



Master Your Own Destiny

YOUR JOURNEY OF PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

& SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY

WITH SHEILA STEPTOE

MODULE EIGHT – YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Illustrations by Geoff Holdsworth

*Lots of people pursue personal growth
but when you combine it with spiritual growth
you unleash your full potential.
Suddenly, there are no limits any more. . .*



Sheila Steptoe



YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

*To hear the Voice of Silence is to understand that
from within comes the only true guidance.*

— John Algeo

ARE WE ALL ONE?

At the very beginning of my spiritual journey, when I was seeing colours and pictures, hearing music and words, it gave me such a blissful feeling that in some ways I never felt alone. I was being looked after by my 'helpers' which in itself was a fantastic experience. And then other events and experiences started to happen which made this all the more powerful. I wanted to learn more.

In the fifteen years that followed, I have learned and experienced such a lot which I want to share with you. This has helped me to understand that there is far more to life than I realised. I want to help you understand, as I have, that there is a true reason we are enrolled in the *School of the Universe*.

We are all spiritual beings. We have a human existence, but there is a *spiritual impulse* in all of us. I want to share with you how I know this to be true.

I am not going to go into every scientific detail about all the areas I am going to cover, because it's more important to understand this in simple terms. I would like to give you an overall picture of what life is all about — but I am only writing about *my* experiences and what *I* understand. I could never teach you this; I can only guide and advise. It is all highly personal, different for everyone. You have to feel some of this within.

There are many people out there with different ideas, theories and experiences. That is fantastic because it means the world is waking up to a much richer life. If you want to learn more at a later stage about any aspect that you have read about in this book, I will be delighted. That would mean I have whetted your appetite to learn more — and that is exactly what this book is about!

Numerous subjects, ideas and even spiritual and scientific findings are being uncovered every day. To keep up with it all would be impossible. What I will give you is a brief outline which is just *my* theory of what I call 'how life works'. Don't forget we are each masters of our own destiny; what resonates with one person may be different to another.

Some of you reading this will have a strong religious belief. I want to make sure there is no confusion here, and hopefully no offence taken, because what is in this book has nothing to do with any religion. To me, and to many others, spirituality is much more about you as a person, getting in touch with the inner you, and empowering you to find the peace and love you have been seeking. For those of you who are spiritual and *not religious*, my words will speak to your soul. We are all one, and I believe come from the same source — it's just a different story.

The belief of the true beauty within ourselves is what matters to me, not who you believe in.

MY UNDERSTANDING

Before all this spiritual stuff happened, I had no idea that many people in my life had been with me before in a past life and were part of my soul family; I just accepted them for who they were. I never questioned how they had come to be in my life. After my parents died I wrote my first book, *Before I Get Old and Wrinkly*, as I realised that I hadn't really known them as people. They somehow were just my parents ... yet there is far more to it than just that!

I have many friends, some of whom I have known for many years, since we were teenagers. As my life has opened up I have made lots of new friends too. These new friends have come into my life, enabling me to grow as my interests have changed, since the time when I was married.

My family has also grown. One of my most magical experiences was when I was at the birth of my first granddaughter. My daughter had split up with her partner of a year, just two weeks before she found out she was pregnant; she chose to be a single parent and the whole family supported her in that decision. Two weeks prior to her due date, she was rushed into hospital for an emergency caesarean section. I received a frantic phone call to say could I please hurry to the hospital because my granddaughter's father could not be there.

Anni was gowned up and had been given an epidural and covered in green sheets so we could not see anything. I sat at the end of the operating table, holding and stroking her head, not knowing what else to do. The surgeons and nurses were running around the room ... and then suddenly the surgeon looked straight at me and passed this tiny precious gift of a life, covered in blood and with the cord still attached, into my hands. I held her to my daughter's face. Suddenly I saw this little bundle's nostrils pop open and the surgeon said to me: 'You have just witnessed your granddaughter's first breath.'

