

Master Spiritual Healer Eric Thorton relates his personal story of coming into his powerful healing abilities. His unforgettable story challenges and encourages our individual understanding of the energy of the human soul.

Educating the Soul - Spiritual Healing and Our Eternal Psychology

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Educating the Soul

Spiritual Healing and
Our Eternal Psychology™

Eric Thorton

**EDUCATING THE SOUL : Spiritual Healing and Our Eternal
Psychology™**

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Contents

Foreword	ix
Preface.....	xv
Introduction.....	1

Chapters

Chapter One: My Greatest Fears.....	11
Chapter Two: My Transformation.....	39
Chapter Three: The Blind Leading the Blind.....	65
Chapter Four: Branching Out.....	87
Chapter Five: My Discovery of Fusion.....	109
Chapter Six: Terms and Concepts Defined.....	123
Chapter Seven: The Healer’s Toolbox.....	149
Chapter Eight: Developing and Working with Discernment.....	177
Chapter Nine: Educating the Soul—What’s Next.....	189
Glossary	199
Index.....	205
About the Author: Eric Thorton.....	209

Foreword

Editors don't generally write forewords for the books they edit. Editors usually confine their scribbling to such remarks as "Can you come up with a better example?" or "I'd move this to the conclusion," or simply "Huh??" This is a special book, though, and I have developed a special relationship with this author.

I first met Eric Thorton on paper two-and-half years ago when I had an opportunity to edit a very early draft of this book, sent to me by email through a third party. Along with my corrections and suggestions, I characterized this as a compelling, intriguing story, not only a great read, but capable of truly making a difference in people's lives. I thought it was one of the most important and unique manuscripts that had crossed my desk. I only wished I had some way to communicate that directly to the author.

For a year I watched for the book to hit the bookstores. Nothing. The manuscript haunted me. I went back and read it again, sure I had stumbled onto something very special. And there I found a little thread of hope: Eric Thorton's phone number!

It took a few days to work up the nerve to call him, but I had to know the fate of his book. He had no idea who I was when he answered the phone, but then he wouldn't have known about me, since we had worked through a third party. We had an animated discussion about his healing practice and writing efforts, but he told me he had no prospects for publishing at the time. He had begun to revise the manuscript, and I liked the things he was telling me about it. Then he asked me, "Uh, did you say you're an editor?" I said, "I'm your editor. I edited your

Foreward

manuscript.” He told me he was currently in search of an editor, and we agreed without hesitation to work together.

Reading Eric’s revised manuscript, I was more convinced than ever that this was a humble, truthful man with special gifts he wished to offer for the good of others. His story was as intriguing this time around as it had been in the past. And then I discovered Eric lived just a few miles from a close relative I visit several times a year! I vowed to meet him on my next family visit.

We agreed to meet at Starbucks. I suppose he was reluctant to bring a strange woman into his home, and I wasn’t about to meet him anywhere but in a very public place. Would he be weird? Would he talk about my aura and hint that he could see into my soul or even my mind? Would he creep me out? Try “none of the above.” Here was the guy next door, as he had described himself, just a friendly, affable guy with a good sense of humor—and the uncanny ability to help Spirit heal people who wish to be healed. After an hour of rapid-fire conversation, I knew I had to experience Eric’s gifts firsthand. I asked for a healing session. He requested permission to contact my Guides through meditation to prepare himself for the session, which would be in a few days. He knew nothing of my medical history and preferred to keep it that way.

Now, I was not in any way ill or in pain or suffering. I simply wanted Eric to look inside me and tell me what he saw. After sharing with me what his meditation had revealed, various details of which confused either or both of us, I lay on a massage table, fully clothed, covered with a down comforter. (He had the windows open, and the weather was brisk.) Eric never touched me, never actually saw my body

EDUCATING THE SOUL

with his physical eyes. He consulted his Guide and mine, who apparently were stationed at the foot of the table. I neither saw them nor heard them.

Holding his hand about 10-12 inches above my body, he went where the Guides told him to go. Now, the session lasted four hours, and I won't bore you with all the details, many of which would be of interest to me only. But let me share a few of the surprising moments. When Eric's hand hovered over my liver, he suddenly asked, "Have you had chemotherapy?" Whoa! Indeed, I had undergone nine grueling months of chemotherapy 18 years prior. He said there were lingering traces of the drugs, which he would normally see in the kidneys, but the Guides wanted to remove them from my liver. "Go for it," was my answer. The room did not tremble; there was no great wind, no physical sensation at all. He did the job and moved on.

After several stops along the way, discussing the situation quietly and calmly with the Guides, Eric's hand made its way toward the site of my original tumor. Would he find it, I wondered. And, yes, when his hand hovered about 12 inches above the spot he said simply, "Oh, so this is where the cancer was." Bingo! He really could see into my body! Then he asked whether I had undergone radiation and, yes, I had. He said the Guides would like to remove the effects of the radiation, and, with my permission, he began making scooping motions in the air and sort of tossing aside something invisible. Suddenly he shook his hand at the wrist and grimaced. "Geez! How many treatments did you have?" I told him 30, and he shuddered and flicked his hand again, explaining that the effects of the radiation were scorching his palm. He turned to the invisible Guides (invisible to me, anyway) and

Foreward

asked very quietly, “Can you do something about this?” holding his palm out to them. After a few seconds he mumbled a “thanks” and continued removing the effects of the radiation.

The four-hour session was thorough and astounding, yet Eric remained matter-of-fact throughout. He never made any dramatic moves or spoke to the Guides in an affected voice. He did not become exhausted or weak. In fact, we kept up a friendly banter and even had a few laughs. I didn’t go into a trance and he didn’t speak in tongues or chant or do anything strange at all.

About a year later I returned for another healing session, again feeling fine but wanting to know what I could learn about myself. And I will go back again when I’m visiting in his area. Eric’s ultimate goal is something he calls “education of the soul” through “Eternal Psychology™” As he explains in this book and on his web site, the physical body is the spirit’s laboratory, the place where learning occurs through pain, discomfort and suffering. Only when we learn the root cause of the ailment do we truly grow from our illnesses, and only then can we achieve permanent healing. But the process goes beyond healing the physical body; it’s about the progression of the soul for the purpose of improving and elevating the entire human species.

Eric Thorton has opened my mind to the possibility of exploring my purpose on earth, discovering the lessons I came here to learn and making progress in that learning. Now that he has shaken me to the core by surprising me with his knowledge of my being, I am determined to develop my own knowledge of my being and work on the education of my soul. Read the book; you’ll probably want to do the same.

EDUCATING THE SOUL

Lynn Gerlach
Middleburg, Florida
December, 2007

Preface

I am a spiritual healer with uniquely developed gifts for moving energy to allow physical and emotional improvements in people's lives. Other than that, I am an ordinary man who works to support his family and pay his mortgage, worries about his expanding waistline, and eats, sleeps, laughs and cries just like anyone else.

In addition to my gifts as a medium and healer, I was granted another gift that seemed, for most of my life, more like a curse: I am dyslexic. For that reason, my knowledge of things spiritual and physical has come through hands-on experience, including trial and error, as well as through consulting with other practitioners. Academic research has never been my strong suit.

This is the story of a little boy who saw and felt things beyond the capabilities of other little children and grew to be a contractor who used his hands to build but only reluctantly to heal. My early life had its share of pain and loss, perhaps more than most. It also had more than its share of wondrous experiences involving amazing connections with other living creatures and incredible sources of energy and beauty. I assumed all little children saw and heard and felt these things. I was a little boy; what did I know?

