

Your Soul's Calling excerpt

Your Soul's Calling: Answering the Question "Why Am I Here?"

By Nancy Canning, M.A.

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Published by: iCann2 Media, www.NancyCanning.com

Edited by: Barbara C. McNurlin

Cover design by: Kathi Dunn, www.dunn-design.com

Interior design by: Rochelle Mensidor

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Portions of the author's previous book *Past to Present: How Your Past Lives Are Impacting You Now* are presented in this book.

Canning, Nancy

Your soul's calling: answering the question “why am I here?” / Nancy Canning, M.A. –
1st ed.

ISBN: Paperback: 978-0-9823661-4-1

ISBN: Ebook: 978-0-9823661-5-8

1. Mind, body and spirit
2. Afterlife
3. Reincarnation

1st edition, November 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

Foreword

For the first 35 years of my life, I had no interest in spirituality. It wasn't until my father died in 1997 that I began to contemplate the deeper questions about life and death. Why are we here? What is my purpose? Where do we go when we die? And why do bad things happen to good people? These are all questions that most of us have asked ourselves. And it was my father's passing that became the catalyst for this personal inquiry, which is a common theme in many people's lives – a loved one's death sparks their spiritual journey.

Being a private investigator by profession, I decided to use my skills as a private eye to find the answers I was seeking. I focused on the afterlife, believing that if I could understand life after death then I would be more likely to gain the bigger answers about purpose and truth as well.

My first evidence of life after death came after stumbling upon a medium, someone who can communicate with people in spirit. My reading was like a reunion between myself and my father, grandmother and several other relatives who are on the other side of life. Since this medium was a stranger to me, who knew details about my life she could not have known but for communicating with my loved ones in spirit, this experience was eye opening. It taught me that there are aspects of life and death of which I was unaware. And I knew that this was the beginning of my awakening.

Once I had experienced mediumship multiple times, I found myself wondering what other experiences were available to me. *What's next?* I pondered. *What other experiences might give me a new level of spiritual insight?* I opened our local mind-body-spirit magazine to find a photograph of Nancy Canning smiling at me. I was looking at her 3-inch by 5-inch advertisement for past-life regression and life-between-lives regression. I was drawn to it, so I immediately contacted Nancy and booked a session.

I had no idea just how momentous this experience was going to be for me. To be honest, I didn't really believe I could be regressed. I had heard enough stories to believe other people were *regress-able* (if I can make up a word), but I also knew that my experience as a private investigator led me to maintain control at all times for safety's sake. Nevertheless, I made the 3-hour drive to Cape Cod, and hours after my arrival I left Nancy's office a profoundly changed man. My life would never be the same.

I was so pumped about my remarkable regression experience that I was now extremely eager to consume new experiences. I practiced meditation. I implemented a daily inspired-writing exercise. I had readings with channelers and animal communicators. I consciously and deliberately recorded the signs and signals from spirits known as after-death communications. I had sessions with astrologers, shamans and energy healers. I got a spirit-portrait drawn of my great, great, grandfather by a spirit artist. If there was a new experience to be had, I was signing up for it. And I learned something from each and every one of them. I learned about the experience itself. I learned universal wisdom and truth. And I learned about myself.

Today, more than 18 years since my father's passing, I recognize that this investigation of mine was not just a means to an end; it *was* my life purpose. Yes, I am an investigator, but I am also a teacher – I teach others about my investigations and the conclusions I've drawn based on them. I've written a book about the afterlife, numerous articles about spirituality, created an online show called Afterlife TV, and I have two resources to connect the public with legitimate and

reputable psychics, mediums and related practitioners. Who knew my father's passing was going to lead to all this?

Life purpose, consequently, seems to be easier to find than most people realize, because it tends to find us. Your purpose is whatever you are drawn toward. Purpose is not about career unless you want it to be. Some people's purpose in life is to serve as an inspiring example to others, or to be kind to whomever crosses their path in any given day, or to express courage in spite of their challenging circumstances, or to nurture people and animals as if they were all their children.

I learned that we are here simply to have experiences that we as souls are unable to have in the loving, safe light of the spirit world (our true home). So we come here to this earthly life where love exists, but only as an option from which we can choose. We also have options that teach us about love by showing us the opposite, such as hatred, greed, fear, and separation. These free-will choices set the stage for some very interesting, albeit challenging and painful, experiences. It seems that the more we choose love in life, the more pleasurable life tends to be for us.

Along my journey, I discovered there are spiritual experiences that I am unable to schedule with a practitioner or practice in my home. One example is having a near-death experience. This is one of the most fascinating experiences in the afterlife arena, but it is something that happens to people unpredictably and uncontrollably. And, of course, not everyone who dies for a few seconds or minutes and then recovers back to life has a near-death experience. So rather than experience this for myself, I conducted extensive interviews with people who have had NDEs.

During my research of near-death experiences, I noticed that I was able to relate to what these near-death experiencers were describing. *How could this be?* I wondered. And then I realized that the feelings they had during their NDE, the way they felt out of their body and in the spirit world, even the way they communicated telepathically, were all experiences I had known during my past-life and life-between-lives regressions. Yes, of course! I too was out of my body and in another dimension during these regressions. I got enthusiastic about the similarities between the two experiences. It helped me to understand these NDEs that most near-death experiencers say are difficult to put into words.

