

JAMES REDFIELD

#1 *New York Times* BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
The Celestine Prophecy

THE
TWELFTH
INSIGHT

THE HOUR OF DECISION

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INSIGHT

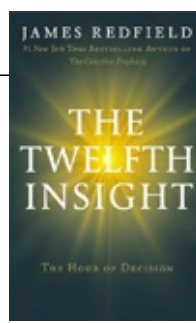
The Hour of Decision

JAMES REDFIELD



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For Kaelynn and Mckenna

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In a time of universal deceit, truth-telling becomes a revolutionary act.

—GEORGE ORWELL

SUSTAINING SYNCHRONICITY

I turned onto the freeway and hit cruise control, trying to ease up a bit. There was plenty of time to meet Wil at the airport. So I forced myself to relax and take in the autumn sunshine and the rolling southern hills. Not to mention the flocks of crows slinking along the shoulders of the highway.

The crows, I knew, were a good sign, even if I had been battling with them all summer. In folklore their presence indicates mystery and an impending rendezvous with one's own destiny. Some say they will even lead you to such a moment, if you chance to follow them long enough.

Unfortunately, they will also show up in the early mornings to eat the young pea plants in your backyard garden—unless, of course, you make a deal. They laugh at scarecrows and shotguns. But if you give them their own row of plants near the forest, they will tend to leave the rest alone.

Just then, a single crow flew over the car and out in front of me. Then turned completely around and headed back the way I'd come. I tried to follow it in the rearview mirror, but all I could see was a dark blue SUV about a hundred yards back.

Thinking nothing of the vehicle, I continued to watch the scenery, taking in a deep breath and hitting another level of relaxation. A road trip, I thought, nothing like it. I wondered how many people in how many places, were experiencing this exact kind of moment—getting away from the stress of an unsure world, just to see what might happen.

Only, in my case, I was also looking for something. For months now, I had been running into total strangers all talking about the same thing: the secret release of an old, unnamed Document. Supposedly, it had come from a coalition representing the world's religious traditions, and word of it was already widespread, at least among those with an ear for such things. Yet no one seemed to have any details. Rumor had it that it was now being released ahead of schedule, out of necessity.

For me, the rumors were both intriguing and slightly humorous. The idea of a coalition among the religious traditions was hardly new, but it had always proven to be all but impossible in reality. The differences in beliefs were just too great. And in the end, each tradition wanted to prevail over the others.

In fact, I had been ready to dismiss the rumors when something else had occurred: I received a fax from Wil. He sent me two translated pages, ostensibly from this old Document. In the margin of the first page was a notation in Wil's handwriting saying, "This has both Hebrew and Arabic origins."

As I read the pages, it seemed to be a treatment of modern times, proclaiming that something important was going to begin in the second decade of the twenty-first century. I grimaced at the date, thinking it might be one more end-of-the-world prophecy—another in a long line of doomsday predictions misinterpreting everything from the Mayan Calendar to Nostradamus to Revelation. All shouting to the ends of the Earth: "Haven't you heard, the world is ending in 2012!"

For years now, the media had been pushing the "end times" scenario, and people, though worried, also seemed deeply intrigued. The big question was why? What could be causing this fascination? Is it just the excitement over being alive at the precise time the Mayan Calendar is scheduled to end? Or was it something else? Maybe, just maybe, our fascination with the end revealed a latent intuition, increasingly noticeable, that something better was about to be born.

The more I read of Wil's fax, the more the pages began to carry a kind of numinous attraction. The style was upbeat and vaguely familiar in some way, and the authentic tone was confirmed when I saw a second notation from Wil on the last page. "This came from a friend," he had scribbled. "It's for real."

I looked over at the very same fax pages lying on the passenger seat beside me. Light from the afternoon sun flickered over them. Wil's written comment, I knew, meant that the original was, at least in his mind, well founded—and probably extended the message of what had always been his singular obsession: the old Celestine Prophecy that had been discovered in Peru.

The thought spawned a flood of memories as I recalled how quickly word of the First Nine Insights of this Prophecy had circulated around the planet. Why? Because they made sense in a world too shallow and materialistic. The message of this Prophecy was clear. Being spiritual is more than merely believing in some deity in the abstract. It entails the discovery of another, entirely different dimension of life, one that operates solely in a spiritual manner.

Once one makes this discovery, one realizes the universe is filled with all sorts of fortuitous encounters, intuitions, and mysterious coincidences, all pointing to a higher purpose behind our lives and in fact, behind all of human history. The only question, then, for the seeker who wakes up to this reality is how does this mysterious world really operate, and how does one begin to engage its secrets?

In those days, I knew, something had popped in human consciousness and had led directly to two more Insights: a Tenth and Eleventh. The Tenth delved into the mystery of the Afterlife and chronicled a decadelong focus on Heaven and its inhabitants, forever dispelling, along the way, an age-old repression of death and what happens afterward. Once that block was lifted, an exploration of everything spiritual seemed to begin.

Quickly came the next Insight: the Eleventh, born of a collective knowing that we are all here to participate in some as yet undefined agenda—a Plan of some kind. It involved the discovery of how to manifest our deepest dreams and to lift the world to its ideal. In the years that followed, this intuition grew into all sorts of theories about Secrets and Prayer Power and Laws of Attraction, theories that seemed right but not quite complete.

Those theories, I knew, brought us up to recent times and lasted until the material bottom fell out from under all of us—in the form of a worldwide financial collapse. After that, we faced more immediate matters, such as personal solvency and not letting the doomsayers take us too far into fear. We were still awake, and we still wanted more spiritual answers. But from then on, those answers had to be practical as well. They had to work in the real world, no matter how mysterious that world turned out to be.

I felt a smile coming up.... How interesting that Wil had found these writings now. He had long predicted the emergence of another Insight, the Twelfth—which he felt would signal a final revelation for humanity, picking up where the Eleventh had left off. I wondered, would the Twelfth finally show us how to "live" this spiritual knowledge at a greater level? Would this change begin to usher in this new, more ideal world we seemed to sense was coming?

