

SPIRIT RELEASEMENT THERAPY

Dr. Alan Sanderson MBBS (London) MRCP DPM MRCPsych

Abstract

Spirit releasement therapy was successfully employed in treating a depressed woman of thirty-three years of age. Although she experienced no sense of possession, hypnotherapy revealed four spirit presences. The patient benefited greatly by their release and remained well more than two years later. A shortened text of the hypnotherapy sessions and the patient's written account are given.

Spirit possession is periodically reported in the psychiatric literature (Pereira et al 1995), only to be explained away as delusional or as a culturally sanctioned belief, which science is not required to include in any general theory of behaviour. The climate of opinion is now changing. In the tenth edition of the International Classification of Diseases (1992), a new category, trance and possession states, officially acknowledges the need for a distinct grouping, separate from multiple personality disorder on the one hand and from the psychoses on the other. Only after extensive debate was a similar category rejected for DSM IV. Outside psychiatry there has traditionally been a greater readiness to accept the spiritual dimension. This tendency has increased in recent years, and several authoritative texts have been published (Crabtree, 1985; Fiore, 1987; Baldwin, 1992; Lucas, 1993). Fiore and Baldwin, in particular, report many cases, with conditions as various as phobias, eating disorders, drug dependency, depression and hallucinatory experiences, in which, usually through hypnosis, the putative possessing spirits are released, with the alleviation or relief of symptoms. The great majority of these cases lack a subjective sense of possession. While the patient may have the feeling of spirit proximity, for instance that a deceased relative has been close by, the identification of a spirit presence usually comes as a surprise.

Such a case is reported here. It will be of particular interest to those unfamiliar with this concept, because the patient's complaints of depression, anxiety, headache and panic are common symptoms and the picture in no way resembled that of the popular concept of possession. The clue to the spiritual aspect of the condition appeared during self-hypnosis. Four spirits were later identified and were released over two sessions. Following this treatment the patient experienced a dramatic improvement, as her written account testifies.

CASE REPORT

Clara, a twice-divorced woman of 33, was admitted via an Accident and Emergency Department after experiencing a major panic attack, while in the

company of her family. She had been increasingly depressed for five months, particularly so for the past two, after her partner of five years had left. She had three children aged 9 to 3 years. This responsibility kept her from considering suicide. She had increased her drinking to four cans of lager nightly and her smoking to 30 cigarettes a day. Comfort eating had caused her to gain 10 kg. There was no history of previous psychiatric contact, nor was there any history of memory disturbance. Clara came from a united family. Her childhood had been uneventful. An emotional and over-dependent person, she was highly conscientious in fulfilling her family commitments and in her work as Company Secretary and Finance Director of a thriving family business.

On admission, Clara was markedly anxious and tearful. She settled well, participating fully in group sessions of a non-analytic kind and using hypnosis tapes, designed to aid relaxation and reduce anxiety. At other times she worked hard at learning Spanish. Her medication consisted of Diazepam 5mg tds, for a few days, and a hypnotic.

Clara quickly learned to use hypnosis to control anxiety and lift her mood. She also used the Figure of Eight technique, as developed by Krystal (1993), to work effectively on the painful relationship with her ex-partner. After three weeks, she was discharged home, calm and euthymic. Hypnotherapy continued weekly as an out-patient. At the second session Clara was regressed to pre-natal and birth experiences, with the aim of better understanding her anxiety. This was a vivid and enlightening experience for her. Four days later, during self-hypnosis, she had attempted to return to the pre-natal period, She had become aware of a scene involving two young women, dressed in the fashion of one hundred and fifty years ago, in a street market. We agreed to explore this in her next session. The following is a shortened version of hypnotherapy interviews with Clara, which took place on 5th and 12th June 1995.

June 5th

'Subconscious mind, is there anybody with Clara who is not actually part of her?'
The presence of two entities is established through finger signals. One identifies herself as Henrietta aged 31. She dies of a fever, with her sister, Matilda, by her bedside.

'Henrietta, just go on now to the time when you lose your body. Tell me what your perception is.'

'Slipping.'

'Yes. As you leave your body what are you aware of?'

'The sky. The light.'

'Is this the sunlight?'

'A bright light, a white light.'

'Yes. Do you see anything else, or anyone else, do you see anyone you know?'

'No, no. It's empty.'

'All right. Are you aware of your body? Are you aware of the body you have left behind you?'