There is one other fundamental result of having spiritual experiences that I noticed yet hear few people mention. When we have any of these experiences that I've discussed thus far, particularly the regression experiences, we gain a 'knowing' about spiritual truth that seemingly satiates us as an unexpected and often unnoticed consequence of the experience itself. Said another way, we seem to absorb wisdom while having the experience. More interestingly, this absorbed wisdom appears to bypass our intellect and lies dormant within us until, one day, we surprisingly find ourselves acting with greater patience, compassion, love and fearlessness in the face of challenges that would have previously shaken us off our rails and had us acting with less desirable qualities.

Accordingly, spiritual experiences of any kind have an exponential effect on us that is so much more than the stages that unfolded or the stories about them that we later share with others. We learn lessons, of course, but we also raise our vibration – individually and collectively. Our physical energy moves away from the frequency of fear and closer to the frequency of love. Moreover, we accept and appreciate our connection to our higher self, whatever term you give it, so that we learn to trust the guidance that flows in our life. In this way, we listen to our intuition and pay attention to the coincidences and messengers in our life.

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I can tell you for sure that I was not seeking or expecting this result when I underwent the various sessions and practices I chose for experiment. Instead, I unwittingly became a more loving, authentic, empathetic, patient and understanding human being than I was before my investigation into life after death. Naturally, just like everyone, I still have a long way to go, since personal and spiritual growth are ongoing processes. But I trust fully that everyone, including myself, is exactly where we are supposed to be at this moment in time, which prevents me from wanting to control people and circumstances out of fear that someone or something is heading in a challenging direction. And that gives me a sense of inner peace that was once rare or nonexistent in my life.

Today I teach more and seek new experiences less, but in hindsight I realize that out of all the experiences I have known, my past-life and life-between-lives regressions held the most impact on my spiritual growth. This is because they are personal experiences. Someone wasn't telling me what my past life was like; I was reliving it myself. And that distinction between personal experience and secondhand knowledge makes all the difference, because only personal experience can lead us to 'knowing.'

Nancy Canning gave me my first past-life and life-between-lives regressions about 15 years ago. She taught me a great deal at the beginning of my journey, and her work has helped me to recognize my own soul's calling. Now, 15 years later, she has taken the wisdom she's gained from working with clients and having her own sacred experiences to help you discover your own soul's purpose for being here. The result is this life-changing manual of life and purpose that I wish was available to me when I still felt lost and wandering without a sense of direction in my life. I am honored and thrilled to be writing the Foreword to such a valuable contribution to spiritual-growth literature. And I'm happy for you that it has come into your awareness.

Whether you are just beginning your spiritual voyage or wanting to build upon years of insight and experience, you can expect many 'Aha!' moments while reading this book. I learned new truths and gained new tools from it, and I was also reminded of knowledge that I had previously learned but somehow forgotten. I have already utilized this book's teachings in unexpected and valuable ways. I hope you share the same experience and allow the teachings within to expand and illuminate your life.

With love,

Bob Olson,

Author of *Answers About the Afterlife: A Private Investigator's 15-Year Research Unlocks the Mysteries of Life After Death* and host of AfterlifeTV.com.

October 10, 2015

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Two Thumbs Up

"We did it! We created the life we wanted!" – Peggy Canning

In September 2010 I was on a plane flying over the desert in Utah or Nevada, headed for San Francisco. That morning, I had received the call that no one wants to receive: Come home now, Dad is dying. Our mother had died nine months earlier, on New Year's Eve. Dad had been in decline since, so we four siblings knew he was fading.

The previous night I told him on the phone, "Dad, don't hang around for any of us. We don't want you to go, but it's OK when you're ready." I had meant sometime in the future. However, unbeknownst to me, he went into a coma two hours later. My older brother and sister were with him that night, and my younger sister had flown in that morning. I was on my way to Dad as fast as I could get there: a long cross-country journey from Boston to San Diego.

Suddenly, Dad was there with me in the plane. I could hear his voice as plain as day: "I'm sorry, Sweetie, but I couldn't wait any longer." I knew he had just died. His energy was rather scattered and diffuse. In comparison, I could see (energetically and psychically) my mother with him. Her energy was "nicely put together." She'd had time to regain her soul essence and to be healed.

I saw her with two thumbs up, very happy and proud, saying to my father, "We did it! We created the life we wanted!" She was so happy!

I said to myself then, and I continue to say to myself now, "I want that! At the end of this life, I want to give two thumbs up and be happy and proud of my life."

And I want that for you, too. I want to help you create that kind of ending for yourself. That's why I'm writing this book: To help you understand your life from your soul's point-of-view and be able to really hear your soul's calling.

You Are A Time Traveler

While your physical body is limited to being in this time and space, your soul has been traveling throughout time without regard for space. You have lived in other bodies on earth, and, chances are high that you will live on earth again. You have had many bodies, but only one soul, which is uniquely you.

