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...everyday spiritual guidance.

Nigel Peace

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**THE STORY OF A PERSONAL SPIRITUAL
JOURNEY, OF UNFOLDING AWARENESS AND
OF TRANSFORMATION.**

Contents

Preface	7
I Finding the Way	9
II The New Path	29
III Signposts	45
IV Grand Alignment	61
V Before Completion	87
VI Miracles	103
VII Give Up, Let Go, Move On.....	119
VIII The End of Time	137
IX The Fire	153
X Winter	177
XI Deliverance	197

Appendices

A The I Ching	219
B A Summary of the Dreams	225



Preface

This is a very personal story. Telling it is the only honest way to give an account of the extraordinary spiritual phenomena that I have experienced over many years of a journey to learn more about the nature of this life and our part in it. I hope you will not think it self-indulgent; indeed in many ways it has been painful to describe intimate details. Risky too - I fully expect to be ridiculed by many, not least because several of the events recounted are almost literally incredible. Well, have you ever heard of Divine Guidance by car registration plates...?

The trouble is this: there are many New Age writings which purport to teach us about aspects of 'the spiritual path'. Some are very thoughtful and genuinely helpful; many more are just ephemeral or bald statements of 'channelled Truth' which can insult the intelligence. (By the way, you should know right away that this book will *not* tell you The Secret of Life, let alone The Truth About Everything, because I don't know it; I dare say that there may well be some inescapable conclusions to be drawn from my experiences, but so far I have managed to escape most of them.) Most of these writings, good or bad, tell us that there is much 'guidance' to be had along our way, from the spirit worlds or from signs and omens, if we only knew "how to listen and look".

But very few of the writings ever actually describe this 'guidance' or give down-to-earth examples of it that the rest of us can understand or evaluate.

So how is anyone to learn how to recognise it? How are we to know which state of mind to cultivate? Most importantly, supposing we have got as far as to receive some guidance (perhaps, for example, simply through recalling an important dream), how are we to learn how to interpret it – sort the wheat from the chaff, the vision from the desire – unless we share these experiences with each other, discuss different ways of analysing them, and profit from each other's mistakes? Maybe only then can we begin to learn what it really means to be human...

So this is an honest and verifiable account of the phenomenal guidance that I have experienced on an almost daily basis during a particular period of about ten years. I believe that everyone can experience and learn from similar events. My story also includes many mistakes and foolish misinterpretations. I hope that others may learn from these.

Please try to read this story with an open mind or at least an open heart, and focus not so much on the ragged course of my life (though I'm sure many will recognise the same personal troubles that I have known) as on the mysterious events that accompany and sometimes illuminate it. That's why I've taken the risk of writing this.

After all, what does it mean 'to live spiritually'? For me, it is trying to live ethically, trying to be honest, to care for others and try not to cause hurt, to make one's life meaningful and experience it as fully as possible, to grow in understanding, to become all that we are capable of being – and to recognise the inevitability of messing up in all of these things! But, surely, we are *human* insofar as we can hold our hands up, try to make good and try again – living with an open heart, being prepared *to take risks*.

I believe that the experiences described here have extraordinary implications for our understanding of the mind and of what it is to be a human being.

May you be blessed on your journey.

I. Finding the Way

I was bored. The regular Saturday Spiritualist meeting had not been very illuminating, and the gossip afterwards was certainly not very spiritual. I sat with my cup of tea in the front room of the little terraced house in Wolverhampton, wondering exactly how we were supposed to access ‘altered states of consciousness’ let alone develop psychic abilities. It wasn’t happening for me - perhaps I was too critical, or too young. I was in my early twenties, the other half dozen people in the room considerably older. But something quite incredible was about to happen which dramatically changed my attitudes.

This evening, one member of the group had arrived wearing a neck brace and clearly in great discomfort. She was actually a hospital nurse, but none of her colleagues seemed to have been able to alleviate her pain. The higher states of consciousness had been left behind in the back parlour for another week, but I suddenly found myself experiencing a vivid mental picture of placing my hands on her head in a certain way, and I somehow knew that this would help her. I shook my head but it just wouldn’t go away. Even so, I was far too shy to mention it to the others. For one thing, I was the rookie of the group with very little real experience of these things. More importantly, my personal confidence was pretty low since I’d often been subjected to considerable derision from my family – including this very evening as I left home - for my interest in psychic things. But the vision was so insistent that eventually I told the others about it, suggesting that one or two of them who were known as ‘spiritual healers’ might carry it out. They pointedly refused, saying that it was my vision so I had to do it! What did I have to lose, since nobody outside those four walls would ever know about it? So I did what I had ‘seen’, feeling a powerful and peaceful energy flowing through me. Within seconds the lady became very quiet (which was a bonus, since normally she never stopped chattering) and ten minutes later the injury appeared to be cured; she said that the pain had gone, she took off the brace and never wore it again. This was my first experience of healing.

But something far stranger was yet to come.

As I drove home, still feeling quite stunned, I realised that I'd been following the same car for several miles and I noticed its registration number: LUK 853 E. I don't know why but somehow I read this as a Bible reference: the Gospel of Luke, chapter eight, verse fifty-three, and I felt compelled to look it up when I got home. The passage describes the healing of Jairus' daughter, whom everyone had believed to be beyond hope; the onlooking crowd had even laughed scornfully at Jesus.

The synchronicity of these events seemed to suggest that the car number had been a genuine 'omen' encouraging me in my spiritual search. And there was more...

One year later almost exactly the same situation happened again. In the same Spiritualist group, out of nowhere I began to feel a strong sense of premonition (butterflies in the stomach) and shortly afterwards a neighbour called in unexpectedly, asking for healing. I was persuaded to help and again my 'efforts' seemed to be successful.

On the way home later I found myself following a car with registration LUK 946 E which I read as Luke, chapter nine, verses four to six: Jesus commissions his disciples to go out preaching and healing.

I told no-one about these experiences – I was shocked and very self-conscious about it all.

But then the very next day the speaker at the Spiritualist church service I attended chose *exactly the same text* for her reading.

This was particularly remarkable because Spiritualist speakers are free to choose any reading whatsoever, or none, for their theme and indeed they very rarely choose one from the Bible anyway.

What on earth was going on? Was this Divine Guidance? Or meaningless coincidence? Or was I in fact, er, mad?

Φ

As a teacher of mathematics and statistics, I suggest that we should all be well aware of the unimportance of coincidence!

Perhaps we go to a football match and find that each team has a player with the same name, who both score a goal and both later get sent off. Maybe a woman goes to a party and sees another woman wearing an identical dress, and it turns out that they come from the same home town and their husbands do the same job. There are also some famous examples, such as Abraham Lincoln becoming US President in 1860 then being assassinated in the Ford Theatre, while John Kennedy became President in 1960 and was assassinated in a Ford Lincoln car, and so on. These are interesting events to talk about, but they are hardly enlightening and do little for our understanding of life. Coincidence just happens sometimes.

But then there is synchronicity. The sort of events I experienced are literally shocking. Their probability is unimaginable, and they held a *personal meaningfulness* that directly affected the future course of my life.

Well, I simply do not know if there is actually any purpose to our lives. Personally I just want my life here and now to be as worthwhile as possible because if nothing else this is a way to be at peace. But something very strange and disturbing had entered my experience, and how was I to deal with it?

