

The Mortal Coil

and other out of body experiences



Scott D. Hale

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By Scott D. Hale

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Preface

I do not consider myself to be someone who *believes* in things. I am skeptical until I see proof. When I was in film school, I read a book in which the author claimed to listen to a sound program that made him see his dead relatives.

On a family vacation to Santa Fe, New Mexico as a kid, on a historic ghost tour, they claimed that there was a spot on the porch of an old house where a ghost materialized every year on the same night.

If that were true wouldn't everyone in the world want to see it? I thought, "Of course!" I don't remember where that old porch in Santa Fe is, but I wish I knew, I'd still go, on that special night. Likewise, when I read a book in which the author described an audio program that made him see ghosts, I thought, I would totally listen to them. Unlike the old porch, these sound programs were not hard to find in an age of the Internet. I found the very programs described in that book and I gave them a try. Over a period of a few months I proceeded through the course and one afternoon I had an out of body experience that changed my perspective.

The purpose of this composition is to simply write down my experiences. I am attempting with this manuscript to clearly document what my experiences have been in the most basic language I can. My enthusiasm for this subject is the driving force behind this writing, and it is my aim to convey my personal experiences and further explain the theory and science behind this phenomenon. It is also my aim in writing this book to clarify for myself what I don't understand.

Part I

Chapter 1. The Mortal Coil

The summer after sixth grade I went to Boy Scout camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains. We slept in tents. There were latrines (ditch toilets) and not much running water. We filled canteens and we ate dinner in a mess hall. We had an "exercise" where they marched us 5 miles away from camp on a gravel road at sunset and then onto a trail into a secluded part of the woods. Everyone was instructed to build a shelter and sleep in it for the night. We were trained beforehand how to make a primitive shelter. So I made one by taking a log and putting it at an angle against a tree, and then lashing sticks over top of it. And I "slept" in it all night. It was uncomfortable and very cold and damp. I won't even mention the spiders.

One afternoon at our campsite, in a field behind our tents, a group of kids from my Boy Scout troop were gathered in the clearing. I had returned from lunch or some merit badge activity and I approached them and I asked what was going on and they said, "We're making people pass out." This was not a camp activity. It was a couple of the "bad" kids and they demonstrated how it was done on somebody, who then fainted, and I said that I wanted to do it, because I had never fainted before.

So the instructions were: crouch down, breathe heavily in and out, deeply for about 30 seconds and when you do this you start to get dizzy. Then you stand up and someone squeezes your

chest from behind or pushes on your chest against a wall and essentially you just pass out. When you start out, all the blood rushes to your head, and you are breathing heavily so there is a lot of oxygen going to your brain. And then you stand up and hold your breath while someone squeezes your chest and there is a lack of oxygen, and you pass out.

Here's what happened. I crouched down and started breathing deeply. My head was between my knees and I could feel the blood rushing to my head and I could feel a tingling sensation in my fingers. I did the breathing for about 30 seconds.

The group previously concluded that the longer you breathe in this crouched position, the more effective the passing out will be. Either you will stay passed out longer or go deeper, but they were somehow related. After 30 seconds I stood up. The preferred method outside is you hold your breath and stand up straight and someone gives you a bear hug with your arms inside of their arms and they squeeze around your chest from behind. After about 5 seconds I started to feel really light headed and tingly and then everything started to fade to black. My surroundings faded to black around me and I found myself in a dark void. I was floating in this space, I looked down and my body was surrounded by a spiral that appeared to be train tracks. It was a spiral made of train tracks, complete with a double rail and the planks connecting them. And on this train track was a big compartmentalized train, but each of the compartments were more than a 3-dimensional thing, they were ideas and memories from my life.

I was witnessing this as a three dimensional scenario, but I also perceived each one of these compartments of this train as a portal into those moments in time. I was floating in the center of this coil, and I was able to extend myself into each compartment, and I would go into that compartment and re-experience that thought, or that moment in time, as if I was there. And I got lost in this happening, and I went in and out of numerous compartments of moments and it felt like a lifetime of being in this world, but then instantly – BAM! I hit the ground. The world slowly faded back in visually and then my memory came back as well. I remembered that I was at Boy Scout camp, that I was in 6th grade and I had just passed out for the first time.

I stood up and I said, "Wow, how long was I out?" And they said that I just hit the ground. They said I slumped over and hit the ground. They said I was out for less than a second and that I had my eyes open the whole time! But to me the experience that happened lasted what felt like a lifetime, what felt like an infinite expanse of time. It felt like it was a vantage point that was natural to be in. They said that I just hit the ground and that I was just out for a second.

At the time, there were specific memories that I had, while I was "out", but I was only 12 years old at the time, so I don't remember specifically what they were. I do remember at the time, thinking these were very concrete experiences I went into, like the time I caught my first fish, or learned to ride a bike. They seemed like very concrete, real experiences that I had gone into, and they showed me the sum of my life to that point.

That was when I realized that time was relative and dreams may only last a second but they might seem to last an infinite amount of time. When it happened, I considered it a dream but I don't consider it a dream anymore. An actual dream can't happen instantaneously at the beginning of a forced "sleep cycle" like being made to pass out. This was an altered state induced by the stress of being made to pass out or a near death experience where your "life flashes before your eyes". Apparently my flashing life took the train!

Years later I heard the term "the mortal coil", and after I heard it I thought, the mortal coil? Well wait a second. What was that thing that I found myself in? That could be considered my mortal coil, because it was directly related to my life, and it was literally a coil that surrounded me. The phrase can be found in Shakespeare's Hamlet.

"To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,

And by opposing end them? To die, to sleep,
 No more; and by a sleep to say we end
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;
 To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there's the rub:
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this **mortal coil**,
 Must give us pause – there's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life."

--from William Shakespeare's Hamlet

Chapter 2. Growing Pains

Currently, as I write this book, or rather dictate it to my handy digital recorder. I am driving in Livermore Valley wine country to get inspired. I am looking for Tesla Rd. And I am going to take a right. I am driving next to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. They grow grapes next to where they store nuclear waste, yum!

Childhood is inherently mysterious. The young, new, uninitiated are confused and trying to figure out the ways of the world. Even the day-to-day behaviors of adults seem mysterious to children. The experience I had with the mortal coil created a sense that I didn't have all the answers, that science didn't have all the answers. Growing up I was skeptical of people who claimed to have seen aliens or ghosts, but I was also skeptical of people who were atheists or didn't believe in ghosts. How could they be 100% sure? I don't know. I can't say that these things don't exist. I just don't know.

When I was around 5 years old or even younger, I remember nights when I couldn't sleep. Sometimes I was put to bed early and I couldn't sleep. I hadn't expended enough energy during the day. My parents put me to bed early anyways. They said, "You don't have to sleep, but just be quiet in your room".

As I'd fall asleep, sometimes I would feel sort of an uncomfortable feeling, kind of a throbbing throughout my body, like a falling feeling, a tingly feeling. Not a good feeling. And it felt like time was thick and slow. I wouldn't be able to sleep and I had this weird feeling in my head and in my body and I would roll over and toss and turn and I wouldn't feel any better so I would sit up and crouch with my head between my knees and I would rock back and forth, and the rocking feeling made my head feel better. It sort of made what ever that sensation was, go away.

As a child I would have various aches and pains and my mother would say, oh it's growing pains no matter if it was leg cramps or a headache. When I was a kid I had terrible leg pains and my mother would just say, oh they're just growing pains. How do you have "growing pains"? Maybe I was dehydrated, I don't know. But the interesting thing about those sensations was that it felt like time was slowing down. I felt a thickness, like time had a viscosity. Like there was a thickness to time, and the rocking brought it back to a manageable thickness. There was a thickness in my head that seemed to effect time. This was in the middle of the night when I couldn't sleep and I felt weird but wasn't completely awake.

I speculate that I was probably in the theta brain state, just completing a sleep cycle. Growing up, I never really thought about what was causing it, I took the experience for granted. But it definitely was an altered state of consciousness because it was in the middle of the night or upon waking from a dream.

An awareness of altered states was emerging. Even in childhood I was starting to recognize feeling weird, feeling different sensations at certain times. I always considered the mortal coil a

dream, but I thought of my dreams as a portal into some other possible dream world. Early on, as a kid, this idea of a dream world started to develop, and that the world of my dreams might be a concrete place of some kind. Concrete in the sense that it really existed, not just as a figment of my imagination, but also as a real place, even if it's a private universe, a real one to myself.

Here is my short story that I wrote in Elementary School:

I Climbed

A By

Tree Scott
Male



This Book is Dedicated
To My Family

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One day I climbed up a tree into the sky. I saw this
fantasy world right in front of me. I was careful not to
fall into it until a bird pushed me into it.



In the fantasy world everything was so weird. Everything was
upside down.

Even people were weird. I had to get out of there, so I climbed up another tree into the sky and I saw my world. I quickly jumped into it. I got there safe and sound. I climbed down the tree and never went up it again. From that day on my favorite color was red. It had been green, but the tree changed my mind!



The next day my brother Michael asked me if I wanted to climb up a tree. I said, "No way! Are you crazy?" Then I pulled my hair out. "I can not stand trees!" But my brother wouldn't listen to me. He grabbed me and climbed up the same tree!

I said, "Stop! You must stop!" But he still would not listen to me! We got to the top of the tree and instead of the fantasy world we saw a village of tiny little men dancing around us. I thought they were leprechauns.



My brother thought they were Littles but they were in green so they must have been leprechauns. I asked, "Are you leprechauns?" They said, "Yes." Then I suddenly said "I got ya!" and I grabbed one.

I put him in a cage that I brought from when my brother grabbed me. I finally had a leprechaun!



Now I could finally be rich, but how could I get out of there? Wait a minute, I thought. I don't want to get out of here. If I do, I won't be able to get any more leprechauns. So I'll stay here awhile.

I jumped again. I did not get another leprechaun, but I did get a piece of gold. I shouted out, "I'm rich! I'm rich!" My brother said, "We are?" "Yes!" I said with excitement. I had never been so excited in my life.



I had to go now so I could eat my dinner. My mom and dad would never have believed me. I'm not sure I believed it myself so I jumped out of the tree and ran into my house.



It is interesting to me that I would write a story with this theme. The story has a profound set of subconscious symbols. The tree symbolizes a way of accessing non-ordinary realms of awareness, and the gold is riches of knowledge and experience.

Chapter 3. Man is Machine

As a kid I spent a lot of time lying down on the floor staring at the lights. That explains a lot, I guess. I would squint and allow less light in, and my iris would open, or I would open my eyes wide and my iris would close. If I lay perfectly still, my iris would open and close, open and close like an auto iris on a video camera, trying to find the perfect balance. As I lay there I could actually feel my iris, independently from my will, dilating open and closed, in and out. I could feel the mechanisms working on their own. This made me aware of my body as a machine and how my consciousness seemed to be separate from that machine. These early experiences combined with the mystery of the mortal coil, fostered a natural curiosity that I think was healthy and essential.

As a kid I asked myself when my hair and nails were cut, "Is that me?" "If the outer layer of skin is dead than how deep before it is alive?" "How deep before it is really me?" Where am I in my body? I realized that if I went deep enough into the "living" tissue I still wouldn't find myself and I would come out the other side. Another thought involves the sense of self in relation to what we have. Things like our jobs, money, etc. I remember saving up to buy something, and after I spent the money, I remember asking myself if I felt like less. I didn't. The I, that is me, is not connected to money or things in that way.

I have wondered all my life why the universe gave each of us the most amazing machine ever created (the human body), yet never supplied an owner's manual. No resource for proper maintenance and "how to", such as, how to live.

It's no wonder kids and young adults feel so lost in our society. Our modern culture has no proper rites of passage into adulthood, which *actually* address the fears of that young person, or shows them what adulthood is, what life's about and what they should aspire to. Ancient cultures, traditional cultures all have had this rite of passage but it has been lost to most of us. So many people have rejected or looked beyond their own heritage and family religions, and so they don't even have traditions that their parents or grandparents held dear.

Chapter 4. Art

I was predisposed to want to explore the world and try new things. I love to learn about different cultures and explore things that I don't understand that are not familiar. With that curiosity in mind I went out into the world. As a young adult, my curiosity remained because of experiences I had which sustained it. Contrarily, I also had the skepticism of any rational person. I grew up with an understanding of what was normal. Things in my life were always a-b-c-d, Mon-Fri, inside, outside. It was a Sesame Street view of the world. Skepticism combined with the notion that the world is magic and mysterious created a good climate for honesty and soul searching.

As a young kid I was always interested in art. I was painting watercolor at 1 year old with these watercolors for kids. They were basically coloring books with little dots of watercolor printed on the page. And when you took water and brushed over these little deposits of paint, it would free the pigment and color the page. As a very small child, 1 or 2 years old I realized that I could wet the brush, mash it into these dots and soak up the color from these dots and paint with the color anywhere I wanted.

This had a profound effect on me. The way I saw art, I was always an artist growing up, I always identified with art. People would look at those watercolors I did, or later pencil and crayon drawings and say, "Wow, you're a little artist aren't you?" I would say, "Yes, I am."

Growing up, art illustrated (no pun intended) to me at a young age, that I could create something, take an idea, start a project, actualize something, and follow through to the finish. Art can be used as

a way to communicate and express oneself, and engage in the world. Art creates an identity. A child can say, “I am an artist. I can create this and express myself, and communicate in this way”. That creates a feeling of satisfaction and self worth that is very important for young kids. A person of any age can grow and benefit from creating and finishing a work of art. That feeling can be applied to any aspect of life. If you ask a kid to take on a monumental task in their family life or their emotional life, but they can’t complete things or they are shy, it’s hard. But if they already have a background in which they think, “Well I have completed a series of artworks because I enjoyed creating them, maybe I can rise to this challenge, even though it may be difficult. Art is very important to people of every age to be able to express themselves, communicate ideas, illustrate concepts beyond what words can express. But for kids it is extremely valuable to create identities and self worth and the initial foundations of responsibility and following through. I took art classes throughout my elementary, junior, and high school years. My county offered summer Art classes that would never be available during the school year. Classes offered included Airbrush techniques, Computer Art, Stage Combat, and Video Production to name a few. It was like a college experience where you were in charge of creating projects and managing your time, and working effectively with a group. These positive experiences built on top of previous success and I felt confident in my creative abilities.

I decided to go to art school when I learned that you could still earn a Bachelor’s Degree and not have to take any math classes. I was always attracted to drawing and painting, and I took art classes all through high school. The fact that art could be a vehicle for a real degree was an attractive idea. I went to The Savannah College of Art and Design and I took it very seriously. I graduated with a Double Major in Computer Art/ 2D Animation and Video/ Film.

Chapter 5. The Drum

I have been playing drums since I was 12 years old. I took drum lessons for 2 years, and then continued to play in a number of bands throughout my high school and college years and I continue to compose and record music as an adult.

My fascination with the drums began when I was 12 years old. Before then I had always thought that big drums were cool, tribal drums were cool, that drummers and drum sets were cool. But it wasn’t until I got a little bit older that the interest in actually playing became obvious. It wasn’t until 6th grade that I actually started thinking seriously about learning how to play. I started playing guitar in fourth grade and wasn’t that enthused about my guitar lessons. In school, I would take two pencils and play drums on my desk, on the tabletops, on my lap, on my books, everywhere. I asked my dad if I could switch from guitar to drum lessons.

My dad and I went to a drum store, a store that specialized in drums and drum sets, and cymbals. They had a bunch of drum kits set up and you could just jump on them. I had no drum playing ability whatsoever. The first time I sat behind any drum set was in that store. I remember picking up the sticks and just letting ‘er rip. I just started, Right Left R L R L, hitting every drum. Boom boom boom boom boom, as hard as I could, as fast as I could, all over, hitting the cymbals and everything. I am sure it was horrible to hear, but this was a place where they expected you to do that. They were used to kids who didn’t know how to play very well, or at all, testing it out, trying it out for the first time, seeing what it feels like. The power that I felt, the surge, the response of hitting the drum and hearing that acoustical sound was incredible. Also the simple fact that they allow you to go crazy, felt strange. I certainly couldn’t make that racket at my house. After that first experience on a drum set, I was hooked.

I didn't get a drum set right away. My dad fashioned a crude foot pedal out of wood and a spring, and got me drumsticks. The drum store referred us to a drum teacher who gave lessons nearby, and I began drum lessons with George Sheppard, the author of *Primary Handbook for Drum Set* and drummer for greats like Dizzy Gillespie and The Talking Heads. I played for several months on the wood pedal and a pillow, only getting to play a real drum set on Sundays for an hour when I took my lesson. After 6 months, I rented my first drum set. It was all black, with a big bass drum, two toms attached to the bass drum, a floor tom, and a snare drum. There were 2 cymbals and a high hat, if I remember right. It was a real, full on drum set! I was getting into it seriously.

To this day I have a drum set. Playing drums, especially with other musicians, is one of the greatest joys I have experienced. The drum holds such an important place in music, and our culture. The drum is the creator of rhythm. Each person has a heartbeat. That heartbeat is a rhythm that regulates life. The world and all physical life, matter and energy is vibrating with the rhythms of their respective systems. The rhythms can be seen in the ebb and flow of tides, cycles of sleep, our heartbeat, the seasons, the vibrating states of atoms and atomic particles. It is not a stretch of the imagination to see the rhythms, and patterns that surround us in everyday life.

When I play drums, I feel tapped into a larger rhythm, and a larger pattern, than simply myself. I feel connected to the world around me. I played drums in a funk/ reggae/soul/jazz band called Kung Futon in Savannah, Georgia, when I was in college. When we played live, I felt a certain connection with all of my band mates, the audience, and the place we played. When I took my djembe to the park and played in a drum circle, I felt connected to those people, that time, that energy and those surroundings.