When a client for whom I was doing some remodeling asked me, point blank, whether I was a healer, I nearly died of embarrassment. I was reluctant to admit to anyone that I could see into

Preface

their energy, feel their pain, know their suffering. At the age of 29, I hadn't even told my loving wife (not that she didn't know). Dyslexic as I was, I had declined to read about spiritual healing or the other phenomena I had experienced. On the occasions I had been asked to participate in a healing session, I assumed the positive energy flowing through me was flowing through everyone else in the room too. As a child, as a man, what did I know?

Once I embraced my gifts, supported and assisted by an amazing psychotherapist to whom I had gone for career counseling, I began to build my healing practice and learn from a variety of excellent practitioners all around me. Experience taught me how to protect myself from danger, and my conscience taught me how to apply my gifts ethically for the good of humanity.

A few years ago, in agony with kidney stones to the point that I had to suspend my practice, I finally listened to the Guides on whom I had learned to rely for direction and leadership, and the message was clear: Write the book. For two years I stopped seeing patients in order to apply my overwhelmed dyslexic brain to the accomplishment of this writing task. My goals were pure and simple:

To bring to the general reading public, in the simplest of terms, an understanding of the process of spiritual healing.

To bring out into the sunlight the gift of healing which everyone possesses as a birthright, but which few of us develop and apply for the common good.

To open a dialog about the role of a healing tradition feared and shunned in contemporary society but rooted in every ancient tradition and revered in every culture throughout history.

To give hope to others who might recognize in themselves the signs

EDUCATING THE SOUL

of a special gift but who, like me, are confused about how or when or even whether it should be used.

My book is humble and unassuming, based on one man's experiences, with only meager mention of academic sources. My intention is not to pretend to know it all, but simply to share with the world that of which I am certain: That we are all united through the Absolute, no matter what we call that divine perfection; that we are each possessed of an immortal soul seeking to be educated and perfected; that our biological life on earth is a means of educating that soul for the ultimate uplifting of the entire human race; that some of us are more capable than others of facilitating the loving touch of the Absolute, through Spirit (the working hand of divine perfection), because we have gifts of sight and hearing, touch and healing more developed and accessible than the gifts of our fellow humans; that we are each tasked with using whatever gifts we have to improve our souls and so improve all of humanity.

This is my story; I hope it will start a conversation that moves spiritual healing into the cultural mainstream, offering encouragement and support for each individual's exploration of his or her unique gifts.

In order to protect the privacy of those individuals with whom I have worked, all names, places and specific identifying data have been changed or deleted in the narrative that follows. Some information has been gathered from several healings and compressed into single stories for the purpose of clarity. All the facts and experiences of spiritual healing remain true, although any similarities to specific individuals or events are purely coincidental. The integrity of the emotional processes, spiritual and experiential data from my practice is completely maintained.

Introduction

This is the story of how I became a full-time spiritual healer and how I came to learn that healing could be used to enhance my personal life. I hope that, as you learn about my journey, you recognize how a new approach to healing can be incorporated into *your* life. Perhaps you will discover the keys to unlock your own joy and become more comfortable with this aspect of your own life. While each individual will discover his or her gifts in a unique way, I thought it would be useful and, I hope, interesting for others to learn how I awakened to my special gifts.

The mere mention of the phrase spiritual healing produces strong reactions from just about everyone, from the avowed skeptic to the true believer, the searcher to the cynic, and to those who think the concept is merely ridiculous. I fully appreciate all those reactions, having experienced each of them at various times myself. Tugging at my attention for some time has been an innate curiosity to know my own soul, and this curiosity has opened the door for my gifts of healing. My path has led me, at times reluctantly, to my current situation as a healer and medium. Here I stand today with an over-booked calendar of clients whom I've worked with on a wide variety of issues. My practice includes spiritual, psychological, emotional and physical healing, which, together, are recognized by the term etheric healing. Such healing is a process that awakens one's connection to the divine. My clients have received healing of broken bones, cancerous tumors, heart disease, blindness, hearing loss, and much more.

Introduction

Spiritual healing does not preclude the use of modern medicine. (Sadly, a reciprocal attitude is hard to find.) Clients of spiritual healing have achieved what some have called miraculous results. This is not because I am a prophet or possess superhuman powers, but because, as a born healer, I have been able to foster a profound and very human connection with the Absolute for the purpose of healing. This is something we all can grow into; it is intrinsic to our human nature. The gift of spiritual healing is not a sixth sense, paranormal phenomenon, mysticism or any other unattainable concept that society has shrouded in mystery and set aside from mainstream culture. Such a connection to the divine is perfectly normal, although it does occur outside our current understanding of the laws of physics.

Think about it like this. Your brain is the control center, so your soul gives you information in the form of energy which stimulates a brain reaction much like the micro-currents used to stimulate the hearing centers of the brain to give a deaf person hearing. I cannot prove this scientifically, but the anecdotal evidence that such energy transference exists around our planet is undeniable. This occurs in our lives whether we are believers or skeptics. It includes the quiet knowings, the visions in the corner of our eyes, the greatest tool we all have and use every day. Why do we all turn and look when some stranger we've never met is pointing at the sky? This is because our souls are trying to preserve the somas (life) using our subconscious communication -- if something is falling on your head, you need to know, right? In those little ways, we all receive information from our souls. I am different simply because I have learned to pick up this tool and use it. The tool is communication with my soul, which is directly linked to all that we don't physically see, hear or access.

EDUCATING THE SOUL

One of my objectives in writing this book is to dispel the mystery and misconceptions surrounding spiritual healing so people might open their minds to the myriad of possibilities beyond currently accepted attitudes. I wish to see them engage their own natural curiosity and abilities. Such a discovery can awaken the joy and peace we all seek throughout our lifetime.

As you read this book, maybe the question you will want to ask yourself is not, is this true or false? But rather, what if? What if this book begins to establish spiritual healing as a practical tool for use in your daily life, enabling you to understand and process the physical and emotional problems you have endured since birth? What if this book fosters a closer walk with that which we call divine? What if this book opens up new possibilities for conflict resolution? What if medical doctors would start to refer patients to healers?

I wish people could see and feel what I experience on a daily basis, because it could change the way they see themselves in the context of our world, as it changed me. I believe we would share a common reverence for life that reaches beyond a mother's womb and our nation's borders and could even make war obsolete.

This book is not intended as an academic work, but a compilation of cultural and practical knowledge. My intention is to open up a dialogue regarding the nature of spiritual healing (not just from my own limited point of view). I would like my readers to see how and why it works in people's lives and why it works. In order to illustrate that, I have used real-life examples from my own practice and that of psychotherapists with whom I have been working closely in the healing of mutual clients. Together we have seen how spiritual healing and the medium have dramatically affected a wide variety of clients.

Introduction

True healing restores free will and brings balance to the somas, which is always for the higher good of the individual rather than what the individual might perceive he or she wants at that point in time.

Healing does not always unfold the way you expect, though, and that is why psychological processing is necessary to gain the full benefit of healing. At times the client needs outside help with this processing. Healing occurs on physical, emotional and spiritual levels, often in unusual combinations, but always for the education of our souls. We all have a body and a soul. The body's purpose is singular: to experience physical life for the soul. The body is finite and lineal. For a short period of time it is the vessel of learning for the soul. The body dies, but the soul keeps this knowledge forever. If we can look at the somas as the two different phenomena that they are, we might, just for a minute, get out of our own way, maybe even become less vested in our physical problems and find the joy that is there for us all.