There is nowadays a plethora of well intentioned gurus prepared to tell us 'the true meaning of life' and 'the nature of the soul' (and thus, by implication, how we should live); some of this information has even, apparently, come from 'Ascended Masters Of Wisdom'. There are mediums and near-death experiences and past-life recollections and so on, not to mention ancient mystical teachings. Hmmm, but is there any real *evidence*?

Well, we should not just dismiss all these things, surely, for many of the accounts are undoubtedly honest, often humbling and frequently mind-boggling. We certainly don't know everything there is to know about the nature of life. Our knowledge and understanding move on, sometimes hesitantly and sometimes in leaps of inspiration, and yet there is always more... We can see a few thousand stars with the naked eye. With a decent telescope it's millions. With a deep space telescope, many billions. Yet there is even further to go. We do not understand much about energy and even less about consciousness, for example, and these are fundamental to knowing what a human being is. There are so many

phenomena which undoubtedly happen but which we cannot explain, and it will probably always be so. Therefore a certain open-mindedness and humility are a Good Thing.

Equally, however, it is downright silly if not also dangerous to keep a mind so open that it is prepared to swallow whole almost any fashionable, comforting or appealing belief that the latest guru offers, invariably without a shred of down to earth evidence or a critical examination of alternative explanations. Such gullibility robs us of perhaps the most important characteristic of a decent human life, our personal responsibility. We have to make our own minds up, experience life with thoughtfulness and a sense of purpose; yes, of course we must also listen to our teachers (and *anyone* at any moment can be our teacher), but without suspending our reason. We must be ruthless in distinguishing between what we *want* to be true and what *is*.

We wouldn't buy a television from someone without knowing that it worked. Even less, then, should we buy into a spiritual philosophy without evidence at some level that it at least helps us to live better lives. ¹ On the other hand, we don't have to know *how* the TV works before we buy it.

¹ Take the case of survival of death. There can be very few of us who do not desperately long for the knowledge that we shall continue as individual personalities beyond this life, that there are angels and guides to support us, even that we might get another chance on Earth later... This would be the most incredibly comforting knowledge with immense implications for how we live now. And there are some extraordinary mediums who seem to offer evidence of survival (although for every one of these there are a hundred appalling ones plying their vague and mindless trade among the hopeful and broken-hearted).

But what is the quality of even the 'good evidence' that some mediums offer: are there clear and verifiable names, addresses, dates and factual accounts of events which could not possibly be known otherwise? And even when we strip down the accounts to those very few which do seem highly evidential, shouldn't we then consider alternative explanations such as clairvoyance, telepathy or the collective unconscious (for extraordinary as these are in themselves, they don't have the same implications for the nature of the human soul)? Moreover, there are very few of these wonderful accounts compared with the billions and billions of human

Perhaps I was just seeing significance where there was none? Human beings often look for connections in random phenomena (apophenia), or see meaningful images where there are none, such as faces in the clouds (pareidolia).

These are examples of what statisticians call a Type I error, the belief that something significant has occurred when the event is actually by chance. If a fire alarm system fails under test and we replace it because we think it's faulty, when in fact only a fuse had blown, this is a Type I error and we have lost some money. The opposite tendency to believe that nothing significant has occurred, when actually it has, is called a Type II error. If we don't replace the system because we think that probably there was just a blown fuse, when actually there was a serious fault, this is a Type II error and we may lose some lives.

One major problem with this is that the very idea of randomness is alien to us - seeking patterns and meaning is a very sensible thing to do, not least for our survival. If we are walking down a dark lane and mistake a shadow ahead for an attacker, at least we are prepared; Type I errors can be preferable to Type II!

Moreover, finding patterns and meanings can lead to creative leaps in our thinking, and we need such creativity in order to discover the underlying 'laws' of the universe that are hidden behind apparent chaos. Science is itself a deliberate and rational search for order, but that does not mean it always has to be 'logical'; its history is full of discoveries made, despite a lack of hard evidence, through creative and intuitive thought, or by sheer accident, and even through dreams (for example, the DNA double helix, the atomic structure of benzene, penicillin, continental drift...).

My experiences were surely more than just coincidence. To deny them entirely could be a Type II error. But to decide if they had any real meaning would require a healthy balance between scepticism and humility, between the need for evidence and the need

deaths there have been and therefore the billions and billions of souls who presumably would have wanted to communicate with their loved ones left behind and yet have not managed it... Clearly, even if there is a 'spirit world' then communication with it is extremely difficult and highly suspect!

to admit how little we know. And in any case, there are many *different ways of knowing*, just as the artist experiences life very differently to the engineer. The key must be whether our experience seems to work for us, to be important for us, in becoming better human beings. In other words, is there any point to it?!

As you might imagine, from the time of my Bible signs I started deliberately noting what seemed to be significant omens: not just car registrations but also important coincidences such as perhaps hearing a particular song at an appropriate moment or seeing an apposite slogan or name just as I was thinking of some relevant issue... Of course, one could get quite neurotic about this sort of thing: not *every* car number, song or slogan can contain a 'message'. I certainly found that it is all too easy to become obsessive about such experiences, especially when life is troublesome and one needs some tlc. One also needs some self-discipline (although, on the other hand, total scepticism must logically block one's awareness of such events! Nothing can be seen with eyes closed). I decided that only those omens that occurred at special moments or in especially strange circumstances may prove of value. Even so, for a long time, these events didn't make a lot of difference in my life. Until later, when they became much more frequent, regular and powerful. At that point, they started to turn into some kind of 'evidence'... That is one reason for this book being written.

Another reason is to try to show that, by our approach to these things, we can actually change our behaviour and grow spiritually.



So now I'd better put my cards on the table. This is a love story. What I mean is not that it is an account of my love for one particular woman, but of my learning about human love through several relationships. There are those who believe that we come to this life with a pre-ordained or even perhaps personally planned purpose, a set of lessons which our soul needs to experience in order to approach 'enlightenment'. Earthly life is a huge school where we undergo one course after another, one examination after another,

until we have exhausted either our bodies or our capacity to learn. Whatever the truth of this, surely we all recognise if we are honest with ourselves that there are definite things we should try to learn if we want to be more at peace with ourselves and others. This, then, *is* our purpose. I believe that mine is to learn about love.

As a school teacher, I have often invited students to suggest alternative approaches to dealing with a new mathematical problem which they have encountered. The first suggestion is invariably to ignore it and do something else! Many of us do just that quite successfully for long periods in our lives even when we recognise that there is a problem to deal with. But fortunately both life and the mathematics syllabus have a way of presenting us with this same issue again sooner or later. Suppose, then, that we have decided to address it. A sensible idea is to try and relate it to similar problems we have encountered before and to adopt familiar methods. There can be two snags here, the first being that we must have sound knowledge of the facts and methods that we came across earlier. Students of life, no less than students of school mathematics, are notorious for failing to learn as we go along, for making the same mistakes we made before and having to retake our tests.

But even the most conscientious student who has revised continuously and practised thoroughly will inevitably meet the second and crucial snag: sometimes the problem facing us will require knowledge or methods that we simply haven't come across before, and we have to start over with learning something entirely new. This can be incredibly daunting. I have the utmost admiration for those who enter upon such unfamiliar territory with excitement and curious anticipation; it demonstrates a rare strength of character to walk into the unknown and risk failure, knowing that much of one's previous learning will be useless. Sooner or later, this challenge comes to us all.