In all those situations, there was something in common. The drum allows you to transcend time, place, identity, and other physical limitations, and transports you into another realm of experience, communication, and spirit. Any drummer can tell you what its like to be in the drum zone. I highly recommend anyone, and everyone, young and old to go into a music store and wail on a drum set. It will change your life! The raw power of letting go and hitting those drums is unmatched. After many lessons and years of practice I have developed a drummers rhythm and learned coordination, but at the core, rhythm is something we all have. It isn't about sounding good, as I am sure I sounded awful that first time, but I got a rush that I will never, ever forget. That rush created a passion inside me for rhythm.

All societies have the drum. Its purpose is vast and great. It is interesting to me that all societies developed the drum, but how could they not? It is a chamber that is struck. It is one of the basic musical instruments. The drum may have started as a gourd or wood block and then at some point it was realized that if you hollow out the wood block it makes a more dynamic sound. Then over time the top was tested with different materials and different sound qualities emerged. The drums of the world show the journey and evolution of the instrument, and the simultaneous development of an instrument for the needs of people to create rhythm, to express the indescribable, and to transcend this reality, in the moment of the rhythm of the drum.

The drum is sacred. It is used in ceremonial practices in every culture around the world. At military funerals the drum is played worldwide. Not only is the drum used throughout the cultures of the world for different ceremonies and rituals, the drum is also used to create altered states of consciousness. Rhythmic drumming, wood block playing, rhythm in general has been shown to create altered states of consciousness, observed in numerous cultures around the world, some disconnected from each other.

When I was in college, in art school in the late 90's and turn of the century, there was a strong hippy community. I went to an art school, and I lived near a large park in the center of town, where all the hippies hung out on sunny days. There were drum circles all the time. I would listen for one, and if I heard one I would grab my djembe, which is a large drum. I have a Remo djembe, which has a weatherproof, synthetic skin, but it produces a pretty nice sound and you can take it anywhere. It is a very nice drum.

There is a musical connection, a communication and a spiritual connection you have with the people you play drums with, and it is very exciting. It is an exciting way to connect with your surroundings, the world, time, and other people.

The word drum is the center from which so many different directions of thought can spring out. Since I play the drum set, if someone said the word, "drums" then I think of a drum set. But if someone said "drum", I might think of a big wooden African drum with a goat skin, or some kind of animal skin hide. Throughout time the drum has always played a part in man's culture. Even the most modern cultures are still connected to the drum. The most technologically advanced societies are completely into music. The appreciation for the drum doesn't seem to disappear, no matter what time or culture. The drum is always important and ever present. I love rhythm. The amazing thing about a drum beat or a rhythm is that when you hear it, you are instantly affected. My pal and guitar player from Kung Futon, Ian, said, "If you have a heartbeat you have rhythm, and if you got rhythm, you got soul."

We all have a heartbeat. We all have a beat that is the foundation of our being. Besides the heart beat, there are many other natural rhythms in our body. The regulation of breathe, the electric pulses of our nerves, our brainwaves, and many others that make up who we are.

I began making drums out of gourds a few years ago when it dawned on me that something I could grow in my garden could be turned into a musical instrument. As it turns out, they are hard to grow unless you have the perfect climate, which I do not. But making drums as a hobby took on a life of its own after I learned Shamanic Drum making in Sedona, Arizona with Shaman, Jade Wah'oo Grigori. But I am getting ahead of myself now.



A drum I made from a gourd.

Chapter 6. Dreams of freedom

One of the earliest dreams I can remember is the "dinner cart dream". This dream was very unique and "looked" like no other dream I've ever had. This dream was black and white, which was not normal, because I almost always dream in vivid color, or "realistic" lighting. This was another matter altogether. In this dream, not only was everything black and white, but there were dinner carts

all around the house. In my dream, my parents were having a dinner party of some kind, and there were some kind of dinner carts everywhere. The weird thing about the dinner carts was that they looked like animation cells of black outlines and they weren't filled in. They were more or less plastic outlines, but in 3 dimensions, sort of. This is a dream, so I don't need to explain how this works, because I don't see how any of it made sense. The weirdest part of the whole dream is that I was a cherub that was flying around the party. I was like a little baby with wings. I remember thinking, "what was that about?" when I woke up. I used to refer to it as the cupid dream, because cupid was the only cherub I had seen as a kid, but in art history I saw a whole host of cherubs in baroque art, and identified them as the same from my dream. In the dream, it was almost as if people at the party couldn't see me, or they weren't noticing me. I was flying around, and I remember being interested in what was on the transparent carts with the black outlines.

Another dream I had from around that same time involved my skateboard. This was another random weird dream, but I guess most dreams are. I was looking for my skateboard. I couldn't find it anywhere. I looked all around the house, and I couldn't find it. I went to school and I looked for my skateboard there. As a kid I loved to skateboard. I had great balance and I loved to spin and cut sharp circles in the street. I thought that I would find my lost skateboard at school. I looked in the playground but it wasn't there. I went to the classroom and asked some friends if they had seen it, but no one had. I went home disappointed. I was running out of places to look. I went upstairs and in the bathroom, the shower curtain was closed. I thought I would just look behind there, just in case. When I moved the shower curtain, there was a dog sitting in the tub, with Martin Luther King Jr.'s head on it. I can't remember if I asked him if he saw my skateboard or if he just showed me where it was, but when I looked into the shower, past MLK dog, I could see outside into my front yard. I was in the upstairs bathroom, but I could see outside, and there was my skateboard! I stepped into the tub and into the backyard. I ran over and grabbed my skateboard. Whew, what a relief.

I don't usually get nightmares. Sometimes I have intense dreams, or dreams that involve a confrontation or problem, but those aren't the same as a classic nightmare from childhood. One of my most vivid nightmares as a kid was a dream where I was trapped in the basement of a scary old mansion, like in Castlevania, the video game. This basement was a maze of corridors and passages. There were windows that you sometimes see in basements. These are window wells that are at the top of the wall, at the ground level. The basement was filled with these windows but the all had bars on them. Some light was streaming in, but I couldn't get out. I was being chased by a vampire, for what felt like hours. I woke up extremely scared and I didn't want to go back to sleep. Then I remembered the playground, and the big orange climbing thing. I was able to control my dream, and dream that I was climbing the orange thing, for what seemed like all night, and I didn't have the vampire nightmare again.

When I was a high school junior I drove for the first time on a weekend road trip to visit a friend in college, who incidentally was the friend from Boy Scout camp who made me pass out. I drove to a remote part of West Virginia. This was the first time I had driven far away from home on my own personal adventure. The actual weekend wasn't that memorable, I hung out in a college dorm and drove through the mountains, but after that point in time, I started having dreams where I was driving that route.

I found myself driving down the highway. I started having a reoccurring dream of driving and following my dreams into the west. This started junior and senior year in high school. After I moved to college I would dream that I was driving from my childhood home to college or vice versa. Other times I would just be driving and I wouldn't know where. Now, after over 15 years of driving and 15 years of these dreams, sometimes I am driving all the way up the north east coast, or I am driving in California, or I am driving in some world that I haven't placed in physical reality.

There is something about the quality of these dreams. There is a deep down feeling, a soul feeling, that I am searching for something. In addition to these driving dreams, I used to frequently dream I was walking on foot, through a neighborhood, and instead of walking around a house, for some insane reason, for no reason, I open the front door and walk through the house, just to walk

through it. I guess like Ferris Bueller, it was faster to go through the house. But it was usually the middle of the night, and I opened the door and I would take a couple steps only to find myself in the house, now wanting to get out. I'd be trying to sneak out before anyone heard me in there. But I would not be in there for any purpose other than to get through the house, which is weird to me. Although the dreams are different, there is this underlying feeling of yearning, which has this very palpable real feeling, and a sense of urgency associated with it. It is like there is something important that I am missing, that I don't understand. This feeling, this sense of urgency made me feel like there's something really important about the dream world that I didn't get. I still feel that, and I don't know what the significance of my driving dreams are. I feel they have value. When I dream them, or remember having dreamed of them during the day, a weird feeling fills me, like I had traveled to a place I don't understand. Why would a robot need to dream? If a machine was programmed to do a job, and shut off, why run a program to dream? These reoccurring dreams feel like they have an urgency about them, but my rational mind tells myself they aren't real. They are not worth changing my whole life in pursuit of these literal dreams, but they are nagging in the back of my mind. I always thought that these dreams were my subconscious search for love, for my soul mate. They could be reminding me that there is more than I can see.

Chapter 7. Vision Quest

When I was 5, I used to break dance on the kitchen table when my parents went out to dinner and I was left with a babysitter. I would crank up Michael Jackson's Thriller on my Fisher Price record player and spin on the table top. I identified with rock and roll at an early age. The things that I was into as a kid, besides sports and playing outside were art and rock and roll. It seems to me that artists and rock & roll musicians were known for their weird and interesting behaviors. So as a young kid, I associated eccentricity and a party animal mentality to rock and roll. As I grew older I became aware the drugs side of it, the psychedelic side of it.

I smoked cigarettes on and off in high school and I experimented with alcohol and marijuana as a teenager. But I felt that the feelings that these drugs gave me was simply a buzz, a physical feeling, but the proposition proposed by LSD, that you could take a very small amount of something and you would hallucinate for many hours, seemed crazy and attractive to me. As a naive person, I didn't understand what effects it would have physically, but I was very into the idea that with LSD, I could hallucinate and see magical or cartoon things.

I was really just in it for the entertainment value of seeing things that weren't really there. As an artist, that appealed to me very much. It was only after I tripped for the first time that I realized that the hallucinations that I thought weren't real, were indeed something real. They were inside me and they were coming out. Or maybe they weren't *inside* me at all. Maybe I was tapping into something that is normally unseen. Maybe I was seeing something *else*.

When I was a young kid, I felt fearless. I was like, "I'll do this, I'll try that". Nothing seems dangerous when you're a little kid because you are young and vibrant and strong, and nothing can hurt you. I did a school report on LSD and drugs of the 60's in 9th or 10th grade. It was a report on the different drugs and what they did. I was especially curious about drugs, having grown up in the "Just Say No" era. It was a sort of forbidden fruit.

I wanted to try LSD. When someone said that they had it, I wanted to get some. There were a couple times that I paid \$5 for a hit of LSD that turned out to be a piece of notebook paper or a piece of magazine paper or a piece of cardboard and wasn't actually LSD. And then a friend of mine and I discovered that we knew someone who did have some. We each purchased 2 hits.

We took them at my friend's house after school on a Friday, because we knew that we weren't going to run into parents for many hours. We dropped the hits of acid and after about a half hour to about 45 minutes, I started feeling an anxious fidgety feeling and sort of a drunken intoxicated heavy headed feeling. It was sorta like you have taken too much cold medicine and you are just starting to lose a little bit of your articulated coordination. Not losing complete control, but just the finer controls. Then, after about an hour, the walls started breathing.

The walls of my friend's small cottage home started waving in and out tremendously, almost like a wave pulse of the ocean, breathing in and out. As I focused on the effects, we started comparing the effects that each of us was feeling. We concluded that we were experiencing the same visuals of the walls breathing, and we both noticed that psychedelic patterns started to appear embossed on the flat white walls. To me the patterns initially looked like a mixture of styles of graffiti art as well as southwestern Native American tribal art, geometric arrow like pattern, animal shapes and also organic type shapes. I confirmed with my friend that we were both seeing patterns. So we began to investigate the surfaces of these patterns. As I got closer to the wall I noticed that the swooping shapes that I could see from across the room, these larger organic graffiti swoop shapes were actually made up of smaller organic shapes of snowflake like southwestern style graffiti patterns, continuous organic patterns embossed over everything.

At every level I could see that they were made up of more and more and more. At this point my imagination and my vision were connecting in such a way that I felt that if I squinted and really focused, I could zoom in and see the next level in, and then see the next level in. Starting with a swoop a foot across, and that swoop was made up of shapes that were several inches across, and those shapes had a thickness that was about half an inch. Those shapes were made up of pieces that were half a centimeter thick, and those shapes were made up of minuscule shapes. I zoomed in as far as my eye could clearly see, and when I got to the smallest shape that I could perceive, it was about a quarter of the size of a grain of sand.

When I really squinted, I thought that I saw what appeared to be a uniform stack of little people, little men. When I zoomed back out, the pattern that I saw, those organic shapes, that graffiti, was made from these little men, frog-like quadrupeds stacked and repeated to form these complex patterns. The stacking was shaped in circles and in squares and in all these different organic shapes. It was the linking of various arms and legs and rings of linked arms and legs of varying thickness, and combinations and every imaginable possibility that created these various patterns.

My linguistic friend, Jason, coined the name, "The Quasi Real Squat Frog People", because I was trying to describe the men as squatting on top of each other, stacked on top of each other in such a way. So the term "Squat Frogs" became short hand for those little frog men and the trippy patterns they form that we never saw before, but now realized were there all along. The Squat Frogs came to symbolize the infinite patterns of the universe, and the underlying power that connects all of these patterns, and the power that symbolizes the one pattern. All the patterns are variations of a power source, of a single energy. That energy is the spirit of what the Squat Frogs symbolize. The Squat Frog became my spirit animal, or animal guide.

I tried to trace the Squat Frogs. I took a white piece of paper and tried to trace what I saw. Of course this was basically impossible because the patterns evolved in front of my eyes on the white paper. They were impossible to reproduce in the tripping state. The squat frog pattern symbol hints at the larger pattern that can't be seen or described because it is so dynamic and multi-dimensional it can't be captured. When you look at the ground from an airplane and you see the ridges and you see the waves of a desert looking like the grooves in wood and in the ocean. You can see a similarity and a pattern in the energy of the erosion of time and of the forces in our universe. The squat frog became that symbol on my very first trip, which was a valuable vision quest that gleaned a valuable lesson learned. My first tattoo was a Celtic knot circle with 3 squat frogs knotted together in the center. The frogs have the infinity figure 8 on their backs.



Chapter 8. Coincidence

As I record this, I drive along side a creek, a natural spring that comes out of the hills. The road veers and the creek goes over the road, because it is a mountain spring runoff creek, and I thought it would be good to get some ambient sound of this creek. I am south of Livermore Valley wine country on Mines rd.

I parked my car and walked over to the stream. The sun was shining and the weather was perfect. There was a bit of cool in the air, but the sun and my excitement kept me warm. I found a nice spot to record some ambient sound. Time slowed down. The crickets creaked continuously while I sat next to the stream. I heard the whoosh of the air in the trees as I monitored my recording with one headphone in my right ear. I wondered what frequency those crickets were chirping at. I was happy. I felt content. I didn't want to stay in this spot all day and roll around in the grass, I had things to do, but I was into this moment and the sounds I was hearing. I was testing my new sound recorder. A plane flew overhead, reminding me that meditating outside is not as easy as it seems. The plane sounds faded. The loud engine must have snapped the frogs out of their trances because they took a cue from the new found silence to chirp above the ever continuous drone of the crickets. The first frog goes for it. A thunderous series of ribbits followed by throaty coos and grumbles.

That is when I realize the coincidence of hearing the frogs, after I was just talking about frogs into my recorder! I was stating the importance of frogs as a personal symbol and then I encounter them first hand. I came to this area because it was wine country, not frog country. I didn't expect or anticipate that coincidence.

This is a perfect example of coincidence. I was talking about Squat Frogs and I was talking about how the Squat Frogs became a symbol for the patterns and therefore underlying energy of everything in the universe. This pattern could be attributed to a higher power, the source, or connected with the unseen world. As I am out here writing (recording), and I finish talking about Squat Frogs and I pull over to record ambiance of this stream. I hear the sound of frogs frolicking and enjoying the sunny day with crickets. I was just talking about a frog and to have such a personal connection with frogs is auspicious and coincidental.

Chapter 9. Coincidence, Deja Vu?

As I drove along the road I came upon a spot in the stream that was close to the road, but not behind fencing, so I could check out the stream. I pulled over and parked. I was recording the chapter about that coincidence and how I heard frogs as I walked along the creek earlier. I stopped and looked down. A little green frog jumped onto my foot. Awesome! I picked him up, and I pulled out my camera. I put him back in the stream and he let me take a picture of him.



Chapter 10. Didgeridoo

On a family vacation to Australia, I discovered the Didgeridoo. Walking down the street with my family I heard a strange vibrating, whimsical drone. I followed the sound down a corridor to some shops in the town of Alice Springs. The sound lead me to a man sitting on a stool in front of small group of tourists entranced by his expertise. The man was screeching and yelping into the didgeridoo, interweaving expressive bursts into a rhythmic beat that seemed to expand and contract as he drew us in with each breath. I became captivated by the instrument, its sounds, and the mythology surrounding it. A prolonged Didgeridoo performance can create a meditative 'theta' brainstate for the player and listener, which can create a state of consciousness analogous to the Aboriginal Dreamtime, the time/place before time. I played the didgeridoo constantly for the first few weeks. I was in the outback and there wasn't much else to do. I got really good at circle breathing and found I could sustain the tone for quite a few minutes at a time, and when I did, the vibrations made my head feel funny. It felt good, and I always felt relaxed and energized after a good didgeridoo session.

