

Q and A Brian Weiss

Hay House: Being from a science background yourself, did the initial sessions of Past Life intrigue you? How difficult was it for you to believe in something that has not been proven scientifically?

Dr. Weiss: I was very intrigued but my initial reaction was one of skepticism. I didn't believe in the concept of reincarnation. I considered the possibilities of metaphor, symbolism, fantasy or imagination, multiple personalities, etc. However, her symptoms disappeared, and I knew that imagination didn't cure such life-long and profound problems. Also, her recall was very detailed and emotional, and there was some validation to her ancient memories. Since that experience, I have used regression therapy to past lives with more than four thousand patients in my office over the past thirty-eight years, and I no longer doubt.

Hay House: It is said that memories of past life are nothing but one's imagination. Please clarify. In addition, there has been a lot of criticism about your thesis on Past Life Regression. What is the harshest criticism that came your way and how do you deal with that?

Dr. Weiss: As a psychotherapist I know that imagination does not have a long-term curative effect by itself. I have had patients speaking foreign languages that they have never heard or studied. I have had patients who have found their families from past lives after therapy sessions in which they recalled specific validational information. Others have known detailed historical facts that they never studied. So it is much more than imagination..

The harshest criticism has come from other psychiatrists who never studied regression therapy, who never tried it with their patients, and who therefore have uninformed opinions. These criticisms were worse in the 1980's and 1990's, but I find less of this resistance now.

Wisdom: How do you cure a person through Past Life Therapy and what is the relation between what you have learnt in the university and the therapy you impart?

Dr. Weiss: The concept of past life therapy is very much related to traditional psychotherapy. The recall of emotionally important and often forgotten memories has a healing effect on present day symptoms. Past life therapy merely expands the arena beyond childhood and infancy into previous lives. The overall theory and therapeutic skills are the same.

'There does seem to be a continuity of the individual soul. That is how we learn our lessons here. However, at some higher level all souls are connected.'

Wisdom: What do you find are the present life healing benefits of past life regression?

Dr. Weiss: That was my focus from the beginning. It wasn't just a belief in past lives and reincarnation, but how to use regression therapy as a form of healing. What I found very quickly was that as people remember past life roots of their illnesses or symptoms, they tend to disappear. That's very much like traditional psychotherapy, you may have had a childhood trauma and then remember it and then the condition gets better. That's the foundation of

psychotherapy. That can be enlarged to include past lives, because people are getting rid of phobias, panic attacks and sometimes physical symptoms as well. If they were hanged in a past life and they have neck problems in this life, or they drowned and in this life, they have a fear of water or gagging or choking issues, or swallowing pills. It's like that. They are healing the physical and emotional symptom. There is also an understanding that if you lived before, and here you are again and remembering your past lives, what does that mean on a deeper level? It means you don't have to fear death. You come back and go on and so do your loved ones. It's also healing the fear of death, dying, loss and grief. In addition to the psychological benefits and healing physical symptoms, healing these other fears is very important also.

Wisdom: There is a feeling that I have and have heard others express when meeting someone seemingly for the first time. It is a sense of "Oh, there you are again." Is that potentially a past life connection?

Dr. Weiss: It doesn't prove it by itself though. It's kind of a 'deja vu again', that feeling of familiarity. You recognize them on a deeper level, a feeling of familiarity that is too soon. I even wrote a book about it called "Only Love is Real", about soul mates and soul connections. Relationships are so important and often times there are people with whom we have been together in other life times. The bodies change so the relationship can change. For example, your grandfather can come back as your nephew. The soul is the same. When you get those meetings, it is usually someone of some importance in your life. It doesn't have to be the beginning of a fifty year relationship and it doesn't have to be romantic. It could be a grandparent or best friend. Sometimes you meet a soul mate and you are only supposed to get together for a couple of months, but those months may be instrumental in changing your life. I call them soul families. We travel with them.

Wisdom: Do you find that reincarnation is about lessons that we haven't learned or does there seem to be no rhyme or reason about them?

Dr. Weiss: I think it is always about learning lessons. That's the reason we come back, because it's like coming back to school. If it were random, it wouldn't make sense. My patients have done this work since Catherine began this in 1980. So, it's been twenty eight years and more than 4,000 patients in my office and many more in my groups. We're learning lessons about love, compassion, getting rid of fear, getting rid of greed, violence and hatred. We have to learn these lessons to come more from the heart, more from compassion, more from love. They are not all learned in one lifetime; they are difficult lessons and that's why we have more than one chance to get it right. There seems to be higher guidance. We have the free will here to learn them, not learn them, to learn just some of them...It's always about love. That's the main lesson. The more we learn about love and not be fearful, that's how we can graduate from this school.

Wisdom: When people have told you about time between lives, have they described themselves as energy or entity?