But I am getting ahead of myself. The first and perhaps most difficult step of all is to identify the problem! I realised quite early in my life that the greatest challenges for me were about security – partly material (anxiety about money and home comfort) but mostly emotional (a need for loyal and loving relationships). I'm sure it's just the same for very many other people. But we all have our own individual circumstances, our unique genes and environment, which

determine our challenges and our individual ways of meeting (or avoiding) them.

I was particularly sensitive to emotional pain, to rejection and the abuse of trust, and especially in relationships with women. I never managed to develop a 'thick skin', nor the sunny philosophical disposition I so admired in others who seemed able to take emotional knocks in their stride. The pain of several pretty extreme experiences was felt deeply. Does any of this sound familiar?

Oddly enough, I didn't become mistrustful but managed to develop an attitude to life that actively sought out new challenges and experiences, for example by changing my career path and by travelling. I became self-reliant and was seen as outwardly confident. I knew 'how things should be done' and I organised things excellently. People thought I was competent and strong. But what had happened, of course, was that inner defensive walls had been built, and limits set as to how much I was able to give and to receive.

This is a huge weakness, a strategy for avoiding the problem! Gradually I realised that I was failing. I was growing and learning, but only in my head. The inner barriers were being pushed back but rarely broken down, and if one set of walls fell over, others were being hastily erected. When my marriage failed in 1995, I knew I had hit the student's crucial snag: I had to learn an entirely new way of being.

But how is that possible?

Leaving aside the idea of 'fate', many of us certainly recognise that there are rhythms and patterns in our experiences. The same challenges keep coming up. We keep responding in the same way to certain situations. The more mindful we are of these, hopefully the better we are able to do things the next time. This is being the 'conscientious student', learning as we go along. For example, it may simply be a matter of realising that "I am behaving just like my father did..." But maybe these patterns are so deep that we can do nothing about them? Should we not just 'accept ourselves for what we are' (and insist that others do the same)?

This is giving up! It is perfectly clear that however entrenched a pattern may be, we *can* still make different choices however hard that may be. You can choose, for example, *not* to react like your parents did. You can choose *not* to accept an opportunity

that has opened up to you, however valuable or exciting it may seem, because you may not feel ready for it or you just feel comfortable as you are. You may be lucky enough to get two different but exciting job offers at the same time. These are all real choices. So because to all intents and purposes we do seem to have free will, *then we do*. We are not determined by fate.

Yes, there may be some pretty powerful forces pushing us in certain directions and there will be times when resistance is downright foolish. Think of it as travelling along a river. There are times when we simply have to go with the flow, mindful of the current and the rocks and the weirs but with little control; yet there will be other times of relative calm and there will be tributaries that we can choose between – we might even be able to divert the flow entirely! Wisdom is about knowing the river. I decided that I had to start learning all over again, and let the river teach me.

I had to try to give up control and accept that I didn't know where to go.

This meant inviting 'higher guidance' and taking my strange experiences more seriously. Being a mathematician and naturally analytical, however, of course I couldn't stop trying to *understand* what was going on. But this had to be balanced with other non-rational ways of knowing and accepting that there may be subtle, paranormal energies at work in our lives. The first step was how to put this new attitude into everyday practice...

It seemed important to try to live quietly, the better able to hear, and as far as possible in harmony with nature. It would also be valuable to adopt a regular spiritual practice, a daily period of quiet inner vision. There would have to be a willingness to experience life as fully as possible, on as many levels of consciousness as possible, *to follow wherever the river led* whatever the pain and discomfort. Education is about personal change and that is never easy. Without wishing to stretch the school analogy too far, and in case all of this sounds horribly serious and gloomy, I want to say right now that:

- yes, life can be a serious and sometimes painful business, and if you want to learn about it the tests do keep coming one after

another and getting harder (like GCSE, then HND or AS and A2 Levels, then university degree, and then it *really* starts);

- but the rewards are literally wonderful too, from realising how very strange, powerful and clever the human mind is to feeling the magical beauty of spiritual experience and connecting deeply with other people. School students often seem to think that life cannot be worth living after about thirty years of age... I have news: the most joyful experiences of my life came in my late forties and beyond.



And so I made the deliberate decision to keep a careful record of my journey, and try to understand the path. There were three kinds of personal paranormal experiences that I learned from: readings of the I Ching oracle, my dreams, and of course the sort of signs and omens I described earlier. Many of these will be described in this account and labelled IC, D, and S.

Here are some examples showing why I think these things to be so important.

THE I CHING

The Book of Changes is of ancient Chinese origin; originally mainly a set of oracles, it developed into its present form of ethical guidance about three thousand years ago. Its central theme is that all life undergoes continuous change and transformation according to natural rhythms and cycles. If we can understand these, it helps us to make wiser choices in life.

When we consult the book about some vexing question, we are directed to one of sixty-four 'hexagrams' (six-line patterns). Each one has a general commentary describing the significance in human circumstances of a certain kind of situation. (More information about how to use the book is given in Appendix A.) Nobody knows quite how it could be that this description invariably closely matches the question posed; presumably it is some kind of psychokinesis. The reading will usually draw our attention to specific lines of the pattern, and associated with each of these is a more detailed

description of the forces at work in our individual circumstances. These are the factors undergoing change or movement and the reading will offer some ethical advice here as to how to deal with the issue. It is always assumed, though, that we have entirely free will in understanding and responding to this. The final step in the consultation is to look at the new hexagram that will result when these 'moving lines' have eventually changed their nature; this resulting reading then describes the likely outcome if we heed (or do not heed!) the advice.

So, yes, the I Ching *is* a form of oracle but it is *not* an instrument of 'fortune telling' - its purpose is to help us understand the true nature of the situations we find ourselves in so that we can develop a spiritual attitude in our approach to them. The fact that this book is still in continuous and widespread use (the oldest book in continuous publication in history) is testimony to the accuracy and helpfulness that countless people ascribe to it, even if we haven't the faintest idea how it works...

I was very fortunate to be introduced to it in September 1982, through a mutual friend, by a serious China scholar who taught me its underlying philosophy. He also taught me, in no uncertain terms, the serious attitude of mind required for its use! This is not a simple tool of prediction. It demands a mindful and indeed reverent attitude towards the important developments in our lives. If we consult it on frivolous matters, the response will be dismissive! Its language and symbolism are not easy to understand (although at times its words are just astonishingly clear and apposite). Therefore there have been several translations in recent years that offer alternative interpretations with varying levels of sophistication, some very down-to-earth and simplistic. I have tried some of these but always go back to what many others agree is the truest rendering of the spirit of the original, by Richard Wilhelm. I approach each reading as if it were a meeting with a spiritual guide, calming my mind, focusing on my question, preparing the room to shut out the distractions of the everyday world and approaching the event with a prayer for 'higher' guidance.

A few weeks after my introduction to the book came my first proper opportunity to use it. I had been considering a new teaching job, a promotion with more money. It seemed like a good

career move and I was offered the job after an interview, but before making my final decision I wanted to consult the book.

IC **3rd November 1982: “Will my change of job be successful?”**

– x – **This refers to Hexagram 62: “Preponderance of the Small.”**

– – **The Judgement, or general commentary, describes a situation of struggle and of achievement in small things only, with a need for a conscientious and modest attitude.**

– o –

– o –

– –

– x –

Not very auspicious!

