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Let's Have a Past Life Discovery

I did not know where this was going to lead me, when one day, out of great curiosity and a little trepidation, I asked my nephew Devin to try doing a past life regression session with me. I did not know what to expect. In fact, I was incredibly nervous.

Devin was living with my partner Tim and I, as an international high school student. And I was fresh out of graduating from a two-year clinical counselling hypnotherapy program.

During the program, our instructor had told us that “weight loss” and “quit smoking” was where the money was in this profession, and it would be wise to focus on these areas in our practice. Accordingly, I planned to start my practice treating people’s mental, emotional, and behavioural issues.

At some point, I became aware of my growing fascination with the more spiritual aspects of hypnosis. That very same fascination was present when I finally learned that it was possible to access past lives through hypnosis. Even though I had not registered for the Hypnotherapy Program with the intention of doing past

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life regressions, taking the course helped to place me squarely on that path.

For a long time, I had delayed asking Devin. I had hoped to “exchange” nephews with another newly graduated Hypnotherapist to avoid any embarrassing situations. What if I had killed my nephew, or if he me, in a previous life? After all, didn't they say souls travel together in different lifetimes due to karmic debts? Wasn't humanity's a history of violence? One person or group killing another or vice versa for one reason or another?

But I could not find another Hypnotherapist from my class who was as keen as I about exploring past lives. Most of my classmates likely did not believe in it. Those who did, were significantly discouraged by our instructor's instruction: “We do *not* do Past Life Regression on purpose. When it spontaneously happens, deal with it.”

Keen to experiment, I looked around and found my nephew was the only person with whom I could afford to fail in this endeavour. It would not be a big deal for him. At the time, Devin was an easy-going teenager; one immersed in the world of online gaming. He was relaxed about his new life, despite living away from home, in a new school and a new country.

Devin has since grown into a self-confident young man, and most things are still not a big deal for him. My first book *Past Life Regression: A Manual for Hypnotherapists to Conduct Effective Past Life Regression Sessions* was dedicated to him, as he was the one who helped me out

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when I first started. But as far as I know, my nephew seemed not to care about such sentimentality. He has not, and probably will not read it, even though I told him a book with his name in it is travelling all over the English-speaking world.

It was that relaxed attitude of Devin's at the beginning that enabled me to try and not be concerned about failure. Devin would do it simply because I had asked. He did not question me; he did not seem to need to know what for, how, how long, or how far we would go.

My 18-year-old nephew seated himself comfortably on the club chair in my bedroom and closed his eyes. His eyelids quickly fluttered. After a short while, he found himself in Japan as a 7-year old boy playing with his little sister in the backyard of a nice house.

Oh my God! I could not believe it! So vivid, so real, so true! So easy! I paused, opened the bedroom window, and took in a deep breath of fresh air before I could continue the session.

The little boy in Japan grew up to become a very successful businessman in real estate. In the 1980's when he was in his 60's, he died unmarried and alone. The only person who had been close to him his whole life had been his younger sister, who married and had children.

That past life regression session of Devin's was the start of something incredibly significant in my life. Thanks to my nephew, he made me feel success could be easily attained when undertaking such sessions.

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After that first session, Devin and I did a few more past life regressions. It was then that his Soul's theme became clear to me: my dear nephew was always alone and left feeling lonely at the end of a life. Intrigued, I discussed my past life regression discoveries with my partner. I had wanted to have a session with Tim, too. For a while, nothing else mattered more to me. But Tim did not buy into those New-Agey beliefs. A life *before* Tim? No way, not plausible. You have got to be kidding. There was none. A woman's egg and a man's sperm. That was all there was to it, as far as "before Tim" went.

But some of my recounting of Devin's past life regression stories must have resonated with Tim. In hypnotherapy, using targeted key words is a common practice for getting through to a person's subconscious mind. And Tim had been an engineer who loves science to this day. So instead of "regression", I knew that using words like "exploration" and "discovery" would speak to him.

One day during a relaxing bath, I must have been describing something too excitedly to Tim. To my surprise, he uttered, "Cool. I would like to explore that too."

For a moment, I could not believe my ears.

Wow. Great! Really? Oh, I cannot wait!

I managed to keep my excitement in check. Too much enthusiasm sometimes scared him.

