

‘Spirit release therapy: what is it and what can it achieve? A clinical presentation of therapist and patient perspectives’

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Rumi, the 13th century Persian mystic, had no doubt about reincarnation.

The soul’s extravagance is endless.
Spring after spring after spring
We are your gardens, dying, blossoming.

In putting dying before blossoming, Rumi makes the point that, in the cycle of transformation, dying has equal importance. In another poem he says, ‘When were you ever made less by dying?’ While Rumi’s belief in a steady upward progression may be the norm, dying can bring unforeseen difficulties, not just for the voyaging spirit, but also for those still incarnate.

The belief that death may be either good or bad is found in many, so-called primitive cultures. In a bad death the soul remains earthbound and may afflict the living. I have come to believe that people, in the West as elsewhere, are often troubled by such spirits. If this is so, psychiatrists have a great opportunity to liberate both the host and the attached spirit.

How, after the benefits of a Maudsley training, have I come to hold such way-out views?

My break with orthodoxy began in 1992, when I met Lance Trendall, author of *Dead Happy*. His card proclaimed, ‘Hypnotherapist and Ghost Therapist’. I had never given much thought to ghosts, much less regarded them as potential patients. Lance explained that people often harboured personal ghosts, haunting beneath the skin. He gave me a copy of ‘The Unquiet Dead’ by psychologist Edith Fiore (1987). I was impressed with her accounts of spirits speaking through her hypnotised patients and I invited Lance to demonstrate his rather similar technique at Fairfield Hospital. It worked dramatically in a few cases. I remember in particular one young man, who suffered a bombardment of hostile voices, opening his eyes and exclaiming, ‘They’ve gone!’ They were back in a week, but never so badly. I learned hypnosis and went to Florida to train with William Baldwin (1992) in Spirit Releasement Therapy. Releasing spirits in the NHS was an exhilarating experience but not without its difficulties. That is another story. Now I practise privately.

Before proceeding to case studies, I want to stress that the concept of spirit attachment and the practice of spirit release are not based on faith, as are religious and mystical beliefs. They are based on the observation of clinical cases and their response to standard therapeutic techniques. This is a scientific approach, albeit one that takes account of subjective experience and is not confined by contemporary scientific theory.

So where is the research to back these heretical claims? Research results are not yet available due to three facts: (1) This is a new development. It is only in the past decade that spirit release has begun to be systematically taught and practised; (2) There remains much suspicion, ignorance and misinformation about the subject, and not a little obstruction, which prohibits access to NHS patients; (3) There is no access to research funds.

I believe that before long, funding will become available and research, with the development of appropriate methodology, will take place. Outcome studies are the obvious first step. Until such a time comes, individual cases have much to say.

Case 1. Multiple personality.

Presentation

Pru, a childless, married woman of 46, had spent lengthy periods in hospital and suffered 14 years of psychotherapy. The diagnosis was personality disorder. She had been sexually abused by her father. Lost time was a characteristic feature. Frequently she had found clothes in her wardrobe that she had no knowledge of buying. Pru came to see me dressed in black, wearing a floppy velvet hat. She held a teddy bear and giggled girlishly. Suicidal thoughts and periods of black depression were her chief complaints. There were many scars from self-inflicted cuts. Despite appearances, Pru was strongly motivated. We agreed to use hypnotherapy and she proved an apt subject.

Therapy

Some very destructive spirits were identified during treatment. Most powerful among these was her father, Jason. Pru would sometimes see him in the consulting room and would recoil in terror. In hypnosis, Jason spoke through Pru, claiming that she was his possession, to do with as he wished. On two occasions, she rose from her chair and stood over me, threatening to kill me. Each time she responded to my steady gaze and the command, 'Sleep!' In deep trance, Jason agreed to look within himself, where he saw blackness. I called for angelic help. With the use of Baldwin's protocol for dealing with demonic spirits, the blackness left. Thereafter, Jason was amenable. He agreed to leave. Other destructive entities responded similarly.

It took time for the most troublesome elements to show themselves. They sometimes made their mark during hospital admissions, when Pru would be seen determinedly walking off the ward. She did not hear voices but she came under the influence of irresistible compulsions. Several times I had desperate telephone calls, in which Pru spoke as Jane, a helpful discarnate, 'Pru has driven off and won't go back home; she's lost'. Or, 'Pru is on top of the car park and I'm afraid she's going to jump'. Only by talking to the destructive entity could I resolve the crisis.

There were also positive entities, a Guide and a Guardian, which gave Pru much support. Jane was sometimes able to give me information ('Pru has a razor blade in the heel of her shoe'). At first Pru didn't know. Later, this barrier dissolved and Jane had to be more circumspect. After the destructive entities had left (none of them has returned) came the task of working with the distressed child alters and healing the fragmented soul. During our 2 years work together, Pru had been developing her talents as an artist. Initially, her painting had been largely in black – crucifixes, knives and other objects of violence. Later she painted, in vibrant colour, trees, which had a powerful symbolic meaning.