It is fairly unusual to find four ‘moving lines’ (suggesting much change) in a reading. Counting from the bottom, the first is a ‘moving yin’ line, the third and fourth are ‘moving yang’ lines and there is another ‘moving yin’ at the top. Looking at the interpretations of these, there were references to “misfortune”, a danger of “attack or injury”, a need for “great determination” and the likelihood of “disaster if one presses on too forcefully or too far”.

This was all pretty unequivocal. Yet the book was *not*, as it were, telling me that I should not take the job – for we always have a choice – rather, that the experience was likely to be tough. When one proceeds with the reading and allows the moving lines to change (so the first and top lines becomes ‘yang’ while the third and fourth become ‘yin’), a new hexagram results which represents the likely outcome of the situation. Here, it is Hexagram 27: “Nourishment”. This describes personal and spiritual growth resulting from the experience.

So what should I do? I had felt optimistic about this opportunity, really wanted to leave my present post where I was frustrated, badly needed the extra money and had no ‘evidence’ to support the I Ching’s verdict. And after all this was my first reading so I might have got it wrong anyway... I delayed my decision and two days later asked a further but rather different question.

IC 5th November 1982: “Is it God’s will that I should go ahead with the new job?” (Meaning, would this be the right course from a spiritual point of view?)

This time the answer was Hexagram 35: “Progress”, with the second and top lines moving. The interpretation of this was much more encouraging, describing “reward and advance” for one who “adopts a right and modest attitude despite sorrows”. Further, “deserved happiness” would be received through the assistance of “a woman in authority”; and provided that one remained “determined but not forceful” the result would be Hexagram 40: “Release”. So I was still being promised a hard time but, if I could deal with it properly, it would be rewarding.

I accepted the challenge and found myself embarked upon twenty months of torment and stress! It turned out to be an appalling school and I was given the lowest achieving and most ill-disciplined classes, with virtually no support from a weak management. There was indeed “misfortune” in the form of personal abuse, theft and vandalism of my property, and there was even “attack” in the form of an assault on me by a pupil. There were times when I almost did “go too far and too forcefully” in my determination to uphold my values... But I held on and just about kept control; moreover, *I really learned how to teach* and I certainly learned a lot about people. My character was strengthened, my understanding of the world advanced. I also wrote two books of mathematics material for my disaffected pupils (since the school had virtually no text books) and these were accepted for publication by the first company I approached, whose commissioning editor turned out indeed to be a woman. This gave me great satisfaction and happiness especially in such difficult circumstances. Then finally I seized an opportunity to change jobs again and was ‘released’ to an excellent school where I stayed for more than twenty-five years.

So the I Ching proved astoundingly accurate in this instance, a book written thousands of years ago even identifying literal events that I would experience as well as interpreting their personal meaning for my development. It doesn’t always work so well. Sometimes the book’s answers, while clearly apposite, are extremely

difficult to understand or seem too vague to be useful. Maybe this is due to the reader's 'wrong state of mind', to poor preparation or to there being too much inner confusion or anxiety. I don't think anybody knows how it works or why it sometimes doesn't. Carl Jung, who wrote the introduction for the Wilhelm translation, said that given another lifetime he would devote the whole of it to studying the I Ching!

It seems to be, rather like dreams perhaps, a means of reaching into an inner stream of consciousness and reading its patterns (like dipping a hand into the river and feeling the current). Sometimes the waters are pure and clear, sometimes muddy. It shows us that the future is not determined, but that there may be more or less strong probabilities in how it will turn out; these outcomes depend upon our choices and, significantly, our attitudes. The book is certainly hot on attitude, much of its ethical advice being in the form of how 'the superior man' should respond to the situations it describes. Naturally, none of us can claim to be him, for however high our ideals we fall short of them time and time again. But the determined soul who keeps trying will find a wonderful personal relationship developing with this extraordinary book, almost as if indeed it is the voice of a wise and spiritual master. One just *knows* when the answer is clear and trustworthy. And if the message isn't clear, that's far more likely to be due to our poor understanding than to a deficiency of wisdom in our teacher.

DREAMS

In 1994 my school had two minibuses, one older but in better condition than the other, and I learned that they were to be sold off at a nominal price to make way for new ones. I made the Bursar a token offer of £100 for the older bus, intending to convert it into a campervan for holidays; the offer was accepted and we shook hands on the deal. On the 10th of April I did an I Ching reading about my project: the result described "**distrustful people**" and "**difficulties**" leading to "**grief**" and "**shock**". I was getting a warning but I really couldn't understand or believe it; so I tried again but the new reading also described "**others interfering with one's**

good intentions” and the matter being closed in “a period of seven”.

D That same night I dreamed that I was returning home from abroad in a hired car. Near a crossroads I saw someone selling horses, a mare and a foal. I switched the hazard lights on and stopped to talk to the man, offering to buy the mare for £450. Still, I didn't feel sure about the deal. While I was deciding, I saw the police take my car away so I left to try and retrieve it without making the purchase. The dream ended with the police returning my car to me.

My interpretation ran like this: being abroad and hiring a car suggested a holiday time, while the crossroads and the hazard lights clearly indicated a decision to be made and perhaps danger; selling horses (that is, ‘horse trading’) is a cultural symbol of dishonesty; my car being taken away obviously meant that my progress or plans would be damaged, though without too much harm done since the car was later returned. I didn't know what to make of the other details and, perhaps stupidly, I didn't even connect the dream to the I Ching reading immediately – well, I trusted the Bursar and had no *reason* to believe anything was amiss in that situation.

Almost exactly seven weeks later on the 26th of May, the Bursar reneged on his promise, claimed that we'd never even discussed the idea let alone shaken hands on it, and put the minibus up for secret auction (I have never found out why). It was eventually sold to a colleague of mine – I had thought he was a friend and had discussed my plans with him – for £450. It now became clear that the two horses in the dream represented the minibuses (one older than the other) and it may be worth recording that the Bursar's name was clearly hinted at in the dream!

What is so remarkable about this dream is that it is not some vague premonition that something might go wrong with the deal, as if perhaps I'd picked up the man's body language and had had inner doubts.

No, this was an actual precognition of factual details, which nobody knew at that time.

Although there has been much excellent research and many interesting theories put forward, still nobody fully understands much about dreams, even about why we have them let alone what they mean. I started to become fascinated by mine as a child and gradually taught myself to be able to remember and record many of them. Typically I will wake up immediately after what seems to be a 'significant' dream and use a small tape recorder kept at the side of my bed to keep an account of it, which I will write up and study the next day. Over the years, my dreaming has become more and more often lucid, that is to say I am aware of dreaming while it is going on rather like watching a film (although, curiously, I am aware of being a character in the film at the same time). Therefore I am also able to study and begin to interpret the dream while it progresses. One can develop an attitude of detachment towards one's own mental events, just as for example we may be totally involved in playing a game and yet at the same time know that it is a game.

So while I cannot claim to be an expert on dreams, I can offer a few observations from my fifty years or so study of them... There are clearly several types. Some are pretty chaotic and involve recent events and impressions perhaps from the previous day or something we have seen on television; it is as if the brain is scanning all the information to decide what is important and worth remembering. I call these **Filing Dreams**. Other dreams seem to recall old memories, perhaps integrating past experiences with more recent events, or checking through old files to assess their continued usefulness so that they can then be discarded or stored in the attic to make room in our consciousness for new learning. These could be called **Spring Cleaning Dreams**. We all do exactly these sorts of things in our everyday lives with the masses of correspondence and bills and information leaflets, brochures and magazines that come our way.