Then her little ears popped out, from being stuck against her head, and it was one of the most magical moments in my entire life. To watch the miracle of a baby being born is a joy beyond words. My daughter and I both burst into tears, as she had so wanted a girl. Then they took the baby away and cleaned her up before handing her properly to her mother.

I had two children of my own. But the truth is, when you give birth, you are utterly exhausted. A new mother does of course feel the joy and love instantly — but this was

different. My daughter and granddaughter came to live with me for six weeks, as she couldn't lift or do anything herself; I began to see my first grandchild as one of my own. Over the next few years they were both constantly in my life and my house but I had no idea just how special to me this little girl was going to be.

My Spiritual Circle had decided to spend a weekend as a group in Glastonbury. I was still learning quickly, and was excited about visiting this famous place. I somehow knew deep inside that this trip was going to be special; I didn't realise how significant until I returned home.

I had promised my granddaughter that I would bring her back a small present from Glastonbury. It's not really the place to buy anything small for children — but in a book shop they had some beanbag animals for sale, which would fit the bill. So, I went to a little basket that had a yellow beanbag duck in it. Just right, I thought, as her favourite bedtime story is about a duck which she called the Duck Duck book.

When I took this duck to the lady at the counter she said to me: *'Do you want this duck? It is a very special duck as it only has one eye.'* I thought about it, and decided to get another one from the shelf; the faulty one might have been cheaper, but would my granddaughter notice? Thinking nothing more of it, I packed it in my overnight bag, and after another long journey, arrived home.

My granddaughter, who was three years old at the time, came running to open the door. I said: *'If you would like to look in my bag you will find a little present.'* The most amazing thing happened. She found the brown paper bag and looked inside, and proceeded to take out the beanbag duck. She then said to me: *'Nanny, why didn't you buy me that special duck? That was the one I wanted.'*

I and everyone else were speechless. We could not believe what she had just said. How could she know about the little duck more than 200 miles away, that I had picked up just a few hours earlier?

That was an extremely powerful experience. I have since discovered that my granddaughter and I have a very special spiritual bond that can never be broken; she is part of my soul family, even a soul mate, which I will explain a little further on. I am sure she will develop her own psychic abilities later in life. As a child she played for hours with her 'special friends' and always felt protected by a toy angel that I gave her for her bedroom.

One of my other grandchildren used to talk to my Dad, and pointed him out to me on numerous occasions from one of my pictures by my kitchen table. My Dad had died long before my grandson was born, and he used to say that 'James' came and chatted to him at night time. When he was at school he said that James helped him in the playground, and he said it in such a convincing way I never disbelieved him. As he has got older he has stopped mentioning James and I am not pushing it.

Many children have 'special friends' whom they see and actually talk to, because children are far more connected than adults to the source of where they have come from. I don't think anyone truly knows whether babies do see spirit — but if you watch carefully, very small children will often follow with their eyes something or someone you cannot see. They will even laugh at something for no apparent reason; maybe they are seeing someone.

There are also many children who suddenly start to talk in a completely different language. Others can lead you to a place they 'know' already. They can describe details that no-one can explain, and when investigated they have been proved right. I think there has to be something in this.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

Consider events that you have experienced that you would describe as 'spiritual'. Has anything happened to you which is similar to my own experiences?



- You remember having your own 'special' friends.
- You have felt uneasy when in a house or a place.
- You felt inexplicably uneasy about something and were later proved correct.
- Life has suddenly become more peaceful as if you have a deep inner knowing.
- You have 'heard' a little voice at the back of your head.
- You have an inner voice that gives you helpful advice but are not sure where it comes from.
- You have sudden flashes of visions but don't understand what they mean.
- You 'talk' to spirit guides or Angels and sense they are listening, even though you are apparently alone.

- You feel occasional tingles, smell something strange or feel a breath of air somewhere on you, maybe on your face.
- You sensed that something was going to happen and it did.
- You have always felt 'different' and you are not sure why.