I have seen many clients who failed to benefit from the full extent of their healing process because of their carefully guarded beliefs. Many people today have become complacent with the beliefs they have been taught. This complacency limits their capacity to be fully aware of their own abilities and birthright. It limits their view of how Spirit can and should be incorporated into all of our daily lives. This birthright is access to the vast sum of knowledge that can be engaged with the help of a spiritual healer/medium. When we exercise our spiritual free will, we expand beyond these limitations and open ourselves to the promise of complete healing. (By *spiritual free will* I mean a direct, intrinsic, uninfluenced connection with our own soul.) This is why spiritual free will plays an enormous role in individual healing. It allows each of us the individual freedom to learn and

EDUCATING THE SOUL

experience healing directly, without the constraints of man-made doctrines. If we go to the divine with a specific education, agenda or predisposition, we lose the lessons, much like starting kindergarten at the age of five with a Ph.D. The most valuable lessons of kindergarten would be lost to the already educated child. The most important lesson of school is to learn *how* to learn by oneself and with others. Paradigms created by previous knowledge block the experience.

It is important to understand that healing is not a New Age philosophy or cult and should not be mistaken for a religious doctrine, educational process or belief system. Consequently, this book is neither religious nor anti-religious in its message. The healing process I am talking about is neither heresy nor voodoo. And I do not claim to present here the entire story of spiritual healing. It is *my* story and *my* journey as a spiritual healer, a collaborative process that has brought together very dissimilar people in the creation of a practice synthesizing spiritual healing with psychotherapy. This is about an educational process, not a quick fix. I want to show you how spiritual healing, combined with psychological work, supports the overall progression of each individual's soul.

Healing has been documented in the earliest archeological finds around the world; it is referenced in our most ancient texts, yet is considered bogus by many in today's society. How and when did spiritual healing lose its legitimacy? When did we lose access to this powerful treatment method? Why are healers now seen as charlatans, and why is spiritual healing no longer embraced as an effective treatment for the body and soul? And why, despite the overwhelming pressure from society to discredit anything that can be seen or touched, do millions of people seek out healers, clairvoyants and other spiritual

Introduction

practitioners on a daily basis? We have an insatiable curiosity regarding the reality of Spirit, which underscores our intrinsic knowledge that the soul exists beyond the body. It almost seems as if the greater the resistance to this reality, the greater the intrinsic knowledge.

Healing is simple and clear. It is not sensational. It is a quiet knowing that fills our lives with peace and the understanding of our true purpose. It is the education of the soul, which brings us closer to that which we call divine. It is through this process of education that physical healing occurs. If physical healing occurs without the appreciation of the underlying cause, then the healing is not complete and the physical manifestations can return. It is like treating a backache with anti-inflammatory drugs. Sure, the pain will subside when the drugs take effect, but you have not addressed the cause of the backache. Is a joint out of alignment? Is it a problem with your posture? Is it caused by stress that manifests as muscular tension, which, in turn, pulls your spine out of alignment? Unless and until you address and resolve the underlying cause, the backache can return. True healing gets to the root cause of whatever ails you and, thus, can eliminate the problem permanently and completely.

Everyday life is not without its problems, and they take many forms, including physical and mental illness. Yet it is these very problems that are intended to provide the grist for our daily lives. The grist is the inherent dissatisfaction that keeps each of us searching even when we have found all the answers. It propels us to search until we find and embrace our intended spiritual purpose, often allowing for the uncovering of our spiritual gifts. It is because of this seeking process that we are not still living in caves. The soul education can appear arduous and painful to the physical body, and so it causes many people

EDUCATING THE SOUL

to take shortcuts, damaging the body-soul union and limiting their healing to one particular modality.

The tendency of the human physical body to take shortcuts can make us vulnerable to predatory or negative energy, which, in turn, has undermined our spiritual growth as a species. These shortcuts encompass everything from religion to science. If we separate the somas into the two basic parts, the body and soul, we might be able to distinguish the shortcuts the body wants from what is best for the soul. Keep in mind that what is ultimately best for the soul is ultimately best for the physical body too. We take a pill to get rid of the pain immediately instead of finding the meaning or metaphor of the pain in order to cure or heal permanently. We pray for an instant cure in a religious ceremony, revival or laying on of hands, and if we do not get what we want, we then legitimize with feelings of unworthiness, which is easier than finding why our prayers were not answered.

Remember, the soul seeks knowledge for its education. The body, on the other hand, the animal part of us, naturally seeks the immediate path of least resistance or the easy way out. When the shortcuts don't produce the desired results, we legitimize these failures on a personal level but also on civic and national levels in order to save face within our cultural parameters. These shortcuts can include: failing to seek mental health care because we are too proud, poor or smart; not seeking the help we need because it seems to have failed before; feeling too superior to seek help, and therefore relying on religious or scientific excuses. On civic levels, we shun new and different people entering our communities that come with different ideas. On the national level we tend to do the same thing by closing our cultural doors because of semantics and cultural differences. It is these rationalizations that form

Introduction

the foundations of our religious, socioeconomic and political myths.

It is my intention to begin to examine this phenomenon and how it affects our physical conditions and our learning processes. I will also attempt to explain how this predatory energy works, as well as why it is so effective. In doing so, many of the commonly believed myths regarding good and evil will be discussed, without the intention of debunking them, but rather, developing a language that is both straightforward and simple in order to discredit the false concepts holding our spiritual progression hostage.

I hope this book will be a vehicle to move healing into the mainstream of all cultures. In order to accomplish this, I make no judgments nor identify any one system or body of knowledge as the right one. And I certainly do not claim to have all the answers. Understanding of our purpose and potential is achieved through direct experience and cooperation. It is imperative to scrutinize the conflicts caused by physics, politics, religion, nationalism and economics. By examining these conflicts in a neutral, unbiased manner, we can begin to identify the impact they have had on our spiritual growth and see how they have been holding us in spiritual stagnation. I hope to encourage people to continue to do their own research and have ongoing dialogues to promote their souls' education.

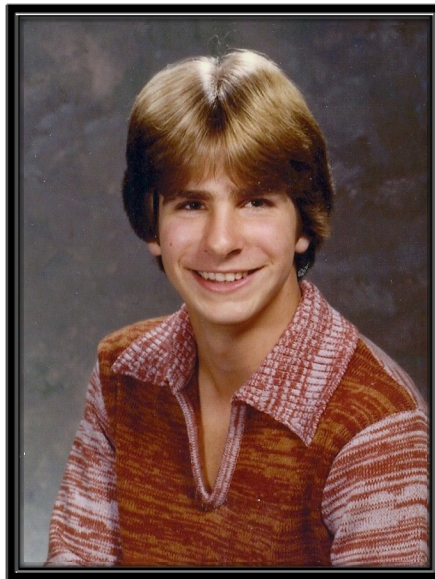
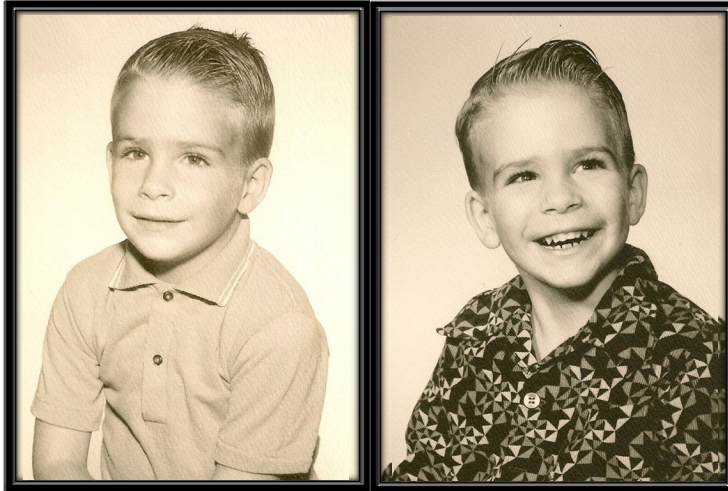
My goal is to provide a view of our current spiritual climate that might explain why mankind is struggling with its spiritual evolution. Perhaps the discussion will open a new door for the dramatic spiritual growth intended for us all and provide a framework for understanding and reconnecting to our intrinsic wisdom. I also hope that people who have gifts whose potential they have not yet realized will read this book and begin to apply this knowledge to their own lives. Perhaps you, the