But then there is another kind of dream which is more coherent, often developing some kind of episodic story and usually riddled with strange or archetypal symbolism; irrational things may be happening, the scenes and characters may change suddenly, yet the whole experience hangs together in a way that insists we take notice. Such a dream can seem to be quite long and can have a powerful effect on us. It seems as if the unconscious mind is trying

to bring to our attention some important information which we cannot - or will not - grasp by normal conscious thought. Maybe it is something that we ought to know but have failed to recognise in our daily lives because of lack of evidence or maybe because we're afraid of what it means and the consequences it might have.

This kind of dream can be one of (at least) two kinds. The first arises from our deep-rooted anxieties or desires that have been suppressed – a **Therapy Dream**. The other is a dip into the stream of consciousness in order to make some sense of the underlying patterns in our lives (getting to know the river) – this might be a **Clairvoyant Dream**. It can be extremely difficult to distinguish between these two and, in any case, in my experience any one dream may be a mixture of all the above!²

² For example, if a dream seems to suggest that a significant event may occur in the future, is this actually what is going to happen, or may happen, or just what I want to happen? And if it is difficult to know what *type* of dream one has experienced, it can be even more of a challenge to understand its meaning. There are many psychological approaches. Most people who have studied the field recognise that there are certain archetypal symbols ('running upstairs' represents an improvement, a 'flash of light' means the solution to a problem). I started by using a respected 'dictionary of symbolism' that helped me to become familiar with the general language of the unconscious mind. But then many symbols are entirely personal and will mean different things to different people: for many, a dream of being 'at school' may suggest there is something important to be learned, whereas for a teacher, for whom school is an everyday experience, it could represent something entirely different. I have come to recognise that for me this symbol refers to my emotional relationships. However, there is an amusing snag here: once we think we have understood a certain symbol, in future our minds may seek out an entirely different symbol with which to convey similar information because, after all, it is trying to tell us something which we do *not* know rationally! So it is only through personal experience, study and self-awareness over a period of time that each of us gradually learns what our minds are telling us. Ultimately, although there may be common recognisable scenarios, we are the only ones who can really interpret the detail of our own dreams. Yet for all the difficulties this is surely one of the most fascinating of phenomena in human experience.

In case you are thinking that this is all too problematic, subjective or even pointless, I have to say that my dreams have often been unbelievably helpful to me in understanding how real life situations are developing on inner and as yet hidden levels. *Sometimes, as above, they actually foretell the future.*

But does the example I've given suggest that the future is in fact determined? Not at all. I have already said that we have plenty of experience of making real choices which lead to very different outcomes. Rather, my minibus dream seems to have been nothing less than time travel!

Occasionally, then, in dreams as with the I Ching, perhaps we can see the future with some clarity. But how can we tell when we have? It can only be a personal judgement based on our previous experience and on the coherence and impact of the dream or reading. And, yes, sometimes we're bound to make mistakes...

SIGNS

I described earlier my first experience of being guided by signs or omens. But what do these things really mean and where on earth do they come from? If they do have meaning, then they are some kind of 'psychic signposts' which indicate that one is on the right (or perhaps the wrong) path. For me, they are usually encouraging or reassuring, strengthening my resolve when life is hard. Sometimes they seem to warn me that my thinking about a particular matter is misguided. At other times they can even be predictive and are followed within a short time by some appropriate event.

If you haven't already stopped reading on the grounds that this account is plain ludicrous, I promise that you will simply not believe some of the signs that I will describe later... And there are moments when the circumstances, the meaningfulness and the sheer creativity of a certain synchronicity are so astonishing that *surely* it must have been deliberately and cleverly engineered by some intelligent force beyond me...

The existence of guiding spirits or 'guardian angels' sometimes seems the simplest and most obvious explanation. Yet it

is one that I continue to resist despite my earlier interest in Spiritualism. Of course, like very many people I *want* to believe it; but as I have said earlier, there are too many profound implications, not to mention possible alternative explanations, even if some of those are equally outlandish. So I am *not* going to propose spirit worlds as The Truth. I prefer to think that our minds can somehow access an alternative or inner consciousness, where the underlying energies and patterns of our lives can be perceived more clearly than in the rush and noise of the everyday world. I therefore apologise publicly now to my spirit guides for denying and often ignoring them if indeed they are working so hard and so brilliantly to help me...

Many others have spoken or written about similar synchronous phenomena (although even Carl Jung seems to have missed car registration plates!) There is nothing special about my experience except perhaps that I have kept a careful record of hundreds of such instances. I am sure that *everyone* can develop awareness of this inner consciousness and see the signposts – everyone has experienced a really strange coincidence - just as everyone can record and study their dreams and everyone can read and learn to interpret the I Ching.

***What I am going to describe now, everyone can experience.
There are many ways of 'knowing'. All it takes is an open
mind, an honest heart and a passionate desire to live a
meaningful life.***



II. *The New Path*

My second long-term relationship was hitting the rocks in ways frighteningly similar to the first. Situations were different of course, but I could recognise some patterns now. Sure, I had grown over the years and learned a lot, I was coping better than before with some of life's frustrations and challenges – but I was still hitting the barriers. I wasn't selfless enough to accept the things that were happening; it was making me ill and I just didn't know where to turn.

We tried psychotherapy but it didn't seem to be getting us anywhere and the pain was still intense. However, at the end of 1993 I experienced a period of what I can only call Grace, a kind of higher awareness of love that helped me somehow to transcend the problems, to believe there was light at the end of the tunnel...

Now, I'm not a great fan of astrology but Patrick Walker did often seem to have an unusual sensitivity and perception. In January 1994 his reading for my sign said:

S “You are about to enter a period of change, excitement and adventure... encouraging you to seek new routes on to the path of greater enlightenment. However, nothing is ever gained without a certain amount of sacrifice... (It is) time to recognise that you are not chained to any destiny other than one of your own making.”

But if there is no fixed destiny, how could he suggest that my life was about to change? Perhaps this sort of 'forecast' reinforces what I had come to believe through more than ten years experience of the I Ching: there are patterns and rhythms in our lives, and times when we are presented with opportunities and challenges – but we always have a choice whether we accept these and how we approach them. One thing is pretty certain: change is often painful! Well, I chose to try the transcending route and asked my partner to marry me (we had lived together for nearly nine years).

IC 1st January 1994: “How will this year develop for me?”

Hexagram 54 is “The Marrying Maiden”. The moving lines described one who is disappointed in love and lonely but staying loyal; marriage passes one by, but later one is rewarded. The eventual outcome is Hexagram 24: “Return (or, Turning Point)”.

Like the previous example given of I Ching readings, this was not encouraging! But I chose to press on with my course and we married in March. Just five days later:

D 22nd March, 1994. I am driving home on the A41, going too fast. I know there’s going to be an accident – others will crash into me and I will be killed.

That particular road has always been significant for me – I have lived near it many times and travel on it regularly, so it has come to represent ‘the course of my life’. The dream was an unequivocal warning of danger and serious upsets ahead!