I knew we would have to wait and see. Wil had said only to meet him at the airport and from there we would head to Cairo, if it worked out. If it worked out? What did he mean by that?

A deer dashing across the freeway broke my rumination, and I tapped the brakes to slow down. The big doe ran full speed across six lanes and jumped the fence on the other side. A deer was also a good sign, a symbol of attention and alertness.

As I looked out at the hills then, their fall colors now bathed in the light of an amber-tinted sunset, I realized I felt exactly that way: more alert and alive. All these thoughts had somehow induced a greater energy level in me, lifting me to a place where I was attending to every detail—the sunset, the landscape whizzing by, the thoughts entering my mind—as though everything was suddenly more important somehow.

Another huge smile spontaneously erupted. This was a state of mind I'd experienced many times before. And every time it happened, it caught me totally by surprise—surprise in one way over its sudden occurrence, and in another way over why I had ever lost it in the first place, it seemed so right and natural.

There were many names for this experience—the Zone, Heightened Perception, and my favorite, Synchronistic Flow—all names seeking to capture its central characteristic: a sudden elevation in one's experience, wherein we transcend the ordinary and find a higher meaning in the flow of events. This Synchronistic perception “centers” us in some way and feels beyond what could be expected from pure chance—as though a higher “destiny” is unfolding.

Suddenly, a building coming up on the right caught my eye. It was a little sports bar called the Pub that Wil had pointed out years ago as having good eats and homemade pies. I had passed it many times but had never stopped. Plenty of time now, I thought. Why not grab a bite here and avoid the airport food? I took the exit and headed down the ramp. The SUV behind me also took the turn.

After parking under a gigantic oak tree in the fading light, I walked inside, finding the place full of people. Couples talked around the bar, and families with kids ate casually at six or seven tables in the middle of the room. My eyes immediately fixed on two women sitting at a table against the far wall. They were leaning toward each other and talking intensely. As I made my way in that direction, I noticed a small table open beside them.

When I sat down, the younger of the two women glanced at me for a moment and then turned back to her friend.

“The First Integration,” she said, “suggests there's a way to keep the Synchronicity going. But I don't have all of the Document. More of these writings exist somewhere. I have to find them.”

My energy surged again. Was she talking about the same Document? The woman speaking was wearing jeans and comfortable hiking shoes, and around her neck was draped a multicolored scarf. As she spoke, she kept pushing her blonde, tapered bangs behind her ears. I caught the faint scent of rose perfume.

As I watched her, I felt an odd attraction, which shocked me. She looked around instinctively and caught me staring, making deep eye contact. I quickly turned away. When I glanced back, a short, stocky man walked up to her table, surprising the two women and creating a round of smiles and hugs. The woman with the scarf gave him several typed pages, which he silently read. I pretended to look over the menu as I waited, sensing all the more that something important was happening.

“Why are you going to Arizona?” the man asked.

“Because it keeps coming to mind, over and over again,” she replied. “I have to go with it.”

I listened intently. All of the people at the table seemed to be at the same level of flow that I was.

“I have to understand why my mother contacted me,” the woman continued. “These writings are going to tell me. I know it.”

“So you're leaving right away?” the man asked.

“Yes, tonight,” she replied.

“Just follow your intuition,” the man interjected. “Synchronicity seems to be happening for you. But be careful. Who knows who’s looking for this information?”

I couldn’t stand it any longer. I was about to say something to them when a large, muscular man at a table near mine mumbled, “What a crock!”

“W-w-what?” I stammered.

He nodded toward the women and whispered, “What they’re saying. What a bunch of bull!”

For a moment, I didn’t know how to respond. He was tall and about forty-five, with unruly brown hair and a frown on his face, leaning toward me in his chair.

He shook his head. “This is going to be the death of our civilization, this kind of magical thinking

Jeez, I thought, a skeptic. I didn’t have time for this.

He was reading my face. “What? You agree with them?”

I just looked away, trying to hear what the woman was saying, but he scooted his chair closer.

“Intuition is a myth!” he said firmly. “It’s been disproved many times. Thoughts are just nerve firings in the brain reflecting whatever you think you know about your environment. And Doctor Jung’s crap about Synchronicity is just the act of seeing what you want to see in the random events of the world. I know. I’m a scientist.”

He grinned slightly, seemingly pleased that he knew the origin of the theory of Synchronicity. I, on the other hand, was getting more irritated.

“Look,” I said, “I’d rather not talk about it.”

I turned to listen again but it was too late. The woman and her friends were up and walking toward the door. The skeptic gave me a smirk and then got up and walked out as well. I thought about following them but decided against it, concerned I’d look like a stalker or something. I sat back down. The moment had been lost.

As I sat there, I knew the energy I had marshaled in the car had totally vanished. I now felt flat and uninspired. I even pondered, fleetingly, whether the skeptic might be correct in his assessment, but quickly shook off the idea. Too much had occurred in my life for me to believe that now. More likely what I thought had happened, had happened. I was on the verge of finding out more about the Document when I was bushwhacked by the bane of my life: a skeptic out to debunk everything spiritual.

I might have gone on in my funk had I not suddenly noticed an individual staring at me from the corner of the room near the door. He was dressed in a brown leather jacket and had short hair. A pair of sunglasses hung from his shirt pocket. When our eyes met, he stepped behind a group of people bunched up at the bar.

Carefully, I looked around the room and caught two more people looking at me, all dressed in varying casual attire but sporting the same monotonal stare. They also looked away when I saw them.

Great, I thought. These were professional operatives of some kind. I got up and eased toward the restroom. None of them reacted. Walking past it down a small hallway, I found what I was hoping for: a back door. I walked out to the poorly lit parking lot, seeing no one. Then, as I got closer to my vehicle, a figure ducked behind a panel truck. When I started walking again, the person began to walk as well, angling to cut me off.

I stopped and he stopped, and then I saw something familiar in his posture. It was Wil! When I got to him, he pulled me down and looked back at the Pub.