EDUCATING THE SOUL

reader, will see yourself in a different light and allow for the prospect that you, too, may be a spiritual healer in the rough.

Most of all, I want to bring spiritual healing out of the closet and place it squarely in the light of day, where it belongs. The fundamental truth regarding spiritual healing has been hidden away from us all, making it inaccessible as a tool to our joy. I aim to expose this legacy to the light of day so we can all enjoy the beauty and love of spiritual healing.

Introduction



Chapter One: My Greatest Fears

Sitting in my easy chair watching my three children playing in our yard, I try to cope with the fear welling up inside me. What have I done? Where will this book take me? Tears come to my eyes as I think back over my life and wonder at all the amazing experiences that have brought me to this moment. Will my fear of losing my anonymity be unfounded, or will the consequences of publishing my thoughts and experiences be even worse than I can envision? I have never had a desire to be famous. I prefer to live a quiet and peaceful life with my family. What will publication of a book do to them? Is the response to my unusual calling going to make my worst fear -- of being misunderstood -- come true?

Until fairly recently I had been a self-employed contractor, a career I had enjoyed for about twenty years. I was always able to provide for my growing family and took great pleasure in my work, particularly in the interactions with my clientele. For me, the key to a successful business was always good communication and understanding. In the course of working on lengthy or multiple projects, I often came to know my clients well. In fact, my wife would regularly remark how I was part remodeler and part counselor. The phone would frequently ring during and after dinner with clients calling to say hello. I would find myself in conversations about their worries and concerns that had nothing to do with remodeling and were more about their issues than about what needed fixing. My wife often referred to me as the man with two tool bags, one for listening and one

My Greatest Fears

for repairs. It did not seem unusual to me that they would seek me out for a sympathetic ear. In some cases I became like an extended family member and was asked to attend family gatherings and even funerals.

The work as a contractor was tough because of the long hours of physical labor, but it was satisfying, as I got to see tangible results. There is no feeling that can compare to having built something with your own two hands and knowing that you helped someone live a better life. No drama, just parts and a sympathetic ear. Looking back on this time in my life, I can see how my natural healing gifts were emerging, even within the context of general contracting.

Over the years, I did several repair or remodeling jobs for one particular local couple. While working on their beach cabin, which had fallen into extreme disrepair, I experienced a phenomenon that I will call, for now, a knowing. It ultimately helped me save the cabin from total ruin. In truth, this cabin should have been torn down, but the local building codes prevented any new construction on the site. I knew the structure was riddled with powder post beetles, a highly destructive insect that turns wood into powder. These beetles had eaten away all the structural framing, which meant I had to replace all four sides of the cabin, one at a time, to prevent a total collapse. As I was tearing down the north wall, I began to receive mental images of the cabin leaning. They were like the thoughts you have just before sleep, when the visual part of your brain begins to gear up in anticipation of the dreams to come. These images became stronger when I ignored them, until I was finally driven to get a 30-foot beam to brace the cabin. As I tightened the brace, I noticed the entire structure shifting into alignment. That night, we had a storm that surely would have blown the cabin down

were it not for the support I had installed. I thanked God that I responded to those startling images which have now proven to be extremely useful in my work.

During the four-month period I worked on this cabin, I noticed that the owner was becoming seriously ill, though he was apparently unaware of it. I noticed his joyful demeanor slipping away, and I saw him come home overly exhausted at the end of each day. Still, I knew I had to keep this knowledge to myself. Every time I laid eyes on this man, I actually *saw* deterioration of his tissues. He had become a friend over the years, and to see this happening to him was painful. My preoccupation built up to the point that, in a moment of complete distraction, I actually drove my truck into a sand pile on the job site. It was then that I knew I had to share with someone what I was seeing.

I risked telling my wife. In our five years of marriage, I had never mentioned to her my ability to see illness. My heart raced and my stomach churned as I began to utter the story. I had no idea how she would react, so I started out slowly. I remember her sitting at our old, white, Formica kitchen table with chain-sawn legs, a relic my great uncle had built for my grandfather. As she listened to my story, her expression was a mix of sadness and insight. She was not surprised by what I was telling her; it was as if she had known all along. Her understanding meant a lot to me because, even today, I sometimes feel terribly alone in these gifts. Her continued support has been a mainstay in my life.

As a result of the discussion, we agreed that I should continue to keep this knowledge to myself. After all, what would my client think if I walked up to him and said, “Hey, I just thought I should let you know

My Greatest Fears

that you are ill. I know you don't feel it, but I can see it. Don't ask me how. I just can." What would you think if your building contractor said that to you? Would you look at the messenger in total disbelief? What would my subcontractors have thought, had they heard such remarks from me? I would have been a laughingstock. Even worse, would I be responsible for totally redirecting this person from his life journey?

I now know that being a good steward of healing gifts requires that I follow divine guidance regarding when and how to speak of these *knowings*. To do otherwise, I would be acting as a god, and my gifts would stagnate, diminish, or disappear altogether. It is not up to me to tell somebody something just because I can. It is never the seer's job to influence anyone's personal experience unless asked to do so by that person, operating within their own free will. This is a mistake I have witnessed many healers and seers make. They justify their actions out of ego and ignorance, when truly this indicates that their own gifts are not fully matured.

I continued with the jobs this couple gave me, making no mention of what I saw. Again, this was difficult for me, as we were also friends. About two years after I first noticed the man's illness, I found out he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. One day, while I was working on another job for them, his wife approached me and asked, "Are you a healer?" I was stunned at her timing. All my subcontractors were standing around, and I didn't want them to think I was strange, so I just quietly said to her, "Call me later." I was surprised that she had asked me out of the blue, but not surprised by the question. To be honest, I had been expecting for some time that something like this would happen. Nothing could prepare me, however, for the challenge

that lay ahead or the chain of events that would lead me to where I am today.

As young as the age of five or six I had started noticing a wonderful feeling whenever I talked about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit. (I use these terms because my mother raised me in the Catholic Church, much to my father's chagrin. For each of us, our vocabulary is based on the frame of reference we were given as a child.) I'm referring to a feeling of warmth that would come into my heart, not unlike that safe, enveloping hug a child craves from a loving parent. This feeling was particularly strong when someone in need was near me. I would experience this physical knowing and then, suddenly, a slight shift within occurred and I would feel the person's physical and/or emotional pain. I did not know why they were under duress; I just felt it. I became very compassionate, in the literal sense, experiencing tremendous empathy for people in need, and also a great desire to alleviate their suffering. I never talked about this because it was a normal occurrence for me. After all, as a child, everything you experience firsthand is "normal," even routine, until you are told otherwise.