Here's the good news: Your soul has a fabulous memory, far better and more accurate than your brain's memory. It remembers details of your past lives, what you do in between your lives, and even more importantly, the agreements and plans you made for this life.

This book aims to help you understand why things have happened to you in this life as they have, so that you can accept these events and understand your life's purpose.

Know this:

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Before coming into this lifetime, your Soul/Higher Self planned what you wanted to learn, experience, and accomplish during your time here on earth. Your soul is calling you to remember your plans.

If you already know this statement is true for you, and you've been searching for your purpose in being alive, then you're already listening to your soul calling to you.

On the other hand, if this statement doesn't ring true for you, or you simply don't understand it, then just by reading this introduction you're listening to your soul. It's calling you to open up and remember who you are. You may put this book down at this point and not read another sentence, and still, this statement has been planted in your consciousness as a way to help you remember who you really are (a spiritual being) and why you are here in your body (to learn and grow).

I am a time-traveler guide. I lead people into other lives they have lived, as well as into the afterlife (our life-between-lives, aka heaven or the spirit world). By so doing, I help people learn about their soul's journey. Even though this book is about your spiritual path, it is practical information. I will show you how you can look at your life and discern the all-important question so many people want answered: "Why am I here?"

I think all of us ask these questions, don't we?

- "Why in the world am I here?"
- "What am I here to learn?"
- "Why is this happening to me?"
- "How can I know what my soul wants?"
- "How do I even know what my soul is?"
- "Have I really lived before...and will I live again?"
- "How can I know this is all true and not just made up hocus pocus?"
- "How do I find real meaning and purpose in my life?"

You may have the feeling that something is not quite right or is missing in your life. You know there's more you're meant to do but for the life of you, you can't figure it out. Your life doesn't "add up quite right" because some things have happened that don't make sense. You may know you are far more capable than the way you are showing up.

Or, perhaps your life is comfortable and you are happy in your work or family or creativity. You're not at a crossroads, but rather, life is just going along for you. And yet, you may feel inner nudges. They may be compelling you to question your higher purpose, or wonder about your intuition or guidance. You may even wonder how to communicate with your soul.

Or you may know exactly what you are here to be and do this lifetime, but can't figure out how to make it happen. Perhaps fear is holding you back, or doubt and uncertainty, or even the thought that you need to know a little bit more before you can really live your life purpose.

If any of these situations apply to you, or if this is all gibberish to you, and you don't know what I'm talking about, keep reading. It may begin to make sense to you shortly.

Why Did I Even Get Born?

One of our poignant questions, especially if we're having a difficult time, is "Why did I even get born?" If heaven is so wonderful, why do we leave it to come to earth? Why don't we just stay there? Why do we show up in rough lives?

When things are going well, you may be enjoying the sunrises and sunsets, you're in love, you're creating, you're helping others, and there's enough of everything. You may be thinking, "This is why I came."

But things can get really tough. Sometimes life isn't working for you, and no matter what you do, you can't seem to get out of the struggle. That's when the thought pops up, "I don't understand. Why can't I get it together? Why can't I have the life I want?"

Through the ages, scholars and mystics, prophets and sages have expounded on this conundrum. Here's a brief explanation of what I believe about this very big subject.

Physics is beginning to catch up with religion and spirituality in proving that there is an Essence that is found in everything. A few of the many different terms to describe that Essence are: God, Infinite Intelligence, Source of All That Is, Creator, and Allah. I certainly do not refer to God as some male figure in the sky or some persona that is a human reflection. Rather, God is Light, Love, Consciousness, Creative Source, and Being.

My belief is that God is Love, which means that the Source of All That Is can be nothing other than Love, equally loving at all times, in all places, in all situations.

As an immortal soul, we each are part of this Source of Love. Think of God as the ocean and your soul as a drop of ocean water. You are the same essence as the ocean. You are fully ocean. Yet, you are not the entire ocean. You are the essence of God, Love, and yet you are not all of God. You don't create universes and galaxies, and yet you create your own personal world with your thoughts and actions. You are here to remember the truth that you are One with God and then learn to live from this Truth.

As a soul, we want to grow and evolve into all that we can possibly be. In the spirit world, we are aware of our spiritual nature and the areas in which we want to grow so that we can be more loving, more God-like. It's our innate God nature to want to be Love and be fully who we are. Earth provides us the circumstances to grow because it tests our ability to be Love, always. Even though life on earth is painful at times, as a soul we want to evolve, and being in a human body is our pathway.

In each lifetime, we have lessons to learn, with many facets to each lesson. One lesson, of course, is to be Love. It's not the only lesson, but it's our primary one. We learn different facets of being Love in different lifetimes, including how to not be Love. We need to learn all sides of being Love before we are proficient in giving, receiving, and being loving to ourselves and to all others. Although, as an immortal soul, our nature is to be Love, it takes lifetimes of practice to live this truth in everyday human life. That's what earth school is for.

To explain this using an analogy, you may be gifted with musical talent and read all about how to play the piano. You memorize the notes, keys, and pedals, but until you actually sit down at the keyboard, you aren't playing the piano. Playing the piano is the goal. Mentally studying how to play the piano is part of the process to attain the goal, but it's not the goal itself.