And by the end of the next month I had to recognise that the relationship had collapsed irretrievably. All the old problems had returned with a vengeance and my wife seemed disinterested in addressing them with me; there were family and financial crises, great stress in my career, and vandalism was just one of the signs of general chaos and breakdown of life... Car registration ‘signs’ referred to **betrayal**, there were dreams about **attack** and an I Ching reading spoke of “**Dissolution**”³. I felt emasculated, lonely and afraid; despite the ceremony, marriage was indeed ‘passing by’. The light at the end of the tunnel was turning out to be a false dawn. Maybe it had been a glimpse of the future, of what could be, and after all the I Ching also described ‘reward’ and a ‘turning point’. But right then everything was very dark and I was on my own.

My life became almost intolerably difficult now. I was trying to keep home and family and job together, but suffering severe stress illness that had me hospitalised more than once. The dreams

³ You may be glad to know that I shall not list every sign, dream or reading in this account – there are thousands, but they *are* all documented.

kept coming. A particular theme recurred for more than nine months because I just wouldn't accept the truth of what it seemed to be telling me, that my wife would betray me. Eventually, as if in exasperation, my mind presented it so that the message was perfectly obvious.

D 22nd January 1995: I am at home in the lounge, on my knees with a severe wound in my abdomen caused by a knife attack. I am aware that elsewhere in the flat several people are painting the walls and doors white and I can feel their hostility as I stagger out to watch. There are three of them, people I know. All my decoration work is being whitewashed over, as if to wipe me out. Then in the kitchen I come face to face with another male teacher I know, sitting there calmly as if it is his home. I ask him what's happening and as he's about to tell me I wake up, feeling a powerful and painful energy.

Even now I couldn't really believe it (or didn't want to) and in fact it was almost exactly another year before it was publicly admitted that this man in the kitchen was indeed my wife's lover. (And a little later, he actually did move into that flat as his home!) Meanwhile, other dreams continued to warn me of forthcoming attacks, of separation, and of legal and financial problems.

Yet throughout all of this there had also been intimations of a happier future.

D 18th August 1994: I dreamed that I was the character Nigel in The Archers radio programme (one of my favourites), in a very good mood and talking to his fiancée. Then I had to go somewhere important, and crossed the road at a major junction; it was foggy and I was being very cautious, waiting for the lights to change. I crossed safely and continued north, arriving at an airport. There were two groups of four people there and someone was collecting our passports. All was well.

I have to admit that at the time I was still immersed in personal confusion, and the dream made little sense at all except for being vaguely optimistic. It probably meant something for my future

because the character had my name. What was at least clear was that things would become difficult (fog) and I was going to have to make a major decision (the junction); I would have to be very careful and wait for 'the right time' (the lights). But I was also reassured that I was on the right path, because I 'crossed over' and went north (which is an archetypal symbol for 'the right direction'); this would lead to a new and happier journey (the airport, having a passport) when perhaps life would 'take off'...

Yet what is so extraordinary is the detail which I didn't - and couldn't - understand then. I do know that numbers in my dreams usually represent time periods, and over the next few years a double four or an eight featured frequently. It would later turn out that four years and eight years from the decisive time of changing direction would be critical points (which, incidentally, illustrates how my dreams often see a long time into the future). Even less could I know that a relationship with a woman with the same name as an Archer's character would be the most important experience of the first four year period!

About two weeks later another dream filled in some details.

D 30th August 1994: I was a prisoner but had been allowed out of jail on a sixty-mile cycle ride, so I went to visit the home where I spent much of my childhood. I met my parents there; it was my father's sixtieth birthday and he looked very frail. They begged me to stay with them but I said I must 'do the right thing' and go back. "Still," I said, "I'll be free in one year." This was repeated. I rode on into Uplands Avenue and along to the park where I waited to be collected. It was five to six.

Yes, I felt like a prisoner in my marriage at that time and I wanted some sort of comfort (home, parents - though my father had at this time been dead for nearly two years). Perhaps I wanted an escape. But my mind was impressing on me here that I must act honourably, while somehow I also knew that there would be a release and improvement (Uplands). I had to recognise that there was a natural 'cycle' involved (a nice example of the amusing puns that often turn up in dream language). This seemed to be reinforced

by the repeated number sixty which is a cycle of the clock too. The time of five to six suggests one twelfth of a clock cycle; my wife and I had recently passed the twelfth anniversary of our meeting. So this again indicated to me 'a one-year period'. Throughout, the number six seemed especially important.

In the event, some ten months later my marriage would finally end in separation. And almost exactly one year after this dream, in early September 1995, I would meet Eve. But moreover, five years or sixty months after that, and precisely six years after the dream, another even more significant relationship would start... I'm sure you are now beginning to realise why I have come to trust my dreams.

January 1995 was perhaps my lowest point.

IC I read the I Ching for the year ahead and was hardly surprised to receive Hexagram 6: "Conflict", which speaks of danger and 'dispute over possessions'. Yet it also foretold a 'significant meeting' later and the resulting Hexagram was number 44, "Coming to Meet", echoing my airport dream.

This unhappy period came to a head, perversely, on my birthday that year and the decision to divorce was made the next day. The night before, I had had one of my strangest ever dreams, one that I hardly understood at all at the time but which in retrospect was showing me exactly where the decision would lead.

D 17th June 1995: I filled my car with petrol at a garage on the A41 at Apex Corner, paying with two £2 notes and one £1 note. The cashier gave me two pennies change, one of them bent, and also a lottery scratch card. He showed me what to do with it since I didn't know – you win if the panels reveal pictures of women, which mine did. They also revealed the numbers 34, 35, 36 and 5. The cashier became very excited and said that the ticket was worth a lot.

This was clearly telling me something about my personal progress (fuel for my car, the A41 again) and especially my emotional life (the women). And strangely, given my deep

unhappiness at the time, there seemed to be a promise of good fortune (winning the lottery), maybe even some kind of ultimate happiness (Apex). Now consider the numbers here: I had had two marriages, and in the course of establishing my new path in life there were going to be two transformative relationships and one lesser one. One of these would involve dishonesty (bent coin) – in fact, Eve left exactly thirty-four months later. The number five was suggested twice – I met Alice exactly five years after the dream. And Apex Corner was on the route between our two homes.

Now, I realise that I could be accused of interpretation by hindsight. But the facts I have described are *true*. And the correspondence between them, the dreams and the I Ching readings, is startling. The inescapable conclusion is that I was somehow reading a future that could not possibly have been known at the time – there was just no evidence of it and the people involved had not even been met. This last dream cannot have been simply wishful thinking, and nor can the awareness of the dream possibly have brought about the subsequent events.

***Isn't it enormously comforting to realise that in our darkest hours we can still see new light ahead?
As the I Ching teaches, life is change.***



I could just not have imagined the change that was going on all around me now. I had really wanted my relationship and family to work and believed in a new way for us; marriage had been a solemn and holy intention and I now felt wretched for breaking the vows. But equally there was nothing I could do about it anymore, as if I was being carried along on the river's torrents despite myself and it was all I could do to keep my head down and somehow trust that the flow was taking me where I needed to go – to places where I could learn what I had to learn. Was this really what I wanted? On the thirteenth anniversary of my first dream about my wife, before I had met her, I asked the book whether continuing the divorce action was the right thing to do.

IC 22nd July 1995: the response was the Hexagram “Darkening of the Light”, a very descriptive name. It talked of struggling to create order in one’s life but also of eventual ‘victory’ after some considerable time. Again the result was “Return (Turning Point)”, just as it had been at the beginning of 1994 when I was making the decision to marry...