"Are you sure?" I had asked. Haltingly I stumbled through thoughts and questions about scheduling a suitable time to do it. Despite my best efforts, my

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excitement got the better of me. “But ... if you really want to explore it ... Let me see. Maybe ... next ... Is Thursday okay? Otherwise we'll have to do it much later. I'm quite busy this week.”

“Sure. Thursday works fine.”

“All right. I'll put you in my calendar to make sure it's happening then.”

Thursday came and found Tim lying on the couch. “What areas would you like to explore?” I softly asked.

“Anything at all would be fine.”

“We will free flow then.”

“Free flow sounds perfect to me.”

I was nervous. I had just graduated from my nephew, an open and carefree youth, to a sceptical and logic-based adult. Even though this was still an unpaid “friends and family” type of session, I felt that there was no room for error with this one. In case anything about our karma came up, I acquiescently suggested to Tim, “If there is anything that you want to keep to yourself, that is all right. Just let me know and we will move on.”

It took me a lot longer to get Tim into a deep enough state for past life regression than it had for Devin. Devin was younger with no agenda other than to simply go along for the journey. Tim on the other hand, while generally an open-minded person, also had a lifetime of attitudes and beliefs to contend with.

First, I had Tim focus on my pen which I held in front of him above his eye level, and I slowly began the hypnotic induction. “Give yourself permission to go into hypnosis. Nod your head without moving your gaze if

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you are ready ... Your eyelids are getting heavier ... and they will blink.” I timed my words to the movements of his eyelids. “Allow your eyes to gently close and remain closed on one of your exhales.”

Once Tim’s eyes were fully closed, I followed up with a progressive relaxation technique. Progressive Relaxation is a common practice which supports a person in becoming more deeply relaxed. Starting at one end of the body, I bring their awareness to one set of muscles and guide them to relax those. I then shift their focus to the next set of muscles as we systematically work our way through their body. Tim was completely relaxed by the time we finished. So, I closed the induction with a simple deepening, instructing him to visualize taking an escalator downward.

Tim’s first regression into past lives turned out to be a primitive life. He was living in an icy cave-like structure and was male with a wife. There was a fire in the centre of the structure to keep out the cold. Everything was simple in that life, including the story itself. After a short time, his wife died. Caveman Tim ended up living the rest of his days feeling very lonely. Towards the end of Tim’s session, there were two streams of tears silently running down his face.

I wondered about the theme of loneliness that ran through those past life regression sessions of both my nephew and my partner. I don’t know what their thoughts were about their past lives. But I was comforted by holding onto the thought, that at least they

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had me in this life. In that moment, I made up my mind to love them as much as I could, for as long as I could.

Thrilled as I was with the “success” of facilitating a past life regression with a second person, I did not know what to make of the session with Tim. For the longest time, emotions from both my professional and personal lives became intertwined. My delight, however, with this success was magnified by the fact that during my Counselling-Hypnotherapy training, we had not been taught *how* to do Past Life Regression sessions. The instructor held his own religious beliefs. As unbiased as he tried to be, he did not seem to want to get into this “grey” area in his teaching. He informed us that one way to explain what comes up in a “past life regression” was that it is genetic. That is, we each carry the genetic profile of our ancestors all the way back to the beginning of time. So, the “past life regression” experience could be described as a genetic “memory”. Even though my instructor never denied reincarnation theory, he simply chose not to emphasize it in the curriculum he presented to us. During the entire two years of the program, we had watched one video on Past Life Regression, and five slide shows on this topic. That was it. I must have been doing past life regression sessions in another life. I really cannot find another explanation for my fascination, enthusiasm, and proclivity for it.

If Orlea is a client-turned-friend, I also have quite a few friends-turned-clients. One such client once said, “I don’t understand why so many people are interested in sports shows. More people should be more interested in

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past life regressions. Because, in a sports game it is always certain one team will win, and one will lose. But with this past life regression stuff, you never know what's coming up. It is to find out more about me, ourselves. Everyone should do it, multiple times. A session is not even more expensive than a game ticket!"

At the time, I could not agree with her more. My client's comment helped me delightedly visualize a stadium-full of people flowing into my practice for past life regression sessions. But today, years later, I would not agree with that. Why would *everyone* be interested in using past life regression to find out more about themselves? We can discover and explore our unique selves through anything, including sports shows. In everything we do, there is an opportunity to learn more about ourselves. People can choose to learn in the manner best suited to them, that resonates with them the most. Exploration of past lives through hypnosis is simply one such tool on the path of self-discovery.