In the same way, the learning we do in the spirit world is part of the process to help us reach our goal of evolving as spiritual beings. Our goal is to incarnate into a physical body and actually live life with all of its conflicts and suffering, as well as its fullness of joy and passion, all the while remembering the truth of our soul essence, remembering to be Love. Living life in our human body is the process through which we spiritually evolve, and this evolution requires living many lifetimes.

I'll start with my own story of how I got into this work of helping people find their life purpose. Throughout this book, I refer to two types of clients' hypnosis sessions that I have conducted to help them better understand their life purpose: past lives and life-between-lives spiritual regressions. I'll briefly describe them both so that you have an idea of what clients experience.

My Story

"This is the life you've been dying to live" is a favorite past life joke of mine.

In 1982 I did not believe in reincarnation. I could take it or leave it, and I actually preferred to leave it. One evening I was talking with friends. I don't remember what we talked about, but I do know it was not about reincarnation or foreign countries.

Suddenly, and spontaneously, I slipped into a past life in Japan. I could see it as clearly as watching a movie in my mind. I knew with every fiber of my being that I was the young girl I saw, with long, straight black hair and a vivid blue blouse. I was about 10 years old, hiding in a ditch with my younger brother. There were Samurai soldiers marching nearby and we were crouched down to keep from being seen by them.

As I watched this "memory movie" unfold in my mind, I was frightened and confused, and began yelling out loud what I was witnessing. I kept saying, "I'm making this up!" But I knew inside that it was very real. I'm very grateful that one of my friends was immediately aware of what I was going through and encouraged me to stay with the experience. It was over fairly quickly, but it shook me to my core. I couldn't dismiss it as imagination because there was a deep knowing inside me that it was much more: It set me on my path.

After that dramatic introduction, I began clairvoyant training to "read" past lives as a psychic. A person would sit in front of me, I would close my eyes and wait for images to appear to me, and then I would tell the person out loud the scene I was seeing, what the person looked like, the action I was being shown, and the life lesson that particular scene represented. I would see scenes from different ages, some normal everyday activities and sometimes traumas or dramatic events. Traumatic deaths tend to remain more energized, so those would often appear.

During the next eight years of intensive psychic work, I "read" hundreds, perhaps over a thousand, past lives. Many readings had profound effects on the clients and helped them on their life's journey.

Early in 1998 I spent an intensive month studying hypnotherapy. In my private therapy practice, I began using hypnosis to lead clients into their own past lives. So rather than me relating to them the stories I psychically saw, I used (and still use) hypnosis to gently assist them in going back to a past life that dealt with an issue they are dealing with in this life. By experiencing another life for themselves, the vast majority of my clients gain three major benefits: (1) They

release all fear of death, (2) they validate their immortality, and (3) they understand their current life better.

After so many years and past life experiences, all my doubts and misgivings about believing in and knowing our souls' undying nature have long since given way.

From the hypnosis experiences of clients over the past fifteen years, I have learned a lot about life purpose and lessons. The subject of life purpose and the soul's journey through numerous lives has been a passion of mine for many years. I'm pleased to share some of these fascinating sessions in this book to illustrate different lessons and principles of the soul's journey.

Past Lives

So many people ask: Have we really lived other lives before this one? How do we know? How can we "prove" it?

To answer these questions briefly: I believe we all have lived past lives, and I have helped thousands of people to experience their past lives. I may not prove the reality of past lives to you, but here's what I have learned about them:

You have been born into this life as a continuation of your soul's journey. All that you have been and done in your former lives has led you to be who you are today.

Therefore, by looking at your present life, you can discern how your past is still affecting you. By looking at your past lives, you can better understand your current life as well as the journeys you have taken through time.

In the end, it is this life, the here and now, that matters most and is where your focus needs to be.

If you don't believe in past lives, or are highly skeptical, keep reading because you can still learn a great deal from these stories. The wisdom and truths these clients gained do not depend on past lives being real. Even if you believe it's all made up, the stories can still be helpful to you.

From a spiritual perspective, you are the sum total of all you have been throughout your incarnations. People often ask, "How many lives do people typically have?" I heard one "expert" on the subject answer, "People can have up to nine lives." Another "expert" said, "You can have over 600,000 lives." So what's the "real" answer? My guess is that it's somewhere between those two numbers.

When a person enters into the spirit world, the number of lives lived is not a question that is asked because it's irrelevant. What's important is not how many lives we've lived but rather the progress our soul has made on its journey and the life lessons we have learned.

We all identify with our current body, personality, gender, and race, so it may be difficult for us to imagine ourselves as a person in another life as the opposite sex, or another race, a different body size and type, or a very different religion or personality.

From all the past lives I have helped my clients explore, I have learned that we don't remain the same gender and race in every lifetime. Yes, we may have a soul preference to be either male or female, but we will still come into some lives as the other gender to learn how to better understand and walk in the shoes of someone different from ourselves. It's also highly likely that

you have lived in many different countries, having skin color that was white, black, brown, and all shades in between.