One such experience occurred when I was about thirteen. During a First Communion church service, my attention was drawn to a particular little girl walking down the aisle in her white dress. I was overcome with a deep, confused sadness that suddenly convinced me I had to be perfect or I would be punished. My compassion was drawn to her. Our eyes met and, as they did, I was shown her pain and sorrow. I saw the damaging incidents that had filled her life up to that point. My attention was also drawn to her parents, who were attending the service.

My Greatest Fears

I was filled with dread at the sight of them because I could feel their daughter's powerlessness in their presence. Clearly, they were the cause of her pain. Many years later, this little girl, now a grown woman, came back into my life, and the truth of my early experience was confirmed by her own recounting of her childhood. As she told me her story, I relived what I had seen at the age of thirteen. Without realizing it, she confirmed for me one of my earliest experiences as a seer with a desire to heal. I never let her know what I had been shown so many years before, and I now realize it was all for my education, to teach me compassion for the human condition.

These experiences of intense insight also occurred with plants and animals. Gradually I became aware of my ability to sense the energy of plants and animals. I could understand their needs and wants without any outward signs of communication. I would respond to what I "just knew" they wanted, and they responded to me. Everyone said I had a green thumb, but the fact was I *knew* what the plants needed. Animals that would not let anyone else come near would let me near them.

When I was young, the neighbors had a collie that befriended me. The dog's owner was abusive and liked to brag about killing animals for no reason. This man enjoyed shooting animals or finding other means to kill them. His collie would find me in my yard and spend hours playing and hanging out with me. When his owner returned home, the dog would become skittish and run off and hide. The collie was always calm with me and always very nervous with his owner. I felt the dog knew his human was an animal killer and would kill him on a whim. Even at my young age, I had a *knowing* that the

collie sensed he wasn't safe with his owner. Sadly, one particularly noisy Fourth of July, the dog ran away, never to be heard from again. No doubt he thought the fireworks were the sounds of his owner's gun threatening his life.

One of the most profound incidents of my childhood took place when I was eight and my little brother Roger was five. My mother and stepfather owned a marina on a lake. It was a working marina with a gas dock, boatlift and living quarters above a boat repair shop. There were apartments overlooking the marina, with year-round activity. The marina had four docks, one of which was elevated above the high water line for fuel pump safety. I learned to work here. I begged for jobs because I wanted to learn about boats and how they went together. I earned 25 cents an hour for doing odd jobs. I liked working with my stepfather because he was kind and patient with me. We all learned to water ski and "sail" boats. In fact, my stepfather actually built me a five-foot sailboat so I could sail about the marina on my own. What great fun! I felt so special to have my own real boat. Don't get me wrong: Both parents were very concerned about safety. We always had our life jackets on if we were near the water.

Well, my little brother Roger and I were buddies, even though he was three years younger. He was an active spirit, and I was always chasing after him. We had many games of hide-n-seek, and we shared everything we could: toys, games and secrets. I helped with him all I could when he was a baby, so he knew me well; I had been at his side since his birth. One late winter morning at the marina, my mother and new stepfather had stepped out to get some lunch for the family, leaving my older stepbrothers in charge. Roger ran out of the marina

My Greatest Fears

living quarters to hide from me, as he did frequently during our games of hide-and-seek. My mother and stepfather were very strict about our wearing life vests around the marina, and I had taken the time to put mine on. Roger had not... and he was ahead of me.

I went out looking for Roger, walking the entire length of each floating wooden dock and checking in each boat as I went. I remember a sense of dread creeping into me. Even though I was freezing, I checked each dock and boat twice. Slowly, like poison seeping into my veins, I began to feel desperation. Where was Roger? It hadn't occurred to me to look in the water. Terror set in as I continued to come up empty in my search. I could usually find Roger easily. I was beginning to panic when I noticed my coat and hat in the dark water off the main service dock. I immediately started screaming, and I remember seeing a man in a dive suit calling down to me from the fourth floor.

“What’s wrong?”

I yelled back at him that I saw my hat and coat in the lake and that my brother was missing. The next thing I knew he was rushing toward me in full dive gear. The diver jumped into the lake where my hat and coat were just as my mother came over the hill. Her pain was just beginning; soon her worst fears would be realized. With a jolt to my heart, I comprehended that my little brother was gone. My gift of compassion felt more like a curse at that moment because I was also feeling my mother’s anguish as if it were my own. I remember her husband holding her back from jumping in the lake. “It’s too late,” echoed through the marina. (I can now fully appreciate her pain because I have children of my own.)

As I stood at the lake's edge, police divers, news reporters and camera crews began to line the docks. I remember ambulances, crowds of people and lots of yelling, yet I felt completely alone and detached. I continued to scan the boats, thinking Roger must be hiding, and then I heard someone yell, "We found the body!" What had taken three hours seemed an eternity. I'll never forget the image of the divers hoisting Roger's limp, lifeless body out of the cold waters. At the time, it didn't seem odd that I was watching all the commotion from the small dock to the east of the main service dock. From where I was standing, I could see a beautiful smile on my brother's face as the divers lifted his body from the freezing lake. I remember seeing the large, red bump on his forehead, which must have happened when he fell from the finger dock, hitting his head on the empty boat hull next to where I found my coat and hat floating in the water. I remember feeling eerily calm and isolated from where I stood, but somehow I knew this was the place I needed to be.

The tragedy did not stop with my brother's untimely death. That night, my biological father found out about the accident and came out of the mountains. He was intent on stealing the body and taking it to a private graveyard somewhere in the Cascades and taking my two older blood brothers and me with him into the mountains, and he was prepared to kill my mother, my stepfather and anyone else who might get in his way. As he exploded into the living room of our house, he picked up my 225-pound grandfather and tossed him through the air like a twig. He took his German Luger pistol from his pants and attacked my stepfather and my mother. Neighbors seized my brothers and me and hurried us from the house, over fences and through bushes

My Greatest Fears

to the safety of a neighbor's house. Can you imagine my mother, distraught at the loss of her child, now having to deal with a maniac intent on hurting her and taking her other children? Fortunately, no one got shot, but my mother and stepfather were in the hospital for a week, both injured physically and in the throes of an emotional breakdown.

Watching the news the next day, I was astounded to see myself standing next to my mother on the main service dock as divers pulled my little brother's body from the water. Mother was sobbing as she shielded me from the gruesome sight of the body. I noticed that I had my eyes closed and was turned away from the scene. I have absolutely no recollection of it happening like that, even though I had the evidence in front of me. I clearly remember seeing the entire event from my vantage point on the next dock.

I was only eight years old and not quite sure what to make of my experience, so it remained a persistent question tucked in the back of my mind. From time to time, I would find myself thinking about the beautiful smile on Roger's face. I thought about the peace I had seen radiating from his body as a pure white light, and I knew he was happy. Looking back on it now, I can see that the trauma of the event plunged me into a state of shock, and it was only the lovely smile I had seen on Roger's face that kept me from becoming totally despondent.

