

## Discovering Disembodiment: A Primer for the Dearly Departed

- Are you unsure of where you are in the world?
- Feeling disoriented, lost and without direction?
- Have you lost all physical sensations such as sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch and proprioception?
- Do you find yourself slowly becoming aware of other people's memories?

If you answered yes to all these questions, you've either smoked something you maybe shouldn't, or you've begun an exciting new chapter of your experiential journey: you're permanently disembodied! Welcome to the Afterlife.

If it's your first time with the Afterlife, there are bound to be a thousand questions that came to mind about now, so let's start off by answering a few of the most common questions asked by the recently disembodied:

*What are you talking about? Are you telling me I'm dead? What does that even mean?*

Good question! We don't use the term "dead" around here, due to its tendency to confuse the philosophically inclined. The argument tends to go something like "You" cannot be "dead" since "dead" means ceased or nonexistent, and "you" are certainly still extant. That's why throughout this booklet you'll see the term "disembodied" used instead. That said, for the purposes of this primer, it simply means you no longer have a physical body to maintain.

*What happened? How did I die?*

Honestly, you're the best judge of that. If you think about it, you'll remember the moment you lost touch with your body. Were you sick? Probably that. Driving? Hmmm, that's risky. Did you get a sudden pain in your chest after eating too many cheeseburgers? Do you remember ignoring your Uncle Albert warning you not to feed the hippopotamus while drunk? In this instance, your own memories will give you much more detail than you'll find anywhere else.

*I can't see anything. I can't feel anything. What's going on? Why is there nothing?*

The reason you can't sense anything from your body is very simple: you don't have one anymore! This can take some getting used to, but give it time, feel it out, and you'll realize that there are other ways of perceiving that will make the physical senses seem limiting. From interacting with the thoughts of others to multi-locational phasing, before you know it you'll discover all the wonderful things you can do now that you're no longer limited by space and time!

*You say I'm dead. Or, sorry, disembodied. But I'm still here. Wherever here is. Where am I?*

Excellent question. One of the first things you've probably noticed is that you no longer have a sense of "position," or "place." That's because rather than being tethered to a single body, your continued existence is in the hearts and minds of those who knew you in life. And here's the neat part: since they are in many places at once, so are you!

*What about my family? I want to go back! Take me back! Pleeeeeeeease!!*

Yes, transitions can be uncomfortable. The good news is, contrary to popular belief among the living, you're not going to leave your loved ones behind! We'll go into this more later, but you'll actually have the opportunity to be with your loved ones (or your enemies) and continue to help (or infuriate) them for a long time to come, and in ways you couldn't while you were alive! That said, if you're dead set (pardon the pun) on going back, see the section below on Apparitions.

*What about Elysium and Hades/Valhalla/karma and the cycle of rebirth/Heaven and Hell/Paradise, etc.?*

Well, the thing about earthbound religions is that they are all designed to help you to live a decent life while you are alive and in that sense there is truth to be found in all of them. Then again, the living trying to explain the experience of the dead is a bit like a two-dimensional being trying to explain the hole that just got punched through the piece of paper that makes up its universe. That's not to say that these places and experiences don't exist in the Afterlife, just that they maybe aren't quite the way the living expect them to be.

*So what happens now?*

So glad you asked! With these preliminary questions done, let's start talking about Phase 1.

### **Phase 1: The Gentle Reminder**

Some of your grieving relatives are probably being told even now that they will always carry a piece of you with them. To the griever this is a pithy and usually useless thing to hear, but for you it is very much to the point. To understand Phase 1, you have to come to understand what the living call "souls." Counter to what you've surely been told, souls are not actually individually wrapped, single serving spirits that are temporarily housed in a meat package. Instead, souls are the impressions that we all make on each other. Other people have impacted you, and you therefore carry a piece of that person with you. So, too, everyone that you impacted carries some of you. This is who you are now. You are the collected memories and feelings of you carried around by other people, along with your own memories and feelings you carry of them. As such, you have the ability to do something you always wanted, namely to be in several places at once!