'Yes, I can see that. I can see that.'

'Yes. Can you see Matilda there too?'

'Yes, I see her. And my bed.'

'Yes. All right. Are you aware of how you are? Are you dressed?'

'Yes, I'm dressed - and I'm well.'

'All right, Henrietta, just go on now and tell me what happens.'

I come into a sitting place, and I sit down. I feel happy. I can't see anyone.'

'Yes. Could you describe the sitting place, Henrietta'

'Like a bench.'

'And how about the surroundings, are there any surroundings?'

'Just a bench... and just a very clear white light. Just sit there waiting with my basket.'

'Right. Just allow yourself to pass rapidly to the time when somebody comes, or something happens... I will count from one to three and at that point something happens... One, two, three!'

"Yes. I am back down, I'm in a garden, I'm in... '

"You're back down? So you don't go on?"

'No, no, I'm back now, on the earth.'

'Do you understand why you have come back?'

'No-one came.'

'Ah, so you decide to go back, is that right?'

'Yes, yes.'

'You decide to go back in search of... relatives?'

'I don't know why I am here.'

'So describe the scene where you are now.'

'I'm in a small garden, I can see a house.'

'Is this a familiar house?'

'No, it's not familiar. I'm just standing in the garden.'

'Do you see anyone?'

'No, no-one's there.'

'So how do you feel as you stand there?'

'Still lost.'

'Yes. Just go on a little way. Tell me what happens.'

'Yes. / can see Clara.'

'Clara! How old is she?'

'She's four.'

'Ah. Where is Clara? What's she doing?'

'She's in this garden, sitting out in the garden.'

'So what is it about Clara, Henrietta, which causes you to feel you need to join her?'

'She's just playing and happy, laughing. I don't want to be on my own.'

'So is it just that this is a little girl who is happy and laughing? Is there no particular affinity between you and her?'

'I don't think so.'

'All right. And does little Clara have any particular weakness that allows you to enter her?'

'Well, she feels very lonely.' 'Feeling lonely, is she?' Yes.'

'So you are entering her now. Is there anyone else with Clara, when you enter her?'

'Oh, yes. Gladys, yes. She's there.'

'Gladys? Ah, you mean there's someone else in the garden with her?'

'No, no there is someone inside her.'

'There's someone inside her. I see. Is it Gladys? Is Gladys the other person who's with her now?'

'Yes.'

'I see. Yeah. Do you and Gladys communicate?'

'Oh, yes.'

'You are friends, any you?'

'Yes. I saw her, I saw her just before I went in.'

'Yes. Ah. So you and Gladys get on well together? And you...'

'Oh, yes.'

'Good. That's really nice. So you have remained with Clara ever since, have you?'

'Well, no.'

'You have been off on vacation?'

'Yes, I come and go.'

'Ah. When you go off, where do you go to?'

'I go back up and s/f on the bench for a while, I just wait with my basket, but...'

'I see. And no-one ever comes?'

'No, no-one's ever come.'

'But if someone were to come, would you wish to go with them?'

'Yes, I think so.'

'All right. Well, it's really interesting to hear what you say, Henrietta. I would like a word with Gladys now. Perhaps you would just step back and let Gladys come forward.'

'Yes.'

'Gladys?'

'Yes.'

'It's nice that you've come forward, and it was very interesting to hear that Henrietta and you are such good friends. And may I know, you also have lost your body, have you?'

'Yes.'

'Yes. And you have a clear recollection of that event?'

'Yes.'

'Yes. And tell me this. How old was Clara when you joined her?'

'When she was born.'

'I see. At the moment of birth or before?'

'No, when she was born - at the moment of birth.'

'At the moment of birth. I see. What was it that attracted you to her then?'

'She needed me to help her.'

'Ah. Why did you feel that Clara needed you particularly? Most new born babies manage on their own.'

'No, she needed some help. She was very angry.'

'Did you understand that, why she... ?'

'Oh, yes, yes.'

'What made you feel that she... ? Did you understand why she should have been angry?'

'Yes, yes. I know her parents.'

'Oh, I see. You mean she was angry because there had been difficulties with her parents and she hadn't... ?'

'Oh, yes.'

'You mean... , she hadn't been exactly welcomed initially had she, initially?'
'Gladys, when you say you knew her parents you sound almost like a family friend.'

'Oh no, no! I'm her great aunt.'

(Gladys tells how she has remained continuously with Clara. She intends her influence to be life-long).