Describe your experiences here and/or in your journal:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing, spaced evenly down the page.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH & ENLIGHTENMENT

I used to feel ‘different’ when I was younger and I had no idea why. I even told my friends that I had been adopted because no-one in my family could understand some of the things I talked about. I had such a deep sense of ‘inner-knowing’ that I could not explain, that had always been with me. Some of my friends and colleagues have been brought up in a family where this was the ‘norm’ — but many others have been what I call ‘awakened’ any time from their mid-thirties onwards.

For many this has happened at a crisis point. For others it was a natural progression stemming from a curiosity. We can all learn, if we wish, to open our psychic ability. It can be an amazing help with guidance but is not necessarily for everyone. Some people search their whole life long to experience this beautiful gift and never find it. There are others who take it too far, and live in what I call La-La Land!

A spiritual growth is rarely a sudden awareness, and it doesn’t happen automatically; it’s a gradual process. It comes through self-awareness, and it takes effort and deep thought, to get a clear vision of your purpose in life and feel serenity. However, as you begin this journey, your true enlightenment will speak for itself. You will demonstrate it in your actions and in the very essence of how you are. You will begin to radiate a light around yourself; if you have to tell people you are living a spiritual life, then you are probably not. True spiritual growth will be when people say: ‘There is just something about them that I can’t put my finger on — but somehow they are beautiful.’ This happens when you begin to feel inner peace.

Living a more spiritual life is not just about opening yourself to your guides. It is more about living as the authentic you. Following your gut instinct and intuition is one of the most important ways that your guides and spiritual helpers can communicate with you through your Higher Self. If you can imagine a big power surrounding you, that you know is there but that you can’t see, then that is a wonderful way to start to understand this. Your helpers, or this bigger power, come through when you are in dream state, meditation and through your intuition — or, for the real psychic stuff, through your ‘third eye’, which is in the middle of your forehead, between your eyebrows.

HOW SPIRITUAL ARE YOU?



In this exercise I invite you to reflect on some questions which may help you decide how spiritual you are. This is not a definitive test or guide, but I hope help you to identify some areas of your life and personality that demonstrate your spiritual impulse.

Consider the following statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, how true are these statements for you?

1. I believe that there are forces, spirits or guides that are greater than ourselves and that they exist to help us.
2. People come to me when they need help in desperate situations, and I am often able to recommend books, music or other media that can help them.
3. I enjoy using my artistic talents to make things.
4. I hold fast to my personal belief in the truth even in the presence of ridicule, apparent failure, or pain.
5. I often find myself praying for myself and others and have a strong belief that someone or something is 'listening' to those prayers.
6. I feel great compassion for the problems of others and feel enjoyment and fulfillment in helping them.
7. I am able to relate well to people of different cultures.
8. Music always lifts my spirits
9. I enjoy thinking about, and discussing 'spiritual' issues and sharing my insights with others.
10. Sometimes when I pray or meditate, I have warm tingling feels, or I hear things or see things that I don't fully understand (this can happen at other times too).

11. I have felt an unusual presence around me which has given me greater confidence when important decisions needed to be made.
12. I find myself doing simple things for people that touches them deeply.
13. I enjoy greeting and welcoming people to my home, office or church.
14. I have a desire to work with those who have physical or mental problems to alleviate their suffering.
15. My desire for spiritual riches outweighs my desire for money or material possessions.
16. I sometimes have a strong sense of what should be said to people in response to particular situations.
17. People have told me that I have spiritual gifts.
18. A big house, a fancy car, or a large bank account are not important to me.
19. I can recognize talents and gifts in others, and often tell them.
20. People have told me they were moved spiritually by my singing, dancing, or playing music.
21. People say they have been touched spiritually by things I have written.
22. People sometimes look to me for guidance, coordination or advice on personal issues.
23. I feel compelled to use my hands to craft things that show the beauty of creation.
24. People who are feeling upset sometimes come to me for comfort.