It's quite the experience to go into another lifetime during hypnosis and feel yourself as a very different type of person than who you are now, especially if you change gender and/or race, or have a very different personality. This experience is especially helpful if you hold judgments against other types or races of people, or are sexist and hold the mindset that, of course, your gender is superior. Living through a lifetime that is different than your present one can help you more deeply understand and have compassion for people you previously might not have acknowledged as equal or somehow similar to you.

Underneath the skin color, race, and gender, we are all the same, moving through our life with challenges and successes, giving and receiving love, creating and changing, seeking to be recognized and regarded, and all that encompasses the human experience.

If you are searching for answers to deep questions about your own past lives and reincarnation's validity, I believe you're in for some surprises. Your soul's journey this lifetime may be for you (and your logical mind) to come to terms with your previous lifetimes. The clues about who you have been and where you have lived are all around you. It's usually a journey and a process to learn to trust your inner knowing and let go of your doubts about past lives. Appendix A has more information on evidence about past lives, plus you can visit my website at www.nancycanning.com for further resources on this subject that you may find interesting.

We Are All Here in Earth School

When we begin going to school, we're at the start of a new learning adventure. We learn the letters of the alphabet, how to use these letters to make words, and then how to print those letters and words. We learn math, how to add and subtract in very simple ways. We also learn socialization skills, how to get along with the other children, how to do what the teacher says, how to move from one project to another in orderly ways. At the beginning of our schooling, we step into a very large unknown world where everything is new and there is so much to be learned.

By the end of first grade, we've learned just the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. We're not yet proficient in any of these areas, nor are we expected to do more than the first grade level. We are not expected to know geometry, be able to write short stories, or diagram a sentence. Those expectations would be ridiculous because we're simply not yet capable of that level of learning.

Then we move into second grade and begin the year by reviewing what we already learned in first grade. We start slowly with some of the same skills we learned and then begin enlarging on those skills and adding mastery. Even so, while at the end of second grade we're much further along than in first grade, we're still not at the level of learning of a sixth grader. That's not expected of us. We learn only so much each year, and we begin the next year by reviewing what we've learned and then moving into new territory.

The way we move through the grades at school is a hologram for our soul's journey. We're not meant to learn all aspects of our soul lessons in one single lifetime. That's as ridiculous as saying

we're supposed to master all of our schooling in one year. It just doesn't happen that way, nor is it meant to.

In school, we learn what is age-appropriate and grade-appropriate, and then we advance to the next grade and learn more. Likewise, we grow in each life, even those in which we seem to backslide or waste our time. Each life, regardless of how we live it, is a learning experience. Each life presents us with different facets of the lessons we're learning for our soul's development. We are challenged to grow through our greatest fears, which takes lifetimes.

This is how it is for us in "Earth School." As spiritual beings, we leave the spirit world and incarnate into a human body to learn and grow. The spirit world, heaven, is a place of unconditional love, peace, joy, and learning. The learning we do there is more theoretical than practical or experiential because no negative emotions, such as fear, greed, or resentment, get in our way. No obstacles or conflicts waylay us from our path of being Love. We learn the "theory" of how to handle situations in more loving ways, but we must be on earth to actually do the work itself, to remember to be Love and peace in the face of fear and loss.

It's true that some children excel in school, skip grades or move quickly into advanced studies. At the same time, other children hold back, repeating a grade because they're not ready for the more advanced work. They feel overwhelmed by school, or are simply not doing their homework.

In the same way, as souls, we may try to "skip ahead" and take on advanced lessons that can end up making our life extremely difficult. Or, we may do a "rest life" in which we're laid back and don't achieve much. I'll go into detail about this later in the book. All people are on their own spiritual path, following their soul's calling, learning what they need to learn here in earth school.

One of the great misunderstandings of reincarnation is that if you're having problems this lifetime, then it must be punishment for a life when you were bad. This is a misuse of the doctrine of karma – that is, the law of cause and effect. There is no punishment. Rather, reincarnation is a learning cycle that you have chosen. This truth can be very hard to swallow, especially when your life is filled with tragedies or heartaches. I want to introduce this important concept here:

Karma is learning, not punishment.

I have found from my clients that we all desire to learn and evolve as souls. The way we learn is most often through adversity and challenge, through risk-taking and stretching beyond what is comfortable or feels safe for us. Yes, we definitely grow through love and creativity, but most often, our soul grows the most by moving through fear.

This concept can be very upsetting. For example, what if a family has suffered a tragedy, such as the loss of a child? How can such a terrible event have been chosen? This is where the past life and life-between-lives viewpoints are so useful. They give us the "soul's long view," which means seeing the child's death in its much larger, many lifetimes' context.

From our human viewpoint, this death is tragic and heartbreaking. Absolutely! Yet, from the spiritual viewpoint, profound soul learning is possible. Often a death can spur a loved one onto their spiritual path. Perhaps, on the soul level, some members of the family came to earth school to learn to move beyond loss into being valuable contributors to their family or society. Or

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perhaps someone needs to forgive or to live alone or to accept help. Whatever the soul lessons for all the people involved, the event can make sense in the larger spiritual context.