'Would you be willing to go back and re-experience your death, so that we can understand a little bit more? We can do it in safety and comfort.'

'No, I don't want to.'

'What was the year of your death, Gladys?'

'1947.'

'Now, I can imagine that perhaps you haven't always approved of Clara's friends... '

'Oh no, not the men.'

'No, quite. Now Gladys, it seems to me more than likely that you have actually influenced Clara, that you have affected her relationships with these men, perhaps you have intended to do so.'

'Oh, yes, of course.'

'Yes. So you have actually tried to get them out of her life?'

'Oh, definitely, ... brutes.'

'Yes. I think this is something I shall want to discuss with Clara, because I am sure she has been quite unaware of your presence with her. Now that she is aware of it, it really should be she who decides, wouldn't you agree, whether you stay with her or not? After all she hasn't invited you in, has she?'

'No, but she needs me.'

'Shall I discuss it with Clara? Do you think... '

'She doesn't listen.'

'Can you help her to understand the picture, in the market place, of the two young women?'

'Oh, yes.'

'Do clarify that for us, please.'

'It's this girl, she comes in sometimes.'

'Henrietta?'

'Yes, she's there sometimes. She comes and she goes, she comes and she goes. She is very sweet.'

'But there's another figure, in the market place with her.'

'Yes, that's her sister. She doesn't come.'

(This situation is confirmed by Henrietta and Clara is brought out of hypnosis. She says she will make inquiries about her great aunt).

12th June

(After some exchanges with Gladys)

'Gladys, I was sorry to learn that your life has been such a difficult one. Do you often think of it now?'

'All the time.'

'And with very deep unhappiness, I think, don't you?'

'And anger.'

'Who is it you are angry with, Gladys? Is it your husband?'

'Yes.'

'What was his name?'

'Michael.'

'From what I have learned he treated you very badly.'

'Yes.'

'Gladys, how old are you now?'

'Fifty-two.'

(Gladys talks about her unhappy marriage and the tragic death of her son Roy, aged 28).

'And yet that anger is still very strong, isn't it?'

'I know, I can't help it.'

'Gladys, I am sure I could help it. I can show you how to help it, how to leave that anger behind. And then I think you would feel so much easier. Will you let me help you in that?'

'Yes.'

'Good. Well, what we need to do to help you to leave that anger behind, is to go back - of course you are staying with Clara, we realise that - go back in your memory, to the time when you leave your body because that's the time that so often people take with them feelings that they could leave behind if they knew how. So we will go back to when you're in hospital, shortly before you lose your body, and then just go through that time. But as you leave your body behind also make the firm decision that you leave your anger behind in the body. Leave the anger with Michael, leave the anger about Roy, those are the two main sources of anger, aren't they?'

'Yes.'

'Is there anything else you feel really angry about?'

'Well, just being so ill.'

'Being so ill, yes and having to leave before your time?'

'Yes.'

(In the following section Gladys is helped to let go of her anger).

'And it is very important that you just now decide to leave this anger and anguish relating to your illness, which has seemed so unfair, that you leave it in the body where it belongs. Will you make that decision now, Gladys?'

'Yes.'

'That you are going to leave it behind in the body?'

'Yes, / am.'

'Good. And now, the anger about Michael, who was impossible, who battered you, and cheated you, and gave you such a difficult time that you didn't at all deserve. Now, I am not asking you to forgive him, because I know that you don't feel ready to do that, but can you look back and think of some good times that you did have with him?'

'Yes.'

'Good, I would like you just to concentrate on those for a minute. Think of those times in your very early life, when you first met him. Think of the time when he proposed marriage to you. That was a good time for you?'

'Yes.'

'That's a happy memory isn't it? Think of times when he used to take you out, perhaps when you went dancing, or some other good time. And just enjoy those times again. They were happy times. Then something happened to change him and he treated you so meanly. And Gladys, you have lived through all that, and

now allow yourself to let go of it, you don't need it. You don't need the anger, you don't need the memories of those bad times. Are you ready to let go of that anger, Gladys?'

'Yes.'

'Good. Leave that in the body, which you are about to leave behind. Now think back to the time with Roy. Think how proud you were as a young mother when he was born. That was a wonderful time - so proud of yourself. At last a boy, and he grew up so beautifully, and you were so proud of him right through his childhood. And then as a young man? Was he very good looking?'