- 25. If someone is facing a serious crisis, I enjoy the opportunity to help them.
- 26. When people come to our home, they often say they feel at home with us.
- 27. I feel it important to live life simply and honestly.
- 28. I do not fear death because I know that death leads to something even greater than life on Earth.
- 29. I am beginning to feel content with who I am and accept myself better
- 30. I accept others as individual people who are separate from me but on their own journeys

Note down any others aspects of your life that indicate you have a spiritual impulse:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

Reading and listening to others is a wonderful way to gain enlightenment and understanding and I have read many books over the years. The three most influential that helped me understand some of my experiences are: *Many Lives, Many Masters* by Dr Brian Weiss; *Journey of Souls* by Michael Newton; and *Ask and It is Given* by Esther and Jerry Hicks.

The first, *Many Lives, Many Masters*, is by prominent American psychiatrist and scientist Dr Brian Weiss. Many years ago he accidentally regressed one of his patients into a past life. Over a period of time, the woman continued to go back into different lives whilst under hypnosis; he started to record the meetings because this past life regression started to cure her psychiatric disorder. He wanted to collect evidence that we all have been here on planet Earth before, in a past life. Sometimes many lifetimes were recorded, and he believes that most of us will come back again too; this made sense to me. It took him four years to disclose his findings because he was afraid of what his colleagues would say — but by then he had the evidence which he could no longer ignore.

Why would we be here on Earth if there wasn't a purpose? And where did we come from? Surely we can't all have come from nowhere, and then just disappear into nothing? To me, people are too precious. I simply could never understand why some people assume that there is nothing more to themselves than just this existence.

The skeptics I have spoken to can never give me an explanation for this, and many of them are quite happy about that. But I find it sad that they don't seem to have much depth to their lives. Many of them feel that only a scientific explanation will justify them even thinking about this. Dr Weiss is one of many who are realising the truth behind this concept. People are beginning to awaken to a new reality, including scientists themselves!

Many people fear death because they don't understand or know anything about this beautiful concept. I think these fears may stem from the pain you may feel at the time of your death due to a possible illness, and many people worry that they may have a feeling of nothingness afterwards. But the good news is that we do live on after death.

There is much to be learning from reading and listening to spiritual and personal development 'gurus' and I would urge you to make it part of your weekly routine. I have included a suggested reading list at the end of this module to get you started. The most important thing is to remember that you are not obliged to follow any single guru or group. It's perfectly Ok to use some of their ideas, techniques and explanations if they feel 'right' for you. You must always be true to your own beliefs.