Now, it is commonly accepted wisdom that when one important relationship has just ended is exactly the wrong time to begin another. But there was absolutely nothing I could do about it. It was as if the universe was saying to me: “Right, that’s one chapter of your life over with and you said you wanted to learn new stuff and grow spiritually, so here’s your next lesson.” I met Eve in September and it was simply a powerful attraction that couldn’t be ignored, as if we already knew each other and had to be together. Apart from anything else, the relationship brought me much comfort and happiness during the terrible months ahead of legal battles, financial and emotional threats, while I also tried to set up a new home. I don’t know how I would have coped without her support. As time passed, naturally I wondered whether we might have a future together although I was also quite disturbed about our circumstances – although estranged from her husband, she was still married. This ethical dilemma soon gave rise to an important dream, again showing me the road ahead.

D 16th November 1995: I had been invited to help coach a badminton class at a sports centre on a certain road, but the other coach with me was lazy and rude, ignoring me. I couldn’t find the light switches, became angry, and left the class, walking home in the dark. But then I went to an office where I talked to a receptionist about buying a new car; she offered to take my old car and give me £2000 off. I felt there was something not quite genuine about this offer. The woman was tall and slim with long hair and a strong attraction developed between us. Later I moved into a new house and this woman arrived as I was unpacking boxes.

Now, Eve worked at a sports centre and lived on that particular road, so the dream was telling me something about her. And although I did in fact coach badminton I have come to recognise this symbol as representing ‘decisions’ in my dreams. I was indeed trying to decide what was right in this situation, and my mind was apparently warning me that she would turn away and leave me ‘in darkness’. Maybe I already suspected this deep down? But of course what I couldn’t possibly know was that in the year 2000 would begin a second important relationship (‘exchanging my car for a new one!’) – this would be Alice, who was indeed tall and slim and with long hair. Thus I would find ‘a new home’ for a while, although again there might be something not quite right about it.

The dream confirmed my feeling that the relationship with Eve wasn’t ‘right’, or at least that she was not the partner I needed in the long term, however lovely she was. This was not the way to reach the light. I wrote all this down at the time – and promptly ignored it. Well, the attraction between us and my need for her comfort were simply too strong, and men can be very weak...

As if I needed telling, the Debbie Frank horoscope for me at the beginning of 1996 was straight to the point.

S A new era had begun for me last autumn, in which relationships would affect me “as never before”. I would have “the opportunity to learn a new way of relating to others”, and would become more influenced by my emotions.

And how! This was after all what I had intuitively known I needed, but that hardly prepared me for what was to come – my rational and analytical mind was going to be torn apart and rebuilt over the next few years. I had glanced at this horoscope with a vague interest when it was published because it happened to be in the newspaper I was reading, but kept it because it contained several intriguing predictions for the year which seemed very relevant to my circumstances. One by one they proved astonishingly accurate and right on cue, in domestic, financial and health matters. I know enough about the theory of astrology to dismiss the normally superficial readings in newspapers, but sometimes a particular

individual astrologer just seems somehow to be getting things right. We can only judge on our own evidence.

For me at least, this sort of reading and the way events were beginning to turn out were strong evidence that I had indeed made the right decisions in changing the pattern of my life. Shortly, another incredible and wonderful sign would confirm it. Many of the awful legal troubles began to end, in quite surprising circumstances, as Easter approached. Against the odds (even my solicitor had advised me against this course), I won the final appeal hearing in court on the 9th of April.

S I returned to my car after the hearing in a state of shock, elation and exhaustion. It was all over at last. As I began to drive home, I turned on the tape machine intending to listen to a play recorded earlier from the radio. But somehow I must have made a mistake in the recording and the radio had been tuned to the wrong channel. Instead of a play, I found myself hearing the Byrds' song 'Turn, Turn, Turn': "to everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven".

This was so humbling that tears began pouring down my face and I had to park the car until I recovered. Who, or what, had arranged that for me?

By the end of summer, life was much more peaceful in most respects. But my emotional state was far from steady. Undeniably, I loved Eve and when we were together we were very happy. But we weren't together very often, mainly because of her personal circumstances, which she seemed unable to change; I still felt uneasy about the ethical problem and now frustrated about the relationship too. Further dreams warned that she might turn away from me while the I Ching told me that **"little can be achieved"**; enigmatically, however, it also said that **"inner forces of Fate"** were at work and that I should be patient...

But I was in a hurry for security and, new to the path, I was spiritually immature. I understood neither the point of the lesson that life was offering me nor how much personal rebuilding was still necessary. So I ignored the advice and began to consider the

possibility of other relationships. Yes, the I Ching did warn me against this but I ignored it again, refusing to believe in any sort of 'Fate'; surely we must make our own decisions? Hmm, yes, and our own mistakes. One or two fledgling relationships quickly came to nothing because my heart just wasn't in them. Then, as one did seem to be developing further, I suddenly realised too late that I was betraying Eve. It doesn't matter whether she was being 'fair' to me or not; she had her own path, her own lessons and her own way of facing up to them, and I should have accepted that. Instead, I hurt her and undermined whatever growing confidence in me and in the possibility of change she may have felt. I was deeply sorry, and it was a savage lesson for which I would pay dearly later.

***Now I started to learn. One who has consciously embarked on a spiritual path has a fundamental responsibility to, well, try to be spiritual!
Absolute integrity in every way is a basic requirement.***

Whatever the source of guidance is, it is wonderfully merciful. Not only did Eve forgive me, so that we might continue with our lessons, my dreams now reminded me of the overall picture.

D 6th August 1996: I was taking a school team to play in Norwich and went on ahead, discovering that due to a double booking we had to change to a different stadium. Then I found myself with the school Headmaster discussing exam results. They were good; two of my pupils had had their papers remarked and their grades were improved from E to A.

Now, Norwich represents something very special for me, although I had only been there once, on a day trip about five years before. Quite by chance, in a small side street there I had found an object of great personal significance. After I began to use the I Ching I had several dreams about searching for a 'ting', which is an ancient Chinese pot representing sacrifice and nourishment. It had begun to assume the proportions of a Holy Grail for me! But despite having several Chinese friends and searching the Chinese areas of

London I hadn't been able to find one before. So going to Norwich signifies the achievement of a spiritual purpose for me. The dream suggested that this would involve a change in my plans or direction (a different stadium) and that there would be a change. E (Eve) would give way to A. Remember, this was still some four years before meeting Alice. Then as if to make sure I got the message, another dream two days later went even further.

D 8th August 1996: I was taking my son for his first day at secondary school and collecting his uniform in an area of my home town Wolverhampton (by now I was living in London) called Ash. It cost £700 less staff discount of 10%. Then I had to follow a new road system, almost got stuck in a dead end, but finally found my way.

I assumed that my son here represented me making a new start at a 'higher level'; and if school represents relationships for me, then I was looking ahead to a 'second' important encounter. In the event, there was indeed another short relationship after Eve, but it didn't lead anywhere (a dead end). Two other details of the dream meant nothing to me then but were to prove *astonishingly precognitive*. First the numbers: 700 less 10% is 630 – Eve left me exactly 633 days after this dream. (Sorry, yes, analysing numbers is just something I do.) Secondly, Alice's initial is of course A, which was prominent in both dreams this week.