'Um (full of emotion) Oh yes, he was wonderful.'

'And then, the accident and that made you so sad. That's what really broke you, wasn't it? It made you so unhappy.' (Sobbing).

'But, Gladys, do you know something? When you decide to leave Clara, and go into the Light, you can be with Roy again, and meet him again. Did you realise that? I am sure that Roy will come and meet you and take you into the Light, and that's going to be a wonderful experience for you. So, Gladys, I'd like to suggest that now is the time to leave that anger behind. You will be reunited again. Leave the anger behind, in the body where it belongs. Can you do that now?'

'Yes.'

'Good. That's wonderful. And now just have the experience of gently rising up out of your body, leaving behind the anger at your early death, leaving behind the anger with Michael, leaving behind the anger at the loss of Roy. Just rise up out of your body now. How does it feel to be released from it?'

'Yes wonderful.'

'Good, I'm sure you feel light'.

'Very.'

'Great. Just enjoy that feeling of lightness, Gladys, that wonderful feeling of release. You can feel happy again now. And Gladys, now you are here with Clara and you have done a great job, looking after Clara, helping her as she grew up, to be more practical and down to earth. Not always to accept things at their face value. And you have helped her not to be taken in sometimes, you have made her realise, sometimes, before she made a mistake, and sometimes afterwards. But you have always done your best for her,'

'Well, I thought so.'

'Yes, surely you have. And surely Clara feels gratitude to you for all those very good intentions.'

'No, she doesn't.'

(There are some further exchanges)

'So now, when you are ready, all you need to do Gladys, is to just look round and you see Roy. Just look round and see.'

'Oh, yes' (excitedly).

'There he is. Isn't that a wonderful surprise? How's he looking?'

'He's wonderful.'

'Great. And how is he greeting you?'

'He's waving,'

'All right. Let him come close, take him in your arms.'

'Oh!'

'Isn't that wonderful? And now, he is here to take you into the Light, to introduce you into the spirit world, where there is so much good to experience and to learn. And as you go, Gladys, do you have any parting message for Clara? If you have,

just let her be aware of it, and I am sure she sends you her love, and every good wish for your future, and her thanks.'

'How are you feeling Clara?'

(We next proceed to release Henrietta, who has no strong emotions holding her back. Her sister, whose name she unaccountably changes from Matilda to Miranda, does not appear to collect her, but she goes off happily with Uncle Bert).

'She's gone and I feel quite happy for her.'

'That's nice. I am just speaking now to your subconscious at a deep level and check to make sure and see whether there's anyone else with you. It can happen. Subconscious, please answer through Clara's fingers. The index finger means "yes", the little finger means "no". Subconscious, is there anyone else with Clara now? (No). Is there anyone hiding? There is? I see. Is there more than one person with Clara? Oh. More than two people with Clara? (No). So there are two people with Clara? May I just... ' ("Clara becomes very agitated and cries out, putting her hand to her head. She responds to calming imagery). *Now I am speaking to Clara's subconscious mind. 'Subconscious, you know the answer to this question. Is there any further work, which we should be doing today? Yes or no? There is. Just make it known to Clara what is the work, which still needs to be done, and when Clara is fully aware of it, then just indicate. Clara, what is the work that needs to be done still?'*

'We need to help Jack.'

'We need to help Jack. Yes. Tell me about Jack.'

'He's with me. He's frightened.'

'Who is Jack?'

'I don't know him.'

'Was it Jack that seemed to give you that pain?'

'Um.'

'What was it you were feeling then?'

'Just pulling, pulling on me, like a sharp pain. He's so frightened. He's crying.'

'Is Jack a child, is that the impression you have?'

'No, he's not a child, he's a young man.'

'Oh! Jack, I'm speaking to you now. Thank you for making your presence felt. Clara tells me that you're really frightened. I wonder what you are frightened of. Don't be frightened of me, I'm here to help. I'm here to help you in any way I can, with whatever you need. Some people are very frightened, and they're frightened for all sorts of reasons. Sometimes they are frightened because they are afraid what will happen when they go into the spirit world.'

'Yes, I am' (a small, timid voice).

'What is it that you are frightened of, Jack?'

'There won't be anyone for me.'

'Oh! Well, who is it you'd like to meet? Did you have parents or... who is it that you'd like to meet?'

'My Mum.'

'Your Mum, yes. What makes you think she won't come? Didn't she love you?'

'No, ... was so bad.'