“What are you into here, my friend?” he asked in his customary half-humorous tone.

“I don’t know,” I blurted. “I saw several people watching me inside. What are you doing here, Wil?”

I noticed for the first time that he was carrying a large trekking backpack.

He nodded toward my vehicle. “I’ll tell you later. That’s your Cruiser, right? Let’s get out of here. I’ll drive.”

As we entered the automobile, I looked over at the far end of the parking lot and spotted the woman with the scarf standing with several others. Shockingly, one was the skeptic.

I wanted to continue watching, but I saw something beyond them that startled me even more. The blue SUV I had noticed behind me earlier was parked a hundred feet away, near a back fence. Even at this distance, I could see two men sitting in the front seats.

I grimaced. I should have known.

As I watched behind us, Wil drove us to the freeway and turned north. No one seemed to be following.

“Why did you come here to the Pub?” I asked again.

“Just a hunch,” he said. “I didn’t know how else I could find you. I began to see people watching me, too, so I didn’t want to use a cell. A friend was driving me to the airport, and I remembered this place and thought you might have stopped. When we found your car, I had him drop me off.”

He looked closely at me. “What about you? Why did you decide to stop here?”

“I saw the Pub from the freeway and remembered you pointing it out. I thought it would be a good place to grab some food...”

He smiled at me knowingly. We both knew it was pure Synchronicity. As I looked at him, I noticed that he had aged well in the past few years since I had seen him. There were more lines in his tanned face, but his movements and voice made him seem like a man much younger. His eyes still sparkled with alertness.

“There are more people looking for this document than I thought,” he mused. “Better tell me everything that’s happened to you.”

As we traveled north, I relayed all of it: the ideas that came to me while driving, the blue SUV, the sudden flow of Synchronicity, and every detail of what I’d experienced at the pub—especially the parking lot where the skeptic brought me down and the men were observing me.

When I finished, I didn’t wait for him to comment. I asked him about the surveillance.

“I don’t know who they are,” he said. “I started to have the feeling I was being observed a few days ago. Then yesterday, I saw one or two of them at a distance. They’re very good.”

I nodded, feeling nervous. I lifted the pages of translation by my leg and asked, “Who sent this to you?”

“A friend who lives in Egypt,” Wil replied, “one of the foremost experts in ancient texts. I’ve known him a long time, and when we talked by phone he said it’s unquestionably authentic and probably dates back to the fourth or fifth century. He was sent only the first part of the Document, already translated, but he thinks it refers to our current time period, just like the old Prophecy did.”

We exchanged glances.

“There’s more,” Wil continued. “The Document says we’re in some kind of a race here. My friend said these fragments are popping up all over the world. Apparently, whoever is releasing this Document is sending selected parts to various people with some end in mind. That’s all I know. My friend and I were disconnected in the middle of the call. I haven’t been able to reach him since.”

My mind was abuzz. The woman I saw at the Pub had a part of the Document and was going to Arizona. But where in Arizona? Was she in danger? Were we?

The reality of the situation was sinking in. The Document was fascinating, but we had just seen that someone official also had an interest as well. Were they trying to restrict access to it? How far would they go? A pang of fear rushed through me.

“Well, I guess our trip to Egypt is off,” I said, looking for humor.

Wil grinned for a moment. “I had a feeling we might be going somewhere else.”

Suddenly, he looked hard into the rearview mirror. Behind us was another SUV, a long way back.

“I think this one’s following us,” he said.

At this point Wil began a series of strategic moves. First, he asked to borrow my smart phone and pulled up the map of the local area, turned the phone off, and pulled out the battery. Then he slowed down, which made the SUV slow down as well in order to keep its distance behind us. After a minute Wil quickly sped up, a move that opened a lot more space between us and the SUV and allowed Wil to take the next exit unseen.

He took an immediate right onto a small paved road, then a left onto a gravel road that I knew wouldn’t have been on the map.

“How did you know about this road?” I asked.

He shot me a look but said nothing. The old road was full of potholes and ruts, but it eventually led to another paved road that in turn took us back to the freeway again, about five miles farther north. When we hit the ramp it became clear that the freeway behind us was completely backed up. We could see blue lights and a fire truck parked at the point of congestion.

Wil sped down the ramp and onto what was an almost empty road. Everyone else behind us, including those in the SUV, was completely blocked.

I was staring at Wil. In the past I had seen him do many things, but nothing this rapid.

“How did you know to make all those turns?” I asked.

He looked at me and asked in return, “How did you know to stop at the Pub so that we could connect with each other later?”

“Okay,” I acknowledged. “Intuition. But what you did seemed so fast. I’ve never done anything like that.”

Light from the oncoming cars swept over his face. “I’ve been talking to people who have seen different parts of this Document. It describes many abilities humans haven’t developed yet. That’s what this Document seems to be all about. Each part is devoted to what it calls the ‘Integration’ of spiritual knowledge, and it refers directly to the insights of the old Prophecy.”

“Wait a minute,” I said. “That would mean the author of this Document, whoever it was, had to have known about the Prophecy, way back then.”

“Yeah.” I think it’s some kind of companion piece, like a guide. My friend said there are eleven parts of this Document floating around out there, each devoted to a particular Integration of knowledge. And it talks about a Twelfth....”

“It reveals what the Twelfth Insight is?” I asked.

“Apparently, but no one seems to have that part yet, or at least no one is talking about it. The Document says that each Integration must be actualized in order, one after the other, beginning with the First: learning to sustain Synchronicity.”

He paused and looked at me, adding, “That has always been a problem.”

I knew what he was getting at. Everyone glimpses Synchronicity. The challenge, just as in my case, was to sustain the experience and keep the flow going. Of all the difficulties with Synchronicity, this

was the one most people voiced. Synchronistic experience seemed to come into our lives almost as a tease, stay a while, and then end.

Turning around, I gazed behind us again to check the road, finding it still clear. I remained nervous.

“I’m not sure I want to get involved with this Document, Wil. It may be too dangerous.”