Outcome

Pru's painting made a major contribution to her recovery. She has held several exhibitions and she came second in an international competition. Pru's artistic success depends upon many factors, determination, sensitivity and, not least, the hidden influences at work within.

I visited Pru recently and found her much more confident. She needs no medical care and it is years since she last cut herself. The inner children come out from time to time. Sometimes they splash the paint and she has to start afresh. Jane was still there, and the Guardian and the Guide influence her daily. Each day contains surprises. Of her painting, Pru comments, 'I've got to climb now. I feel it will be trees. I'm pulled that way. I know I've no choice'.

I asked Pru to write a paragraph on her experience. She wrote, '*the spiritual approach* left me freer from the remaining daily distress than anything tried before. Whilst under hypnosis I found myself talking about some experiences that I had definitely not had and places I certainly had not been to. So, was this Spirits, split off

parts of my Personality, Ancestral memory or even False Memory/Imagination? I very much doubt the latter. There was reluctance, yet at the same time relief, to be spoken to, accepted and contacted. The release from the darkness, into the light and to the beyond had to be experienced to be believed. It was amazing and I still marvel at the sight of these 'entities' disappearing and freeing me.

Case 2. Gender dysphoria.

Presentation

I am indebted to Dr Edith Fiore for the next case I want to cite, which is fully reported on the SRF website (www.spiritrelease.com). An internationally known 41-year-old physician with severe gender dysphoria, Roger was already being prepared for surgical gender re-assignment. He came at the insistence of his wife, who had read Fiore's book. A psychically sensitive friend had seen a female spirit with him.

Therapy

In hypnosis, Roger experienced a female spirit leaving. Previously a sceptic, he was utterly convinced by the procedure.

Outcome

Three years later, Roger's orientation was fully heterosexual. His marriage was happier than for years.

Comment

This case does not stand alone. Barlow et al (1977) report a case responding to exorcism. Gender dysphoria is a condition of particular interest for the assessment of spirit release therapy, since there is no known curative treatment. Surgery is the only available treatment in severe cases. The situation cries out for funded research within the NHS.

Case 3. Adjustment disorder. My patient, Christina kindly came to the meeting on Spirit Release Therapy to tell her story in person.

Presentation

Christina is 59. She came to see me 18 months ago, in crisis, following the break up of a stormy, 12-year relationship. Together she and her partner had taught, travelled and co-authored a book on Qi Gong. Christina expressed tremendous grief and anger but was determined not to go back. She had never before felt so disturbed. Mostly, Christina was happy and liked herself. Sustaining emotional relationships with men was the one area where her life had not flowered. She works as counsellor and Qi Gong teacher.

There had been a strained relationship with her mother, who was sensitive, frightened and unable to show affection. Her father, a Jew who escaped Germany in the early 1930s, was philosophical. He gave Christina his love of life. Both died some years ago, in old age. Mother's passing was a huge relief.

Christina's symptoms consisted of inner turmoil and a tormenting voice saying 'Why not go back?' She wished to explore for a spiritual component to her condition.

Therapy

Induction was by guided visualisation. Christina was instructed to fill herself with light and scan her body for shadowy areas. The following account, much shortened, comes from the taped session.

“Round my head there’s a dark, grey band of resistance. There’s something that wants to keep talking its own language, and resists. The solar plexus is soaking up the light; it’s so grateful.

“I’m connecting more now with the frozen feeling round the jaw bone and that tightening in the face. The face is in the grip of a frozen state.”

I invite the dark grey area around the head to speak. *“Just let whatever comes, come, Christina.”*

“I will bind her; I will eat her. I will bind her; I will eat her.”

“Tell me, do you have a name?”

“No. Now, this lovely life, I will feed upon.”

Christina’s comment: *I am aware of different levels of inner sensing after the “Voice” comes in; the sceptical mind, the witnessing self which realises that the voice has an interesting quality, a different energy – and an inner decision I make to suspend belief, to placate the rational mind, and to go with the energy of what’s happening. I continue in good faith, noticing bodily sensations and the spontaneous answering of questions.*

“So you are here to feed on Christina’s energy?”

“Yes.”

“How are you affecting Christina?”

“I frighten her to death.”

“And tell me, how old was Christina when you came into her life?”

“Really early and the first was fear in her.”

It had joined Christina when she was 8 or 9.

“She began to feel frightened and alone with her parents. The love wasn’t there. She began to feel ugly, plain and different.”

“And what was it that allowed you to come in?”

“A big hole opened in her forehead and down the front of her body. I could come in like a grip and use her mind, and sit in her head.”

“Where were you before?”

“Swirling around, waiting... looking for somewhere to come in.”

“And who do you answer to?”

“Christina’s got a tight pain round the back of her throat. She’s not going to say.”

“But you can say. You can say whom you answer to. You know.”