'She was bad to you?'

'No, I was bad.'

(Jack tells how he stole, took drugs. He died in 1965, aged 17, being run over).

'How was it that you came to join Clara? How old is she when you join her?'

'Four or five - a little girl.'

'Is she? What is it that attracts you to Clara?'

'Well, I just felt lost.'

'Did you, yes.'

'I was with somebody, somebody else, a little bloke, but he died.'

'He died too?'

'Yeah. So I saw her.'

'What makes her open to you?'

'She's very sweet, happy. I want to be like that.'

'Yes. As you go to her, so as you enter her, do you realise, is there anyone else with her?'

'Yes, Gladys.'

'Yeah. What does she do? How does she feel when you come?'

'I just... she's saying... No, no!'

'She tries to stop you?'

'Yes, she tries to say get out but I'm not going to.'

'So now you're there. And you have been with her ever since, have you? You've not been able to leave?'

'No, I haven't wanted to.'

(Jack describes how, after an evening at the pub, he and his mates are fooling about on the sidewalk).

'So just go on to the time when something happens to your body. What's happening now?'

'Still mucking about, and just step off, step off the pavement. Crash! I'm hit, just hit. I look down and there's me and there's blood everywhere.'

'Are the others all right?'

'Yeah, they are sitting on the side of the road, don't know what to do. Oh, God!'

'So, what's your feeling now, Jack?'

'I don't know where to go! I can't go!'

'What's your feeling about the life you have left, that you have lost?'

'Just don't know what I'm doing!' (Gets agitated).

'What's that?'

'My head...Ooooooh.'

'All right Jack, when I put my hand there, that goes away, and you feel good again. That's right, now that good feeling is coming into your head. So you are looking round, and you are feeling lost. Do you realise you have lost your body at this point?'

'Yes, I can see me there.'

'Yes, yes. All right, Jack, just go on and tell me what happens next. What's the next thing that happens?'

'Well, the ambulance comes, and they put me in there, but I go as well - we both go, me and that body.'

'Yes, you are going in the ambulance with your body.'

'Yes, I'm sitting next to it.'

'Yes. All right. Go on until the ambulance stops. What happens?'

'Hospital... '(Gets agitated).

'O.K. Jack. I think you could allow yourself now to go on.'

(Jack is able to go into the Light, accompanied by his mother, who comes to fetch him. Before going he reveals that the other person is a man, Tony, aged 40).

'Tony, I should like to speak to you, just say "Here" when you are ready to speak to me.'

'Here' (rather tired voice - weary).

'Good. Thank you, Tony, for coming forward. Now Jack told me your name, and he also told me that you're... How old is it?'

'Forty-one.'

'You're 41. OK. How old was Clara when you joined her?'

'Twenty-three.'

'I see. And, Tony, you realise of course that you lost your body?'

'I don't... Yeah, yeah, er... I'm not really sure.'

'You're not sure.'

'No.'

'Well, you know Clara's a woman, don't you?'

'Well, er... I've been asleep.'

'Oh! you've been asleep, have you? Well, that can happen, that people lose their bodies and they feel that they've been asleep for a long time. But, Tony, you're awake now, aren't you?'

'Yeah.'

'And you see, what's happened is that you actually lost your body and you're a spirit now and you have joined another person, another living person with a body of her own.'

'Um.'

'So you've joined Clara, who is a woman, and you're in a woman's body now.'

'Tony, what year is it for you?'

'1982.'

'1982, is it? Well, you may be surprised to hear that it is now 1995.'

'Oh!'

'So in 1982 you must have lost your body, something happened. Have you any recollection of what happened?'

'Er...no.'

'Would you like to know?'

'Yes.'

'Well, you surety can. All that's necessary is for me to count from one to three and snap my fingers and at that moment you will be back just a few minutes before your lose you body and you'll be able to re-experience what happens in safety and comfort and so that you have a clear understanding of it. So just wait for it to happen, now as I count and snap my fingers, and you will be there.'

'Tell me, Tony, are you inside or outside?'

'Inside.'

'Is it daytime or night-time?'

'Night-time.'

'Are you alone or is someone with you?'

'I'm on my own.'

'And where are you Tony, where is this place?'

'I'm in my bedsit.'

'Your bedsit. O.K. So are you in bed, or what are you doing?'

'I'm on the floor.'

'You're on the floor! Why are you on the floor?'

'I'm drunk.'