He nodded. “What do you want to do?”

“I want to go to a police station and get these people off of us. Maybe I can help get the word out after the contents are known.”

“What if that doesn’t happen? And the Twelfth is never found?”

I looked at him and smiled. We’d been through a lot in the past, and Wil had never steered me wrong. I wanted to hear what he had to say.

“Look,” he continued. “All that we’ve discovered, the whole search for the truth about spiritual experience, it may be coming down to this moment. You decide, but at least let me tell you what’s at stake.”

Wil slowed the car and exited the freeway, saying he wanted to concentrate. He noticed a little side road just off the ramp and backed in and turned the lights off.

“The Document speaks very directly,” he began. “It says that during the current period of history, the easy material life will get harder, with widespread financial and social disruption. Yet it proclaims that all the challenges are evoking an even greater spiritual awakening in us, where we can realize many new abilities and perceptions.

“But each of us has to make a decision. Will we embrace this deeper spirituality, or go into fear and foreboding? It is a challenge of courage, but also of practicality. In some sense, events are forcing us to put our beliefs into action. The only way to survive the level of turmoil we are facing in the world is to pursue life in a different way.

“It says the first ability that will manifest is our being able to sustain Synchronistic Flow. When the mysterious coincidences come more frequently, we’ll eventually learn that we are guided, even protected, from the dangers of this historical period.”

He paused and caught my eye in the dim light. “There’s more. The Document says that those of us early on, who discover how to sustain this flow and integrate this knowledge will make it easier for others to open up to it later, just because of the influence we have.

“But on the other hand, if too many of us fail to move forward in this regard, the knowledge might not be actualized at all and could be lost to history.”

“It says that?”

“Yes, exactly that.”

He smiled at me in a sympathetic way.

“That’s how important it is,” he continued. “Yet we all have to make our own individual choices.”

“Tell me more.”

“The Document focuses on the Synchronistic experience first,” Wil continued, “because it is the phenomenon that leads each of us forward. If we make this experience more consistent, then we realize our lives are trying to take off in a destined direction. We feel more alive.”

Exactly, I thought. More alive. I’d used that exact expression earlier to describe my own experience. And because I had just been thinking of the release of the Document, I knew the meeting was beyond chance when I saw the women and heard their conversation. I was meant to be there

somehow. Then, of course, the skeptic appeared and the experience was lost. I could feel my energy drop even now, just thinking about it.

Wil seemed to notice. “When we enter a flow of Synchronicity, clarity and aliveness is what we get. When we fall out of the flow, it is what we lose.

“The point is, we have the opportunity now to finally reach a higher clarity about not just the phenomenon of Synchronicity, but also about our entire spiritual nature. And if we don’t, then all our futures, and the futures of our children, could go in an entirely different direction.”

He paused as a car moved along the road in front of us. It passed us and seemed to be of no concern.

“So the idea is this: we find the pieces of this Document, one at a time. Each part builds upon the previous one, so they integrate seamlessly together, yielding both a greater understanding and a higher consciousness, and all these new abilities.

“The Document says when we integrate all eleven, we get the final download: the Twelfth. After that, we’ll understand not just the full picture of spirituality in this life, but we’ll be able live it most of the time.”

Another car went by.

“But again,” Wil continued, “the First Integration gets the whole thing going, because it involves learning how to stay in the flow of Synchronicity that will lead us forward.”

“What does it say about staying in Synchronistic Flow?” I asked.

“It says all we have to do is learn to remember.”

“Remember what?”

“That this flow is possible! That it exists! In the past, when you first read the Insights of the Prophecy, and we were all thinking and talking about Synchronicity, didn’t it seem to happen a lot? Well, that was literally because we had the expectation of it in mind. That’s all it takes. All you have to do is remember to remember.”

I had to think about this for a moment. Was it that simple? Earlier, as I was driving to the Pub, I certainly let go and began thinking about the reality of Synchronicity. And yes, I suddenly fell right into it.

“In practice,” Wil clarified, “it boils down to consciously expecting the next Synchronicity to come, which means we should go into a posture of ‘expectant alertness,’ a mood that’s not that easy right now, because we always think we’re behind, with too much to do. But staying in this state of alertness helps us immediately, because it has the effect of ‘slowing down’ time.”

I knew that was exactly true. Anytime you are expecting something and want it to hurry up and happen, it takes forever to arrive. Time does seem to slow down.

“Slowing down time is a good thing right now,” he added, “because so many of us feel overwhelmed by problems coming at us at light speed. The more we can slow everything down—and wait on a Synchronistic event to show us the way—the easier life is to handle.

“So, to begin, we have to put a sticky note on the bathroom mirror, or tell a friend to call us first thing in the morning, anything to remind ourselves to set up an expectation for Synchronicity first thing each day. Eventually, it becomes a habit. And once all the mysterious coincidences are happening and our destiny seems to be unfolding, all that is left is to stay in that flow.”

He paused dramatically.

“And to do that,” he went on, “we have to learn to communicate what’s going on with us to others.”

“What?”

“Think about what happens when we lose the Flow,” he explained. “Doesn’t it occur because we h

some situation where we have to interact with others who aren't in a flow, and who can't readily see the meanings we are seeing? The effect is to knock us out of it altogether."

I thought about what happened to me with the skeptic. It was certainly true in that case.

"When I'm in the flow," I said, "I usually try to get away from most people, so they can't knock me out of it."

"I know," Wil said in a mock accusatory tone.

"Are you saying," I asked, "that I should have taken the time to talk with that skeptic, even though that's not what I wanted to do?"

"No, I'm suggesting that you should have been open and truthful with him, maybe asking him to wait a minute while you talked to the people at the table. He was needling you, but you didn't lose your flow because of him. You lost it because you didn't find a way to honestly communicate who you were and what you were doing."

"I don't think he was interested in hearing anything from me."

"You're missing the point. I'm not telling you to defend yourself or to convince him of anything. You just have to give him the truth of the situation as you see it, with the main purpose being to keep yourself centered in the flow. If he'd walked away or thought you were rude, so be it, but you would have held your flow."