My recollection of the events of Roger's death kept haunting me. How could I have been in one place and yet have a memory of the tragedy from a totally different position? As I matured, I began to understand that dead bodies don't smile, nor do they glow. I realized that I had received a "gift" from Roger and the Holy Spirit. The gift was the peace I needed to make it through the tragedy, as well as a

realization or awakening of something inside me that could not be denied: the gift of seeing and the gift of knowledge. It also gave me my first realization that the body is separate from the soul. I believe that part of the purpose of my brother's life was to help awaken my gifts. This was not his only purpose, by any means, but it was one of his life's greatest gifts to me. Looking back on the incident today, I can only imagine that what happened was an out-of-body experience and a very real, intuitive communication between Roger and me. It was as if Roger was speaking directly to me.

It seemed to me that almost as soon as one such experience was over, another would occur. Each experience made me more comfortable with who I was meant to be. This was a completely unconscious process that unfolded naturally in my life, just as growth and maturity happen to all children, incrementally and sometimes imperceptibly. I never felt afraid of these happenings because they always made me feel safe. I didn't think of these experiences or myself as unusual, as they were all very genuine. I never asked for anything; it just happened.

Another one of these experiences came to me when I was about ten years old. My friend Ryan and I were in the backyard. We had made a dirt pile and were playing king of the mountain. In the midst of our shoving and pushing, he fell over and began to cry. I couldn't figure this out because he wasn't really hurt. He wouldn't stop crying, so I asked him what the problem was. He blurted out, "I have cancer!" After he wiped the dirt and tears off his face, he told me he had to go to the hospital to have an operation. He was visibly scared. He told me he had waited a long time to tell his mom about a pain he had been having,

My Greatest Fears

and, when he did, she immediately took him to their family doctor. This really freaked him out because he could see that his mom and the doctor were upset. Ryan had to go to another doctor who had taken X-rays and even taken some of his tissue for tests. That's when he found out it was cancer. Ryan needed emergency surgery if he were to have any chance at all of survival.

Ryan's mother was terrified. She called the local parish priest, who put her in touch with a Dominican nun known for her prayers of intercession (asking for God to change an outcome). The Dominican sister was living in another state at the time, but she arranged for the whole family to gather around Ryan in a prayer circle the day before the operation. Ryan's mother asked me to be a part of this prayer session. I agreed without really giving it a second thought because it seemed like a normal thing to do. (Looking back on her inclusion of me in this private family matter, I can only guess that she must have sensed something about me.)

I went to Ryan's house, not knowing what to expect. The nun was already on the phone, and she asked us all to huddle around Ryan in a circle. I found myself in this huddle with Ryan's family, my hand on my friend's shoulder, with the rest of the family touching Ryan also. Ryan's mom was on his other side, completing the prayer circle. The nun opened with a prayer of petition for God's will to be done. At that same moment I felt warmth envelop me and flow down my right arm, into my hand as it rested on Ryan's shoulder. I felt a weight pressing down on my shoulders as a wonderful flush of energy unleashed itself around me. I felt it come over my head, along my arm and out over my right hand. What a joyful moment! It felt so normal and natural that it

never occurred to me everyone else wasn't experiencing the same thing. The energy running about me brought tears of peace, because even at that young age, I knew this energy was from God. I wondered at the time if anyone noticed my eyes well up with tears or my body shake slightly.

The next day, Ryan went into surgery early in the morning. The physicians were prepared to take out all the cancerous tissue seen on the X-ray, as well as anything else affected by the malignancy. Ryan was already scheduled for radiation treatment and chemotherapy, following the surgery, to make sure all the cancer cells were killed. However, when the surgeons opened him up, they discovered the cancer had "spontaneously disappeared." There were no signs of the malignancy noted in the previous biopsy, so he was never sent for radiation or chemotherapy. We were all overjoyed. The relief to his family spread through the neighborhood. For me, it had all unfolded just the way it was supposed to. I thanked God for the blessing, just as I would for anything else in my life. It never occurred to me that this was some great feat. To me, it was simply the way God worked. Nothing more was ever said about the prayer circle or the subsequent "miracle." Ryan is still alive and healthy, happily married and doing well. Now, 34 years later, he has had no recurrence of the cancer.

Looking back, I recognize that this was the first time I was used in a conscious manner to let the healing power of the Holy Spirit come over me and affect another person. I still remember that peaceful feeling of the energy coming forth and enveloping my friend and me.

This event was a powerful reaffirmation of God's presence in my life. It also occurs to me now that this is the way all of us are

My Greatest Fears

supposed to experience the Absolute – directly, with no intermediary, innocently, and with no expectation and no fear.

Around this same time, I started noticing the presence of something around me, a sort of glow. It looked like the multi-colored rainbow effect you can see in the fine mist of a sprinkler. Slowly, I began to notice this beautiful glow around others and soon came to realize I could see it around everyone. We each have a unique aura, which is as individual as a snowflake or a fingerprint. In these early stages of seeing, I often had to blink in order to see the actual person. In other words, I had to learn how to use this gift of sight correctly so it would not interfere with my physical life experience. Auras vary in shade and substance. Some auras are dull, as if they are overshadowed. These I found repulsive and today I know I was seeing “polluted energy.” The darker the area, the more it attracted my attention. Dark areas would make me agitated or draw my compassion, depending on what energy was emanating from them. I began to notice a pattern with people who were sick or troubled or both. I had not yet put all the pieces together and did not realize this was a gift; however, I was becoming more aware of these occurrences in my life. I was also becoming much more empathetic to all of God’s creation, because I could see the life force.

My ability to sense this type of energy was not limited to people, and I began to notice auras around animals, trees and everything else. Because of this discovery I had a sense that the Absolute worked in many ways and was to be found not only in church but also in all things and all people. This was especially real for me during a trip with friends through northern California. I was eleven

years old and excited to be visiting this part of California for the first time.

My friends' parents drove us down in a battered old station wagon that looked as if it wasn't up to the trip, but, as kids, we were oblivious to such things and enjoyed being on an adventure. We made a stop at the coastal redwood forests along the way, and I recall looking from the car window, amazed by the beauty of these ancient giants. I was sure I could feel something from the trees. As I became aware of the magnificent energy emanating from them, I noticed a wisdom and purity much like that which emanates from a giant blue whale.

I stepped out of the car at the site of the cathedral trees and the Paul Bunyan and Seven Dwarves exhibit and almost fainted from this pure, innocent source of energy that completely enveloped me. It was as if the energy looked at us and gave each one of us exactly what we needed at that moment in time. It gave me joy that nearly overwhelmed me. It caused me to take in so much oxygen that I hyperventilated. The energy seemed to be pure love. I had never before experienced the untainted energy of God's creation. My body began to tremble as I awakened to the reality of this magnificent, life-giving force. I felt more alive here than I had since before Roger's death. My heart beat so fast it felt like it was going to burst through my chest. I wanted to run and jump and laugh out loud. I saw life moving and vibrating in every corner of my field of vision. This all happened instantaneously. I was overjoyed by the scent of the forest and the change this energy made in my aura as well as in the auras of most of the other people I saw there. Unfortunately, no one else in my group seemed to register any of this. In fact, my friends were oblivious to everything except their

My Greatest Fears

squabbling, and, of course, their parents were aware only of this distraction. In this setting, it was as if I was in my own world, unattached to my friends. Sadly, we stayed there for just a few hours. I longed to be able to stay there forever.