Part II

Chapter 11. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

My first day of college we had an orientation class. The orientation class was just a group of students. It wasn't a real class. It was so new students had a group of people to connect with, and the school could check on you. It was a way to help us adjust to college life. All the new students met in the civic center. This was the first official thing we did at college. We split into orientation groups. Our orientation group leader was Sharon. Sharon was a young sexy, corporate type, yet new age enigma. The first thing she said was, "Hi, I'm Sharon. I am your orientation leader... and SCAD has a "no dating" policy between students and teachers. That is the first thing that she said! Then she said, "Okay, now everybody lay down on the floor, and close your eyes." We are in the civic center downstairs on the floor. This is where they play basketball. She says, "Everybody lay down on the floor, spread apart, and everybody close your eyes." First she says there is no dating, and now she wants us to lay down on the floor? Make up your mind!

Sharon explained that we were going to do a relaxation exercise. We were like, "Okay?..." For the relaxation exercise, she told us to close our eyes, breathe deeply and then she proceeded to tell us to relax each part of our body, one at a time. Starting with our eyelids, progressively clenching and then releasing each muscle. Moving on to our cheeks, and jaw, forehead, and every muscle in the head. Then going on to our toes, and then working our way up the body until we got back up to the neck and the top of the neck and the head. At the end of this process, I felt like I was in a warm cocoon, and I was completely relaxed. My muscles had sunk into the floor and I was so comfortable even on the hard concrete slab.

This was my first exposure to the *process of relaxation*. Relaxation as I now understand it, and think of it, is not so much a state of mind, but a *process*, which creates the mental and physiological environment necessary for meditation. Some people consider their hobbies to be a "relaxation". A "relaxing" activity such as reading the newspaper on a Sunday, or laying on the floor, listening to the rain, playing with the cat may be relaxing but it is not "The Process of Relaxation". Relaxation as therapy is often over looked in fast paced modern life. Some of us don't even sit down once, for 12 hours during the day. We run ourselves to the breaking point. We can learn from cultures that take siesta, or daily prayer. This timeout period is an important way to stay

balanced. The process of relaxation calms the nervous system and resets many biological, and chemical processes in the body and brain. When you stop, lay down, and relax, you can slow your heartbeat, lower your blood pressure, and encourage natural healing processes to begin.

This “Progressive Muscle Relaxation” is part of the foundation of Transcendental Meditation, and the Monroe Institute’s Gateway Programs.

I have collected several articles related to stress, relaxation and health.

Tension has been proven to have many negative consequences. Tension causes premature aging of DNA. A study at the University of California at San Francisco showed that mothers who are under high stress have more damage to their DNA than mothers under low stress.

[^](#) E.S. Epel, E.H. Blackburn, J. Lin, F.S. Dhabhar, N.E. Adler, J.D. Morrow, and R.M. Cawthon. Accelerated telomere shortening in response to life stress. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 2004 Dec 7;101(49):17312–15.

One study in the British Medical Journal looked at a group of 192 men and women.(3) The participants were randomly divided into two groups. Both groups were given information on lowering blood pressure, reducing animal fats, and stopping smoking. One group was also given an eight-week course on mindbody relaxation.

After only eight weeks, the mindbody relaxation group had significantly lower blood pressure. But this was not just a temporary effect. After eight months the relaxation group still had lower blood pressure. What was even more impressive was that four years later, not only did they have lower blood pressure, they also had a significantly lower rate of heart disease and fewer fatal heart attacks. The simple and inexpensive act of mindbody relaxation significantly reduced the risk of the number one cause of death in the developed world. The personal, social, and economic consequences of this are enormous.

[^](#) C. Patel, M.G. Marmot, D.J. Terry, M. Carruthers, B. Hunt, and M. Patel. Trial of relaxation in reducing coronary risk: four year follow up. *Br Med J (Clin Res Ed)* 1985 Apr 13; 290(6475):1103–6.

Reverse Hardening of the Arteries

Relaxation can reverse arteriosclerosis. The results were published in the American Heart Association journal, *Stroke*.(1) The study looked at sixty patients and measured the hardening and clogging of their arteries using ultrasound.

The patients were then randomly divided into two groups. One group received health education, while the other group was also taught how to relax. Nine months later, the hardening and clogging of their arteries was measured again. Amazingly, the relaxation group had actually reduced the hardening and clogging of their arteries. They had less arteriosclerosis than the non-relaxation group.

1) A. Castillo-Richmond, R.H. Schneider, C.N. Alexander, R. Cook, H. Myers, S. Nidich, C. Haney, M. Rainforth, and J. Salerno. Effects of Stress Reduction on Carotid Atherosclerosis in Hypertensive African Americans. *Stroke* 2000 Mar; 31(3):568–73.

Increase Life Expectancy with Mindbody Relaxation

Relaxation not only reduces the risk of heart disease, it also reduces the risk of death from all diseases and increases life expectancy according to a study published in the American Journal of Cardiology.(2) The study randomly divided 202 patients into two groups. Both groups received standard health education and high blood pressure treatment, while one group was also taught how to relax. Both groups were followed for eight years.

During those eight years, the relaxation group had 30 percent fewer deaths from cardiovascular disease and 23 percent fewer deaths from all causes. To put this in perspective, a medical treatment is considered successful if it can reduce heart disease by 10 percent.

To reduce heart disease by 30 percent is remarkable. To reduce overall deaths by almost a quarter is amazing.

2) R.H. Schneider, C.N. Alexander, F. Staggers, M. Rainforth, J.W. Salerno, A. Hartz, S. Arndt, V.A. Barnes, and S.I. Nidich. Long-term effects of stress reduction on mortality in persons ≥ 55 years of age with systemic hypertension. *Am J Cardiol* 2005 May 1;95(9):1060–64.

Mindbody Relaxation -From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Mindbody relaxation reduces the risk of [heart disease](#) by 30 %, and reduces deaths due to heart disease by 23% according to a study in the American Journal of Cardiology, which also showed that relaxation increases life expectancy.[4] Furthermore mindbody relaxation techniques significantly reduce the risk of [high blood pressure](#), [heart attacks](#), and fatal heart attacks according to a study in the British Medical Journal.[5]

Mindbody relaxation reverses hardening of the arteries. Not only does mindbody relaxation reduce the risk of heart disease, it actually reverses hardening of the arteries according to a study published in the American Heart Association journal, *Stroke*. [6]

Mindbody relaxation reduces the risk of a [depression](#) recurrence by 50 percent. Approximately 10-30% of people will suffer at least one episode of depression in their life. Relaxation techniques in conjunction with medication reduce the risk of recurrence of depression significantly more than medication alone. [7]

Mindbody relaxation is effective in treating and preventing [substance abuse](#) and [addiction](#). Approximately 10% of people suffer from drug and alcohol addiction. Numerous studies have shown that relaxation provides long-term improvements in self-esteem and psychological health, and significantly reduces the risk of substance abuse. [8]

Mindbody relaxation helps treat [anxiety](#) and [panic attacks](#). A study at the University of Massachusetts showed that patients who suffered from [generalized anxiety](#) or panic disorder felt significantly better after learning relaxation techniques, and continued to use those techniques over the long-term. [9]

Mindbody relaxation can strengthen the immune system. One study showed that after just eight weeks of learning how to relax, participants had a stronger immune system. [\[10\]](#)

Mindbody relaxation relieves [chronic pain](#), and relieves chronic low-[back pain](#). In one study, after a ten-week mindbody relaxation course many patients needed less pain medication. After fifteen months, not only did they suffer less pain, but because they suffered less pain they also suffered less from depression and anxiety. [\[11\]](#)

Mindbody relaxation reduces the symptoms of [fibromyalgia](#). In one study, 51 percent of the patients experienced moderate to marked improvement in their fibromyalgia symptoms. That is rare in most treatments of fibromyalgia. [\[12\]](#)

1. [^](#) S.M. Melemis (2008). *Make Room for Happiness: 12 Ways to Improve Your Life By Letting Go of Tension*. Chapter 4: Use Your Body to Relax Your Mind. Modern Therapies. [ISBN 978-1897572177](#)
2. [^](#) J. Kabat-Zinn (1990). *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness*. Delta [ISBN 978-0385303125](#)
3. [^](#) E.S. Epel, E.H. Blackburn, J. Lin, F.S. Dhabhar, N.E. Adler, J.D. Morrow, and R.M. Cawthon. Accelerated telomere shortening in response to life stress. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A* 2004 Dec 7;101(49):17312–15.
4. [^](#) R.H. Schneider, C.N. Alexander, F. Staggars, M. Rainforth, J.W. Salerno, A. Hartz, S. Arndt, V.A. Barnes, and S.I. Nidich. Long-term effects of stress reduction on mortality in persons ≥ 55 years of age with systemic hypertension. *Am J Cardiol* 2005 May 1;95(9):1060–64.
5. [^](#) C. Patel, M.G. Marmot, D.J. Terry, M. Carruthers, B. Hunt, and M. Patel. Trial of relaxation in reducing coronary risk: four year follow up. *Br Med J (Clin Res Ed)* 1985 Apr 13; 290(6475):1103–6.
6. [^](#) A. Castillo-Richmond, R.H. Schneider, C.N. Alexander, R. Cook, H. Myers, S. Nidich, C. Haney, M. Rainforth, and J. Salerno. Effects of Stress Reduction on Carotid Atherosclerosis in Hypertensive African Americans. *Stroke* 2000 Mar; 31(3):568–73.
7. [^](#) S.H. Ma and J.D. Teasdale. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: replication and exploration of differential relapse prevention effects. *J Consult Clin Psychol* 2004 Feb; 72(1):31–40.
8. [^](#) P. Gelderloos, K.G. Walton, D.W. Orme-Johnson, and C.N. Alexander. Effectiveness of the Transcendental Meditation program in preventing and treating substance misuse: a review. *Int J Addict* 1991 Mar; 26(3):293-325.
9. [^](#) J. Kabat-Zinn, A.O. Massion, J. Kristeller, L.G. Peterson, K.E. Fletcher, L. Pbert, W.R. Lenderking, and S.F. Santorelli. Effectiveness of a meditation-based stress reduction program in the treatment of anxiety disorders. *Am J Psychiatry* 1992 Jul;149(7):936–43.
10. [^](#) R.J. Davidson, J. Kabat-Zinn, J. Schumacher, M. Rosenkranz, D. Muller, S.F. Santorelli, F. Urbanowski, A. Harrington, K. Bonus, and J.F. Sheridan. Alterations in brain and immune function produced by mindfulness meditation. *Psychosom Med* 2003 Jul–Aug; 65(4):564–70.
11. [^](#) W.E. Mehling, K.A. Hamel, M. Acree, N. Byl, and F.M. Hecht. Randomized, controlled trial of breath therapy for patients with chronic low-back pain. *Altern Ther Health Med* 2005 Jul–Aug; 11(4):44–52.
12. [^](#) K.H. Kaplan, D.L. Goldenberg, and M. Galvin-Nadeau. The impact of a meditation-based stress reduction program on fibromyalgia. *Gen Hosp Psychiatry* 1993 Sep; 15(5):284–89.

Chapter 12. Good Vibrations

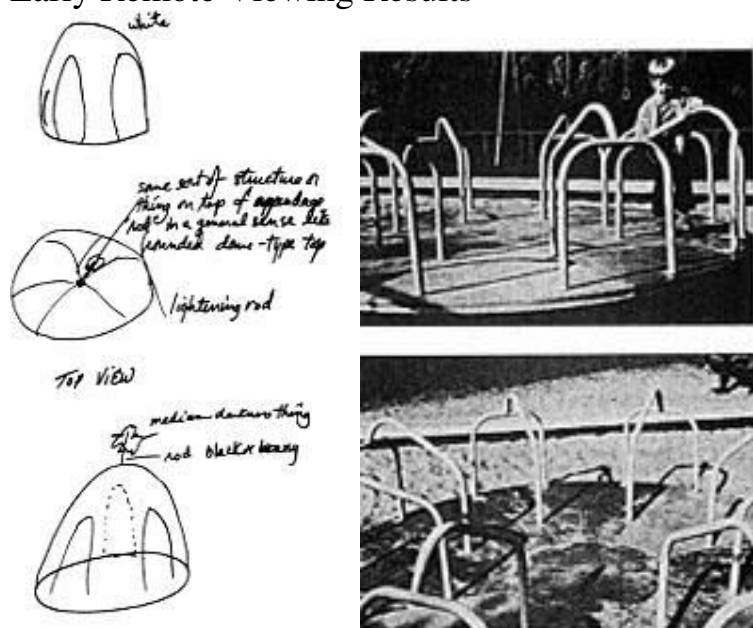
In 2001, I was in Savannah, Georgia working on my final film project for my bachelor's degree in film/video. While in pre-production for my movie, I found a book about Remote Viewing, which was an actual psychic spying program developed by the United States military and

government during the cold war. That alone was interesting or funny enough to keep me reading a few chapters.

The first chapter in Dr. Courtney Brown, Ph.D.'s 1996 book, *Cosmic Voyage* is about "Psychic Warfare". In chapter one, the author describes efforts by the U.S. and Soviet governments to try to develop psychic spies. In chapter three, Dr. Brown explains his qualifications for learning these "psychic spying" techniques because of his completion of a Transcendental Meditation Sidhi Program, and The Gateway Voyage Program at The Monroe Institute in Faber, Virginia. The Operations and Training Officer for the Army Remote-Viewing Program and Director of the "Stargate" program, Skip Atwater, is now Research Director and President of The Monroe Institute. Skip's book, "Captain of my Ship, Master of my Soul" describes how the whole Top-Secret government/ Military project was formed and what they did. In 1995 the CIA declassified The Remote Viewing Project.

In 2009 a Hollywood movie called, "The Men Who Stare at Goats" starring George Clooney was released, based on the true life events of Lyn Buchanan, a US Army Remote Viewer.

Early Remote Viewing Results



As it turns out, The Monroe Institute is a well known non-profit facility that is highly regarded for their pioneering research in human consciousness and especially for their use of sound in aiding altered states of awareness and out-of-body experiences. Skip Atwater's book also chronicles the operations of the Institute from the inside.

In describing his experience at The Monroe Institute, Dr. Courtney Brown details listening to the brainwave enhancing frequencies of The Gateway Voyage that transported him to another sphere of awareness. He describes finding a door to a room filled with bright light, where he was reunited with his dead grandparents and great-aunt. He then is whisked away through fields of light to encounters with aliens and supernatural beings in cloaks.

Courtney Brown wrote about The Gateway Programs, that they could, "quite literally, at the flick of a switch, make one's mind resonate mechanically like that of a great seer or mystic who has spent a lifetime exploring the boundaries of consciousness." Extremely skeptical and utterly amused with the hilarity and openness of these stories, I did more research. Indeed this "Monroe Institute"

did exist, and they did have The Gateway Voyage Program, a week long retreat at their cutting edge facility in the Blue Ridge Mountains. They also had a home study course called The Gateway Experience.

Coincidentally, I grew up in Virginia, and my parents still live about an hour from The Monroe Institute. To me, Virginia always seemed pretty conservative and traditional, even Northern Virginia and areas inside the beltway. So I was surprised to hear that something so “out there” came from my home state! But I was living in Georgia away at school when I was making these discoveries. I did more investigating about Robert Monroe, the founder of The Monroe Institute and author of *Journeys Out Of The Body*, and read up on the research going on at The Monroe Institute (www.monroeinstitute.org). I thought that The Gateway Program would be a great research experiment for a movie. I didn't really believe Courtney Brown's claims, but The Gateway Experience itself claims you will “explore dimensions beyond physical time-space reality”, and “communicate with non-physical energetic helpers”. Are you serious?!

On a spring afternoon in 2001, The Gateway Experience arrived on my doorstep. The Monroe Institute's Gateway Series is a 7 Wave 18 CD set. The CD series utilizes binaural beat technology as well as principles of psycho-acoustics and verbally guided instruction to achieve altered states of consciousness through inducing changes in neural-electrical activity and brain wave frequencies. I will go into more detail about the science and history of binaural beats, which is over 100 years old, in a later chapter. For now let me simply describe the mechanics of the process.

The phenomenon of binaural beats was first discovered in 1839 by Heinrich Wilhelm Dove, but you may have experienced the phenomenon when hearing musical instruments being tuned. A binaural beat occurs when two slightly different pure tones are introduced to each ear. The brain hears a vibration that is the mathematical difference between the two tones. If you had two pure tones, tone A at 100 hertz and tone B at 104 hertz, (waves per second) the binaural beat would be 4 hertz.

The frequency follow response phenomenon illustrates how a tuning fork designed to produce a frequency of 500 Hz is hit and then brought next to another 500 Hz tuning fork, will cause the second tuning fork to ring also. The first tuning fork has “entrained” the second one causing it to ring. These physics of entrainment apply to biological systems as well, in particular, the electromagnetic waves of the brain. The electrochemical activity of the brain results in the production of electromagnetic wave forms which can be objectively measured with sensitive equipment (EEG). Brain waves change frequencies based on neural activity within the brain. Because neural activity is electrochemical, brain function can be modified through the introduction of specific chemicals (drugs), or similarly altered with resonant entrainment. This technique has been coined Brainwave Entrainment. I'll go way more into this subject in a later chapter.

Chapter 13. What is the void?

After using the CD's for a few weeks to a month, I was able to relax into a really deep state of nothingness, which I consider to be the void. The moment right before you fall asleep, you forget who you are, but you still have awareness. You're relaxing on a pillow of nothingness and you feel really comfortable. Using the Gateway Series, I was able to relax into this extremely deep state. I would sink into the void, which is the emptiness inside our head space. This space comes into focus when we turn off the outside noise and just look out with our eyes closed. Eventually this space expands. This is where I spent a lot of time accidentally falling asleep over the weeks. This was fine because I had crazy dreams and was actually learning to relax. At the Monroe Institute they call this accidental falling asleep “clicking out”. In their view, clicking out is a part of relaxation, and a

valuable part of the learning experience, but you may not be aware of it at that moment. Before clicking out I usually am in a dream state or nothingness state. I forget where and what I am. I am in a timeless state. This is the threshold where spontaneous supernatural experiences and messages can come from. Part of the need for continued practice is to stay focused and aware when you would normally slip off to sleep.