Again he paused dramatically, then said, "And by handling it that way, you would have also stayed open to whether he had some information for *you*! You know from the old Prophecy in Peru that you must treat his perceived interruption not as a threat but as a potential Synchronicity itself—in the long run, perhaps being of equal importance to what you were learning from the woman."

The reminder both jolted and invigorated me at the same time. If I was getting all this right, then telling the truth of one's situation, whatever it happened to be, kept the flow going—and primarily because it kept one centered in the clarity of one's own deeper life experience. Again, I had to question whether it could be this simple.

When I voiced the question to Wil, he chuckled and said, "It's as simple and as hard as that. And if you want to follow through with finding the Integrations, you have to start by concentrating on telling the absolute truth, to yourself and others, about what is happening to you—no matter how esoteric it gets."

As I continued to think, Wil started the car and pulled onto the freeway again. After a short distance, he moved into the left lane to avoid a car parked on the right shoulder. Inside was the silhouette of a lone driver. Light flickered across his face.

"That's him!" I stammered, not quite believing it. "The skeptic at the Pub. That's him."

Wil looked back. "Are you sure?"

"Yes."

As we watched, the man pulled onto the freeway and took the first exit he came to. Wil glanced questioningly at me.

"What?" I asked.

"You look like you're more in the flow now. Perhaps you're being given another chance."

"You mean to talk with him?"

"Well," Wil said, looking at the dash, "you wanted to know where the woman you saw was going. And you said he was talking to her in the parking lot. We need gas, so we could go back and find him."

I looked at Wil and nodded, not exactly liking it. "Okay, I'm in. But I'm not sure I'll know what to say to this guy."

"Just tell him the truth," Wil said, "that you believe meaningful coincidences are real, and occur

for a reason... and this is the second time you've crossed paths with him.”

CONSCIOUS CONVERSATION

We turned around and took the same exit and pulled up to a huge, well-lit truck stop. A dozen trucks were lined up behind a main building that housed a restaurant, showers, and store. Only a few cars were at the gasoline pumps. The skeptic's brown rental was one of them.

"Remember," Wil offered, "carry the attitude of expecting Synchronicity all the way into the conversation. I like the movie analogy. Synchronistic Flow feels as though you are slowing down and increasing your feeling that you are the center, or star, of your own unfolding movie. Keep this centered clarity and you'll know what to say."

Wil smiled and pulled the Cruiser up to a pump directly across from the skeptic, then made one more comment.

"The Document says," he added, "that if you commit to holding your truth, it includes all the ideas that come up intuitively to say to him, even if you've never thought of the ideas before."

I nodded and got out and began putting gas in the Cruiser, feeling that numinous sensation again, though this was going to be an immensely important conversation for everything that was going to happen later.

The skeptic was directly across from me, busy fueling his own vehicle. Finally, he spotted me and laughed out loud.

"Well, it's the lover of coincidences," he said. "What a Synchronicity this is!"

"Maybe," I said. "We passed you back on the freeway, and we turned around to talk to you."

I couldn't quite believe that I had started off that directly, but it did seem to help me stay centered.

"And what do you think we have to talk about?" he asked.

His tone was sarcastic, yet semifriendly, and I suddenly realized he was speaking in the jousting style favored by scientists, a mode of talking that is more like a friendly debate. The key element of this style is to take great care not to inadvertently confirm some idea or theory held by the other party. In the world of Science, to affirm a colleague's position is never something to be taken lightly. It has to be earned. So the idea is to be very skeptical at first and to check out whether the person is carrying the proper scientific attitude.

If the other party crosses the line and takes a position that is poorly thought out or too speculative, then the conversation is over immediately. On the other hand, if the other person is being logical and tentative with his pronouncements, then the debate can go on. I had always thought communicating in this manner was boring and time consuming, but I knew I could do it.

"I don't know," I replied, "whether we have anything to talk about or not. I guess we'll have to see. I'm trying to make contact with the woman we saw back at the Pub. She was talking about an old Document, and I noticed you speaking with her outside, later. Did she tell you where in Arizona she was going?"

"What's your interest in this document?" he asked guardedly.

"I'm interested in what it says about spirituality."

He looked at me sharply. "You think it's going to confirm your ideas about Synchronicity?"

"The part we have has already done that."

He shook his head. "I wouldn't give this kind of writing too much weight. The best it could do is add to our knowledge of some ancient people's mythology and superstition."

"Yeah, but you can compare what it says to your own experience and go from there."

"In order to do what?"

"To identify phenomena to be investigated that may have been missed before."

He gazed at me questioningly.

"Look," I said, "I believe that there's more to the Universe than a strictly skeptical attitude allows into experience. Sometimes you have to bracket your skepticism long enough to fully experience a new phenomenon. Don't you ever wonder if there is something real and universal behind people's spiritual experiences?"

He gave me a hint of a smile. I wasn't convincing him, but I could tell he liked my tact.

"We need Science," I added. "But we need it to look at everything."

"What do you know of Science?" he asked, giving me a superior look. "Science is a very precise process where individuals explore and draw conclusions about the nature of the world around them. And its activity is very precise: one scientist suggests that something in nature works a certain way, and other scientists try to refute that hypothesis with other facts they think are true. Slowly, consensus is reached about the issue. In turn, this conclusion about reality is replaced with something that is even more true, and so on. That's how scientific fact, and the resulting social reality that flows from it, is established. It's a precise, orderly process."

He looked away and added, "At least that's the way it's supposed to work."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, lately a lot of corruption has happened: moneyed interests such as big pharmaceutical companies and food processors have taken over the medical schools and university departments with big grants, and now they get the results they want from studies. Other industries do the same thing, but health and food are the worst. It's pitiful."

I thought of the writings of Dr. Russell Blaylock, who talks about why dangerous additives still remain in our food, then realized something in a flash: this skeptic I'm talking to is an idealist.

Something else came into my mind to say, and I recalled Wil stressing that such ideas had to be voiced.