Dr. Weiss: It differs based on a person's own experience and their culture. If they are Japanese, they have a different experience than if they were from South America or India. The most common explanation is that around the time of death, they float above their body and often are able to see. Since they are not in the body, it is not seeing through eyes. They see what's

happening and they see their funeral. They may hang around for awhile. They are not in the physical form. They are in the form of light or energy. They become aware of a beautiful light. Sometimes they go through a tunnel to get to that light; like in a near death experience. In the Japanese culture, it's crossing the river. Often at the light, there is a spiritual figure or a relative; someone to make the transition more comfortable. It's a feeling of enormous peace and joy and almost recuperation. At the light, they are greeted and have a life review: "How did you do in this life? Did you learn the lessons? Did you wander from your spiritual course?" It's not done in any sense of judgment or criticism; always in an atmosphere of great love. If you didn't accomplish all your lessons, you start planning your return trip. We are not in a physical form over there. We are much in an expanded consciousness and a place of great peace. That is something people have told me over the past twenty eight years.

Wisdom: When people say that they are greeted by loved ones on the other side, is it about recognizing their essence, rather than their appearance?

Dr. Weiss: Yes. It's not just loved ones. It could be a spiritual figure. If you are Buddhist, it might be Buddha, if you are Christian, it might be Jesus or Mary, if you are Jewish, it might be Moses. It could also be your grandmother, but she is going to appear like she did in the '50's, because she can take any form. She's your grandmother. Whatever it takes for you to recognize her. Love never ends and the spiritual connections never stopped. Often times it's more than one. It's to welcome you back home. It's good to see those people again.

Wisdom: So we carry with us the heart memory of people we love.

Dr. Weiss: Yes. That heart energy never stops. It never ends even with the death of the physical body. Even on the other side, they are still connected with us. Not that they are observing everything we do. It seems to me that this is the difficult place; Earth . Here on Earth we have pain, loss, illness, death, separation, grief and that doesn't happen on the other side. It's much more joyful. On the other hand, you can't leave school early. You have to learn your lessons. You're supposed to stay here and learn your lessons and appreciate life and find the good things in it; living in the present moment and have more fun. Also, don't be afraid of death, because that is like going home and you are going to be reunited with your loved ones. I don't say it because it makes people feel good.

Brianweiss.com: Can everyone be hypnotized?

Dr. Weiss: Many people are able to be hypnotized easily and deeply the first time they try hypnosis. Some need more experience and practice. Unfortunately there is a percentage of the population (up to 15%) that can't be hypnotized at all. Sometimes non-hypnotic techniques help those people to retrieve memories.

Additional Questions and answers by Brian Weiss:

Are we just vessels that hold the soul?

Yes, exactly. We are vessels, and we contain this eternal and immortal, much more knowledgeable part of ourselves. Now, probably as you get more mystical you find out that these souls, as well as the bodies, are connected to everyone else's, because really everything is of the same substance.

Why do people find reincarnation a difficult concept to accept?

People fear the unfamiliar. If only they would keep an open mind. Not just scientists, but everybody. Just observe it, watch it. Meditation can teach people to do that. If they can let go of their fears.

Reincarnation is in all religions. Where did this knowledge come from?

It comes from so far back that we don't even know where it comes from. We only lost it recently. I think we lost it for political reasons.

In Judaism, belief in reincarnation or *gilgul* is not just ancient, but existed until early in the 1800s, and it was only with the migration out of Eastern Europe to the West, and the Age of Enlightenment and science, and the need to be accepted, that the belief went underground.

But not in the Chassidic (Ultra-Orthodox) populations. They still believe in reincarnation. In Christianity it went underground much earlier, in the 6th century at the Second Council of Constantinople where reincarnation was officially declared a heresy.

Christianity was becoming a state religion, and the Romans felt that without the whip of Judgment Day people wouldn't behave, they wouldn't follow.

They would think: "Well, I'll do it next time around." And so reincarnation was consciously made a heresy. But this was at the Council, centuries after Jesus.

How is the time period between lifetimes determined?

People who die violently, or children who die, often come back faster. And people who live longer lives, and die more peacefully, there can be a much longer time between lives, a hundred years or more.

How many past lives do people generally have?

That varies, but the numbers that come up most (in my work) is about 100. Not the thousands and thousands that the Buddhists talk about.

Is there a finite number of souls?

To me it doesn't matter because ultimately we're all connected.

Are new souls being created?

I'm not sure, but my inclination is to say no. We're probably all ageless and have been (around from the beginning).

Are families more spiritually connected from life to life than strangers are?

Yes, and I do think that people come in groups for the working out of debts and responsibilities, the concept of [karma](#). These are the people that we're learning and growing with. I even put love at first sight, or hostility at first sight into that category, a recognition of souls.

I know the old saying: blood is thicker than water. Well, I mention in *Through Time into Healing* that spirit seems thicker than blood.

So people can be male in one lifetime and female in another, and vice versa?