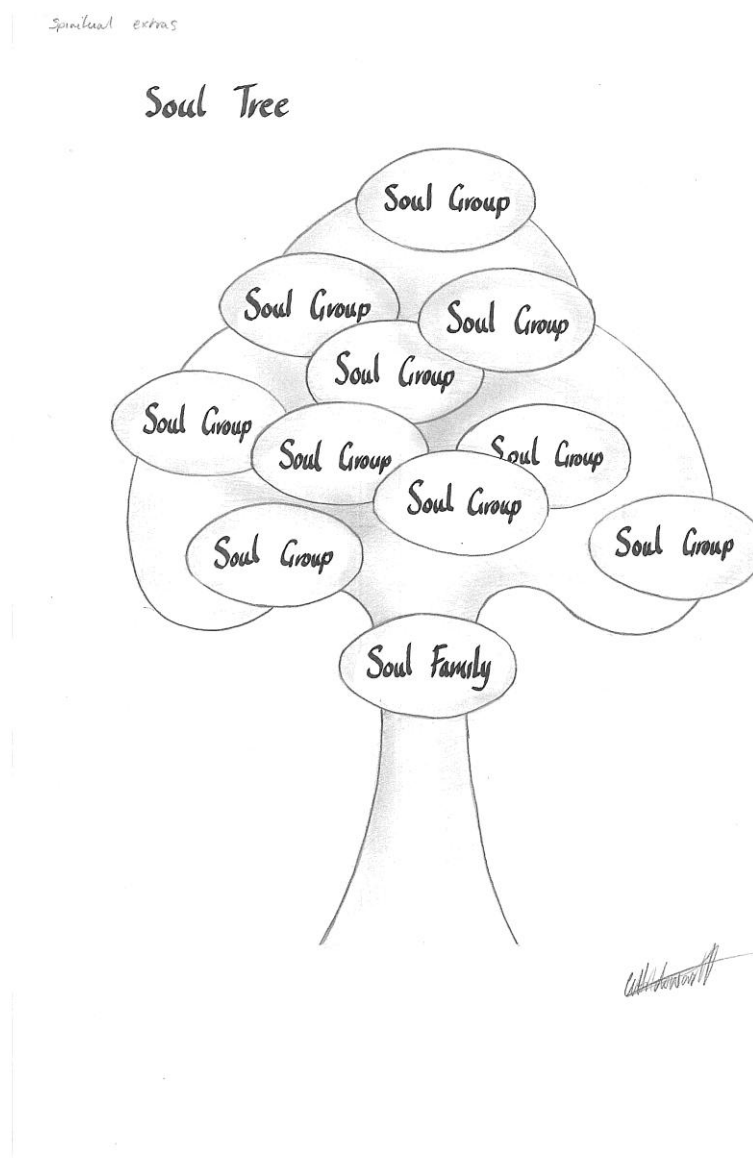
SOUL FAMILIES

Soul families make perfect sense to me because sometimes you just know someone from the depth of their soul; you have a much closer, deeper bond than with others, even your blood relations. Many people have looked into someone's eyes (the windows of the soul, remember) and had a complete understanding that this person is going to be special to them; and they are.

You choose your parents before you come into this world because of what they can teach you. They are usually souls with whom you have interacted in prior lifetimes. They are not from your soul family – but many of your close relations, partners or siblings can be.

Close friends with whom you have a deep friendship and love can often be someone you have had a relationship in a past life. They may even be from your soul family. In previous lives you may have played the role of a child, a brother or sister or partner or friend, because the roles are changed for the lessons you need to learn and experience for whatever is necessary. Sometimes you come back with the same souls time and time again because you need to learn or master something which you may not have done in that lifetime.

To help you understand this more clearly, the best description I can show you is in the following drawing.



Imagine all your soul family (as souls) residing in the trunk of a tree. Trees have many branches, and each branch has its own soul family. Often the people you connect with here on Earth are from one of your branches. You can have a strong connection with a person because you have pre-planned that you shall meet, for whatever reason.

Every person in your own soul family will be someone very special to you. We can each have more than one soul mate because all families have a different number of souls. It is said that each soul family is here on Earth working on something united, and this will be different for each group. Each group will be made up of a different number of souls.

Soul relationships can be in a husband/wife relationship, siblings, co-workers, close friends or other relationships — but a soul mate is like the echo of yourself. They are often mother/daughter, father/son, husband/wife. You connect in each lifetime with the same soul group; however you meet as a different person with a different relationship, which is something you need for our spiritual growth.

There are many soul groups in the astral planes. You will never have a connection to most of them because you will have no need.

When you do connect with someone, it can sometimes feel like an instant rapport; the world suddenly feels much smaller. Such people are from a closer group to yours than some of the other people with whom you've connected in everyday life.

If you have children you will know by now that each child was on a different path right from birth! You can bring them all up in exactly the same way but as they get older (or even at a quite a young age) they can go in a completely different direction. Children each have a unique personality from birth. Look closely and you will see that they are actually following their own individual journey — just as you have done. They have chosen you as parents for what you can teach them, and that's why you should not restrict their growth by insisting they do as you say with their life. They have their own life to lead and you are merely providing guidance.

There are many kinds of relationship including karmic, soul mates and twin flames (which are very special indeed).

Twin flames were created together at the beginning of time and share a unique destiny. Aeons ago, you and your twin flame were created in the image of God from out of the same cosmic sphere of consciousness — two flames of spirit, male and female, plus and minus in polarity. The two of you share the same cosmic blueprint that is not

duplicated anywhere else in the cosmos. Your twin flame is your true 'other half'. To meet your twin flame, all karma must be balanced.