"Look," I stated, "maybe the key is heightening public awareness of the scientific process, and then applying it to every part of our world. What if this document is right about Synchronicity being a part of the natural order of things? Shouldn't it be investigated with the same vigor as a star or bacteria?"

Something about what I said irritated him, and he took the gas nozzle out of his car and slammed it back in its place at the pump.

"W-w-what I'm saying," he stammered, "is that something like this document can't be trusted. Synchronicity is too subjective. The problem with Science now is that the emphasis on basic truth is being lost. Once we start allowing too much speculation or corruption, the culture can slip into fantasy thinking and even delusory movements."

He was looking at me hard. "Don't you see that civilization is hanging by a thread? It only takes so many people losing a grip on the basic laws of nature to undermine logical thinking and scientifically established reality altogether. And if that happens we fall back into superstition and a new dark age."

I nodded and said, "But what if a science of spirituality could be logical and orderly?"

He didn't answer. Instead he shook his head and walked into the building to pay. Wil was still seated behind the wheel and smiling at me. He had heard the entire conversation through the open car window.

“Aren’t you going to get into this?” I asked.

“Nope,” he said. “I think it’s yours to finish.”

When the scientist came out of the building, I approached him again.

“Look,” I said, “you’re right. No one wants a new dark age. But let me pose the issue in another way: what would it take for scientists like you to be able to study spiritual phenomena in a way that is orderly and logical?”

For a long moment he seemed to be genuinely considering my question. “I don’t know.... We would have to discover something like the natural laws of spirituality—”

He stopped and shook his head, then waved me off.

“Listen,” he said. “I really don’t have time for any more speculation. Believe me, none of this is going to happen.”

I nodded and then introduced myself. He shook my hand and said his name was Dr. John Coleman.

“Enjoyed the conversation,” I said. “Maybe I’ll see you another time.”

He chuckled at that and then said, “The woman you were asking about... her name is Rachel Bank. She was going to a town north of Phoenix, a little place called Sedona.”

I sat up straight in the passenger seat, struggling to wake up. As we drove along, sunlight from behind us was just beginning to fill the car, and the sweet smell of Oklahoma farmland filled my nostrils. Wil nodded when he saw me stirring, then immediately looked back at the road, appearing to be deep in thought.

Which was fine with me; I was talked out. Because we both knew Sedona well, Wil and I had conversed late into the night as we traveled west. For years, the town had been a hotbed of spiritual thought, as it was situated in the famous red rock hills of Native American lore. Because the energy was so strong there, it was claimed by some that the town had more houses of worship, new age centers, and artists per square mile than any place in America.

The question that had most intrigued us last night concerned Rachel’s motivations. Why were her intuitions pointing to Sedona? Was it because one would likely find more people talking about such writings there? Or was it because one could understand esoteric information in general at a deeper level just by being in those hills—the famous “Sedona effect”?

I shook off the thoughts. All I wanted to do at this point was look out at the landscape. We had traveled from the mountains of Georgia and Tennessee to the flatlands of Oklahoma, and now the sky was big and blue in the morning light. Munching on nuts and apples that Wil had packed for breakfast, I watched the scenery go by for a while.

When I awakened fully, I noticed two neat stacks of pages on top of the dashboard in front of me. I looked over at Wil, figuring he had placed the stacks in front of me for a reason. He kept his eyes on the road but lifted one eyebrow, which made me chuckle. I reached over, grabbed the stack on the left, and began to read.

The pages described the First Integration almost exactly as Wil had relayed it earlier, and then reiterated that once Synchronicity was being sustained, one should be on high alert—for it was that mysterious flow that would reveal the other Integrations.

Reading on, the Document divided the twelve total Integrations into two groups. It called the first five Integrations the “Foundation” of spiritual consciousness, and the remainder it called the “Rise to Sacred Influence.”

Rise to Influence? I had no idea what that meant, but I remembered that Wil had said those of us

pursuing the Integrations now would make it easier for others to do so later because of some kind of mysterious influence.

Coming to the end of the first stack, I picked up the other stack of text, which began to address the Second Integration. This step up in consciousness begins, it said, when we realize that human conversation, regardless of the subject, is always an exchange of outlook, or worldview—and thus is the basic mechanism of human evolution, taking us from one historical level of knowledge to the next.

When human interaction is done while in centered, Synchronistic truth, this process of exchanging worldviews is lifted into full consciousness. It called this more aware interaction Conscious Conversation.

I looked over at Wil again and said, “Conscious Conversation. Do you know what this means exactly?”

He looked at me as though I was kidding. “It’s what you were engaging in when you talked with Coleman—only there was one part missing.”

“What was that?” I asked.

He nodded for me to read on, and in the very next passage, the Document said the level of conversation, and the consciousness of the participants, are elevated when both people are aware of the “historical context” surrounding the interchange.

I looked back at Wil. “So it’s referring to the *second* Insight of the old Celestine Prophecy?”

“That’s right,” he replied. “Do you remember what the Second Insight is?”

“Yeah,” I said, “I think so.”

I looked away, my mind drifting into an intense contemplation of the question. The Second Insight was essentially an understanding of the longer history of Western society, in particular the psychological shift that happened at the beginning of the Modern, secular age. In essence, it marked an awakening in consciousness—one we’ve been having trouble holding on to ever since.

The old Prophecy had predicted we would one day be able to keep this longer history fully in mind as a surrounding context for our daily activities. And when we could, this historical understanding, in itself, would completely change our individual lives. It would keep us fully awake to the spiritual side of existence.

The Modern worldview, I knew, had begun just after the fall of the dark Medieval period of history. In those times, there was no science in the West, no independent thought to speak of, and very little knowledge of natural causes. The men of the powerful Catholic Church ruled people’s minds and decreed that all the events we now call natural operated solely through the hand of God—including birth, all the challenges of life and illnesses, death, and what came after, Heaven or Hell. The churchmen declared themselves the only interpreters of God’s will. And they fought hard for centuries to disallow any challenge to this authority.