'You're drunk. Aha. So you've got your clothes on, have you Tony?'

'Yeah.'
'And you've just come back, have you?'
'Dunno.'
'You don't know where you were or where you got drunk?'
'No, I don't know.'
'You've been drinking at home?'
'Yeah.'
'You're living in your bedsit, where are you? Where is this place, what town are you living in?'
'In London.'
'So you're living in London. OK. Tony. So how are you feeling? You're drunk. Are you in any pain?'
'No.'
'No. OK. So, just go on and tell me what happens.'
'Don't know, I go to sleep.'
'Oh, you go to sleep do you? All right. Well, it seems to me that what seems to you like sleep may be you losing your body, your body actually dying, it can happen, you know.'
'Um.'
'So just be aware of what happens. And perhaps you are aware of coming out of that body?'
'Oh, yeah!'
'You are coming out of it now, are you?'
'Oh, yeah. I'm getting up now and going down...'
'What's happened to your body?'
'Oh, I can see... I've left it there! I can see now.'
'Ah! And it's a bit confusing isn't it?'
'Yeah, 'cos I'm meant to be in the 100 Club - I'm going there.'
'Are you?'
'Yeah.'
'Where is the 100 Club, Tony?'
'In Baker Street.'
'Yes. Tony, what is your second name?'
'Gizzard.'
'Gizzard, is it?'
'Yeah.'
'Yes. And you are going to the 100 Club, and you're going along there now, are you?'
'Yeah.'
'All right. So as you arrive there - how do you get there?'
'Walk.'
'You walk. So as you arrive there, do you see anyone you know?'
'No - well, the doorman. I know him.'
'Do you greet him?'
'Yes, I...'
'What does he do?'
'He says hello.'
'He says hello when you greet him, does he?'
'Yeah, yeah, he puts his hand up and says hello. He knows me.'
'Aha, yes. So what do you do next?'

'I go down the stairs, go into the cellar.'

'Into the cellar?'

'Yeah, that's where they've got the jazz... and sit down.'

'What happens now?'

'Well, there's a couple of people I know, come over... '

'Do you chat with them?'

'No, they come and sit down, no, no, they don't say anything. I haven't got a drink' (sounds puzzled).

'You haven't got a drink. So what do you do?'

'I don't know... Going over to the bar,'

'Yes. So what happens when you go to the bar, Tony?'

'I see lots of people.'

'Yes. Do you get a drink?'

'No.'

'Do you order one?'

'No.'

'I thought you went over there for a drink?'

'I did. I feel lost.'

'Do you try to talk to anyone?'

'Yes, a girl.'

'What does she say?'

'Nothing.'

'You mean she ignores you?'

'Yeah, I get really cross... Silly cow' (Under his breath).

'What do you call her?'

'Silly cow.'

'All right. Go on now, what do you do next?'

'Oh, God I'm in her... Hm, Ha.' (rather embarrassed, amused).

'You're in her are you?'

'Yeah, that's where I am.'

'This is this girl who wouldn't speak to you?'

'Yeah.'

'This is Clara?'

'Yeah.'

'I see, yeah. So that's a surprise. You didn't mean to join her?'

'No. Oh ...'

'So, that explains a lot to you, doesn't it Tony? You joined her by mistake. You didn't realise you had lost your body!'

'Oh no, that's right.'

'Well Tony, these things can happen, and here you are, and you've been with Clara ever since then.'

'Oh.'

'Have you been aware of Clara's life and what she's been doing?'

'No, I've been asleep most of the time.'

(Without further inquiry Tony was helped into the Light, accompanied by the mother of a friend. Healing Spirits are asked to fill with light any space left by the exodus and to remove any residues of thought or feeling which may have been left behind by Clara's lodgers. She is returned to her normal state of conscious awareness).

Clara's Account Of Her Treatment (October 1997)

'For as long as I can remember I had suffered with a profound lack of confidence. In situations of confrontation, pressure or stress I never felt in control of my thoughts or decisions. I experienced quite severe mood swings that I could not explain. Since adulthood, I have had problems in maintaining relationships, particularly with men, often experiencing feelings of consuming love for them one day and extreme loathing the next.