When you stay awake and alert in this void, amazing things can happen. Go online. Google search: meditation, visions, journeying, astral travel, Out of Body Experiences, etc. You will quickly find amazing tales of lucid dreaming, meditations, visions, and altered state experiences that will inspire and fascinate you. Maybe the stories aren't all B.S. Maybe *even just one* person had a genuine experience.

I was researching brain entrainment and The Monroe Institute as a student filmmaker, for a movie project and at first I didn't take people's claims very seriously. I wanted to understand the whole process, and the more I learned, the more I began to see connections to things I already knew, and started to draw my own conclusions. I saw the similarities, between the sound waves that I was experimenting with, and what didgeridoo players and shamans do when they go into their trances.

The first thing I learned when I listened to Wave 1 of The Gateway Experience, is that with the help of the guiding disembodied voice (the voice of Bob Monroe), and brain entrainment, I could turn off my physical body as if it was asleep. The brainwave frequencies took me from a waking beta brain wave state, into a relaxed alpha and then deeper theta and delta states. It felt like that heavy sleepy feeling of a lazy Sunday morning. This was a nice way to zone out. I tried not to let my expectations get the best of me. Did I really expect to see a ghost by listening to a cd in the dark? I don't think I did. But remembering the mortal coil, who knows, anyway, who cares? This is research for my movie.

Sometimes after listening, I wouldn't know exactly what had happened, but later in the day I would remember... wow! I was in some kind of weird place that I never new existed. Around this time, I was getting really good at being in the void space and remaining aware and alert when normally I would slip into sleep or a dream. After a while, being in this space, I sort of forget that I am lying down on a bed. I don't actually forget, it's just that the space I'm in almost becomes concrete. It becomes like I'm in this space and at some point I find myself with a body. For me, the process works like this: I close my eyes. I am inside my mind. I turn off my physical body and I allow it to go to sleep and relax. I see a field of darkness. I let it expand and eventually I find myself in there, inside my mind, literally. I look down and I have hands and arms. And I can feel myself walking. This took a few months to really develop.

One specific occasion, after relaxing in the void, I found myself walking down a corridor. I opened a door to the right and it was a tavern with loud jukebox music and people talking and clanking their bottles and glasses. The place was kind of old timey like in the movies but it also had a traditional tavern feel. I have a lot of dreams sometimes where I am in public places or restaurants or bars or something where I usually feel uncomfortable or I have to do something, like check out or pay my check and there are obstacles or something.

In this situation, I opened this door from the corridor that was very much like from the movie Beetlejuice. I took a step in and then I realized, "Hey I am dreaming this!" and "I don't want to dream, I just want to relax". I decided that I would rather be in the space where I was just floating and relaxing than entering in this thing that was like a mindless dream that I couldn't control. It was interesting that I saw a mechanism and interface to the beginning of a dream. When that happened I woke up because I was too self aware of everything that happened. These were binaural beats in the Theta range.

Chapter 14. Moment of truth

I got into a habit of meditating in the early afternoon. This was the end of my college years. During the spring of 2001, after several weeks of practice, I was getting good at relaxing and getting

into a place where I wasn't even aware of my breathing anymore, where I was just existing. The hardest part was letting go of the breathing and the little itches and fidgets.

Usually, you tune out these sensations in everyday life, but when you are just lying there, conscious of your body, trying to relax, those things really amplify, especially early on. Binaural beats, other entrainment techniques, music, and time tested mental tools will increase your focus, and the brain's ability to enter the desired state.

The phenomenon of hemispheric synchronization, coined by The Monroe Institute, occurs as the brain interprets separate tones into binaural beats. The binaural entrainment method promotes brain harmony between hemispheres as well as the entraining "frequency-follow-response effect" that dials your brain to a specific frequency. These phenomena working together can help anyone tune out chatter in the mind and end the fidgety itches that come with beginner syndrome in meditation and relaxation.

One particular day, I was relaxing in the void, like any other day. I was not thinking of anything and I had not done anything out of the ordinary. I was just floating in the void, drifting off to sleep. In the middle of nothingness, in the middle of a breath that I wasn't even aware I was breathing—WHAM! There was this explosion that came from about my belly button, maybe somewhere at the bottom of my spine, and at this moment from being in nothingness and nowhere but knowing I was in the center of my head, which had expanded, I had become definitely small, inside my spine, I was inside myself down in the bottom of my spine.

At the very first instant, the initial moment of this explosion of energy, I found my self with my consciousness inside the base of my spine and I could see up my spinal column. In this initial explosive moment of consciousness relocation, an energy explosion of feeling, literally illuminated the pathway above me. What the light illuminated looked like inner spinal pieces. I could see little bones that were outcroppings going up like the inside of my spine, clear as shining a flashlight! The explosion was propelling me instantaneously upward through my spine. I could see things moving past me that looked like nerves and bone, cartilage and flesh! I looked up as I arrived to the top of my spine in an instant. I saw two holes where my eyes were. At first they were dark, and as I rushed up to them, the light surrounded them and I could see the holes clearly as I rushed through and burst out with the wave of energy that was propelling me.

Instantaneously, a *Being* caught me. Now back in the (a new?) void, the Being that caught me was cradling me. I could see this whole thing happening from the eyes that I had just been propelled out of, but also, I was experiencing this from the *me* that had just been propelled out through the eyes! I was being cradled in the arms of someone, something that was beyond any intelligence I have ever met. I couldn't make out features, as this being was ethereal, like an idea. So was I, and this whole state was not physical. However, this *Being* communicated in thought ideas that I understood, and it was humanoid in stature. It felt like a very large being. Either the being was very large or I was a very small baby, but the proportions felt like I was an infant and this being was Mother.

Later, I saw a renaissance painting of the Madonna and Child and it clicked with my experience. Like the mortal coil, the Madonna and child was the exact pose I was in with this being, and the feeling I get, and have gotten from any Madonna and Child image since this experience, is ghostly and awe inspiring. I was not brought up with these symbols in my home and only first really learned about the significance of the Madonna and Child in art history class. But the first time I saw the Madonna and Child after that experience, it hit me like lightening.

In the moment I was shot out my eyes, within that energy, the being caught me, and it cradled me. I looked up at it. In one bowing motion it bent down its head to touch my forehead with its forehead. At this moment I was the baby. I was being cradled by this being and as it touched my forehead with its forehead, BAM! Explosion of Light!

There was a huge burst of energy. The being transmitted a thought, which lit me up. It transmitted the idea that the reason for my specific life, the purpose of this specific life was to nurture growth, and foster creative growth itself, the creative force in all of its manifestations. The

purpose is to experience it, to do it, to make it happen and to love it. This wasn't the "end all, be all" *truth* on the meaning of life. This was very specific about me and what my intention was.

That was the whole point! This thought was given to me, and at the moment of thought transfer, I also remembered that I was the creator of this thought. I remembered that this thought was agreed upon by, the person, or the being that was transmitting the thought, but I remember that I, or we, decided all this before I was born, and that this life was to be about fostering creative growth, having it manifest, and to nurture it. It was an indescribable thought and it came from before I was born, before I was in this life. I need to reiterate that the thought transmitted, felt like it originated, and was decided upon before I was born. It had a timestamp of before I was born.

I am so skeptical about any of this kind of B.S., but the moment that this thought that was transmitted, flashed to me, I remembered intentions I had from before I was born! It's like when you have a dream, you remember when it happened, when you recall a memory, you remember the context of it all and what your motivations were at the time. When you decided to paint the wall yellow, you were motivated by things at that point in time. I remember thinking that my "rat tail" was cool. And this thought that was being transmitted to me, was being transmitted from a decision that was like, "Hey remember what we decided?" "You decided to jump into this crazy game of life."

So I was flooded up my apparent spinal column, which I could see because of the illuminated light behind me. I flew out my eyes, which became illuminated around the eye holes as I was rushed out. I was caught by this being, who cradled me, leaned down, and connected its forehead to mine. Instantly my mind flashed that the point of my life is to grow and foster creativity in all the ways that it can manifest in the world. Not just through art and music, although those are awesome, but through everything. There is an art to living in quality and to act with care in everything that you do.

The whole rush of energy, felt like being in the center of a motorcycle engine, vibrating throughout my entire body. This energy was dynamic and turbulent enough to propel my consciousness beyond Earth's gravity. It can only be likened to the feeling of intense pins and needles, but instead of a dull throbbing pain that comes on after many minutes of pinched inactivity, this comes on suddenly with an orgasmic-like pleasure explosion, but in a wholesome, pure state of excited bliss.

As the thought that had been transmitted to me subsided, I became aware of intense feelings of bliss, love and gratitude for my place in the universe and this chance to be. Tears began to well up in my closed eyes, and then the tears gave way when my eyelids couldn't contain them. The warm tears streamed out of the sides of my eyes and onto my pillow. The warm wetness turning cool on my skin in the afternoon air was enough sensation to remind me of my physical body that I had left behind.

With intense bliss and butterflies of motorcycle engine love dissipating from my body, I opened my eyes and took in the profoundness of what I had just experienced. This had changed everything. Who or what was that being? What had just happened? How did I seem to remember something from before my life began? I was now living in a world that just delivered an experience beyond what my wildest imagination could ever come up with.



Chapter 15. A Voice

After not knowing what that experience was for many months, I was home visiting my family, sleeping in my old room that I grew up in. I was still very much in practice in relaxation. I don't mean having a "relaxed attitude", I am referring to the process of relaxation.

Relaxation is very much like being physically fit for a competition, like fighting or The Olympics. There is a peak performance, and you have to build up to it with practice, and during those training phases you can learn from your mistakes and have amazing insights. With regular practice, just like anything else, you will maintain a level of fitness. If you fall off with your practice, you will not be able to perform as well when you get back to it.

I was in good practice at relaxing, and able to enter the void very quickly. At home this one evening, after a hot shower, with the steam still in the small bathroom, I sat down and tried to meditate because the hot water really relaxed my muscles. My parents have an extreme amount of water pressure in the shower, which is not really comparable to many other showers I have ever felt. It pounds into you like a good massage. At the end of the 5 minute shower I was in a trance.

After the shower I sat and meditated. Normally when I listen to binaural beats I prefer to lay down. But this time I wanted to practice sitting up. I was able to get into this relaxed state rather quickly by just breathing and enjoying the hot air and the relaxation, and I don't know what I did, other than the fact that I was not expecting anything and just enjoying the time to simply do nothing.

After less than five minutes of just sitting there relaxing, this voice crashed into my mind. It said, "YOGA!" really loud! Just like that, "YOGA!" with a deep roaring electricity of a lion and the

wisdom of an ancient redwood. It roared into my head with a sonic boom of announcement while I was in the blissful void of non-being.

It was not the voice of any kind of "narrator" when you're reading "Where the Red Fern Grows", "Catcher in the Rye", or any other book. Whenever I read a book I always hear a narrator and its some old friendly man, or it's my voice, there is an abstract sort of voice. Maybe it is an old lady's voice, depending on what book it is of course. But this was just a crazy, thunderous voice that said Yoga.

I knew nothing about Yoga, other than the fact that I had a friend who's mom used to take a yoga class at the local rec center, and every now and again we would walk into his house and she would be upside down with her legs in some weird position. She was extremely nice, and completely relaxed and she always had a calm and cool demeanor.

Chapter 16. Kundalini Soup

Other than the fact that I knew nothing about Yoga, I had nothing against it. The long weekend of Thanksgiving 2001, I began to research Yoga online. Right away I stumbled upon almost a word for word explanation of what happened to me on a Yoga website. Yoga means union. Although it might be interpreted to mean a union of mind & body or body & soul, actually this union in Yoga refers to the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.

I continued to read, that Kundalini is a sleeping energy, symbolized as a coiled snake in the bottom of the spine, and can explode forth, and rise up, activating the chakras. If it reaches a block it can clear it. I read that the Ajna Chakra, which is in the center of the eyes, where I flew out of, is a creative center, and that Kundalini itself is a creative energy. Kundalini bares a remarkable similarity with the Caduceus symbol, and the staff of Asclepius.



Joseph Campbell suggested that the symbol of snakes coiled around a staff is an ancient representation of Kundalini physiology. The staff represents the spinal column with the snake(s) being energy channels.

Ajna literally means 'command' or 'monitoring center'. It is also known as the guru chakra. It is the point of confluence where the three main nadis or forces, ida, pingala, and sushumna, merge into one stream of consciousness, and flow up to sahasrara. During deep meditation, when all the senses have been withdrawn, and one enters into the state of shoonya, the void, the guru then guides the aspirant from ajna to sahasrara by issuing commands through this center.

Ajna is also known as the third eye, the eye of Shiva or the eye of intuition, which gazes inward rather than outward. It is often called divya chakshu, the divine eye, or jnana chakshu, the eye of wisdom, because it is through this center that the spiritual aspirant receives revelation, and insight into the underlying nature of existence. It is the level at which direct mind-to-mind communication takes place, and the doorway through which one enters the psychic, or astral dimension.

http://www.yogabound.com/yoga/cha_sixth_ajna.htm

This rang true to the emotions and insights I had with my experience, and I really connected with what I read and I wanted to learn more. It was like my experience was a textbook example of something (supernatural) I had never heard of! This voice had given me a complete system for harmony and well being, but also a way to interpret and understand it all. Much like music creates harmony from noise, Yoga was offering me a way to understand the complexity of my experience. I am grateful to that voice, and that being, whoever or whatever they are, for profoundly shaping my life.

Chapter 17. Definitions of Life?

What is life? Fundamentally, it seems like there is a clear distinction between what is alive and what is not alive. A tree is alive because it responds to stimuli. I am alive. I can run around. But at what level am I alive and what level am I not alive? I drink water from a river, and that water goes into my body. Is that water all of a sudden alive because it is part of me? At what level? My fingernails. Are they alive? At what level, what part of me are they? At what level is my physical body alive? My physical body is responding to stimuli, but I am shedding it all the time. Plants and animals, practically every life form does this. Is the bark on a tree alive? A river will respond to stimuli, and so does the earth. (It is getting warmer)

The factor that animates a life form seems to be in synchronicity or acting in harmony with the biological organism, but is not that organism. The biological organism seems to have no separation from this planet in physical make up. We are an example of this. So basically, there is a big mystery. What are we? What is life? If the boundaries of being-ness seem to defy logic, what about life and death? When you incorporate an understanding of quantum physics, in which physical matter is just states of charged energy particles, you realize that there is no “real” physical matter. Physical matter is forces and the *illusion* of mass. What is interesting to me is that science is now grasping what ancient cultures have explained.

The Hindu principle of *Maya* is that the physical world is an Illusion. The big bang, the quantum physics model, reversing time back to one pure moment, creates an environment of science fiction, fact, spiritual questions and answers all coming together. It creates an *original question*. This brings us to faith. I think that creationism and evolution can co-exist in a creative way. I think literal interpretations of any text need to be taken very seriously. It is ironic. I think, if you literally interpret the old testament of the bible, you're in for trouble. But when I read from a Kundalini Yoga book, the reader is supposed to take it literally, as science, a science where there are energy bodies, reincarnation, and Kundalini energy. What are we, really? What is going on? That is the foundation of a spiritual quest. Looking around, even the mundane is a miraculous mystery.

Philosophy is a bunch of people sitting in a room talking and talking and talking.

They're trying to answer the big questions by logic, talking through their past experiences, a meeting of the minds, arguments, and trying to disprove each others positions. The problem with that is, it's all dealing with a past view of the world based on what they think the world is like. The fundamentals of the universe's existence seem paradoxical and a never ending stream of questions. There is a lot of knowledge and insight in philosophy, but can you figure out the truth about who you are, the nature of self and how you fit into the universe? No. It just raises more questions and makes you more and more frustrated and angry and it makes you feel more and more alone. But by taking a small leap of faith and practical *exercises*, I have had direct experiences which uncovered answers to questions I was asking. I had an out of body experience, I heard a voice. The world is a much bigger mystery to me now, but now I ask different questions. Humans are not the top intelligent beings in the universe. There are other *intelligences* that know about us and will connect with us and have connected with us.

Chapter 18. The Chicken or The Egg?

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? The answer is, neither. Neither the chicken nor the egg came first. They are a perfect unbroken circle of birth, life and death. You could argue a position that at some point, a bird that was not of the chicken species mutated, or evolved into the first chicken. But then the question is, was this egg the first chicken egg or did it become the first chicken? But arguing in this manor is all about classification. The answer we are really looking for is, what came first, not what it is classified as. So you see, we are now arguing "labels" and not chickens. These animals were either "created" by a creator as chickens, or evolved to be what they were. Did they mutate? At what point? Wisdom sees the original question is flawed, and nothing has a true beginning or ending. The argument about the chicken and the egg is really about: 1. Classification and 2. The Origin of the Universe. Like with music, classification is limiting and usually causes trouble. The latter, The Origin of the Universe, is a much more appealing subject.

Chapter 19. What is the biggest question?

Is there life after death? Is there a God? Are we alone in the universe? How did the universe form? What is this crazy world and how did life begin? What is the meaning of life, and what is our purpose if indeed we have one? That is the circular question, what is the meaning of life, how did life form? The universe, if it is a contained system of energy, forces and matter, where did that come from and why is it here? Why has it evolved into all these separate life forms causing such a ruckus on this planet? We create a lot of noise down here. And what is it? Is evolution a built in feature of this design that is so amazing and remarkable? Or are we just the product of happenstance or creation?