As we left, we drove along a peaceful, paved road with huge trees on either side. I felt as though we were leaving a great cathedral of God's creation, and the feelings that stirred deep within my soul were screaming out for me to remain there. "No. Don't leave. You will never have this chance again!" Tears welled up in my eyes in a very private moment, sitting in the front passenger seat of the car, as I felt that life force ebb away from my heart. This childhood experience left a profound impression on me of the greatness of God's garden and gave me the knowledge that a truly holy place was to be found on the coast of California. And it gave me great hope. I now know we all require the energy of creation to nurture and balance our bodies.

At such a young age, I could not yet fully appreciate the greatness of this life force, nor how fleeting it would be due to man's encroachment. As an adult, I have gone back to visit the trees only to experience a great sadness and emptiness caused by our ruthless harvesting of their magnificent timber. I wanted to embrace them and give them the joy they had once given me. I cried, and still do, for their plight and their pain. To this day, the conflict this causes within me leaves me sad and awestruck at the same time. I can still see the magnificent abundance of life in those forests as if it were yesterday, and, at the same time I'm aware of the ruin now left behind in man's wake. I don't believe these same energies of life are found anywhere else in this world, and it will be a sad day when these trees are lost

forever.

When school started that fall, I started at a new private Catholic school in Washington State. It was an eventful year because I began to realize that my experience in the redwoods forest showed me life could go on in the wake of my brother's death. I started playing soccer at school and found myself able to joke around with my new classmates. I began to open up to life and allow myself to participate. Part of this process was becoming more open with people and being more aware of their feelings. I felt safe enough not to need to shut myself off from others.

I remember an incident during this time with my religious education teacher. She was a meek individual, not good at controlling her class, which was scheduled right after lunch. We were a rowdy bunch, and when she left us unattended for a few moments, a food fight broke out. Our teacher was not equipped to deal with such unruly behavior, and when she came into the class and saw the mess and commotion, she was not able to stop the chaos. In frustration, the teacher burst into tears and ran out of the room. I just sat there and died a little as feelings of guilt washed over me. Being able to feel the teacher's pain overwhelmed me. I froze in the anguish we had caused. My heart went out to her and, at that very moment, I experienced physical pain and redness in my hands, feet and my left side. I did not realize at the time that I was experiencing what is called stigmata. I experience this anytime I am holding back or resisting expression of the Holy Spirit. My heart had gone out to my teacher, and because my compassion had no outlet at that moment, I developed these red marks.

My Greatest Fears

Stigmata are recognized as the manifestations of the wounds suffered by Christ during the crucifixion. Sometimes, when the stigmata were mentioned during discussions at church, the signs would appear on my body, although they were minor, much like a rash. I could not comprehend the concept. It made no sense to me that Christ would want anyone to suffer with His physical wounds. After all, His ministry was one of compassion, not pain. These manifestations would usually subside shortly afterward, but I remember one time in particular that the pain was so bad that I nearly asked for help. I did not want to draw attention to myself, however, so I decided to suffer through it. If it had been a cut or a bruise I would certainly have asked for help, but since it was something I could not explain, and since we were taught stigmata appeared only on “saints,” I kept my mouth shut.

A few weeks later, in the same religious education class, we were given this assignment: “Write down the most significant event of your life and what you learned from it.” I felt close enough to this teacher to risk being honest, because I knew she felt great pain and compassion for people. For the first time since Roger died, I allowed myself to go back over the events of his death and reflect on what I could possibly have learned from such a tragedy. I wrote: “My little brother Roger drowned at the family marina. I learned never to be too close to anybody because they could die and cause you pain.”

The teacher took me aside after reading my paper and sympathized with me as best she could. Her compassion in that moment helped me go forward in life until I was ready to explore more of my issues regarding Roger’s death.

My next “defining” moment came a few months later. All eighth-graders are of age for “confirmation,” a rite of passage in the Catholic Church in which we were supposed to confirm our faith in the “one and only Church of God,” now that we were supposedly old enough to make such decisions for ourselves. All “good Catholic” children were expected to go through this ritual, which was eagerly anticipated by their families. During the preparations for the ceremony, we were impressed with the seriousness of the commitment we were about to make. All of our parents would be there, as well as the bishop of the archdiocese. Everyone would expect us to be the next generation of Catholics and carry on the traditions of the “only way to God.”

By this time, I could “see” whether or not the Holy Spirit was present in the church or its sacraments. When it came time for me to sign the document of confirmation, I could not do so in good conscience. The principal called me to her office in an attempt to badger me into participating in the confirmation process. When I refused, she called my mother, who, thankfully, stood behind my convictions. This infuriated the principal, who lectured me on the seriousness of this decision and threatened that I would burn in hell if I did not go through with the sacrament. I tried to explain my position, but that did not matter to her. Only my soul mattered, she informed me.

We all sat together as a class during the ceremony, and, when it was our turn, I was forced to sit alone in the pew while all my classmates filed before the bishop to kiss his ring. I never did sign the document. At the age of twelve, I knew far more truth existed than the doctrine of one church. I had seen God in churches as well as in the

My Greatest Fears

forest and the trees. I could see and feel the presence of God in people of all creeds and nationalities and from all walks of life.

One night, I was surprised and seriously frightened by the noise of a fight between two animals in the backyard of our family home. It went on for some time, and I could sense a high level of desperation and pain in one of the animals. The next morning, I went outside to enjoy the sunshine and check the area for evidence of the skirmish. When I approached the area where I thought the scuffle had occurred, I heard an unusual noise. It was a strange, low, growling sound coming from a pile of wood waiting to be built into a garage. Suddenly, the sight of a mother bobcat and her young startled me. The mother had obviously been hurt, as there was blood on the fur on the back of her neck and down her right side, but she was still trying to move her litter from place to place to protect them. I froze with fear, afraid to breathe, having been told these were desperate, vicious animals.

Out of character for a mother protecting her young, she looked at me with curiosity instead of fear. She came closer and stopped about ten feet away from me. My panic was rising when I began to feel that wonderful, warm feeling from the Holy Spirit flood over me. As I watched the mother bobcat, she seemed to relax and I “saw” how she had been wounded. At that precise moment I was shown the fight I had heard the night before. It was between her and some raccoons that were after her young. She had defended her kittens bravely, but at grave consequence to herself. I knew she was fatally wounded. I watched in amazement as the energy from around me seemed to radiate out to the animal. It was as if we were both engulfed in a sparkling white light. The bobcat appeared to become sleepy and, right before my eyes, her

fur smoothed out and the blood disappeared. It was like time-lapse photography. Her body just seemed to renew itself. This went on for about five minutes, and then it was all over.

The white, sparkling energy subsided and the bobcat came out of her daze and ran back to the young she had so fiercely protected. She pulled out her four kittens in broad daylight and moved them to a new location. As she was moving her last kitten, she looked back at me and lowered her head and blinked slowly, much like a domestic cat would do. It was as if she were saying thank you. I could feel her gratitude. I never saw that animal again, nor any other bobcat in our area. I remember being at ease with what happened, yet at the same time keenly aware of how remarkable it was. But I still didn't think these incidents were unique to me. I wondered what other people thought about this type of thing when it happened to them.

My young life was filled with incidents like this, which I kept to myself in part because of an underlying reticence which I now know was a subconscious protective tool. In my heart I believed all people were capable of sensing the energy of trees and animals and the life force in all things. I did not feel unique because of my abilities and, looking back, I never thought of myself as having special gifts.

