I love this concept of prophetic speech, never heard that term, and it fits onto something I am familiar with and it creates new options for me. First there is the word and the concept, then reality can kick in...

Thank you!