But then the Renaissance began, motivated by an increasing distrust of the churchmen and a growing awareness that our real knowledge of the world around us was woefully incomplete. Other influences quickly followed: the invention of the printing press, a greater awareness of the philosophies of the ancient Greeks, and the discoveries of the early astronomers such as Copernicus and Galileo, which contradicted the astronomy espoused by the churchmen.

When the Protestant Reformation occurred—a direct rejection of Papal authority—the structures of the Medieval world began to completely break down, and with them, the established reality of the people.

Precisely here, I knew, was where the Modern age began. For centuries, the churchmen had dictated a strictly theological purpose for existence and for natural events. And then that picture of li

had systematically eroded, leaving humans in a state of deep existential uncertainty, especially concerning their spirituality. If the churchmen, who had always dictated the facts of spiritual reality, were wrong, then what was right?

The optimistic thinkers of that day had a solution. We would follow the model of the ancient Greeks, they said. We would commission Science to go out and investigate this suddenly new world we found ourselves in. And in the enthusiasm of the day, everything was on the table, including our deepest spiritual questions, such as Why are we here? What happens after death? And is there a plan and destiny for humankind?

With this new mandate, Science was sent to look at the world objectively and to report back. Over the centuries it wonderfully mapped the physical realities of nature, from the movement of galaxies and planets to the biology of our bodies, the dynamics of weather systems, and the secrets of food production. But it did not quickly return with an objective analysis of our spiritual situation.

At this crucial point, we made a critical psychological decision. In the absence of existential answers, we decided to turn our attention to something else in the meantime. While we were waiting, we would focus on settling into this new world of ours, devoting ourselves to the betterment of humankind. We abated our uncertainty by striving to make our secular world more abundant and secure.

And that's what we did, creating in the following centuries the greatest surge in material abundance the world had ever seen. But even as we put our energies to bettering our physical circumstances, waiting as we were for the higher questions to be answered, Science itself was pushing that higher mandate further into the distance.

In fact, as the centuries proceeded, Science began to ponder such questions less and less. In a sense these inquiries had become a victim of Science's success in the physical realm. The more it succeeded in explaining the outer world—and created new technologies that increased the population's level of security—the less important spiritual questions became. Let the religions fight it out over the larger issues, scientists began to think. We'll stick to the physical world.

By the time the theories of Isaac Newton were filtering through Science, the dismissal was almost complete. Newton established the mathematics that defined the universe as operating strictly on its own, following basic mechanical laws, in a completely predictable manner—like a giant machine. Now, the Universe could be regarded from a completely secular perspective. God didn't move the stars in the sky. Gravity did.

The Modern, secular, materialistic worldview had been born and, pushed by Science, was exported around the planet. The idea of God, or of a deeper spiritual experience for that matter, now seemed not only unnecessary but unlikely as well. And as for the inner evidence for a spiritual reality—higher states of consciousness, Synchronicity, premonitions and intuitive guidance, Afterlife experiences—these could all be written off as pathological hallucination or religious delusion and removed from the debate completely. Even many religious institutions, suffering from diminished attendance, became ever more oriented toward secular, social activities rather than toward any discussion of real spiritual experience.

And as science and other institutions went, so did the individual. The world seemed so normal and manageable and certain that such higher questioning no longer seemed valid and it began to be pushed out of everyday consciousness as well.

Just work hard, we told ourselves, and focus on bettering your life. Enjoy all the frills and goodies of modern existence. Forget about whether knowing the purpose of life might give you higher guidance along the way, or bring more enlightened relationships with others. Just stay focused on the

everyday stuff and you'll feel fine, right up to the end. If ever the prospect of death raises its ugly head, or questions squeeze into your mind about what happens after, just get busy with the secular action again until the thoughts are lost in the din.

Precisely here, I knew, we could see the real psychological truth of our longer history. We had launched Science to go out and discover the truth of our spiritual existence, and when it didn't return we dedicated ourselves to improving our earthly conditions. And then, gradually, everyone forgot what we were waiting for. Slowly, our preoccupation with the secular world became a full-fledged, psychological obsession.

And like any obsessive behavior designed to repress something—in our case, the missing answers about the true purpose of life—it takes ever more frenzied activity to keep from remembering what haunts us.

By the time the Modern worldview peaked, sometime in the later twentieth century, such obsessive behavior had made the careers of dozens of existential psychologists, who mapped out the vast variety of ways we kept ourselves from waking up: compulsive working, shopping, decorating, arranging, eating, gambling, drugging, sexing, smoking, running, exercising, gossiping, celebrity and sports watching, and the endless search for personal recognition from others—our fifteen minutes of fame.

These obsessions could be found everywhere. And they included, especially in recent years, the most ironic compulsion of all: religious fanaticism, where people kept themselves asleep to real spiritual experience by concentrating only on the doctrines and trappings of a particular religion—even to the point of violently attempting to force these assumptions on everyone else.

Then, thankfully, as the years progressed, we slowly began to wake up. Over the past few decades something, indeed, had popped in the collective human psyche. Why? Perhaps it was the inherent inability of repression to endure, or maybe it was the steady influence of the human potential theorists of the seventies and eighties. Another reason could have been the sheer weight of numbers of the baby boom generation, coming to peak influence in the nineties—and questioning, as they did, all aspects of human culture. Certainly, the old Prophecy found in Peru had some level of influence as well.

In any case, our preoccupation with the material life began to collapse. Like drowning men reaching the surface, we began to gasp for the air of higher meaning. Since then, in fits and starts, more people have glimpsed a new world of wonder around them. As a larger culture, we began, finally, to discover the experience of Synchronicity.

This reawakening, I knew, was the real historical context surrounding our current lives. We are waking up from our secular obsession and taking up where we left off. We want to know our true spiritual situation on this planet. And while those still obsessed with the secular might declare such a quest impossible, intuition says otherwise.

Suddenly, I realized Wil was staring at me. He had been driving along, waiting patiently for my reverie to be over. When I met his eyes, he humorously looked at his watch, making me laugh out loud.