By age 29, however, I was becoming aware of the uncommon nature of these occurrences, which is why I didn't respond directly to my client's question regarding whether or not I was a healer. To be honest, I felt mortified to discuss something like that in front of my subcontractors because I didn't want to be seen as a freak. All my life I had held mainstream attitudes about anything beyond the five senses, and now I was being confronted with my own truth in front of a lot of

My Greatest Fears

other mainstream thinkers. Was I a freak after all? My gut reaction stopped me in my tracks. This was not a simple moment for me. This woman, June, had no idea of the deep struggle taking place inside me.

When I spoke with June later that day she sounded overwhelmed with sadness. “Rick is already in hospice at Lanier,” she told me.

I could hear the pain in her voice as she tried to say this quietly because her small children were playing in the background. June quietly continued, “The cancer is riddling his body and the illness is incurable at this stage.” I could only imagine how utterly devastating this must have been for her. It was all the more upsetting for me because I had seen his illness progressing for several years. This is part of the burden of being a seer and something that requires innocence and boundaries. By that I mean that the healer must maintain respect for people’s own life experiences.

I got the sense this was the first time June had verbalized the seriousness of her husband’s condition. Her pain permeated her every word as she told me he was not expected to live for more than two weeks. A wave of sympathy flooded over me. I could feel her anguish. It struck me very hard because I had known death at such a young age, and I realized how difficult it would be for her young, innocent children to make sense of this. So I risked my deepest secret. This pain that sat in the deepest part of my conscience urged me to reassure her that I had been used for healing many times before, but I hedged the words and finished the line with “I do not consider myself a healer.” The truth was, I was a contractor by profession and didn’t really know what to do to help her husband. I did tell her that I knew someone who was a

prayer healer and that I would be happy to talk to her on her husband's behalf. She gratefully accepted my offer, so I called our family friend, Sister Sara.

When I had Sister Sara on the phone, she told me she had the gift of prayer, not of healing. She helped me understand the difference between a healer and someone with the gift of prayer. She defined a true spiritual healer as someone with the gift of command. She made the distinction between spiritual healing and the gift of "pleading" or prayer. When Sister Sara is praying, she is petitioning "God" for something to be done on behalf of another. Because it is ultimately the "will of God" that is being petitioned, the answer to the prayer is unknown. Sister Sara said it is as if a child is asking a parent for something out of the ordinary, in essence, a miracle. A child may ask for many things without the full understanding of whether or not it is in her best interests. In this case, June is asking for a cure of her husband's cancer without knowing whether this is part of his larger life plan. Sister Sara told me of a few incidents in which her prayers had been answered. She also told me about a healer with whom she used to pray, another nun in California. She had worked with this nun before, but the woman had recently passed away. I immediately thought to myself, "Oh, no. What am I going to tell June?" Sister Sara then said something to me, which I will never forget.

"Eric, you are a healer," she said. "You have the gift of command. I can pray with you for your friend; however, you need to be there in order to bring the energy of the Holy Spirit directly to this man."

My Greatest Fears

Her words shook me to the core. The idea of standing in front of people who knew me as a contractor and acting as a spiritual healer, trusting God to be there no matter what, was, frankly, terrifying. To have the audacity to even think that God would show up seemed utterly impossible. Who was I to command the power of the Holy Spirit? Damn near panic set in. I don't know why I agreed to try; perhaps it was because I promised June I would help, and I could not turn away from friends in need.

We all agreed on a time to meet at the hospice. June was extremely grateful but doubtful that her husband, an ex-Catholic, would agree to our help. A week later, she called me back and told me her husband had just had an operation on his spine to remove a tumor that had left him unable to walk. Things did not look good. He was dying as we spoke, and he was now prepared to try anything. It made me feel he was trivializing our help.

The next day, June, Sister Sara and I went to the hospice center at Lanier. Sister Sara asked June's husband, Rick, a few questions about healing and the Holy Spirit, which he answered skeptically. In fact, he trivialized the existence of God in general, and only the day before had refused to allow a priest to anoint him. As an ex-Catholic, he had only bad memories of the Church that had tainted his experience of God. Rick all but turned us away; however, he settled down when his wife pleaded with him to let us continue.

Sister Sara asked Rick if I could lay my hands on him. I panicked again but kept it to myself. To touch another human being in the name of God! What would I do? What would I say? What would happen? He agreed, saying that he trusted me. We had known each

other for years, and he figured it couldn't hurt. So I punted -- I put one hand on his shoulder and the other on his chest, very lightly.

Sister Sara went to the side of his bed and began to pray in tongues, which made me uncomfortable. I could only imagine Rick's eyes rolling in his head as this unfolded. I felt nothing at first. Then, suddenly, I felt warmth and a weight envelop me. I began to tremble as this energy moved around me, down my arms and over my hands. I watched the energy flow into Rick's body wherever I placed my hands. His wife began to sob uncontrollably, and Sister Sara prayed louder. Powered by a force greater than mine, my hands began to move over areas of his body, stop for a moment and spontaneously move to another area. Throughout this time I was shaking and sweating. I was a wreck and felt physically drained. After what seemed like an hour, I could no longer stand up. In what must have appeared to be a rather dramatic moment, I had to toss myself away from Rick and collapse into a chair. (Things have changed a bit since then, and I no longer have such a drastic reaction when healing people.)

Sister Sara almost pounced on Rick in her eagerness to question him about what he had felt. He said he felt peace and some warmth, but seemed more concerned with the fact that I looked terrible. I felt terrible, too. I could feel his cancer and his pain. It was awful. I had no drugs to dull it and I could hardly bear the agony. Sister Sara very quickly said our good-byes and rushed all of us out of the room.

On the way out, Sister Sara said she needed to pray to release the energy I had apparently absorbed from Rick. About halfway to the car, she uttered the prayer of release and, suddenly, all three of us were lifted into the air and thrown to the ground. At first, we were scared

My Greatest Fears

(Wouldn't you be?), then dumbfounded as we noticed our scraped knees and elbows and our glasses, which had been thrown to one side. June began to cry, and I was immediately concerned about both of them. I knew Sister Sara, at 73, was in no condition for such physical abuse. As we picked ourselves up, she tried to explain what had happened. She said that I had taken on whatever made Rick sick, and that he would be fine now, and so would I. She informed me that I would be sore for a number of days. I have to admit, at that time I was as skeptical as Rick, but I was sore for about ten days, just as had been predicted.

About six weeks later, I heard from one of Rick's good friends that he had "spontaneously healed." Apparently, within hours of our healing session, he was feeling better, required no more pain medications and began eating again for the first time in a long while. He was soon released from hospice and returned home. I found it remarkable that neither Rick nor his wife called me to let me know how he was doing and that he had experienced such a profound healing. The session was never mentioned, even though I continued to do contracting work for them. Looking back, I think it was just too far outside his belief system to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit had performed a miracle in his life. With acknowledgment comes responsibility for faith.

Rick lived for several years before the cancer returned, though he never regained the use of his legs. He was able to spend time with his small children and put his affairs in order. But even when the cancer returned, he never asked for healing again. Through my friendship with June, I knew he hadn't dealt with his issues regarding his relationships

and his faith. I believe this underscored a lack of desire to live. This is an example of how spiritual healing goes only as far as the free will of the subject and his soul allows. This is something spiritual healers must contend with when asked to help. We cannot be attached to the outcome, even if the patient is a close friend or family member.

Master Spiritual Healer Eric Thorton relates his personal story of coming into his powerful healing abilities. His unforgettable story challenges and encourages our individual understanding of the energy of the human soul.

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