Now that the door to one past life had opened for Tim, I wondered whether he would agree to another session with me. I hoped the tears of sadness would not turn him off from further exploring his other lives, but instead, make him more curious. Tim could easily explain it all away by claiming it had been his overly active imagination. But how would he account for the tears?

I was still not certain. If it were me, I would be interested in unpacking those emotions. But Tim was not me, and I could not speak for him. Some people are

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more scared by, than curious about, their unconscious feelings. And often, when I thought I understood Tim, I would be quite wrong. Even on things we agreed upon, if we delved deeper, we would discover that we each used a hugely different thought process to get to that same place. We are now both aware of how extreme our differences in thinking and reasoning can be. So much so, that you would wonder why or how we came together in the first place. Well, it was not exactly “love at first sight”. Emotionally speaking, it was completely drama-less when we first met. But that does not mean there wasn't a story. In fact, it was quite a story.

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Blanket Speaks

Sunday, July 1, 2007. Canada Day. It was a gloriously beautiful sunny day.

Vancouver has been dubbed Rain City. On average, there are 166 days per year of rain. That is almost half the year. Even in the summertime, it is not always dry. This city is a shape shifter. When it rains and when it shines, I feel as though I am in two completely different cities. It knows how to transform itself from one way to the other.

I had heard there was a Jazz Festival going on with some free concerts in and around the Roundhouse Community Centre. Spending my first summer ever in Canada, I could not and would not, find a better thing to do on that bright and beautiful day. So, I headed toward the Roundhouse with the science fiction book *Variable Star*, co-authored by Robert Heinlein and local Vancouver writer Spider Robinson, neatly stowed away in my bag.

A funktronica styled band was playing on the sizable stage that had been erected near the entrance of David Lam Park near the Roundhouse. The park was surrounded by vendors selling typical festival goods. I

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walked from one side of the stage to the other, browsing through all the booths and stalls. Tonnes of people had brought lawn chairs and blankets from home to sit or lie down on and enjoy the free show. I had brought nothing of the sort with me.

The band finished. The emcee was announcing the next show, which was due in about 40 minutes. People in the crowd started to get up and move around. But I was ready to sit down after all my Canada Day window shopping. *Wouldn't it be nice if I had a blanket like those lying there, so that I could sit and enjoy the sun with my book?* As if through magic, to my right I spotted an unoccupied, big, light purple and white checked blanket lain out on the grass. It looked so inviting; lovely and lonely, just waiting for me to take my seat on it in the sun. I found it hard to resist its pull. But I was resisting.

No. This must be someone else's blanket.

But nobody is there now. And my feet are tired. I need to sit on something just like that.

You don't really want to steal a blanket, do you?

If I don't take it away, it's not stealing. It's borrowing.

But how can you call it borrowing without the owner's permission?

Maybe the owner has already abandoned the blanket. Maybe someone just didn't bother to take it back home after that last act.

What if the owners just left for a while and they will come back? That would be really embarrassing.

If they come back ... then ... maybe, I will make a friend or two!

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Strangely, the prospect of making new friends excited me more than sitting on the blanket itself. To date, I had not made friends with strangers in Canada easily. Or, so I thought. I still cannot explain why the idea of making new friends thrilled me so much that sunny Canada Day in David Lam Park.

Later, I had explained many times to Tim that it was not in my nature to take other people's things without first seeking permission. Nor, was it my nature to look forward to making friends with people I did not even know existed, but that day had been different. That sensation of being called by that comfy, faded blanket is unmistakably clear to this day. Somehow, following that feeling made more sense than resisting it. However strong the rationale for not doing so was.

It was a good-sized blanket, about five feet by seven. I accepted its warm invitation, sat down, took out my book, and began to read. Peripherally, I was paying attention to people's feet coming and going around me. Occasionally, I would even look up nervously, or expectantly, only to feel relieved when I saw them walking away in another direction. Half an hour passed. I got more comfortable sitting there and decided not to care about the foot traffic around me anymore. I started to wonder if anyone was going to come back to the blanket at all.

Canadians are very rich and generous! They come out to a park, lay down a blanket, enjoy the music, and then they leave the blanket behind. This is a well-used blanket, but it is still nice and functional. Hand crocheted. It is pretty. At the end of today, if still

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nobody comes to claim it, I am going to take this blanket home with me.