As previously mentioned, this can be a disorienting experience at first. It is generally recommended that you bring your attention to bear during your funeral. This will help give you some closure and help your grieving family members to feel your presence strongly. On a practical note, it will also help you transition from thinking of yourself in one place to your new multi-locational existence. By having a large concentration all in one place of people who carry parts of you, it gives you the illusion of being in one place while affording you the opportunity to practice being multi-locational over shorter distances to start.

A word of warning, though. Attending your own funeral can also be a time when you learn awkward things that you'll wish you didn't know. Aunt Martha always thought you were a jerk. Everyone returned the gifts you gave them for Christmas. Your "best friend" was sleeping with your spouse. "Uncle" Albert was actually your father. That sort of thing.

During Phase 1, you'll find that you can revisit the memories and feelings that other people have of you. If their memory of certain events don't perfectly match your own, don't worry. We all see events through our own lens. By flexing a little bit, you can nudge a particular memory or feeling to the person's conscious awareness. Remind them of that piece of advice you once gave them when you think they need to hear it again. Remind them that they have good qualities when they're feeling down. It is generally recommended that you use this sparingly. You want to strike a good balance between letting memories of you be a source of comfort and inspiration without the living person becoming committed to a mental hospital because they can't think of anything else but you.

Unless, of course, they're someone you hated and you want to remind them constantly of how terrible they were to you until they're riddled with paralyzing guilt. Then by all means knock yourself out. Be aware, though, that this will tend to inspire the person to seek therapy and once they've worked through their feelings towards you, your ability to influence them will be greatly diminished. Your revenge is entirely up to you: a flash in the pan is one way. Another option is the slow burn where you only nudge yourself to the forefront at really inconvenient times. Like when their spouse is trying to be amorous, for example. The choice is yours.

You will also notice that you can revisit your own memories and replay them as you wish. Extreme caution is recommended here. Overuse of this particular feature typically leads to you realizing all of the missed opportunities you had while alive. How many hours did you spend scrolling social media instead of working towards your dreams? How many times did you put off going to spend time with your grandmother, or cut short playtime with your child just because you were a little tired that day and wanted to get back to your favorite book? How much deeper could your relationship with your spouse or S.O. have been if you were talking to each other instead of sitting on opposite ends of the couch, faces buried in your phones? Most of us lied to ourselves about these things during life, so seeing the real answers to these questions played out in front of you can lead to a sense of regret and self-recrimination that may stay with you for your entire time in the Afterlife. Consult with your memories as you wish, but proceed with caution.

Except in some cases of Apparition (see below), you will remain in Phase 1 until everyone who knew you has become disembodied. This does not include those who knew *of* you, only those who had first-hand memories and impressions of you. If you were a beloved teacher who influenced the lives of hundreds of children, you'll be able to enjoy a good deal of influence for quite some time. If you were a grumpy old cuss who lived alone and barely spoke to anyone, your influence on the living will be severely limited and blessedly brief. However long it takes, once everyone who knew you personally is also disembodied, you will move on to Phase 2.

## **Phase 2: The Stew of Consciousness**

As the memory of you fades on Earth, that's when you get to discover one of the most interesting things about the Afterlife: The Stew of Consciousness. We call it the Stew due to all the sentience and psyche sloshing around and mixing, with some common experiences floating to the top like bits of psychic carrot and chunks of cognitive potato. When you reach the Stew, you find out the most interesting thing of all: you never existed! Or, rather, "you" never existed. "You" were basically a bit of the Stew that was ladled out of the pot and put into a smaller bowl in the world so that the collective

unconscious of humankind could find out what it's like to experience things from a particular point of view. And then you melt back into the Stew, bringing your thoughts and feelings and experiences back from the world like little bits of added seasoning.

If this sounds terrifying, trust us, it absolutely is. But not terrifying in a dissolving-into-a-pool-of-acid kind of way. More terrifying in the sense of broadening-your-boundaries-beyond-all-previously-conceived-limits. During Phase 2, your particular bit of experiential seasoning will influence a great many more lives than you ever did before, albeit in a more indirect way. From there, some parts of you may be ladled out again. If that happens you will get to simultaneously partially experience and subtly influence the new bowl of life, along with everyone else whose parts got picked up. A bit like a cosmic choose-your-own-adventure book that you're reading simultaneously with billions of other people, who are all making different choices than you, but the sum total of which nudges the character in a certain direction. Of course, the new bowl won't be aware of the Stew any more than you were while you were alive. They will experience the nudges from the Stew as flashes of insight. Some have theorized that some residual memory of the Stew remains, which is why these flashes of insight are sometimes called "gut" instinct.