Yes, there seems to be frequent switching. You may have a preference, but you've tried out the other to see what it's like. This is also true of races and religions.

How do you explain souls that occupy bodies that are biologically damaged?

If this is all to learn-and this is what my patients keep telling me-to grow, to become more and more Godlike, then whatever experience you have is a learning experience. Sometimes, though, it's a teaching experience as well, so you may come back into this for others, maybe as an act of charity.

*If you would like to explore the possible reasons why we chose the lives, relationships, difficulties, etc... in our lives, you may enjoy reading *Your Soul's Plan* by Robert Schwartz - Tina Kelly*

How do pre-determination and free will co-exist?

Someone told me this once: Life is like being on a bus. It has a certain pre-determined route. But the person you sit next to, how you act, what you say, that's all the free will part.

Why don't we automatically, consciously remember our past lives?

For one, more and more people are remembering. Through therapeutic techniques such as hypnosis, but also through dreams, spontaneously, through meditation, déjà vu. When they're in a place they have never been before and they know their way around.

This may be an evolutionary shift. I don't know why we don't all remember.

So you think some of us are born with certain values and ideals?

Yes, that's the whole purpose. That it gets ingrained at a deeper level. At the level of the [heart](#) and the soul-where the real learning takes place so that you're not dependent just on what your parents teach you.

If one's parents were bigots, and the child is able to overcome that, this is a degree of independence that transcends what we're taught.

This is your soul saying: "You know it's not right to be a bigot, despite what your parents, what the church or temple is telling you. You know better. Follow your heart." And when you're doing that, you've really learnt it. This is the soul memory.

When we're 'out there', will we be with all the people we knew here?

I think so, and even with those who are still here. The vision is better coming from the other direction. They're aware of more because they are not limited by a body and the brain. But we are.

What's the state of reincarnation research today?

There are physicians doing this. Raymond Moody, the psychiatrist who coined the phrase Near Death Experience, is now writing about his research with past life therapy. Then there's the Association of Past Life Research and Therapy (APRT). They publish a journal. It's a mixed group, so it's hard to characterize them as representative of the scientific community.

How can reincarnation be validated? Do you look for supporting information?

It's difficult to prove reincarnation scientifically because of what we consider scientific. As a psychiatrist I'm interested in my patients' clinical improvement, in their welfare, so I look at two levels: of therapy and helping people, and then the other level, that of validating, or proving. Both are vital.

But I function more these days at the therapeutic level. There's no question in my mind, or in the minds of all of these physicians and psychotherapists who are writing to me, that this has a therapeutic effect. It's quick, it's vivid, it's relatively inexpensive, and people get better.

Physicists are now researching how one subatomic particle/wave in one location senses instantaneously what's happening to another one. Is it similar to psychic phenomena?

Yes, and physicists have proof that these particles exist, that they travel at the speed of light, and time is relative, and can stop. It's just that we have difficulty in letting go (of our old concepts).

If I told you that you're really, physically, a mass of electrons, protons and neutrons and energy, and wave/particle phenomena, you would say, "but I'm solid", and I would say, "yes, but that's not really true, because at a deeper level you're energy".

Scientists talk about things being connected at a sub-atomic level-what we would consider ESP-between these subatomic particles. Since we and everything in the universe are made up of these, does this explain how people can have 'paranormal' abilities?

Yes, that summarizes the millennia of mystical knowledge, and solves the problems of the universe! It's true. We need to develop the skills. How to do this, how to be aware. Mystics have always been saying that there is no time, it just appears that way to us.

And when you start talking about other states, there is no space, there is no time. It's all happening now. This is our conception of God and of nature beyond the three-dimensional. That's the fascinating correlation that physics is starting to prove.

In mystical Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, this is all part of the esoteric tradition: There is not time, no space, we're all connected.

Do you believe that physicists will find that science, mysticism, spirituality, religion and parapsychology are connected through quantum physics?

Physicists are the mystics of the 21st century. They've begun to study consciousness, time moving backwards, all of these phenomena that were called occult or esoteric. I believe they'll be found to have their roots in nature, in science.

As we begin to use more of our brains through meditation and other ways, we're going to find that these things do have their basis in science, in nature. To discover the truth you have to throw out your old assumptions and old knowledge.

You wrote in Many Lives... that the most important lesson you learned with past life therapy is that there is no death. How has this changed your life, and how can this change everybody's life?

When you stop fearing death you start to live more. What I value now that I perhaps didn't value as much before are love, relationships, family-not just in the genetic sense, but in the larger sense. And what I value less now are material things. You can't take it with you. That's a cliché, but it's true.

How do our past life experiences and relationships affect our present life?

They affect us in every way. Many of your most meaningful relationships are not new. That's how you connect. Past lives also affect us in symptoms, both emotional and physical. Certain fears and anxieties carry over. Physical symptoms, where one may have been wounded or hurt in a previous life frequently come up. It affects us psychologically, emotionally, even in obesity.