With that thought, I became the proud, new owner of the twice-loved blanket. Another band was starting to play, and more people were gathering back and settling down to listen. A young couple with a much smaller blanket squeezed into a little patch of grass behind me. The woman gradually put her feet onto my bigger blanket. I turned back to glance at her. I didn't intend anything by it. I was just looking.

"Oh! I'm sorry," she said and took her feet off "my" blanket.

"Don't worry about it," I replied and went back to reading my book. I must have done so quite graciously and naturally. It felt funny. It wasn't even my blanket. With the live music playing on stage, I laid down on my back looking up at the infinite blue sky. Turning over on my stomach, I went back to reading. To the rest of world around me, it *was* my blanket. Why would they think otherwise? Especially, when I was so thoroughly enjoying my day in the park on it. But, not to the one who was walking my way in that very moment.

The moment I saw him, I knew it. He wore a short-sleeved, light green and white checked shirt—the fast-dry type of travel shirt—light blue khaki shorts, leather sandals, and carried a big Canon camera with a long lens. He walked from the direction of the front of the stage, still quite far away. But I knew immediately he was walking towards the blanket—*his* blanket. I had just

enough time to quickly put my book and water bottle away, stand up, and leave. But I did not move.

He looked warm and kind, the type of person who I could immediately trust. He was in front of me now. As if I were transparent, he just looked at his blanket.

I said sheepishly, "Sorry, I didn't mean to take your blanket. I just didn't see anybody here for quite a while ... I ... I'm leaving now, though. Thank you."

Still not looking at me, he gestured something like, "No worries."

I had started to pack up my book and water bottle and pull myself up. He sat down on the edge of the blanket, looking intently at the LCD screen on his camera. He must have taken a lot of photos as there were more concerts going on inside the Round House Community Centre.

This is really a big enough blanket for a whole family.

I looked at him again, bent down, "Is it okay if I still sit here on this little corner of the blanket?" Where had I gotten that courage from?! "It's a big enough blanket, and I really like this band."

"Huh? Oh yes. Sure!" That was the first time Tim spoke to me. Then he went back to examining the contents of his camera. I sat back down; this time more properly conducted.

Maybe twenty minutes passed. I felt a little awkward silently sharing the same blanket with a stranger. He was still going through his multitude of photos.

"So, are you a journalist?" I asked.

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Afterwards and many times over, we would tell our story of how we met to friends and family alike. Tim would always emphasize that *I* was the one who came up with the opening line.

That was a pretty unique pick-up line. Wouldn't you say, Hon?

He responded, no, he was not a journalist. But funny that I had asked. He had just been invited by a friend of his to make his first documentary film. So, my guess was not that far-fetched after all.

The rest of the conversation was completely organic. We shared stories of our travels. We were pleased to note there were quite a few places in the world that we both had visited. Tim was impressed that I knew the correct positions of the tongue and teeth in order to pronounce English words properly. As a native speaker he certainly never learned English that way. We talked and talked and talked. The conversation went on as if time stood still.

And maybe time did stand still. I was completely unaware that I may have known Tim before. It was like taking a fish out of a pond and putting it into a lake. The fish does not need to register the idea of different sources of water when it is already swimming in it.

While we were talking, I glanced at him, still feeling the warmth and kindness emanating from him. Hours passed us by, and Tim finally remembered to introduce himself, "I'm Tim." We shook hands. Tim mentioned he was going to make a documentary about Buddhism.

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“Buddhism!” I was instantaneously interested. “Well, in the country I came from, Buddhism is said to be the dominant religion. But I don’t know much about it. I’m very interested in how you’d present it in the documentary.” I dug out my business card from where I worked at that time. “You have to let me know when your documentary comes out. I’d be very interested to watch it.”

I don’t know what would have happened if I had not given Tim my card.

It was the last band of the day. And it was getting dark, yet the music and the crowd had gotten hotter. A band from Mexico was playing a funky fusion of reggae, jazz, and salsa. Everyone around us was standing up and dancing. Tim and I remained seated on the blanket and we continued talking amongst the jungle of moving and grooving limbs.

The day’s free show came to an end. I planned to walk north to watch the fireworks at Canada Place on the waterfront, and Tim was heading west to his home. It was a strange unfinished feeling as we parted ways—comfort, excitement, contentment, uncertainty. From behind me, I felt Tim’s gaze lingering. I didn’t know if he was single, but he did not seem to be interested in knowing if I was either. Much later, Tim would share that he just knew he was going to see me again.

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