We live in a dualistic Universe where we need to hold two truths at the same time. As humans we suffer pain and loss. On the other hand, as immortal souls, we desire to evolve ourselves, and that often requires that we experience pain and loss. Loss truly is bittersweet: We experience the physical pain as well as the spiritual fullness of growth. The more we are able to see both sides of ourselves – physical and spiritual – the more we can live life from a higher perspective, and the easier riding the waves of life's ups and downs becomes. I devote a later chapter to this very important subject, *Our Balancing Act*.

Believe it or not, feeling frustrated, stuck, and miserable may very well be the motivation you have needed to discover your life's purpose. You may even realize that if you can crack this puzzle, and learn the lessons you've come to learn in this life, you won't have to come back again and live yet another lifetime to learn these same lessons. You may say to yourself, "No matter what it takes, just let me know what I'm here to do so that I can do it NOW, because I'm not doing this again!"

Likely you will be back again – to learn other lessons. But for this lifetime, you are here for an important purpose. I hope you discover it reading this book.

2

Your Soul's Journey Between Lives

Your Soul has a calling, a purpose, which is fulfilling.

You do not *have* a soul. You *are* your soul. Your soul is you, and it's more than your personality and your body. Part of your soul is inside your body, and a much, much larger part is outside your body. Your soul is consciousness, energy, light, part of the essence of God/Source/Infinite. Your soul is all that you have ever been. Some call it your Higher Self, others call it your spirit; you may call it by other names. You are not separate from your soul. Rather, you are contained within it.

There are various definitions for soul and spirit and the differences between them. Bob Olson, a friend of mine and author of *Answers About the Afterlife: A Private Investigator's 15-Year Research Unlocks the Mysteries of Life After Death*, has interviewed hundreds of psychics, mediums, people who have had near-death experiences, and others who have connections to the afterlife in one form or another. His book is based on the many interviews he has conducted, and in it, he answers 150 questions about the afterlife. As he notes in his book, the question that has received the most comments and interest is the difference between soul and spirit. Here is a small portion of his explanation:

“The soul is our whole self, the eternal and spiritual aspect of who we are.

The spirit is connected to each individual life's personality. It changes from lifetime to lifetime as we embody different personalities and bodies.

Each spirit has its own individual characteristics, but each will also have some common characteristics of its soul. Because of this, another soul will always be able to recognize a spirit's soul identity because of those signature characteristics.

Now taking this a step further, when I die, my spirit as Bob will leave my physical body and return home to the spirit world. In essence, my spirit will rejoin my soul and remain as an eternal aspect of my soul. In the same way that my human personality as a teenager is always present within me as an adult, my spirit as Bob will always be present in my soul.”

So your soul is the wholeness of all that you are, encompassing the learning and growth and qualities you have developed throughout all your many lifetimes. Each lifetime, your soul creates a new spirit of itself to inhabit the new body. So your spirit is fully part of your soul, but your soul encompasses much more than who you are as this lifetime's spirit.

There is an ever-increasing interest in soul work. Do you believe it is your spirit or your soul that causes you to ask, “Just what is my life all about? Why am I here? Who am I really? Does my life make any sense? I know I'm here for something bigger, but what is that ‘something’?”

Throughout this book I give examples from my clients who have asked this question, and received answers while in past life regressions or in the spirit world during a life-between-lives spiritual regression. We can learn from others' experiences because we are all in this together. We have all chosen to incarnate at this time and so we all have some things in common. The answers to “why am I here?” will differ among us, and at the same time, it's fairly universal that

we all want to grow and develop in consciousness. We want to create and stretch ourselves in various ways. For some, this will be a more conscious choice to develop spiritually.

For others, spiritual growth will be unconscious because they aren't yet aware of being more than just their body. They think that what they experience with their five senses – what they see, smell, touch, hear, and taste – is all there is to life. They are not aware of cause and effect, and they don't yet know that their thoughts create their perceptions and thereby their life experiences. All this really doesn't matter in the big picture because, at some point in their spiritual development, they will learn. It may be this lifetime, or it may be another lifetime. In spirit, each life is but the blink of an eye.

As I cite client examples, notice how you are similar to them. Their life may not look like your life, but the same qualities exist within you as within them. We all have all of the qualities and characteristics known to mankind. Repeat:

We all have every characteristic, but it can show up differently in you than in others.

For example, you may be highly critical of critical people, and not even recognize how you criticize. Or you may think someone is a bully, and declare that you have never bullied anyone. But look at how you react to the bully and see if it is a kind of bullying. Or perhaps you are a bully to yourself, constantly putting yourself down. My invitation is to look at yourself more closely as you read through this book, and try to find every quality mentioned in yourself, in whatever form you choose to express it.

You Pre-Planned This Life

You made plans before coming into this lifetime. Did you realize that? Your soul met with other wise and loving spiritual beings and helped you decide what you wanted to learn this time around. You may have gotten together with your guide(s) – spiritual beings who continually live in the spirit world – to discuss how you did last lifetime with your lessons and the next step for you to take in this lifetime.

It's likely you also met with your soul family – the group of loving beings that you “hang out with” in the spirit world. They know you, love you, and often incarnate with you. You all have discussions about the roles you want to play in each other's lives if you plan to incarnate together.