Following the failure of my second marriage, in my mid-twenties, I was left with two young children to bring up. There was no sense of purpose to my life and I felt a frightening lack of control. I entered another relationship, but this began to deteriorate soon after the birth of my third child, when I was thirty. I felt I had hardly any energy for a person of my age. I experienced frequent pains in my head, feelings of extreme fear, and these, alongside my low self-esteem, made me begin to feel that I would probably be better off dead. My relationship ended and I sunk into total despair. I started saying things to the children and my family that I never would normally have even thought of. I could not predict my moods at all and often felt that somebody else had taken control of me. I was totally in fear of myself. During an outing with my parents I became terribly anxious, the pains in my head were intolerable and I collapsed and was admitted to hospital. In hospital I started hypnotherapy. This quickly helped me to control my anxiety and to deal with several external issues that were disturbing me. The hypnotherapy continued following my discharge. Soon after my return home I experienced a regression to my conception. I decided to see if I could do some work with this on my own in self-hypnosis. A vivid image appeared in my mind's eye. This image was of two young women dressed in costumes of the early Victorian period, chatting in an open-air market place. I had no idea where this image came from but I could not let go of it whilst in hypnosis and brought myself back to full awareness. In my next session we explored the market image further. We made contact with one of the young women in the market and as she spoke I was aware that it was through my voice but I felt a total bystander - as if I was watching a stage play.

During the conversation with Henrietta it became clear that someone else was also present. She was identified as a woman named Gladys. I felt little emotion up to this point other than total fascination. However, as soon as Gladys started to speak I immediately felt tense and intimidated. As Gladys continued to speak it transpired that she was one of my great aunts who had died long before my birth. She struck me as being a very forceful character and she did make me feel like a frightened little child as she spoke of having looked after me since I was born. I was brought back to full awareness and felt drained and bemused.

I did not use self-hypnosis between my sessions with the doctor but I had a good week and felt much more in control of my life. During the week I had learned that Aunt Gladys was indeed a relation who had had a difficult and sad life and had died in her mid-fifties after a marriage to a brutal husband. During my next session, Gladys, after some persuasion, agreed to let us help her. She was encouraged back to the time of her death. I could see the scenes so well, just like watching a film rolling, able to observe everything but unable to control the images put out. However, the images did start to emotionally affect me and I experienced the sense of fear and anger that she was speaking about. As

Gladys left her dead body I felt a peculiar floating sensation. She then said she could see her son Roy in a bright light and that she wanted to go with him. I saw her look so happy and I could feel her relief and excitement. As she passed, I too felt relief. We were able to help Henrietta in the same way.

Although the process was the same, I did not feel anything like the same degree of emotion as I had with Gladys. I then became apparent that someone else was also with me. The next person to come forward was a young man named Jack, He seemed so frightened and insecure. Although I didn't know him I could recognise his emotions and excesses only too well. As we helped him to re-experience his death, I felt, in my head, the pains I had experienced before my admission to hospital, and these got more painful as he relived his own death as a result of a head injury. As soon as Jack left, the pains disappeared. Tony was the last person to come forward. He was obviously totally confused with the whole circumstances. He had died in an alcoholic stupor, and I did wonder about my own excesses with alcohol, which had started at exactly the age that Tony said he joined me. I was brought back to full awareness and felt very light-headed, drained and quite low in spirit.'

Over the next few weeks I noticed many changes in myself. I instantly had so much energy and now have an average 25 per cent less sleep than before my treatment although I am twice as active during the day. I started to feel more and more relaxed about everything in my life as the feeling that someone was looking over my shoulder ready to criticise me at every turn had disappeared. I don't care any more what other people think of the way I live my life. I have faith in my decisions and know that I can now trust myself. I can now explain why I do what I do, whether it be right or wrong, and this has gone a very long way to restoring my confidence and self-esteem.

In the fifteen months since the end of my treatment I no longer have any pains in my head or feel the urge to drink excessive amounts of alcohol. I have lost 15 kilograms excess weight, without dieting, and am down to five cigarettes a day. My moods are much more reliable and I am nothing like so sensitive to people's remarks as I used to be. I do still use self-hypnosis to relax after a stressful day and it is very useful when I have a particularly complicated decision to make or problem to solve, but I have never experienced any images, that I haven't created myself, since the end of my treatment.

I have listened to recordings of my sessions dealing with spirit attachment and I must say I find them a little disturbing. Although I know the voice speaking on the tapes belongs to me, when any of the spirits speak the tone and pattern of my speech is very different. I totally believe in the treatment I received and it has enabled me to take full responsibility for my life and, more importantly, thoroughly enjoy it!