Even if we are just the product of a random universe, that still doesn't answer how come there is a specific amount of energy in the universe and then the rest is empty space. Where did the energy come from and why does it seem like it is evolving into something else?

What are the vehicles that we can use to answer these questions? Until you know the answers, I think it is important to entertain multiple paradigms, and also think of the possibility that any paradigm you can conceive of is completely limiting. I can't fathom the whole universe, but my heart's desire is to understand it. There would be no reason to do anything if we didn't have a desire to understand. But we do. We have a burning desire deep in our heart to understand this world, and our place in it. We need to figure out fundamentally what is going on. There is a big glowing sun that our planet is clinging to. Where did it all come from and why? It seems mystically coincidental

that the Sun and Moon seem to be the same apparent size yet they are drastically different scales and distances away. They seem to be the same size, one ruling the day and one ruling the night. These rhythms and cycles are part of our being. What are the tools available to answer the big questions? Religion? Philosophy? Drugs? Art? Altered states of consciousness achieved through drug use are the least consistent and least valuable experiences for many reasons, like credibility, consistency, and control. All altered states are essentially a change in brainwaves through different means.

Chapter 20. Reality is a Spectrum

Reality is a spectrum, and what we can perceive is only a small fraction of what is happening. That is simply a fact. We cannot perceive sounds above and below a certain frequency. We cannot see light beyond certain frequencies. Perfect examples of that are black light ultra-violet stamps. When you go to an amusement park or a club, they will stamp your hand, commonly with an ultra-violet ink that you can only see under a black light. This simply illustrates that there is energy that is out of the spectrum of our usual perception. It also shows that through additional efforts we can see the unseen. This same principle shows us additional markings on flowers and energy from stars and space.

The fact is, most of the universe is out of the spectrum of our perception. Only perceiving a small sliver of reality allows us to work within that infinite sphere of reality, without being overwhelmed. Here's what I mean: Because we are forced to go through time, we can use time to our advantage; we could consider ourselves prisoners, or partners with time. Also, imagine what it would be like if we could perceive the entire spectrum of energy, what would it "look" like? Wouldn't it be an overwhelming noise? How could we discern all these different layers of color and light and waves of information coming at us? We only consider color, the visible wavelength that we can see. So for example all the colors in the crayon box are within that visible spectrum, and what we consider "ultra-violet doesn't have an actual color, so it doesn't get its own crayon.

Ultra-violet is just beyond visible violet in the light spectrum. As if Ultra-violet was high C, the musical note, and our ears could only hear High A. We know C is up there we just can't "normally" perceive it. We use ultra violet light to perceive the ultra-violet pattern that a bug would see on a flower but we can't know what it is like to perceive that frequency in its original form because we don't have the ability to see that wavelength. Don't feel bad that you cannot perceive all of the universe. That would just be noise.

Let me make the analogy of music. Western music relies on the 12-step chromatic scale. You have A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and in between you have the sharps and flats. The metaphor for music and the visual spectrum of light work because when we look at the visual spectrum, we are seeing a tiny sliver, which allows us to perceive differences of the wavelength of colors. That's important because if you have two berries next to each other and one is poisonous and one is not, you want to be able to tell the difference.

Like the spectrum of light, the spectrum of sound is theoretically infinite. Every sound that is made has a frequency and a "note". Any two things hitting each other create a frequency when it collides: Gong! This creates a disruption in pressure surrounding those objects. The frequency of the waves of pressure will create the tone or note of that sound. The musical scale divides all possible frequencies into 12. It says these 12 specific frequencies are in tune, and all other frequencies in between are out of tune. Every frequency between A and A sharp is out of tune. This explains why certain color combinations are pleasing to the eye, like musical frequencies mathematically fitting into each other, the colors of light waves mathematically fit together.

All sound is noise. The possibility to make music lies in taking the total possibilities of sound and limiting them, in this case to 12 frequencies. This does limit the possibilities of sound and sound

combinations, but by creating the rules and limiting the sounds, it creates a foundation for sound combinations and frequencies that can fit together in meaningful ways. Meaning is created out of order, through the limitations of infinite possibility. This meaning is expressed through music. This meaning is the difference between what is song and what is discord. In design we call this “limiting the palette”.

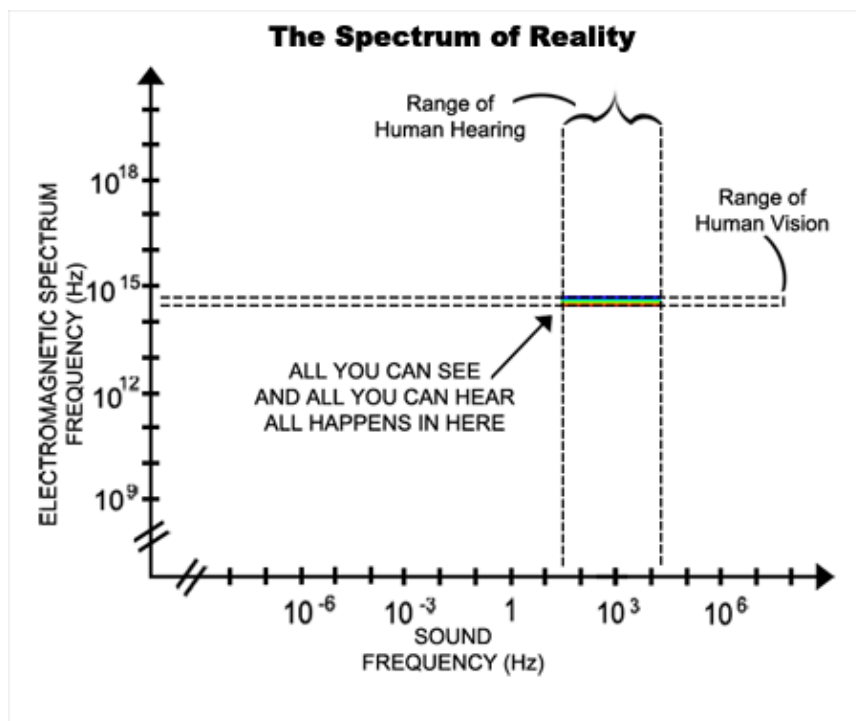
Pure sound can become music through the filter of intention that is made possible by a limited spectrum. Out of the 12 notes, how many combinations of 5 or 8 are possible? These variations are called scales. By limiting the spectrum, a foundation of music is created, improvisation with people you don’t even know is possible. Scales and modes, modes of thinking are developed, which have different moods. People who know each different mode (mood) but have never played together can fit together because of the rules of music, because of the spectrum.

So when you look at a musical scale like the blues scale or the major scale (doe ray me fa so la tee doe) made famous by The Sound of Music. Anyone who knows the major scale can play with anyone else, because it is the same scale, because limiting to these 7 notes as possible combinations creates the possibility for people to create harmonies together.

Have you ever noticed that the most pleasant harmonies are really the simplest ones. The most basic harmonies are the ones that ring true in our hearts. That comes from limiting the spectrum! So by limiting the spectrum of sound we create the possibility of music, and therefore by having our senses limit our spectrum of reality, we have an opportunity to make music with our lives. Thought limiting the senses we limit the possibilities, and through the limitation of the possibilities, coincidence becomes possible, and through coincidence, we find deeper meaning.

Coincidence happens when we see a pattern or something connects to something else that normally doesn’t. There is an echo of some kind, in meaning. And that is only possible if you have a pattern. The only way to have a pattern is by limiting the infinite circle of information. With sound you have a low note C, and then middle note C and then High note C, and then a super high note C, and they are all the same note. They are multiples of a frequency that fit inside each other at different octaves and they could go on forever. But we can only perceive up to a certain high and only so low.

No one could make use of everything at once even if they could perceive it all. Through the limitation of perception of the senses, we filter out noise. We are filtering out the infinite possibilities of perceptions. Through this prism, refraction of the infinite, we experience each moment.



Chapter 21. Expanding our Spectrum?

So should we just be content living inside our spectrum and trying to decipher what the meaning of the whole universe is? We are looking at this tiny spectrum of reality, and there is an infinite amount of stuff that we can't perceive on either side of our spectrum of perception. Maybe that is where the answers to our hearts big questions are, in this 99.9% of the universe that we can't perceive. I am so curious about the unseen world, what can I do to stretch my senses to make this 99.9% that I can't see, become a little bit more visible? When someone tells me that they know a way to expand consciousness, I want to pursue it, I am interested. Because when someone says they know a way to peel back the unseen, it tells me that they get it, that they're here for more. I want to listen. It is easy to take what they have to say with *a grain of salt*.

We have limited perception of the spectrum of reality. Does that mean that we exist in ways that we don't understand. Are we ourselves more than we can perceive? Do we exist in that infinite spectrum? We do exist in a world that we can't perceive, that we have limited sensory data about. Could there be happenings of importance in the ultra violet spectrum that we can't perceive? I remember in grade school seeing pictures of flowers the way bugs see them in ultra-violet and it being different from what a human eye can perceive. There were intricate patterns in the ultra-violet spectrum.

We can embed programs in airwaves. Television and radio is *in* the airwaves. They are all around us but we can't perceive them (without a radio or tv). All of these things are happening on a level that we are not aware of. My hypothesis is that perception is related to states of consciousness. What we are able to perceive is related to our state of consciousness. Clearly, when you are more alert, you comprehend things that you wouldn't "get" when you are drowsy or sleeping.

When you are awake you can hear people, but when you're asleep that mechanism is disabled, and you can't hear, unless it is loud enough and you wake up. Someone could walk up to you and start talking, Maybe on a subconscious level you would perceive it, or maybe you'll incorporate it in a dream, but the fact is you are not aware of what is happening because you are in a different state of consciousness. The state of consciousness dictates your reality. To other people, you are just laying there on the couch, but to you, you are floating on some cloud in a dream world, and you are not here, and that is your perception.

We could be living in aspects of a world that we don't even see. Other beings might be able to see us, but we can't perceive them because physically, we can't perceive that frequency. If science is beginning to reveal an unseen world that traditional religious teachings have always told us was there, the question is, what is it? How can we learn about it? What is it that is of value to us in our existence? If we already exist in that world and are a part of it, then what are our responsibilities to it, and what is its responsibility to us? What is going on in that world?

If you are in a dimension that you don't even know about, wouldn't you want to take it upon yourself to find out what's going on there? There comes a point in time when you reach the age where you start hearing about other cultures. The culture you grew up in, or lack there of, is going to affect your worldview. American culture has a very mixed way of looking at things. Most of The United States is religious or spiritual, yet we view everyday modern life as ordinary and supernatural events as superstition. We may believe there is a mystery to life, but we probably won't figure it out. There is "*everyday Life*", Monday through Friday, weekdays, and weekends. Saturday and Sunday are just everyday, normal days of the week. There is inside, outside, up and down. That's all there is to it, and what else is there? What else needs to be known?

Chapter 22. Why Altered States of Consciousness?

Altered States of Consciousness expand the spectrum we are able to perceive. When we have a certain type of equipment, whether it is a speaker or a microphone, or any kind of hardware or

software, it has its original intended use, and then there is what it is capable of, and there is always a gray area of how far can you push it. I have seen bands playing live use a speaker to amplify the bass drum. You reverse the polarity of the wires and it creates a large microphone from the speaker. This speaker mic can pick up a broader range of sound from the bass drum than an ordinary mic can. Articles like this one are all over the web: <http://www.gabeherman.com/how-to-build-a-kick-drum-mic-f/>

The hardware and software of our brains and bodies can be pushed to expand the possible experiences that we can have. There is a term called Peak Experience that refers to moments of great ability or clarity in our lives where we go beyond ordinary ability. People have been striving to achieve peak experience since the beginning, and cultures have had unique methods passed down through the generations to achieve such peak experiences.

What are the vehicles, methods, and means of achieving these peak experiences? As mentioned before, through various means, altered states of consciousness can be achieved. People have used rhythm, substances, myth and ritual itself as well as many other means to achieve extraordinary states of mind. But what methods make sense for us, today? I can see how many people would see the benefit of a vision quest involving ayahuasca, peyote or psilocybin mushrooms, or attending a sweat lodge or doing intense physical trials, but it may not be for everyone.

Part III

Chapter 23. Now What?

After my experiences, I looked at mythology in a different light. I also began to see that some of the traditions and stories about the afterlife and death that I had taken so lightly as a kid, now seemed possibly very real. In fact all the philosophies and beliefs that I had ignored or dismissed suddenly seemed like they might contain actual truth, wisdom. I thought of my dreams, of the stories of the Aborigines, dreamtime, of their didgeridoo, an instrument for transporting the player and listeners to dreamtime, the land beyond time and space, that existed before creation and every night in our dreams.

I started to think, what have I missed?! I thought also of the African tribes, who's tribal rituals and ceremonies saw the shaman communicating with spirits of the land and ancestors long passed away. Their portal was the drum. They pounded them together, rhythmically, in what I now realized were more than just songs, patterns that create vibration within us.

The common thread was beginning to emerge, vibration, the one you listen to, feel and experience, first as a drum or didgeridoo, or mantra, and then as an awakening force within yourself. The actual dynamics to this may be shrouded in mystery to the modern western student, but I soon discovered that the map to unfolding these vibrations is clearly marked in the various traditions from cultures like the ones just mentioned. Joseph Campbell was a connector of mythology, showing us our common thread, and it is also clear that the myths point to practical application as well as metaphor and simple ritual.

After I had the out of body experience, I didn't know what to make of it. I did not know how to interpret it, or what it was all about. This was not a textbook "out of body experience" as I heard of them. I did not float above myself or even see myself lying in bed. Although I had no frame of reference or cultural background to understand what happened, I knew what happened. The messages that were transmitted to me were clear. There's no mystery to that. What wasn't clear to me was, who was that being? What was that vibrational energy? When people say good vibrations or good vibes, I never took it literally. I never thought there were literally "good vibes". But there are literal good vibes, which I connected to, as I later discovered the phenomenon to be described as Kundalini energy in numerous Yoga literature.

When I heard the word YOGA, I was not listening to binaural beats or anything. I am very thankful for that because it demonstrates that I can do this on my own, not dependent on the technology. When I heard the word YOGA, that was one of the most exhilarating moments of my life and another turning point in my skeptical life. In some ways I have become more skeptical, because I need proof, or direct experience if I am going to believe something, or if I am going to agree with its truthfulness. After my Yoga voice, my mind was instantly changed. I had thought people didn't really hear voices, except for crazy people. When someone says they've heard a voice talking to them, they didn't actually hear a voice, they're just imagining what a voice might say, like their conscience. But I was sitting there. I was not listening to any meditation cd's. I was in practice of relaxing. I was able to just sit and relax in quiet and then BAM! YOGA!

I am learning about YOGA because a loud voice told me to. I never heard voices before, I only heard this voice once, and I haven't heard voices since then, and that voice only said one word, YOGA. Yoga means union, not of mind and body like you might think, or body and spirit, YOGA as the word refers to the union of our individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. It was instantly apparent that shouting the word YOGA was basically an invitation, or an answer to my subconscious question of the meaning of my life and my long standing adolescent need for a human body user's manual.

Chapter 24. What is Yoga

A skeptical outlook is that religions state things to be true that your mind would think is fantastical. You'd say, "well this is mythology, these are symbols". What some consider to be mythology, others take as gospel. I read a kundalini yoga book about all the "superpowers" you get as you climb the ladder of awareness through focusing the kundalini energy. I used to dismiss such claims as superstition, but now I realize after having experiences myself, that there is something to it. What shamans know and what I've experienced through binaural beats, and meditation are the same phenomenon, using a droning rhythm to change the state of consciousness. Across cultures there are numerous examples of mantras and drones inducing altered states. Behind the different culture and traditions there is a similar physiological mechanism at work.

What is Yoga?

"An ounce of practice is worth tons of theory. Practice yoga, religion and philosophy in daily life and attain Self-realization".

From the introduction to Sadhana Tattwa (Spiritual Instructions)

By Swami Sivananda

Yoga Means Union. When I first heard the word yoga, in my head while meditating, it more than shocked me. It jolted my reality into a new permanent expanded perspective.

The accounts in this book are historical (true). I want to present what happened to me at the time, what my thinking was, and how I moved forward. But I want to clarify and say that as I learned new subjects, I did so with the help of specific guides from books, websites, news articles, and personal conversations. So as I explain Yoga, or Shamanism, my goal is to be scientific and objective, but also to illustrate my path of learning, and how I found what I found. So my explanation of Yoga, which is a vast and ancient subject, comes from my personal investigations and discoveries of it. This book is not intended to be a complete guide to any traditional school of

thought, but I am excited to include my sources. In fact, referencing my sources is fundamental to the complete understanding of the material I am presenting here.

As I have mentioned, the word Yoga means Union in Sanskrit. It also implies the mode or manner in which that union is realized. In other words, Yoga is not just the destination, but also the path. However in western culture many see yoga as simply exercise without realizing its larger scope. Yoga is the exercise, the end result, and the mindfulness along the way.

The Sanskrit term yoga has a wide range of different meanings.[8] It is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj, "to control", "to yoke", or "to unite".[9] Common meanings include "joining" or "uniting", and related ideas such as "union" and "conjunction".[10] Another conceptual definition is that of "mode, manner, means"[11] or "expedient, means in general".[12]

--Gavin Flood, Academic Director of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies

Notes and References for Yoga Meaning Quote

8. ^ For "yoga" as derived from the Sanskrit root "yuj" with meanings of "to control", "to yoke, or "to unite" see: Flood (1996), p. 94.

Flood, Gavin (1996). An Introduction to Hinduism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-43878-0.