A Soul mate relationship is probably the one that most people want in their life but you can have more than one. Your soul mate is the one who makes life come alive; the bond is so close, you feel that the two of you are one but you each have your own twin flame.

A karmic relationship, which is the most common union, happens when you are drawn together for the balancing of mutual karma. All relationships have to be worked at and most relationships in life are not free from hard times and conflict; when you work through these issues, you grow and evolve.

There are many fascinating books on this subject. This brief outline should have helped you to understand more about what I call 'how life works' and why you have some of the relationships in your life, so you can appreciate them more in the bond you have.

Don't just take people in your life for granted. They are special — everyone is — and they are in your life for a reason.

If you are a non-believer, you might ask yourself just why you should suddenly appear here on Earth, live your life and then disappear in a puff of smoke; there is always a reason and it was your own choice. Whoever you meet in any relationship, even just a friend or colleague, enjoy their company and you will teach each other something special.

MY SOUL MATE RELATIONSHIP(S)

Whether you already feel you have a soul mate, or whether you are still searching, think about what aspects of your life are important parts of that relationship. For example, the ability to talk openly and listen attentively to each other, or perhaps your soul mate should be willing to meditate or pray with you? What's important for you?

Make a note of some of the issues or important requirements for your soul mate relationship(s):



My Soul Mate should.....

.....

.....

My Soul Mate should.....

.....

.....

My Soul Mate should.....

.....

.....

My Soul Mate should.....

.....

.....

My Soul Mate should.....

.....

.....

If possible do this exercise with your soul mate(s) and see how close your answers match. You may find it challenging, but discussing both your feelings about this will bring you to a greater understanding and closer together.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

A powerful way of exploring your spiritual impulse is by joining a *Spiritual Development Circle*. This is a group of like-minded people I know, who gather together on a regular basis, to learn and grow their own special connection to the higher powers within the Universe. We each have different spiritual gifts but each member will often have some insight, knowledge or ability which they can develop. Some people know they have a psychic ability in childhood but choose not to develop it further for various reasons. I am not one of those, I never knew any such thing. I do remember sometimes feeling 'different', but I was never quite sure why.

I have always had what I call my 'inner knowing'. This was so strong, even as a child, that it has given me a lot of confidence — but I never knew where it came from. At times I would simply *know* something and I wouldn't know why; or the words that came out of my own mouth would amaze me and have no connection to what I was thinking. When this happens, it is of course for the benefit of the person I am talking to, rather than myself, and I usually don't remember the words afterwards. This can happen in the middle of an everyday conversation, not just when I am giving spiritual guidance.

I have various guides around me with whom I connect but one I know is a beautiful *Messenger of Light* energy who is a Master. I always know when he is around me because the energy I feel is different and very special because it is lighter. But when we connect to our guides in a Circle, what we do is now called 'channelling'. When you do this, you are connecting to a higher spiritual wisdom through your psychic centres, to receive guidance and helpful information. It is connecting to the Divine Source and all-that-is and opening up to the possibilities that go beyond the conscious mind. To put it in simple terms, we speak telepathically to our guides and guardian angels.

Our Circle meeting usually starts with healing for our friends and family, certain people in need that we know, and around the globe, and for planet Earth. Then we do a group meditation; people's energy connects, which can be much more powerful than meditating alone. Everybody has different energy, and sometimes when the group dynamics change the event can be much more powerful. On occasions we have witnessed some magical moments which have made me feel very humble indeed. It can also change when someone has a much darker energy, making me feel uncomfortable because everyone's energy (including theirs) is strong.

Sometimes we explore a different area. Tarot cards, dowsing, crystals and chakras have been some of the most popular ones. We often do psychometry, where we hold a piece of jewellery from one of the group and tell them what we see and feel, or even hear.