“Sorry,” I said. “It’s the way my mind works.”

He nodded. “So I presume you remembered the Second Insight?”

“Yeah.”

“What did it say about a more truthful historical context surrounding our interaction?”

“It says we’re waking up from a five-hundred-year-long preoccupation with the material and secular world, wanting to know what life is really about.”

Wil beamed. “That’s right. And the Document says anyone who sustains Synchronicity, and remembers the context of awakening, will be guided into a flow of Conscious Conversation. And hence will become part of a worldwide consensus-building process to discover the truth of our spiritual nature.”

I looked at Wil. “Won’t that take forever?”

Instead of responding, he nodded toward the rest of the Document in my hand. When I began reading, I realized I had only one page left, which was torn off at the bottom and contained only one paragraph. It said that each person who holds the truth of his Synchronistic journey, while listening for the truth in another’s journey, helps to build a new, more truthful worldview. And because of this honoring of evolving truth, that person exudes a special influence on the world. All we had to do was keep our energy up.

I perked up, thinking again of the Document’s reference to the last group of Integrations we would discover as a Rise to Influence.

I looked back over at Wil. “It’s the centering of ourselves in truth that creates the Influence, isn’t it?”

He nodded. “We’ll find out once we discover the rest of this Integration.”

Indeed. I had no doubt. We were only on the Second Integration, yet everything was occurring just as the Document had said it would. The First Integration showed us that expecting Synchronicity and telling the absolute truth to others kept these mysterious coincidences coming. And now the Second Integration seemed to be saying that if everyone was doing that, and thus staying awake, we would discover what we needed to know. The only things mentioned that weren’t fully clarified yet were the idea of influence and the cryptic remark about “keeping our energy up.”

Suddenly, Wil was pulling the Cruiser over to the side of the road.

“It’s your turn to drive,” he said.

All morning, I drove west. The big sky had stayed blue, and the sunshine vivid, over hundreds of miles of wheat fields and pastureland. For hours I just gazed out on the flat horizon until, at one point, I felt myself get slightly bored and hungry.

Just before noon, I stopped at a roadside gas station and filled up the Cruiser with gas. Unable to resist, I bought a packaged apple pie from the counter and ate it slowly as I drove. It tasted really good, maybe too good. Within twenty minutes my head began to hurt and I felt a sudden drop in energy. The funk lasted for several hours. When Wil finally woke up, I told him what I’d done.

“Let me get this straight,” he said. “You, the disciple of Blaylock, ate a mass-processed pie right off the shelf. You know better than that.”

I knew he was talking about the problem with glutamates that Blaylock railed against. Glutamates and MSG-type substances resulting from the processing of various proteins and oils, are often added to processed foods, mainly because they, like MSG itself, are taste enhancers. They don’t have a taste themselves, but the first bite sends immediate signals to the brain that you are eating the tastiest thing in the world, despite what are probably very bad ingredients.

The food industry says they’re not harmful, but according to some experts, glutamates have been proved to inflame the brain and disrupt other organs, contributing to a myriad of modern diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer’s, and especially obesity.

“Let me guess the symptoms,” Wil said. “Maybe a little nagging headache, tired eyes, low energy, absolutely no inspiration to do anything. All for a small initial hit of taste euphoria.”

He shook his head. “Eating is one of the most obsessive things we do in the Modern world. If you have a particular feel-good distraction is food, it by definition has to taste really good, because otherwise it won’t give you that pacified and satisfied feeling that comes when glutamate receptors in the brain are activated. The food makers find a way to artificially do that for you with glutamates.

“The big problem,” he went on, “is not just the health impact. It’s how it affects your consciousness. You can’t keep your energy up and stay alert spiritually if you are drugged.”

He stopped and looked at me.

“What?” I asked.

“The Document states that keeping our energy up is important to developing influence.”

“Yeah, I remember.”

He glanced over and caught my eye. “Food is the first level of energy we allow into our consciousness, so it’s basic to integrating a higher mastery over life. And the ironic thing is that real food, the kind that’s organic and pure, and freshly picked, stimulates those same receptors in the brain, and gives us just as much *natural* euphoria—without bringing us down later. Did you know that most people have never tasted a fresh-picked organic vegetable? Most of what we buy in regular stores is weeks old and stone dead.”

At just this moment, Wil abruptly stopped talking and was staring at the top of an exit ramp we were passing. He shook his head.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“There was an SUV parked at that last exit. It happened last night as well.”

“You think they’re still following us?”

“Not following us, just observing. They must be tracking us with a satellite or something.”

“What? That would mean these people are highly connected with the government.”

“That’s right. But at least they don’t seem to want to detain us. They could have done that anytime after daylight. They just want to know where we are going for some reason.”

I looked Wil in the eyes. “You think it’s the Document they’re interested in?”

He nodded. “Looks that way.”

For the rest of the day, we didn’t talk much. I periodically felt anxious about our safety, but each time I managed to shrug it off and recover my waiting-for-Synchronicity attitude. At this point, I felt there was no alternative to pursuing this Document, at least for a while longer. The only effect I saw on Wil was that he became hypervigilant about finding clean food.

“You getting poisoned,” he said to me, “was a reminder.”

Every time we stopped for gas, he’d ask for the location of organic food stores and farmer’s markets, and we were able to shop at several. At each mealtime, we’d exit at a truck stop and fire up the lightweight propane cooker Wil carried in his pack. In fifteen minutes we’d have enough steamed vegetables for a great, nutritious meal. After twenty-four hours of this, I felt incredibly energized and clear thinking. I could even see with greater acuity.

By nightfall we were in Albuquerque, where we eased into an enclosed garage owned by a friend of Wil’s and had the vehicle and all our belongings scanned for surveillance devices. Everything was clean. Afterward, we spent the night at a small hotel nearby, which we paid for in cash, and rose early the next morning to drive to Arizona.

At midday, we began to notice the vehicles again, and by midafternoon, we took the exit to Sedona,

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