Discussion

The taboo with which psychiatry surrounds the subject of non-corporeal existence makes it difficult to report this case, let alone discuss it. Indeed, one wonders to what extent discussion is possible, when psychiatrists everywhere declare allegiance to the esteemed dictatorship of science. And yet, as Grof (1985) cogently argues, the materialist-determinist paradigm, which rules modern science, cannot be taken as fact, least of all in the realm of human behaviour and

experience. The statement, 'consciousness is a product of matter', is pure metaphysical speculation. Nevertheless, such is the power of the paradigm to control and direct inquiry that the spiritual realm, consistently accessible within and around us, is unacknowledged and unexplored. Clinicians have the opportunity to explore this realm and to use their findings to question the ruling paradigm. Particle physicists, with irrefutable logic, broke free fifty years ago. Why should psychiatrists, to whose subject the methods and postulates of materialistic science have brought little true enlightenment, not do the same? On the fundamental question of the nature and origins of mental disorders, we have advanced little in the course of a century. One sees this daily in clinical practice, where it is rare to be able to say, with conviction, 'This is the root of the problem.' In Clara's case it was possible to say just that. 'Acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension, followed by employment of the spirit releasement procedure, brought a resolution which could not otherwise have been achieved. Such is the power of a new concept.'

Thigpen & Cleckley (1954) discussing multiple-personality, had this to say about conceptual blindness in science: 'No matter how many clues one is given, no matter how obvious the clues, one will not be led to a conclusion that is inconceivable. One will seek explanations for the problem only from available hypotheses.' Since those words were written, multiple personality, now dissociative identity disorder (DID), has gained acceptance, within the ruling paradigm, as a diagnostic category. Such a consummation is inconceivable where spirit attachment is concerned. This concept challenges the paradigm head on. A successful challenge would have implications far beyond the conference hall and the consulting room. It is not to be thought of.

To see the exclusion process at work, take the much-publicised case of Billy Milligan (Keyes, 1981). Milligan had two dominant personalities, Arthur and Ragen. Arthur spoke and behaved like an upper class Englishman and had a fine grasp of written and spoken Arabic. Ragen Vadascovinich, violently anti-social, was fluent only in Serbo-Croat. He spoke broken American with a strong East-European accent. Milligan, at 26 had not had the opportunity to learn either language.

Only the unavailability of the spirit attachment concept can account for the failure of Milligan's psychiatrists to identify Arthur and Ragen as discarnate spirits. Even had the concept been available such a diagnosis could not have been put forward. Socially, politically, legally and professionally it was unthinkable.

Taboo in every sphere. Truth, within these confines, became a forced response, from a list of prescribed answers. Forty years on the situation has not changed. Let us return now to the case of Clara, in which a spiritual intervention brought obvious benefit. While not wishing to overstep the bounds of customary scientific restraint, it is difficult to see the implications as being less than revolutionary. This is particularly so because my experience in treating more than 100 cases in four years, leads me to think that spirit attachment is a common condition in psychiatric patients. Often, as in this case, strikingly beneficial effects have been maintained. In other cases the benefits have been transitory or absent. Some patients repeatedly develop further attachments. The treatment seems to be harmless and I have not come across any problems, such as have been described when exorcism has been wrongly applied (Bowman, 1993; Fraser, 1993) in the treatment of multiple personality disorder. Spirit releasement,

unlike exorcism, is a permissive and loving procedure. Patients rarely find the concept of spirit attachment frightening. Usually they are relieved to have a therapist with whom they can talk in these terms.

Only a handful of the cases I have treated resembled typical dissociative identity disorder (DID), with the characteristic switching and time-loss. While I have often come across childhood alters, which split off in response to trauma, I have rarely met an adult alter, claiming a separate identity, where the presence of a spirit, usually discarnate, did not seem the likely explanation.

Readers of this case report will group themselves into those who will dismiss it instantly, in the way that people are apt to dismiss poltergeists and precognition, as being beyond belief; those who will see it through the glass of contemporary psychiatry's materialist-determinist paradigm, and will be satisfied to classify the phenomenon as a dissociative state, the effect of hypnosis on an over-suggestible subject; and those individuals, un-enlaved by accepted models, who will welcome the findings as affording an indication of a spiritual reality, which demands exploration. Such exploration can be readily undertaken. All it needs is an easily acquired skill in hypnosis and a willingness to look beyond what is comfortable and familiar.

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