If this is something which may interest you, most areas have Development Circles running. Some people find a Spiritual Church Circle, and attending church, a rich and rewarding experience. The church tends to concentrate more on having mediums passing messages to individuals in the congregation. You don't have to attend any place of worship to be spiritual; it's up to you to find a place to learn and develop your gifts where you feel comfortable. Your own home is as good a place as any.

My own experience of meeting and working with others led me to start my *'Inspire Your Soul'* evenings. I organise a monthly open group, where anyone is invited to attend. Each month we invite a different speaker to come and talk about his or her work. This can be anything or any subject, so long as it provides an inspiring insight in our personal and spiritual growth. We have enjoyed some amazing evenings, learned about many new ideas, wisdoms, belief systems and holistic therapies. But, most importantly, members of the group have been able to explore and share their personal beliefs in a safe environment without the fear of ridicule.



OUR GUIDES, ANGELS AND MASTERS

Who are these unseen helpers with whom I've had so many conversations over the past fifteen years? I do talk to my own Higher Self in the collective universal consciousness – but there are other helpers too, who can give you extra help, guidance and support. The extra dimension they bring can help you overcome your limiting beliefs.

When you are born, everyone is allocated a guide and a guardian angel who are with you at all times; they never intrude in your life and will only help if you ask. They are never judgmental but can show you simple ways to make life easier. They see the whole bigger picture of your life, and know you far better than you know yourself. Let me explain.

GUIDES & GUARDIANS

Your guide may be a loved one who has left this world and comes back every now and then to keep an eye on you. More usually, a guide might be a wiser spirit who has lived on Earth but has chosen to help you from another realm. A guide will usually appear to you as someone coming from a civilisation with centuries of history, such as a Tibetan monk, an American Indian, someone from ancient China or Egypt. Often their

technology will have been in some ways ahead of our own, such as that of the ancient Mayans.

Different guides may come into your life at various times when you need a particular support or guidance; the same guide will not be with you throughout life. Learning to talk to your guide allows you to receive far more information than you can through signs alone.

ASCENDED MASTERS

There are also Masters — sometimes known as Elders, Higher Ones, Wise Ones or Masters of Light. They are spirits that have evolved beyond the need to incarnate; they are very special and occasionally they guide you, too. Normally they oversee your general guides in the higher realms, and it is a very special privilege for a Master to come into your life. He or she will surround you with a pure high vibrational energy, very different to your normal guide. They are masters of all knowledge.

ANGELS & ARCHANGELS

Your guardian angel never changes. He or she will be with you throughout your life — but other Angels come in and go out again at any particular time. Angels are a much higher and finer vibrational pure energy than a guide. That is why you feel and see them differently. They are a much lighter energy which you can sometimes feel touching you with a tingle, a smell or just a little gentle sensation on your face or a particular part of your body. You may feel a small breeze, or see petals or feathers, and this all comes from Angels.

Angels and guides will never harm you. If you have a feeling that something doesn't feel right, then this is not from your spiritual helpers. Angels are messengers of light that have never lived on Earth — but they are fun and they want you to share with them the lighter side of life. Some people, when they feel Angels around them, just want to giggle. Angels are healers and perform miracles, and are sometimes known as the cosmic connectors.

There are of course higher beings of light known as archangels, the best-known being Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Zadkiel, Chamuel, and Jophiel — each with a special role to play, healing the Universe and you and me. Angels were the chorus that sang to me when I heard the music in my ear.

MY ANGEL EXPERIENCE

One of the places I have visited in Glastonbury is the Chalice Well, a beautiful spiritual garden open to everyone. It has a natural healing well whose waters are known to have healing powers, and it is visited by people from all over the world.

It is not a big garden, yet the feelings you get when you are there are beautiful and serene. Each of us drifted off to do our own thing. For some of us this was to be a meditation; for others it was just to connect our own thoughts and surroundings.