9. ^ For meaning 1. joining, uniting, and 2., union, junction, combination see: Apte, p. 788.
10. ^ For "mode, manner, means", see: Apte, p. 788, definition 5.
11. ^ For "expedient, means in general", see: Apte, p. 788, definition 13.

Apte, Vaman Shivram (1965). The Practical Sanskrit Dictionary. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. ISBN 81-208-0567-4. (fourth revised & enlarged edition).

12. ^ archaeologist Gregory Possehl (2003), p. 14
- Possehl, Gregory (2003). The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective. AltaMira Press. ISBN 978-0759101722.

Chapter 24a. History of Yoga

The origins of Yoga are unknown. Yoga is an evolving life science. In the first book I ever bought on Yoga, "The Sivananda Companion to Yoga" by The Sivananda Yoga Center, the book mentions in their history of Yoga section, that Yoga is, "regarded as a divine science of life revealed to enlightened sages in meditation." Right there, the book and the Sivananda Yoga Center are claiming that Yoga was "revealed" through meditation. What is that, like channeling? If I myself had not discovered Yoga in the form of a forceful voice saying "YOGA" to me, loudly and clearly during meditation, I wouldn't believe that Yoga was "revealed", not created or conceived by man. But I *did* have this experience, and Yoga *was* "revealed" to me. While I find it still challenging to keep up Yoga practice, I find it harder to ignore the powerful voice that came into my mind with a thunderous roar, saying **one** word, which reveals it all. Hearing voices may be crazy, but to ignore that voice would be crazy for sure.

The earliest evidence of Yoga, places stone seal artifacts from the Indus Valley at about 2000 BC. These stone seals suggest figures in yogic and meditation postures, according to archaeologist Gregory Possehl, Professor of Archeology at the University of Pennsylvania, Jonathan Mark Kenoyer archaeologist and Co-director of the Harappa Archaeological Research Project in Pakistan and Indologist Heinrich Zimmer.



Yoga is first described in the Vedas, a collection of scriptures that represents the oldest sanskrit literature and the basis of the Hindu faith. Most scholars estimate the oldest Vedic texts to date from 1500-1000 BC.

About the Vedas, Wikipedia contends that:

According to Hindu tradition, the Vedas are [apauruseya](#) "not of human agency"[\[4\]](#), are supposed to have been directly revealed, and thus are called [śruti](#) ("what is heard").[\[5\]](#)[\[6\]](#)

4. Apte, pp. 109f. has "not of the authorship of man, of divine origin.

- Apte, Vaman Shivram (1965), *The Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* (4th revised & enlarged ed.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, [ISBN 81-208-0567-4](#) .

5. Apte 1965, p. 887

6. Muller 1891, p. 17-18

- Muller, Max (1891), *Chips from a German Workshop*, New York: C. Scribner's sons,
- Apte, Vaman Shivram (1965), *The Practical Sanskrit Dictionary* (4th revised & enlarged ed.), Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, [ISBN 81-208-0567-4](#) .

I repeat the Vedas are: not of human agency, of divine origin. If the Vedas were "revealed" "not by human agency" then by what? Who? Why does this "non human agency" care so much about revealing the Vedas, and Yoga anyway? Yes the Bible was written by God also, but wasn't it supposed to be written by Moses and The Apostles and prophets etc. I have opened a can of worms about what books are myth and what are literal, what are divinely inspired and which ones are written by man. After my experiences, I am open at least to the possibility that if I heard one word

from some ethereal source, and I am not totally crazy, then it is possible that other people who are respectable, normal folks have also been divinely inspired or sensed more somehow. I'd put Bob Monroe in that category. So I am open to the possibility that religious texts of all kinds could be divinely inspired. Moving on!

The main foundation of yoga teaching is the Upanishads, which was later added to the Vedas around 800 BC. Between 600 BC and 300 BC the Bhagavad Gita was written. Among the most important Upanishads, the Gita accounts a conversation between Prince Arjuna and Krishna, his chariot driver who reveals himself to be the supreme personality of God. What takes place is a conversation amidst a battle which forms the foundations for Yoga teaching and practice. This conversation is the conveyance to Arjuna that the soul is indestructible and lives beyond the death of the physical body. Directly tied to the foundation of yoga is the idea of an eternal self, and the idea of union with a supreme consciousness. The problem for Yoga to solve, as I see it, is to find the best means to understand the self, and to connect to the universal. The science and techniques of yoga are used to tune the body, to create a physically, mentally, and spiritually fit being who can be an instrument for the world and to live the life they intend.

Purpose of Yoga

To create union of individual mind (Jiva) with the Absolute consciousness (Brahman) In yoga teaching, the Absolute reality is ultimately unchanging. This Absolute is the true reality and nature of the universe. The ever-changing manifest universe is therefore illusion.

As I mentioned, my first exposure to yoga philosophy after hearing the word "YOGA" in a meditation, was from a Yoga book I found at my local bookstore. "The Sivananda Companion to Yoga", by the Sivananda Yoga Center is a practical guide to yoga, which incorporated the fundamentals of yoga practice with the history and science of it. Founded by one of the most influential Yogis of modern times, Swami Sivananda, The Sivananda Center is one of the most highly regarded centers for Yogic knowledge in the world. Swami Sivananda wrote over 200 books on Yoga and philosophy, in an easy to read, and understandable manner, which transformed the lives of many. It was through Swami Sivananda's description of Kundalini that I first realized what I had experienced with The Monroe Institute's Gateway Experience.

Swami Vishnu-Devananda came to the West in 1957 and established the International Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centers. I visited the one in Venice, California (now in Marina Del Rey) where I purchased "Thought Power" and "Kundalini Yoga", two books written By Swami Sivananda and can be found online for free. These books contain wisdom of an experienced Yogi and the simple goal of both books is to educate and provide practical application to achieve "Yoga" or union with the universal consciousness, or Brahman. Another book by Swami Sivananda, which is also free online, is boldly called, "What Becomes Of The Soul After Death".

FROM KUNDALINI YOGA BY SWAMI SIVANANDA

The Chakras are centres of Shakti as vital force. In other words, these are centres of Pranashakti manifested by Pranavayu in the living body, the presiding Devatas of which are the names for the Universal Consciousness as It manifests in the form of these centres. The Chakras are not perceptible to the gross senses. Even if they were perceptible in the living body which they help to organize, they disappear with the disintegration of organism at death.

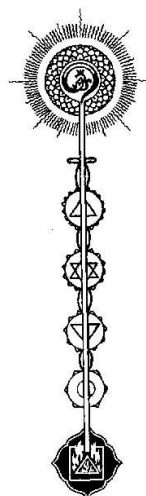
When the Yogi reaches the Ajna Chakra or the centre between the two eyebrows he attains Samadhi and realizes the Supreme Self, or Brahman. There is a slight sense of separateness between the devotee and Brahman.

If he reaches the spiritual centre in the brain, the Sahasrara Chakra, the thousand-petalled lotus, the Yogi attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi or superconscious state. He becomes one with the non-dual Brahman. All sense of separateness dissolves. This is the highest plane of consciousness or supreme Asamprajnata Samadhi. Kundalini unites with Siva.

Supersensual visions appear before the mental eye of the aspirant, new worlds with indescribable wonders and charms unfold themselves before the Yogi, planes after planes reveal their existence and grandeur to the practitioner and the Yogi gets divine knowledge, power and bliss, in increasing degrees, when Kundalini passes through Chakra after Chakra, making them to bloom in all their glory which before the touch of Kundalini, do not give out their powers, emanating their divine light and fragrance and reveal the divine secrets and phenomena, which lie concealed from the eyes of worldly-minded people who would refuse to believe of their existence even.

When the Kundalini ascends one Chakra or Yogic centre, the Yogi also ascends one step or rung upward in the Yogic ladder; one more page, the next page, he reads in the divine book; the more the Kundalini travels upwards, the Yogi also advances towards the goal or spiritual perfection in relation to it. When the Kundalini reaches the sixth centre or the Ajna Chakra, the Yogi gets the vision of Personal God or Saguna Brahman, and when the serpent-power reaches the last, the top centre, or Sahasrara Chakra, or the Thousand-petalled lotus, the Yogi loses his individuality in the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda or the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and becomes one with the Lord or Supreme Soul.

Yoga is an evolving science and practical body of knowledge that has been accumulating for thousands of years if not more. Different Yoga disciplines evolved with different approaches, practices, and traditions. Regardless of the path of Yoga, the goal is the same, Yoga. The name *is* the vehicle and the destination. It is the union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.



Chapter 24b. Paths of Yoga

The various Yoga societies and organizations describe the different paths and traditions of Yoga with some discrepancy. Here are the descriptions of the main ones as described by the Santan Society, Sivananda Yoga Centers, and other sources. The Yogi would choose one or a combination of paths to suit their temperament. In reality, the paths of yoga overlap. For example, Hatha yoga

utilizes several limbs of the eight limbs of Raja yoga, asanas and pranayama to name a few. In fact, many paths of yoga overlap. These definitions should be taken loosely.

Jana Yoga	Also called Gyana, it is the path of right knowledge, reaching the ultimate truth through cessation of mental modifications by negation.	
Bhakti Yoga	The path of pure spiritual devotion, love and surrender.	
Karma Yoga	The path of selfless action.	
Hatha Yoga	<p>Hatha Yoga: Sun (Ha) Moon (Tha) Yoga</p> <p>The Hatha-Yogi uses Asanas (Postures) and Pranayama (breathing) exercises to strengthen and purify the body and mind. Relaxation and other practices such as Yamas (restraint), Niyamas (observances), Mudras (gesture for controlling breath) and other techniques to gain control of the physical body and the subtle life force called Prana. Hatha Yoga tunes the body and mind, removing obstacles to samadhi or non-duality, creating an ideal environment for meditation, transcendence, and union with the universal consciousness.</p>	
Laya Yoga	<p>Is also called Kundalini Yoga, because the raising of Kundalini energy to unite her with the supreme consciousness is the main objective, which is reached through deep meditation.</p> <p>Kundalini Yoga: The Yoga of awareness</p> <p>Kundalini Yoga is the path of yoga centered around awakening and utilizing kundalini energy. Kundalini in sanskrit translates to "she who is coiled," referring to an energy force in the body that lies inactive at the base of the spine that is typically symbolized as a snake. The common symbol for medicine and doctors is actually a symbol associated with awakening Kundalini. When the Kundalini energy awakens in a person, it travels up the spine. The medicine symbol is 2 snakes coiled around a post, rising up to the top. The snakes have wings and have reached the top. This symbolized fully awakened kundalini energy, which is a healing, revitalizing, and creative energy.</p>	
Mantra Yoga	Through the repetition of a mantra or seed sound, a higher state of deep concentration (dharana) can be reached at which the divine form inherent in the mantra becomes manifest.	
Raja Yoga	The royal path of Yoga , where centralized thought combined with spiritual reflection allows the withdrawal from sensory perceptions, leading to deep meditation (dhyana) and samadhi. Raja means to "shine" or to "govern". Eight limbs of raja yoga are: Yamas (moral restraints), Niyamas (further moral restraints), Asanas (exercise), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), Samadhi (superconsciousness, non-duality)	

Krya Yoga	This yoga has a strong connection to Karma yoga and Kundalini yoga , involving pranayama, ritual and deep meditation .
Naad	Yoga that deals with the sounds of the inner world.

Yoga	
Yantra Yoga	Yantras are seen as the body or form of the deity, whereas mantras are the mind, consciousness, spirit or name. Yantras and mantras can bring one in attunement with the same regulating forces that have created nature in all its forms, including the structure of our psyche and our capacity to think. The discipline is used to withdraw consciousness from the outer world and direct it to the inner world. It consists both of the act of drawing and painting the yantra as of centering on the yantra, reconstructing it first within the mind.
Swara yoga	This is the science of nasal breath, providing a practical method to use the right and left hemispheres of the brain at will. It deals with the relationship between the nasal breath and the subtle nerves of the body or nadis, on the one hand, and the cycles of the Moon and the elements, on the other. Swara Yoga offers methods for determining right/left nostril dominance and for synchronizing the dominant nostril with specific activities of everyday life.

The disciplines of Yoga and its methods vary widely as do the various needs and cultural situations of the people, so Swami Sivananda simplified Yoga into 5 specific aspects.

Chapter 24c. The 5 points of Yoga

The 5 points of Yoga according to Swami Sivananda are:

- Proper Breathing
- Proper Diet
- Proper Exercise
- Relaxation
- Meditation/Right Thinking

These 5 aspects of yoga, are really the 5 aspects of life itself, therefore it can be said that every part of life can be yoga practice, and the practice of yoga is in itself, the art and science of living.

Prana

Prana is the energy that runs through everything. It is translated as the universal breath. Pranayama are breathing exercises. In Yoga philosophy, there is a link between energy and breath. Prana is in all things. The energy you get from things is in the currency of prana. As I was sipping my bottled water I was thinking about how it tastes good, but at the same time, it also tastes like nothing, in a way. But when you think about it, it is a vessel in which prana can reside. It is funny to think of water as a vessel for something else, when water is usually held in a vessel. But if you think about all of the empty space in between the molecules of water, all the energy, the forces that bind them. When you consume water, you are consuming forces, because there is no physical matter. The physical matter is just excited wavelengths. The sub-atomic particles that make up a proton and a neutron and electron, are not matter themselves. Therefore all this matter is really just states of energy. We theorize that physical matter didn't exist before the big bang. All the forces were unified at a certain point. Then all the forces split apart. It is the interplay of all these separated forces that gives us the manifest world as it seems to be today. A side note about water. the shaman, Jade Wah'oo Grigori also regards water as alive or containing life force. He frowned upon drinking bottled water. He said that the water in a plastic bottle was still, and old, and dead, basically. He

even said that tap water was better for you, spiritually, than bottled water because it was free running and has been constantly moving from the source, all be it with added chemicals. Common sense sees the value in a water filter. He trekked up the canyon from where he lives to fill a container with fresh spring water for us during our drum making ceremony. Again, I am getting ahead of myself.

1. Breathing

Pranayama

Pranayama in sanskrit literally means to restrain or control the breath. Pranayama, the science of breath control, is the regulation of breath through specific techniques and exercises. These exercises are designed to maintain and revitalize the body and mind. Nothing is more vital to maintaining life than the continued breath. A person can go without food for several weeks if properly hydrated. Without water, someone can still survive for several days. But without a new breath we cannot survive more than a few minutes.

There are three fundamental types of breathing, shallow or clavicular, intercostal or middle and abdominal deep breathing from the diaphragm. A complete yogic breath unites all three breaths. A full yogic breath begins as a deep breath from the bottom of the lungs, moving upward bringing air into the lower chest, and finally filling the upper chest. A yogic breath exhales in the same order as the inhale, starting at the bottom of the lungs, moving upward releasing air out of the middle chest, and then releasing air from the upper chest.

There are 5 basic pranayama breathing exercises. The first two are the most important and are the backbone of pranayama exercise. **Kapalabhati** clears stale energy and revitalizes the body through forceful exhalations. **Anuloma Viloma** purifies the body and restores equilibrium through alternate nostril breathing. The last 3 of the 5 basic pranayama (breathing) exercises are **Brahmari**, **Sitkari**, and **Sithali**. These 3 exercises take advantage of the regular yogic breath adding snoring inhalations, humming exhalations, hissing inhalations and tongue curls. These exercises have benefits that range from appetite suppression to temperature regulation and raising kundalini energy.

Kapalabhati - One round of Kapalabhati starts with 2 normal breaths. Then inhale normally. Now exhale sharply, contract your abdomen and pull up your diaphragm. Relax. Inhale, allowing the lungs to fill with air automatically. The exhale is sharp, active and audible, and the inhale is relaxed, passive and silent. After the 2 initial regular breaths and the 3rd inhalation the sharp exhales are done in a series of 20 with the relaxed automatic inhalation after each forced exhalation. After 20 exhalations, empty the remaining air from the lungs. Take a full deep breath, then exhale again. Now inhale and hold the breath, concentrate within. Flexing the sphincter muscles, bring the energy, from the base of the spine, up to the brain. This is the vital energy yogis call Prana. Visualize the energy rising up into the brain, or ajna chakra. Holding the breath, visualize the energy being held there. Exhale. Begin a second round by 2 regular breaths. Practice 3 rounds of 20 for beginners, and move up to rounds of 60.

Anuloma Viloma - This alternate nostril breathing exercise uses a counting ratio of 2:8:4, breathing in through one nostril, retaining the breath, then exhaling through the other nostril by closing each nostril with the hand. One round of Anuloma Viloma uses the count 4:16:8. Holding your hand in the Vishnu Mudra pose, raise your right hand to your nose. Squeeze your right nostril closed with your thumb and your left nostril closed with your ring and pinky finger. Begin by inhaling through the left nostril, while holding your right nostril closed with your thumb and count to four. Hold the breath, count to sixteen, with both nostrils closed. Now breathe out of the right nostril, squeezing the left nostril closed with the ring and little fingers to a count of eight. Now breathe in with the right

nostril, closing the left nostril with the ring and little fingers, to a count of four. Close both nostrils to a count of sixteen. Breathe out of the left nostril to a count of eight while holding the right nostril closed with the thumb. That completes one round. Start with rounds of three.

Brahmari - Is a basic yogic breath, a full breath in, but you partially close the glottis as you inhale through both nostrils. This creates the snoring sound clearing and vibrating the throat and nasal area. Exhale slowly making a humming sound. The humming allows you to slow your breath. Repeat ten times.

Sitkari - Is also a full yogic breath, but this exercise is unusual because you must inhale through the mouth and exhale through the nose. Press your tongue to the roof of your mouth and inhale slowly through your mouth. You will make a hissing sound. After slowly inhaling, retain the breath as long as possible. Then exhale slowly through the nose, repeating the process five to ten times.