“You know who I answer to.”

“I’m calling now on St Michael and the Mighty Rescue Spirits of Light to be all around and to reach in with a net of light, an impervious capsule of light and place it around this dark grey area that’s affecting Christina, so it’s completely contained, so there’s no escape.”

Christina’s comment: *I feel great relief hearing the invocation of St Michael. I see the “thing” caught within the net of light. It is a negative energy, not a demon or a satanic presence, but something I have been host to – a parasite feeding off my despair.*

Christina moves uncomfortably.

“What did they say the light would do to you?”

“Die.”

“You’re not being harmed in any way. You’re just being contained here, so that I can talk with you and so that you can talk with me. Now, look inside yourself and tell me what you see as you do that.”

Sees grey smoke, then a dark cross, and then an eye. I say to look through the eye. Somewhere strange and soft. Hands reach out to it. Christina starts to sob.

“There’s still something else for you to become aware of.”

Sees blue sky. Feels peaceful.

“How long since you’ve felt warm and peaceful?”

“A long time”

I say the angels can take it to a place within the Light where it can be re-educated and taught to do good. First it must tell me what other dark beings may be around.

“There’s one working with him too.” (referring to the ex-partner).

“It’s trying to pull her back by saying, “Try harder, try harder! Come back. There are goodies here for you. Look what you’re missing! Look what you’ve lost! You foolish girl! You’re letting go of something...”

“Call to that one. Tell it to look into itself and find its own source of light, find its inner beauty.”

“Oh, it’s a wild one! It has wild eyes. It’s hopping all over the place.”

Christina’s comment: *I’m interested at the change in tone, somewhat astonished at the description “hopping around” – it sounds absurd and comical – but that’s what came out. I am surprised too at the level of intensity of the second voice. Throughout the session I have the sceptical mind doubting, and what I can only call the support from my soul which gives me an experience of good faith and which reminds me that I know all this but have been so deep in separation and the darkness of grief that I couldn’t summon up angelic resources of my own. I need strong and committed external*

authority in the absence of my own, to isolate the predators and take them to the place of healing.”

The second entity says,

“I like my job. I like making mischief. I like hopping around; it’s very energetic.”

“What were you promised, if you hopped around and made mischief?”

“Oh! I could feed and feed and make drama and havoc and hate and shouting and hate and...”

“Mighty Rescue Spirits of Light, take each one in its own net of light and have it look inside, so it can be helped and re-educated.”

Finally there is just one big ball of light.

Christina says, **“I feel I could sleep for days.”**

I call upon Healing Spirits of Light, to come to the area where the darkness was, reach in with a healing salve of light and heal. Next, I ask Christina to focus on her jaws, where she had felt the icy feeling.

“I’m speaking to the jaws, to the icy feeling around them. What do you have to say?”

“They’re locked. I couldn’t speak, not allowed to.”

Now the lock is just a memory. Christina indicates that there is something around her lips. I have her take a look at them. She meets the memory of the mother’s bitterness. With Christina’s permission, I ask for the mother to come forward.

“I’m calling for Ann. If Ann is free to come here and make contact with your daughter, with Christina, that would be wonderful.”

“She’s gentle. Like when she was young, when I was a baby and she was gentle.”

“Tell her how glad you are that she’s come, how glad you are to see her.”

“Glad you’re here, Mum, to look after us, bending over me like when I was a ...”

I say to touch the lips. *“Bless her lips. Tell them that they’re beautiful, that they need never be pursed up in anger or resentment or pain.”*

Christina recalls her mother’s laughter and sense of humour. Christina feels her mother’s kiss.

“It’s the first time, Ma, you’ve ever kissed me like that.”

I thank Christina’s guardian angel and spirit guides for allowing the meeting.

Christina: *The experience of meeting my mother is gentle and touching, but I am really not sure whether I have actually contacted her or whether I have visualised a loving meeting between us.*

I call angelic help to cleanse and heal Christina's chakras and aura. Finally, I ask Christina to become aware of her soul. She describes a beautiful being of deep purple and deep blue, positioned behind and within her. I give thanks to unseen helpers.

Outcome

Two days later, Christina writes, "I feel quite different since having seen you and am monitoring, in a diary, the whole experience. I am exploring how my own, malnourished, little one managed to create a space for the unwelcome visitors to enter. It is a very delicate and important time and I am so grateful."

Today she feels, "An ongoing sense of strength, and a reaffirmation of the trust I always had but which trust I had temporarily lost through the crisis of grief, that is, that energies are attracted to a body at a time of emotional depletion - to amplify negative energies already operating - and that spiritual help is required to contain and transform these energies."

References

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About the Spirit Release Foundation.

This voluntary organisation was formed 4 years ago. It has 128 members, mostly complementary therapists and some registered medical practitioners. The SRF offers training and support to spirit release therapists. We run conferences and publish a newsletter. For case histories, courses, bookshop and membership information see www.spiritrelease.com