And so it will be. Until such a time as there are no more human beings, you'll be part of the Stew. Some parts of you will gain added experiences, bringing in new spices. Others might sink or get stuck on the bottom of the pot and get forgotten, even by you. If that last sentence doesn't make sense now, don't worry, it will.

## **Apparitions**

If you feel the absolute desperate need to return to the land of the living, there's one thing you should know up front: actual, physical return of the dead to the living has only been granted to a very few. One or two ended up as the heads of major religions. The rest were killed again almost immediately because let's face it, no one likes zombies. If you still want to try to affect the physical world, you'll find that if you focus all your attention really hard, you can visit the world again for short bursts. This is what people call ghosts, shades, spirits, specters and poltergeists, and what we call Apparitions. This usually happens when someone is desperate to hang on to their individuality or has some business left unresolved that is more important to them than continuing to help their loved ones (as we said, it pretty much takes all your focus to do this). But if you just HAVE to make sure that your high school rival slips down the stairs, or your murderer is outed, or your teenager doesn't forget to brush his teeth and take out the trash, then becoming an Apparition is one way to do it. However, there are some dangers and pitfalls to be aware of.

Firstly, you'll find it takes a great deal of concentration to even perceive the world anything like you used to while alive and this concentration will tend to slip, causing your environment to flicker. If you are sensitive to strobing effects, you would do well to avoid taking this route.

Secondly, it turns out that emotions have frequency. It takes an enormous amount of emotion for the frequency to be strong enough to physically affect the world and exactly how it affects the world is not always going to be under your control. The easiest emotions for most of us to amp up on demand to such a high degree are fear and anger. This is one reason why most of the ghost stories you've ever

heard are frightening. The Apparition may not have been trying to harm or scare anyone, but becoming visible or moving an object requires an intense output on the part of the Apparition. Why not love, you ask? It's possible. There are mothers who have become an Apparition to save a child, but overall, love is much rarer. After all, when's the last time you loved someone so much you wanted to throw them across the room?

Lastly: if anyone perceives you while you are in this state, it will create a *new* impression of you in the world posthumously, which is fresher than the ones carried by your loved ones. If this happens, you will no longer be able to affect them as described above in Phase 1. Instead, you become stuck, tethered to a place, an object or (rarely) a particular person. If you're going to try Apparition, we strongly recommend assiduously avoiding ghost hunters for this very reason. Once you're stuck, you will remain so until either the location or object is destroyed, the person dies, or someone Banishes you. There is a misguided belief among the living that only a holy person, psychic or medium can Banish an Apparition. In fact, anyone can do it, all they have to do is soothe the emotions of the person who perceived you, similarly to how a therapist can help one of your enemies to loosen your hold on them. Therapy works just as well, but most people are soothed by seeing a "professional" go through some goofy ritual and sometimes shout some words in a dead language. Incidentally, this is the other reason why many ghost stories are frightening. If you find yourself stuck and you get sick and tired of being there, you can always try scaring the pants off some random sod. If you're lucky, they'll bring in somebody to Banish you.

Where do you go if you're Banished? Why, straight back to the Stew, of course, now just a little spicier. No escaping the Stew forever, I'm afraid.

### **Psychics**

Finally, a few words on psychics, mediums, fortune tellers and other spiritualists. These are often, but not always, folks who are sensitive to the disembodied. You'll find that when they're receptive, you can nudge their thoughts and emotions similarly to how you do for your loved ones. If your loved one visits one of these people and you've been trying to get a message across that they're just not getting, you can try twiddling with the feelings of the psychic instead. However, we strongly recommend against actually appearing if they hold a séance. These people are professionals. They don't expect you to really appear and have usually prepped their own gimmicks. Your actual appearance would spoil their carefully practiced show. Hilarious as that might be, it also subjects you to the potential for getting stuck as an Apparition (see above).

That's it! Welcome to the wonderful world of the Afterlife.