Sithali - Is also another rare pranayama that asks you to breath in through the mouth. Stick out your tongue slightly, and curl it up. Making your tongue a straw, sipping the air through your tongue. Hold the breath. Exhale slowly through your nose. Do five to ten rounds.

There are many more breathing exercises with very specific purposes including strengthening the nervous and digestive systems to increase the flow of prana and raise kundalini.

Again from Swami Sivananda's Kundalini Yoga:

The process, as described in the Yoga-Kundalini Upanishad, for arousing Kundalini is simple. When a person exhales, the Prana goes out 16 digits. In inhalation it goes in only 12 digits, thus losing 4. The Kundalini is aroused if one can inhale Prana for 16 digits. This is done by sitting in Padmasana and when the Prana is flowing through the left nostril, and lengthening inwards 4 digits more.

From "Kundalini Yoga" by Swami Sivananda. Google Sivananda Kundalini Yoga for more info.

2. Diet

The Yogi should take sweet and nutritious food. He should fill half the stomach with food. He should drink water, one quarter of the stomach. He should leave the fourth quarter of the stomach unfilled in order to propitiate Lord Siva, the patron of the Yogins. This is moderation in diet.

--Swami Sivananda, Kundalini Yoga

A yoga diet is a vegetarian diet. This is because of Yoga's stance of non-violence. One must recognize where their food comes from. It may also be noted that although humans can consume almost anything, our closest "wild" cousins, the great apes, including orangutans and gorillas, eat about 97% vegetation including leaves, fruit, shoots, roots, stems and flowers. Only 3% consists of insects, small vertebrates, grubs, and snails. I am not advocating that we all switch to a fruit and grub diet! But we should look at the portions, and proportions that we eat and ask ourselves if it is natural, healthy, and sustainable.

I was raised as a meat eater. It seemed strange that someone could survive without meat. When I began researching Yoga, it was the first time anyone had described the yoga diet as nonviolent. That inversely makes a carnivorous diet a violent one. I had not really thought about my diet as being violent. I was so disconnected from where my food comes from that I did not equate my meat portions to violence or an actual living being.

After many years of practicing yoga and still eating meat I was taking exercise very seriously. I was supplementing my diet with protein powders and taking multivitamins and other natural supplements. I began to see how only a small percentage of my protein intake was coming from meat, and the meat I was eating was not very lean or even high quality. When it came to meat, I ate what tasted good. Around this time I also became involved with animal rescue organizations. I was volunteering with adoptions, transporting animals from shelters to rescues, and fostering the ones in need of a temporary home. The director of one of the rescues, and someone who became a close friend put it to me in a way that I never quite considered. She asked me how I could try so hard saving the animals and then turn around and eat them. I didn't have an answer. Soon after that was the week leading up to Thanksgiving. I decided not to eat any turkey until Thanksgiving and then I decided I would not eat any meat of any kind. On Thanksgiving I ate turkey, but after that I was very uncomfortable every time I ate meat. By New Years Eve I was done.

Not eating meat requires learning about proper nutrition and enlarging one's scope. I do not want to launch into a big discussion about how you can survive without eating meat. A vegetarian diet offers the highest quality nutrition available and we do not need meat protein to survive, or thrive. I have had fun with my transition, and my explorations into new ingredients and food. I started a food blog that documents my explorations in the kitchen and my changing perspectives on diet. It is at www.tummygrumble.com if you want to check it out.

In our modern daily lives, we spend little time thinking about our nutrition. We spend so little time preparing, procuring, and sustaining our nourishment. What are we working so hard for? What are we living for when we only take 20 minutes to stuff our faces with chemicals and preservatives, just to go back to work to pay for more novelty food and consumer crap.

We have essentially striped out all the necessities from life and replaced them with luxuries, or middle-class luxury. We don't take the time to eat right, but we entertain ourselves sick. We buy cheap crap that imitates what the rich used to have. Today we are all comparable mini McMillionaires, in contrast to what any generations had before us. We have so much possibility at our fingertips that our ancestors would never believe it. It is time to focus on food! It is time to learn about nutrition, and get to know real food, once again.

The Sivananda Yoga Center makes these suggestions about transforming your diet:

The yogic diet is a vegetarian one, consisting of pure, simple, natural foods which are easily digested and promote health. Simple meals aid the digestion and assimilation of foods. Nutritional requirements fall under five categories: protein, carbohydrates, minerals, fats and vitamins. One should have a certain knowledge of dietetics in order to balance the diet. Eating foods first-hand from nature, grown in fertile soil (preferably organic, free from chemicals and pesticides) will help ensure a better supply of these nutritional needs. Processing, refining and overcooking destroy much food value.

Any change in diet should be made gradually. Start by substituting larger portions of vegetables, grains, seeds and nuts until finally all flesh products have been completely eliminated from the diet.

The Yogic diet will help you attain a high standard of health, keen intellect and serenity of mind. To really understand the Yogic approach to diet one has to get familiar with the concept of the 3 Gunas or qualities of nature.

The Three Gunas

In the unmanifest universe all energy was one. In the manifest, physical universe there are 3 qualities or gunas that pervade all things. These Gunas can be used to describe states of being, in this case related to diet and food. A fresh strawberry growing in the garden is Sattvic (pure, ripe) but there may be some Rajasic (passion, over-ripening) and some Tamasic (darkness, spoiled) areas as well.

Sattvic Food

This is the best diet for a student of yoga. It is a diet that consists of pure, fresh foods. The Sattvic diet nurtures the body and mind with light foods rich in nutrients and vital life energy. This kind of diet creates a peaceful, positive well-being. Some Sattvic foods are fresh fruit and vegetables, freshly squeezed juices, milk and cheese, nuts, seeds, sprouts, honey, herbs, herb teas, cereal, and whole grains.

Rajasic Food

Rajasic foods are spicy, salty, bitter, sour, or hot. These foods destroy the equilibrium between mind and body. Too much rajasic food is said to excite the passions and over stimulate the body. Rajasic foods can make your digestion experience painful. Some rajasic foods include hot, and sharp spices, and salty foods. Stimulants like coffee, tea, chocolate, fish and eggs and eating fast are also considered Rajasic.

Tamasic Food

Yoga philosophy sees diet and well being as inter-related. A tamasic diet does not nurture the body. Tamasic food hurts the mind. Yogis insist that thinking and logic become impaired and a sense of inertia sets in. Tamasic food destroys the immune system and fills the mind with dark emotions like anger and greed. Tamasic foods include meat, alcohol, tobacco, onions and garlic, fermented foods like vinegar, pickled foods, stale or overripe food, and preservatives. Eating too much is also considered tamasic.

I take these dietetic rules with a grain of salt, no pun intended. I think garlic has health benefits as does red wine, but all things in moderation. (And I am by no means an enlightened Yogi) I am however trying to make better choices with my diet, that effect my body and my planet in a positive way.

3. Exercise

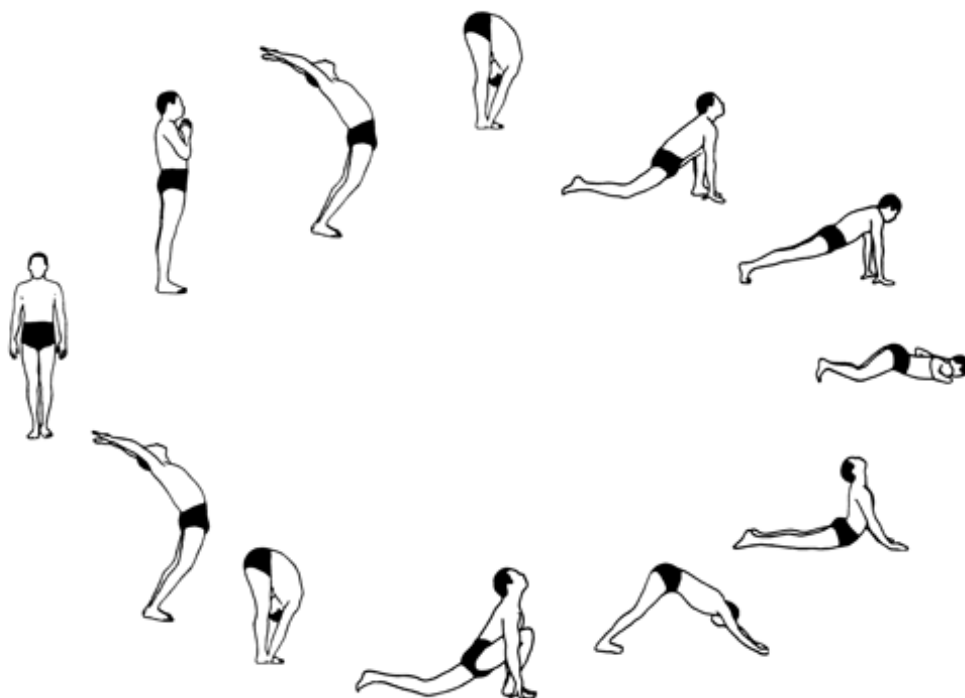
Asanas (postures)

The daily practice consists of Asanas (postures) which are meant to be held. Unlike simple exercises, the asanas are meant to be slow, meditative, and done with careful attention to breathing.

A yoga asana session can leave you feeling relaxed and energized where normal exercise can cause fatigue.

Asanas consist of three stages, the beginning, hold and the release of the pose. Some yogis can maintain these asanas for hours. Each asana is meant to strengthen and purify a specific system or area of the body. Be careful not to strain in any posture, and to release from the posture as carefully as you enter it. The postures will strengthen the body over time, and an awareness of a subtle energy will become evident.

The Sun Salutation is a "warm-up" series of 12 asanas. It is done before the basic "yoga" (asana) session. The Sun Salutation stretches and strengthens the whole body, leaving it energized.



1. Start in a standing position. Feet together, hands together in a prayer position in front of your chest.
2. Inhale. Raise your arms up over your head, keeping your hands together, arching your back from your waist.
3. Exhale, bending forward, press your palms to the floor, bend your knees if necessary.
4. Breathe in, bringing your right foot forward and left leg back with your left knee on the floor. Arch your back, stretch, and look up, chin up.
5. Holding the breath, bring your right leg back, arms straight, in the top of a push up.
6. Exhale, bring down your knees to the floor, followed by your chest. Keep hips up, and stay on your toes.
7. Breathe in, lower your hips, Point your toes, arch your back, chin up.
8. Back on the flats of your feet, push heels down to the floor, raise hips up into an upside down v, head down.

9. Step forward with your left leg, breathing in. Bring your right leg back, press your right knee to the ground, keeping your chin up.
10. Exhale, bringing your right leg forward, bend down from your waist and press your palms to the floor.
11. Breathe in, raising your arms over your head. Stretch back, bending from the waist, with your palms together.
12. Breathe out, rest in a standing position with your arms by your sides.

4. Relaxation

Relaxation is a state of being and a process. The opposite of relaxation is tension. Relaxation is the state of rest, tension is a state of action. There is an inter-connected relationship between tension and relaxation and the body and mind. The mind sends a signal to the body to flex a muscle to perform an action. The results are transmitted back to the mind. Mental stress can cause tension in the body and physical tension can lead to mental stress. To free the mind of stress we must free the body of tension. Tension is just stored energy in the body. Relaxation is a process that aims to remove tension in the body and remove stress from the mind. Rest is no action. A state of rest is achieved when all tension is removed. Peace of mind is the state of rest in the absence of tension.

Relaxation is a technique. Yogis consider 3 aspects of relaxation, physical, mental and spiritual. Sharon, the orientation leader taught us about physical relaxation with the technique commonly known as Progressive Muscle Relaxation. Progressively we tense and relax each muscle in our body. The powers of autosuggestion allow our muscles to get into a deep state of non-action, relaxation. Sometimes my muscles will spasm moments after I have commanded them to relax. This is the muscle's way of removing tension. Relaxation should be a part of daily life. Good times for relaxation are at the conclusion of asanas, or any workout, and in preparation for meditation. I also like to do PMR before I fall asleep.

5. Meditation

The purpose of life is to fix the mind on the Absolute
- Swami Vishnu-Devananda

Meditation has many connotations that have to do with enlightenment, zen, relaxation, and wisdom. These associations are not wrong, but simply put meditation is focus. Meditation is observation and control of the mind. We are not the mind, and we are not our thoughts. Meditation seeks to still the mind. The state of no mind leads to awareness of Self and our true nature. A state of inner peace, bliss, wisdom, super-consciousness unfolds. The purpose of Yoga is Yoga. Meditation is a word that sounds very serious and disciplined, as it can be, but it also is as vast and infinite as the mind and its mind games. The eight limbs of Raja Yoga end with Samadhi, but to get to the last limb you must depart from the seventh limb, Dhyana (meditation). Asanas are performed to strengthen the body and mind for further practice and meditation. All "limbs" of the raja path are actually spokes in a wheel because the day turns and things start over. After a week of stretching, your flexibility can quickly fade with a couple of nights of heavy drinking and sleeping on an uncomfortable couch. The human system must be constantly tuned for optimum use. Just like a guitar, or precision automobile, it is no surprise we need to keep our bodies fit.

Traditional forms of meditation.

Saguna means "with qualities" and *nirguna* means "without qualities". Basically, all meditation can be grouped into two categories, concrete or abstract. Concrete, *Saguna* meditation involves focusing the mind on something concrete, with qualities. This object can be an image, symbol or a mantra. In *nirguna* meditation the mind is focused on an abstract idea. This can be an awareness or an idea of self or the universe, something beyond our understanding.

Staring off into space, Tratak

Stare at an object at eye level, about three feet away without blinking until you tear, then close your eyes and visualize the object until it fades. Repeating this can sharpen focus and concentration. Objects can be the flame of a candle, small figure, or a spot on the wall.

Saying the same thing over and over, Mantra

Mantras are syllables or phrases, traditionally in sanskrit, which raise consciousness to a higher level when repeated.

Chapter 25. Shamanism

What is Shamanism? Oh man, am I going to tackle this one too? I found several definitions. Of course this word has a lot of baggage. It might involve voodoo, magic, spirits, the dead, possession and more. I think of that movie, "The Serpent and The Rainbow" where Bill Pullman is buried alive. Awesome! That's why I want to establish what I mean by Shamanism.

Every culture uses meditation, rhythm, vibrations, visualization, chanting and drumming as vehicles into altered states of consciousness. "Who else is does this?" I thought of tribal shamans, clichés really. "Shamanism" was something I knew nothing about except the stereotypes in movies. But aren't they supposed to contact spirits and ancestors?

First off, I am referring to Shamanic Drumming, trances that "shaman's" go into, and the mythology surrounding that. My exposure to this world of Shamanism involves my work with vibration, meditation, what I know about the power of mantra, didgeridoo, and kundalini. As I was piecing together my ideas about how different cultures around the world use rhythm and vibration to access altered states of consciousness, I began to ask myself, who else uses rhythm? Those chanting monks, right? Those tribal shamans with the masks, what are they doing? The Native Americans too, have shamans and a connection with their ancestors, don't they? These myths of different people around the world, I was looking at with the fresh eyes of someone who had an experience that was beyond a "religious" or spiritual experience, but it made me re-evaluate all religious/ spiritual ideas because my real experience "fit" with multiple religious/ spiritual viewpoints. I had a "classic kundalini awakening" according to many Hindu teachings, Yoga books I've read and people I've talked to who would know about it. I also think it is closely connected with themes and iconography of Christianity. My experience resonates with the images of the Madonna, or the Virgin Mary and child (baby Jesus). I am convinced that in every "mythology", "religion", "culture" there is evidence of real connection through altered states of consciousness. It seems that these are all just phases of consciousness. Back to the chicken and the egg. It's all Life. The physical world, the quantum world, the spiritual world are all really one thing. We shift our focus to perceive the different aspects of it because that is how we have to do it. We can't perceive it all at the same time. We have a limited spectrum. We are taking it in, little by little. Science, Shamanism, Religion are all ways to try to

perceive, utilize, and explain the mysteries of the universe. It is mind boggling that measuring the spectrum of stars have revealed the answers to questions so big, small, basic and complex about the building blocks of our universe and the beginnings of time. But as science can't possibly answer it all, we must look to other methods to solve the mysteries of the universe.

Chapter 26. Mechanics of Shamanism

Before the binaural beat there was the monaural beat of the drum. The shaman induces an altered state in which they perceive new realms by changing their brainwave frequency and therefore their brain chemistry and consciousness. Through entrainment we can induce different brainwave frequencies and that in turn induces different states of consciousness. No matter how your method, when you enter an altered state you open yourself up to a new reality. Many of these methods of brainwave entrainment, the methods of altering the brain frequency take you into the realm of alpha and theta.

Melinda C. Maxfield, Ph. D. is an independent researcher focused on sonic entrainment, shamanism, and healing. A former research report writer for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Dr. Maxfield's work has lead her around the globe lecturing and demonstrating the positive benefits of applied sonic entrainment. She has presented "Journey Work", sonic entrainment workshops in North America, South America, Asia, and Europe, is a specialist in cross-cultural healthcare methodologies and researcher on the physical effects of percussion. She is on the board of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, and executive director of the Angeles Arrien Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education and Research. In the following quote, she explains how she became interested in the subject of shamanic drumming and brainwave entrainment.