You also met with your elders – the group of very wise and loving beings who have known you throughout all of your lives. They know the much bigger picture of who you are as a soul and what you are trying to learn next. They advised and guided you on lessons, challenges, and opportunities you may face in this life.

With all this pre-planning you did, keep in mind one very important item: Free will. Yes, you as a soul have the free will to decide to come into another body or not. Your choice can be very difficult to face right now if you are having a challenging life. How many times have you wondered, “Whose idea was this?”

The answer: It was your idea. In the spirit world, it seemed like a great idea to take on all these challenges so that you could learn. It wasn't so that you would feel tortured or lead a miserable life. It was so that you could grow and develop as a soul.

I'll talk much more about choosing a challenging life in a later chapter on "fast trackers" – that is, souls who want to accomplish many lifetimes' worth of lessons in a single lifetime. I've worked with a number of people who fall into this category.

I used to explain this pre-life planning by saying: "Prior to coming into this lifetime, there was a big checkerboard in the sky that listed various lessons. We would check off what we wanted to learn in this lifetime." It wasn't anything I had read; it was simply an illustration I used. Imagine my surprise and delight when I saw it elsewhere.

I read Robert Schwartz's book, *Your Soul's Plan: Discovering the Real Meaning of the Life You Planned Before You Were Born*, in which he used very capable psychics and mediums to tune into the pre-planning activities of people with challenging lives. In one instance, he describes how a baby was accidentally blinded at birth, which was neither anticipated nor planned. (Yes, surprises happen!)

As Schwartz describes, the baby's spirit and his two guides then quickly had to re-plan his life. They used three large "chessboards" for planning his life: a lower one for the life that had been planned, listing all the planned steps of his growth and development; a middle transitional board where they moved possible scenarios from the planned life that would still fit his blinded life; and a top final board with the finished plan.

As Schwartz describes: "The boards are like a hologram – filmy in appearance, not solid. Their thoughts create these boards and draw lines on them. Lines represent the process of growth."

It's one of the most extraordinary descriptions of life planning I have ever read, and the description of the planning boards felt very familiar to me. I highly recommend his book, as it's fascinating reading.

Why would anyone plan for tragedies, heartache, loss, loneliness, addiction, betrayal, or any other sort of dismal life struggle? How can this all be planned, and why would we do that to ourselves? That's the real question, isn't it?

To be at peace with the thought that you planned a difficult life, you need to know that spiritual laws do not match physical laws. They are very different. On the physical level, it might look as though we are harming ourselves. On the spiritual plane, however, it's not seen as harm but rather as growth. When we move through challenges, we learn and grow. Plus, we gain a sense of satisfaction and achievement as we grow.

There is no intention of harm because on the spiritual plane, there is only Love. It is all Love. There is no death because the soul lives on. We are eternal in nature and upon returning to the spirit world after the end of a life, we return to Love. And yet, on the physical level, we can encounter great physical, psychological, and emotional harm done to one another. There are unconscionable acts of brutality in the news every day. This is true on the physical plane. Yet, at the very same time, in spirit, there is still only Love.

This is the duality people live with daily. It can cause concern, anger, confusion, helplessness, and even despair. How can we possibly perceive love and pre-planning in the midst of tragedy, terrorism, and brutality? If we do deep inner work, becoming willing to shift our perceptions and see the bigger picture of our lives by moving out of "right and wrong" thinking, then we can find the blessings and the balance in anything and everything that happens in our lives. This will make more sense as you continue through this book.

This “balancing of opposites” may challenge you deeply. If so, that’s good, because you can have some deep insights and shifts in your life. If you are willing to let go of how you think your life should have been, you start to notice the gifts and design inherent in how it has unfolded.

I certainly don’t have all the answers. What I do have, however, is many years of experience in leading clients into the super-conscious state of mind where they receive profound insights into their lives and the meanings underlying all they have experienced.

Experiencing a Life-Between-Lives Session

In 2000, I experienced a life-between-lives spiritual regression with Dr. Michael Newton, author of *Journey of Souls*. When I read his book two years earlier, I knew two things for sure: (1) I was born to do this work, and (2) I already knew how to do it; I just needed a session to “remember.”

Since my own session, I have been doing this amazing work. I use hypnosis to guide people into a deep trance that enables them to access the super-conscious state of mind, which is beyond their subconscious knowing. In this deep trance, people clearly and vividly experience being in the spirit world, the “place” they go in between lives. I use the term “place” loosely because it’s not a place; there is no specific location defined by latitude and longitude. Rather, it’s accessed through a state of consciousness and is in “no place” and “no time.”

I enable clients to remember their journey into the afterlife. I lead them back into a past life, through a few scenes in that life, and then through that death. In going through the death of that prior life, the client immediately feels a sense of relief, freedom, no longer trapped, lightness, expansion, or floating. It’s an immediate release of the heaviness of being in their body.

At that point, in their life-between-lives journey, the client releases the body fully and begins the journey “home” to the spirit world. It really does feel like going home. It’s a place we all know so well. We tend to forget it when we are in a body. But in the session, returning home can bring a tremendous sense of relief and joy when we are again united with our loved ones, spiritual teachers, and guides.