Meanwhile back in the real world, little changed over the next year or so. Career difficulties began to ease and I was giving a lot of attention to my son, our new home and especially the garden – this really became an important metaphor for my new life as I gradually transformed it from a mixture of bare patches and overgrown wilderness to a lovely place of shape, contour, colour and growth where I found great peace. There were still irritations there (ants nests!) and I couldn't do all that I wanted to because of lack of money, but I was learning that transformation takes time...

My relationship with Eve also continued much as before, a strange mixture of insecurity and joy, of disquiet as her situation didn't change yet happy bewilderment as I realised that *I was changing*. For all the difficulties, she is a lovely and warm spirit whose

presence was starting to melt my inner barriers, whose *feeling* was overcoming my way of *thinking*. Life was teaching me to **accept the unreasonable, tolerate the unacceptable, and have patience with the irrational** (in which being a mathematician certainly helped) – *all because the most important experience in human life is love*. For the first time, and on a daily basis, I was living from the heart. And I was beginning – just beginning – to learn about unconditional love. Learning to expect nothing. To put someone else's needs and difficulties before my own. The false dawn of four years earlier was now breaking.

Φ

But storm clouds were also gathering in the inner worlds and my unconscious mind saw them. In the second half of 1997 I dreamed of **my own death, of things 'being hidden' and of the loss of a key** (which was my personal symbol for Eve then). The I Ching described **a complete change ahead, a rivalry, a time of conflict and of 'modesty', meaning humility**. Unsurprisingly I became increasingly uneasy and knew there was going to be trouble...

You may think that I had already received considerable warnings – and indeed reassurances – of how this path would unfold, so perhaps I should have been more calm. But for one thing, many of the interpretations I have given could only have been made with hindsight and in several ways I was still an infant in this particular place of learning; I hadn't yet learned fully to trust the phenomenal accuracy of my guidance, or even to recognise clearly what *was* guidance. For another thing, when we are fully involved in actually living life we become caught up in all its events and feelings and thoughts so that it's extremely difficult to maintain any sort of 'detached overview'. Or maybe that's just me! In any case, it would certainly be a great problem over the next few years yet, my natural impatience and scepticism constantly doubting the teaching in the face of the sometimes horrible evidence of the real world. So in November 1997 I really messed up.

D 24th November 1997: a short but immensely powerful dream. I saw clearly the numbers 200 and 1/6. Then I was with an A Level student named Tim Rivers outside the entrance of a sports centre I know well. I was going to go in here for a shower while my new, large house was being redecorated.

Some of the symbolism here is archetypal: a river represents the rhythm of life, especially of the emotions, so it seems that my life was being cleansed (shower) and renewed (redcoration) perhaps at an 'advanced level' (large house). The numbers puzzled me for ages although I knew they represented time, as does 'Tim' of course; was I again looking forward to the year 2000 and the 'sixth' month as previous dreams had suggested? Spot on.

But events rapidly overtook these thoughts as just a few days later, in this very sports centre, I met an attractive young woman, Nell; and in my very unsettled state of mind – there had been further upsets with Eve recently – this was enough to provoke a split in our relationship. The reality of this was so dreadfully painful for us both, however, that we were back together within three weeks. How very forgiving she was. But the writing was now on the wall as I had let her down for the second time because of my impatience for security. A week later I dreamed of someone close to me being a murderer (was this in fact me?) and my New Year I Ching reading of 5th January 1998 described the year ahead as being one of **“Revolution”**.

Surely not by coincidence, I decided at about this time to learn Reiki healing. I have described how I was involved for a while with spiritual healing in my youth but life had taken other directions and I hadn't pursued it (partly because I was afraid of my own ego getting in the way). Now I really felt that I wanted to be involved in this area again. I thought, of course, that I would be doing it in order to help others; but as things turned out I was going to need it pretty soon just for myself! An odd dream at the end of December 1997 had referred to a healing course and suggested an unfamiliar name that I recognised a week or so later when I was looking for a teacher. So I completed Level One of the training in January then Level Two in April 1998 – this detail will prove very significant later.

On the anniversary of my first marriage, another dream pointed the way ahead.

D 27th January 1998: After several frustrations at a restaurant, I left but had difficulty driving properly, and for a while was on the wrong side of the road. Then I got my seatbelt on, cleared my head and settled down, turning at a major junction onto a clear, open road. ‘Oasis’ were playing on the radio and I knew that something important was ‘just 2 m ahead’.

The restaurant scenes show that I am not receiving the nourishment I want. Setting out to find a different way, I make mistakes and have trouble settling down; but I can sense clarity, security and peace (an oasis), and better days ahead. ‘2 m’ seemed to look forward two years to the millennium, or 2000 (again). Then the springtime of 1998, days after my Reiki training and three years after starting out on my new path, heralded in one night two of the most terrifying dreams I have ever had.

D 24th April 1998: I was at my parents’ old house looking out over the garden, although it seemed very much like my own garden. A large and aggressive poodle appeared on a rockery and chased my cat Angie away. I ran to the front of the house and later she returned, frightened but unhurt.

Then I was driving into the grammar school I had attended as a boy. But somebody else was driving out fast and I had to reverse suddenly – my brakes didn’t work properly and I knew I was in great danger. At length I went back into the school grounds and to my office. But everything had been moved around and I wasn’t even sure it was the right place. Moreover, my bicycle, which I’d left locked up, had been vandalised, both wheels and the chain stolen.

I awoke with a heavy and sick feeling, knowing with total clarity that I was going to lose Eve (Angie represented her because I used to call her ‘Angel’), my life hitting the rocks, suffering reverses and being rearranged, a ‘cycle’ ended. Perversely, we seemed to have

been quite happy at this time and I, at least, was really beginning to feel a depth of spiritual love that I hadn't known before. But it all happened one week after the dream. She walked away. She had met someone else. I couldn't blame her.

Well, on one level this was one of those important but eventually broken love affairs, with all its pleasures and sorrows, which so many people experience. Even when they don't work out, we are enriched by them. And I think I always knew that this relationship, albeit that it lasted two and a half years, could not be long term in the real everyday world. We were very different personalities and I was often very unsettled by our circumstances – I had after all looked for alternatives and maybe it was I who unconsciously provoked the end.

But it was much, much more than that. In trying to find my 'new spiritual path', it was essential for me to learn a new way of relating to others and embrace a higher awareness of what love means. This meant literally abandoning my 'self', confronting my own needs and desires and learning to let go of them instead of believing *that someone else could satisfy them*. So I had to meet Eve, had to love her and had to lose her, if I was to grow. The devastation that I felt in 1998 was the inevitable breaking up and cleansing out of the old self. I would eventually emerge with a little more patience and a little more understanding of others' difficulties, not to mention a sound lesson about personal integrity.

But the real reason for telling this story is something quite different. In 1998 I was in quite a bad way for a while. Yet I survived and grew stronger. I can never know how much I owed at this time to the care and support of 'higher spiritual forces' (angels? guides?) but I was certainly aware of somehow being loved and protected. Reiki healing also helped to stabilise me; why had I suddenly decided to learn it just a few months before? Throughout these three years it is undeniable that I had been receiving a stream of 'guidance' (and I have only described a fraction of the experiences), despite my own doubts. It seemed that I was being warned of troubles, reassured of my safety, and even given details of how the path would unfold ahead of me.

*Once we set out on such a journey, there are signposts to
guide the way.*