In the fall of 1986, as a graduate student in a course on core shamanism, I experienced my first "drum journey." I experienced vivid visual and somatic imagery, incorporating classic shamanic and archetypal themes. I was surprised and intrigued. I hypothesized that I was entering into an altered state of consciousness of some kind, related to, but not the same as, a meditative state. If this were so, then possibly it could be tested by measuring the electrical activity of the brain with an electroencephalogram machine (EEG). Three years later, I began my research to determine whether various drumming patterns would be associated with different brain wave activity, as measured by cortical EEG, and to determine if the subjective experience of percussion in general and rhythmic drumming in particular, would elicit images or sensations with a common theme.

EFFECTS OF RHYTHMIC DRUMMING ON EEG AND SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

ABSTRACT

By Melinda C Maxfield, Ph. D.

The purpose of the research was to determine whether various drumming patterns would be associated with different brain wave activity, as measured by

cortical EEG , and to determine if the subjective experience of percussion in general, and rhythmic drumming in particular, would elicit images or sensations with a common theme.

Twelve participants were divided into three groups and monitored for EEG frequency response to three separate drumming tapes. These tapes included: Shamanic Drumming, at approximately 4 to 4 1/2 beats per second; I Ching Drumming, at approximately 3 to 4 beats per second; and Free Drumming, which incorporates no sustained rhythmic pattern. Four cortical sites, bilateral parieto-temporal and parietocentral areas, were monitored for each participant during three sessions. At the conclusion of the sessions, each participant prepared a brief written account and was given a tape-recorded interview of his or her subjective experience. These subjective experiences were then categorized according to recurring themes and consensual topics.

This research supports the theories that suggest that the use of the drum by indigenous cultures in ritual and ceremony has specific neuro-physiological effects and the ability to elicit temporary changes in brain wave activity, and thereby facilitates imagery and possible entry into an ASC (altered state of consciousness), especially the SSC (shamanic state of consciousness). Drumming in general, and rhythmic drumming in particular, often induces imagery that is ceremonial and ritualistic in content and is an effective tool for entering into a non-ordinary or altered state of consciousness (ASC) even when it is extracted from cultural ritual, ceremony, and intent. The drumming also elicits subjective experiences and images with common themes. These include: loss of time continuum; movement sensations, including pressure on or expansion of various parts of the body and body image distortion, "energy waves," and sensations of flying, spiraling, dancing, running, etc.; feelings of being energized, relaxed, sharp and clear, hot, cold, and in physical, mental, and/or emotional discomfort; emotions, ranging from reverie to rage; vivid images of natives, animals, people, and landscapes; and non-ordinary or altered states of consciousness (ASC), whereby one is conscious of the fact that there has been a qualitative shift in mental functioning, including the shamanic state of consciousness (SSC) journeys, out-of body experiences (OBEs), and visitations.

A pattern that incorporates approximately 4 to 4 1/2 beats per second is the most inducing for theta gain. (Theta frequency is usually associated with drowsy, near unconscious states, such as the threshold period just before waking or sleeping. This frequency has also been connected to states of "reverie" and hypnagogic or dream-like images.)

The pattern of the drumbeat as it relates to beats per second can be correlated with resulting temporary changes in brain wave frequency (cycles per second) and/or subjective experience, provided the drumming pattern is sustained for at least 13 – 15 minutes.

Melinda C. Maxfield, Ph.D

The founder and president of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, anthropologist Dr. Michael Harner, Ph.D wrote:

The word "shaman" in the original Tungus language refers to a person who makes journeys to nonordinary reality in an altered state of consciousness. Adopting the term in the West was useful because people didn't know what it meant.

Terms like "wizard," "witch," "sorcerer," and "witch doctor" have their own connotations, ambiguities, and preconceptions associated with them. Although the term is from Siberia, the practice of shamanism existed on all inhabited continents.

Michael Harner: <http://www.shamanicstudies.net>

After years of extensive research, Mircea Eliade, in his book, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, concluded that shamanism underlies all the other spiritual traditions on the planet, and that the most distinctive feature of shamanism—but by no means the only one—was the journey to other worlds in an altered state of consciousness.

<http://www.shamanism.org/articles/article01.html>

The word "shaman" reportedly comes from the language of a tribe in Siberia, where the usage is of a man or woman who "journeys" in an altered state of consciousness.

In his book, "The Spirit of Shamanism", Roger N. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D defines Shamanism as follows: *"Shamanism can be defined as a family of traditions whose Practitioners focus on voluntarily entering altered states of consciousness in which they experience themselves or their spirit[s], traveling to other realms at will, and interacting with other entities in order to serve their community."*

What Is Shamanism?

Since the term "shamanism" has been used in a number of ways during the discussions here I thought it might be helpful to present some basic information on shamanism.

The following is from the foreword of the book *Shamanism*, which explains the approach that Mircea Eliade took to study Shamanism as a magico-religious phenomena.

Shamanism in the strict sense is pre-eminently a religious phenomenon of Siberia and Central Asia. The word comes to us, through the Russian, from the Tungusic, saman. A first definition of this complex phenomenon, and perhaps the least hazardous, will be: shamanism = technique of ecstasy.

Yet one observation must be made at the outset: the presence of a shamanistic complex in one region or another does not necessarily mean that the magico-religious life of the corresponding people is crystallized around shamanism. This can occur (as, for example, in certain parts of Indonesia), but it is not the most usual state of affairs. Generally shamanism coexists with other forms of magic and religion.

It is here that we see all the advantage of employing the term "shamanism" in its strict and proper sense. For, if we take the trouble to differentiate the shaman from other magicians and medicine men of primitive societies, the identification of shamanic complexes in one or another region immediately acquires definite significance. Magic and magicians are to be found more or less all over the world, where as shamanism exhibits a particular magical specialty, on which we shall dwell at length: "master over fire," "magical flight," and so on. By virtue of this fact, though the shaman is, among other things, a

magician, not every magician can properly be termed a shaman. The same distinction must be applied in regard to shamanic healing; every medicine man is a healer, but the shaman employs a method that is his and his alone. As for the shamanic techniques of ecstasy, they do not exhaust all the varieties of ecstatic experience documented in the history of religions and religious ethnology. Hence any ecstatic cannot be considered a shaman; the shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul/(Spirit?) is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld. A similar distinction is also necessary to define the shaman's relation to "spirits." All through the primitive and modern worlds we find individuals who profess to maintain relations with "spirits," whether they are "possessed" by them or control them. Several volumes would be needed for an adequate study of all the problems that arise in connection with the mere idea of "spirits" and of their possible relations with human beings; for a "spirit" can equally well be the soul of a dead person, a "nature spirit," a mythical animal, and so on. But the study of shamanism does not require going into all this; we need only define the shaman's relation to his helping spirits. It will easily be seen wherein a shaman differs from a "possessed" person, for example; the shaman controls his "spirits," in the sense that he, a human being, is able to communicate with the dead, "demons," and "nature spirits," without thereby becoming their instrument. To be sure, shamans are sometimes found to be "possessed," but these are exceptional cases for which there is a particular explanation.

Mircea Eliade

Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, Princeton University, Bollinger Series LXXVI 1964

Originally published in French as *Le Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase*, Librairie Payot, Paris, 1951. Revised and enlarged for the Bollinger edition. ISBN 0-691-01779-4 pbk 0-691-09827-1 hdbk

Late one night during my research, I stumbled upon an article about shamanic drumming by Jade Wah'oo Grigori and then a video on the same subject. The sincerity and knowledge with which he spoke inspired me to contact him about purchasing a shamanic drum for the purpose of recording with it. I had hoped to learn about the shamanic drum to incorporate it into my meditation programs. Jade was easily reachable and he encouraged me to take part in a drum making ceremony at his home in Sedona, Arizona. He had me at *drum making*. So I was on my way through the Mojave Desert to the red rocks of Sedona. I spent the night in The Mojave, under the stars of a moonless night. The Milky Way was so bright I thought it was a storm cloud reflecting the light of a moon that never rose. As the Milky Way tracked with the stars, I realized its true identity and really saw it for the first time as our ancestors did. I recorded an hour of desert ambience that ended up as the foundation for the Progressive Muscle Relaxation Program. The next day, car trouble in the desert almost prevented me from reaching my destination, but 2 hours and 1 rental car later, and I was back on the road to Sedona with only an hour to spare.

During the drum making weekend, I told Jade about my kundalini experience and I asked him what *entity* I had connected with, and he said, that it sounded like I got in touch with Spirit. That was a disappointing answer at first, because I wanted to know what/who that *being* was. When I ponder the answer though, the idea of *Spirit* makes sense. What transient form did it take? What transient form was I in at that moment? That entity could have just as easily asked me, "what are you?" Aren't I spirit of some sort going through change? Therefore, like classifying chickens and eggs into static states is a fundamental mistake, my question was also flawed. Maybe I am *it*, and that thing was *me*. Obviously we were both operating on different levels, from different perspectives, but we met at one moment, in one point. It was a perception. I perceived a message and an experience. I was not filled with more questions. It was a complete answer, all in that moment. It is

the little me that wants to understand what happened in its own terms. What was that being? The ability to comprehend the absolute while remaining an individual seems impossible, but it is the essence of what we strive for. Only through experience can you truly grasp, beyond the paradox.

Chapter 27. Brainwave Entrainment

After a decade of listening to and creating brainwave entrainment programs, I have come to several conclusions. The first is that the ability to enter altered states of consciousness is inherent in everyone. Animals probably do this too, in their own ways. We know that they dream. Dreams were the beginning of my quest, my search for understanding. Not just to answer the basic questions that I had, but also to satisfy that gnawing feeling deep inside me. The feelings I've had in dreams, feelings of freedom, have been a driving force in my waking life. Brainwave entrainment can only create an environment conducive to altered states but the listener is in control.

The second conclusion I've come to regarding brainwave entrainment is that listening to binaural beats or isochronics is highly effective in brainwave entrainment, but without purpose, and the proper "programming" these heightened states may be squandered. The listener should understand why they want to listen and what their goals are. Paradoxically, some of the most profound experiences require the listener to let go of expectations, be patient, and listen frequently as part of a regular practice. But without support from books, friends, mentors, and all the material that constitutes a "culture" I am guessing that a listener would not achieve as much.

This is why it is important to surround the actual programming with information, ideas, and the right mindset to allow the possibility of heightened experience through brainwave entrainment. I hope this doesn't seem contradictory. As I began to learn about and use brainwave entraining rhythms, I also read the biographies of the pioneers in the field. It was Bob Monroe's books that really allowed me to open myself to the possibilities of what I am and what is possible. It was the immersion into the material as I was practicing the techniques that made it possible. It was the verbal guidance, the audio cues, the sound effects, the sounds of waves and wind and the soothing music and tones that created the total experience.

But I feel I have to clarify again, because at the moment of kundalini explosion, when I found myself at the bottom of my spine, engulfed in light and energy, before that, I was in the void, there was no music, no soundscape. That part of the program was just the lull of tones, maybe pink noise. To be honest, I was not there, I was in the void, and I had slipped away from my physical body and my breathing and didn't hear any tones in my ears. So it is also about knowing when to not have music or sound effects or anything and let the listener slip away! It is all about purpose, intention, and then letting go.

Now let's get a bit more technical and talk about binaural beats, and isochronics for a minute.

Chapter 27a. Binaural Beats

As already stated, a binaural beat occurs when two slightly different tones are introduced, one in each ear. The brain hears a vibration that is the mathematical difference between the tones frequencies. Sound is vibration in a medium like air or water. When two sounds overlap they affect each other. A sound's frequency is how many "waves" it has per second. (Hertz) What this means is that what sound is, is force vibrating airwaves.

Light rays are actual light, particles and energy but sound is evidence of an event that took place, which displaced the pressure around it. Sound is the outward pressure wave of the source of that sound. A hand clapping sound is a series of waves traveling from the hands through the air into your ear. Your ear has sensitive “equipment” which picks up the differences in air pressure and then interprets the waves into a “sound” phenomenon that you can “hear”. Sound is like waves of water in a still pond when a rock is thrown.

When two sounds collide, some waves get bigger, and some waves cancel each other out. If you have pure tones like those in binaural beats, when the frequencies are different you have parts that cancel and parts that are boosted. The end result is a vibration that is the difference between how many waves each tone has. Imagine all waves cancel each other but the left over waves are perceived as a fluctuation, or a beat. This beat is perceived in the medulla oblongata (brainstem). The “hemispheric synchronization” that occurs in the brain has been documented scientifically, clinically, and anecdotally for decades.

Personally, I have found binaural beats to be highly effective as described in previous chapters. Brainwave entrainment encourages states of consciousness but in a way that familiarizes the listener with them so they can access them even without entrainment. In this way, brainwave entraining rhythms stand out as significantly dissimilar to drugs.

On the experimental side, I have begun to record natural sounds specifically for the purposes of creating natural toned binaurals. So far I have found success with using ringing crystal glasses, and the human voice. Creating viable binaurals from natural sources is challenging because natural recordings have high dynamic range and changes in amplitude, frequency, and quality and is difficult to create a consistent unwavering tone from them. This unwavering tone is required to have accurate binaural beats. The unwavering tones are created through the layering of source recordings in a way that neutralizes peaks and valleys. This smooth tone is then adjusted to program length. The idea behind natural binaurals is that the mind, brain, and body will be more receptive to the natural sounds and conducive to influence with sounds it is familiar with. Binaurals might be even more effective if the synthetic tones were replaced with natural ones.

No matter how effective the binaural beats are, they still have a limitation that forced me to look at alternatives in Brainwave entrainment. They require headphones (and 2 functioning ears for that matter).

Chapter 27b. Isochronic Tones, Beats, and Noise

One of my first programs, *SLEEPforSURE* was a binaural beat program that started in the Alpha range and went down to Delta over a period of about 15 minutes. I found the program to be highly successful in its binaural form, but sometimes the headphone wires would tangle me, or the earbuds would make side sleeping less than comfortable. I researched about the latest in brainwave entrainment and I discovered that many programs were now favoring isochronic tones instead of binaural beats as the foundation of their entraining rhythms. I was skeptical at first, but I experimented with the tones myself, and found them to be equally as effective in pushing me toward the deep states that I found with binaurals. The strength of the beats worked on me without headphones. I knew I had found the answer I was looking for. The only problem was that isochronic tones tended to be harsh, unpleasant tones, and the period of silence made the tones very staccato and disturbing. Binaurals were subtle and barely perceivable at the right volume, but in any case, the isochronic tones were too annoying to work with.

My first thought was to soften the tones with a layer of pink noise, which has been part of the foundation of all of my binaural programs so far. But then I had the idea of actually making isochronic beats from the pink noise itself. The point of isochronics was that there was a signal and then a silence. There was a period of sound stimulation, and then the same length (duration) of silence. It turned out that Pink Noise is perfect for this application. My recipe for Isochronic Noise

was born. That recipe calls for pink noise to be chopped up (diced) into the appropriate length. 4 Hz for example: that means 4 periods of sound with a period of silence after each sound. The head and tail of each sound has been faded on and off to ease the harshness of the pulse. Then a foundation of pink noise is added (as a garnish), thus removing a true period of silence. The Isochronic noise is still highly effective but tailored smooth in such a way as to make it listenable (palatable). What is the point if it is unbearable (inedible)? Now were cookin'.

Just as I had the idea to create natural binaural beats with natural tones, I realized that the pink noise could be replaced with natural sounds of crashing waves, digitally edited to the appropriate duration and frequency. I also decided to replace the foundation of pink noise with sounds of waterfall, rushing river, and babbling brook, mixed together each contributing to a fuller sound than the standard pink noise. The rushing river creates the foundation that replaces the pink noise. The babbling brook creates some interest as the listener hears the water ripple and trickle over the rocks. The waterfall sounds like mist and is the high-end soft fuzz that blends it all together. This foundation combined with the isochronic ocean waves create an isochronic noisescape that is audibly fuller than the simple pink noise version. Don't get me wrong, the pink noise version is highly effective and is perfect for blending into music, but in cases where the isochronic noise needs to be more up front, the natural version creates a sense of freedom and space that the original noise doesn't produce.

Chapter 28. Reflections

I have been trying to reassess what the purpose of all this was, and as I re-read the beginning of the book, I was reminded that this was just a manuscript to document what happened, and to work out those thoughts and feelings related to my experiences. The last line of my preface is: "My enthusiasm for this subject is the driving force behind this writing, and it is my aim to convey my personal experiences and further explain the theory and science behind this phenomenon. It is also my aim in writing this book to clarify for myself what I don't understand."

I had to complete this book. At times I thought that putting the individual chapters online might make them more accessible, and I still may, but they need to be together in one book to connect the dots, from forced fainting, to dreams, to out of body experiences. Any chapter on its own may be interesting, but they need to be taken in context. This book, regardless of polish, needs to be released, because I need to make sure that what happened to me, can be shared. If we all shared our experiences, we could encourage and amaze each other, uplifting us all. Still, with a grain of salt, I listen wide eyed to anyone's extra ordinary experience, understanding that my own experiences might seem as unbelievable. My curiosity and interest was spurred on by the books I read and stories from random people around the world. As my curiosity grew, my skepticism did as well. But the skepticism was what made me want to try meditation and binaural beats for myself. The early experiences lead to greater revelations and now my tools for exploring the inner and outer worlds have expanded to include Yoga. Yoga has so many multifaceted meanings regarding exercise, diet, relaxation, meditation, breathing, and all the aspects of life that can be analyzed through those lenses. I see a path that unfolds well beyond what I could hope to achieve in my lifetime. I see goals and growth. That may be why this book is so hard to summarize, finalize, and end.

So this is not the end of the story. This is just the last chapter in this volume. We need to take a break, and this is a good stopping point. We have come a long way to get to this point. I want to make the next part of this conversation an open dialog, that's why I created InnerSpaceStation.org, a place to share experiences and methods of exploring, and growing. So I invite you to explore and share your experience. I look forward to hearing from you.