As you enter into the spirit world, deep healing occurs as you release the energies and emotions of having been in a physical body. Typically, there are beings of light that infuse or shower you with healing energy. Clients report that it feels warm, expansive, energizing, and absolutely loving. With this healing, you lose all feeling of being in a physical body and, once again, return to your spiritual state of being. You return to your fuller soul essence. It’s as though you come home to yourself and suddenly feel whole and complete.

Typically, you spend time with your spiritual guide, a wise being who has known you for many lifetimes, reviewing the life you just lived. There is only Love; there is no judgment. These wise beings have deep understanding and compassion for your physical life experiences. That doesn’t mean, however, that you aren’t held accountable for your actions. There is definite accountability and consequences for the life just lived – but it’s without judgment. You’ll read more about this in the clients’ experiences that follow.

Your Soul's Calling excerpt

You view your life from your soul's perspective:

- What you wanted to learn and how you did.
- How you treated others and the consequences of your actions.
- If you were stopped by fear, you have the opportunity to see options that you could not see during your life.

It's an objective and loving review of your life so that you can determine what you want to learn next.

When you're in the physical body, your attention can get consumed with pain, suffering, or fear. At the same time, you are trying to change your actions, be creative, follow your intuition, and create the fulfilling life you've dreamed about. In the spirit world, you are filled with compassion for the life you just lived, rather than judging yourself (as we tend to do when in a body).

One of the main reasons clients come to me for the life-between-lives spiritual regression is to learn their life purpose in their current lifetime. "What is my life all about?" is their primary question. They want to make sense of their life and be sure they are on target for the lessons and plans they made for this life.

In the spirit world, you meet with your council of elders, a group of extraordinarily wise beings who really know you. Some have been with you for eons, many lifetimes, or since the beginning of your journey. It's hard to know "how long" because time doesn't exist in spirit. The elders have been counseling you throughout many lifetimes and can see the bigger picture of your soul's journey. They are typically seen as figures of light and often have a sense of humor, while at the same time, understanding the trials of being in a human body.

They are the ones who typically help you remember and understand your life lessons and purpose for your current lifetime. They help you create order out of apparent chaos or "wrong doing" in this life.

I worked with a woman in her thirties whose beloved fiancé died a few years ago. She started off her questions to the elders with, "why was he taken from me?" She showed great courage as they slowly took her through her pain of loss and indignation that this had happened *to* her.

They were very clear, however: "He was not taken *from* you." It took a while for her life plan to unfold, but then she was very clear. "Oh, I chose this." She had known they would not be together very long. She not only chose to be with him, she "insisted" they be together, even though it would only be a short time.

She gained a deep understanding and clarity of the bigger picture and was able to recognize and fully own her plans and her insistence. Ah, yes, he was not taken from her. Their separation had been planned for the growth of both of their souls' journeys. After the regression, it was several months before she felt she could finally release him, but she did it in her own time and now feels very much at peace with it.

Deep peace comes with this sort of understanding and remembering. Healing also comes as a result of ownership, acknowledging that you set this plan in motion with full awareness of the outcome. True, the planning was in the spirit world, where and when you were not feeling any sort of loss or pain.

As Above, So Below

I think that planning a life in the soul state is very much like setting any major goal here on earth. You think, “What a fabulous idea it would be to start this business!” You get excited as you see the potential, and you recognize the good that you can create for others. But then it gets difficult as you encounter the actual conditions of creating the business, or project, or whatever you are planning. Things don’t go as planned. Unexpected crises occur. Fears overwhelm you and invade your life daily.

“This is no fun! Whose idea was this, anyway? I don’t want to do this anymore. It is a dumb idea.” Isn’t this what we think as we encounter obstacles that keep us from what we desire to create?

The only way to turn your vision into reality is to push through your fears and setbacks. You automatically do this all the time – even if you haven’t noticed. You learned to walk, ride a bike, read, write, and do math. You have pushed through barriers and obstacles your entire life because that’s how life is. That’s how we all learn: We move through the limitations of our old way of thinking and create from a new consciousness.

With any goal setting or creative process, it certainly helps to know what you want to create, so that you head in the right direction. It’s the same with your life purpose. If you have a clear understanding of why you came into this body, you can make decisions that more clearly sync up with your life plans.

When I take clients into the spirit world, they heal and release emotional burdens because they realize what they set themselves up for in this lifetime. They often end up laughing – through the tears – and wondering, “What was I thinking?” From the human perspective, they planned a difficult and challenging life. Yet, as a soul, they were excited about the prospects of what they could gain in this lifetime.

Insights, knowledge, and wisdom I learned from my clients’ experiences into the spirit world, as well as my own journey and years of study, are the basis for this book. My goal and intention are to help you see the bigger picture of who you are and the journey you are on in this lifetime.

Opening our hearts and minds to new information is what helps us grow in deeper and more meaningful ways. I hope and pray you find your lessons and purpose in life and come to a deep sense of peace and well-being that you are, indeed, on your soul’s path. Let’s get going as we delve into the vital roles that meaning and purpose have in your life.