I found myself sitting on a seat by the well itself; I closed my eyes and just sat. After a few minutes, I began to see gorgeous colours swirling in front of my closed eyes, getting stronger and stronger. The colours I was seeing were all of nature. All the browns, greens, yellows, gold and rust, were like the autumn shades of leaves all blowing in front of me, all mixed into one. It was like a peacock's fanned tail but in different colours. Then, I saw all the colours of the rainbow, and the most beautiful blue, and then all the garden colours again, flowing in front of me. They were all surrounded by a wonderful white light, and so was I. We were one.

At the same time, I could feel someone wrapping their arms around me and hugging me tightly – but very gently – and my whole body was tingling. I couldn't move. I sat perfectly still, enjoying this beautiful feeling. It was the most peaceful experience I have ever had. I know I was being bathed in divine love and it was indescribable. I must have sat there for about half an hour, enjoying and embracing every moment... and then reluctantly and slowly I opened my eyes, to see Cathy our Circle leader standing in front of me in amazement: she had just witnessed a Messenger of Light standing behind me. I could not speak. Tears just ran down my face, and words were not needed.

Quite a few of my friends have been touched by Angels or guides and had similar experiences, or have visited the spiritual or Angelic realms during a deep meditation. But one friend, Malcolm, had a completely different experience which neither I nor any of my friends can explain.

Our children are being born into a generation where many of them are much more enlightened than children were even a few decades ago.

Every faith, religion or spiritual belief can be traced back thousands of years. There are so many different views or beliefs that no-one can be completely right. Yet nearly all

have a belief in Angels. Everywhere you look, paintings, sculptures and music mention them. It is sheer delight to allow them into our world.

I know, as do many others who have experienced something similar, that Angels, Guides and Masters exist. However, explaining the feeling, the warmth of the joy and divine love they bring is very hard. Hopefully you will experience this for yourself one day; it will be extremely personal to you, and that is how it should be. Remember: all you have to do is ask for them to come closer into your life and you may have an unexpected insight, a feeling or a tingle, which is just to let you know they are there.

THE MEANING OF CHANNELLING

Channelling with your guides and Angels is done through your psychic third eye and seven centres, known as chakras. These are energy points up and down your body which need to be in balance for you to be in harmony with life.

Everyone will have a different experience but I learned early on that you are not normally given more knowledge or experience all at once than you can understand or handle.

When I first discovered this amazing concept and started to experience so much, I wanted to learn everything. I couldn't get enough of it. But if I had experienced everything at the beginning I wouldn't have been able to take it all in. My vibrational energy wasn't yet ready; instead it was to be what I call 'drip-fed' into me.

As I raised my vibrational consciousness, my connection became higher and stronger. There have been times when the connection disappears for a while, sometimes for a few months which I find frustrating — but this is normally at times when my energy is low or I have other things going on in my life and 'they' have difficulty getting through to me. It's quite normal.

After I told briefly in my first book the story of my spiritual experiences, I have been taken aback by how many people contacted me from all over the world to say that they have experienced something similar. Many friends whom I had known for years told me they share my beliefs — yet we had never talked about it together! Was this because it's a difficult subject to approach when they are not in the circle of my spiritual friends? I am not sure. Many people want to embrace a more enlightened way of living. Some are doing it, and some never will, however we all need to do it in our own way. There are

people like myself doing this, who remain very grounded ... so it doesn't have to be a spaced-out guru way of life!

Because this is so personal and individual to everyone seeking a more meaningful existence, it is important to remember never to make another person your Guru, or to follow their every word and believe only their beliefs. Seek out as many ideas as you can, read as much as you can, learn more — and then follow what feels right to you.

Everyone has their own beliefs, different knowledge, and unique experiences. What is right for them may not be right for you. Some are drawn into cults which I personally think can be extremely damaging. Each cult is different so again, like religion, who is right and who is wrong?

A spiritual path is extremely private and personal to you. You alone. It is important to share your knowledge, shine your light and encourage others to seek their own enlightenment — but please, never tell people what they should or should not be doing. You can be their guide, their support, give them advice about what you know and feel. However, they will be experiencing something slightly different to what you imagine, and will be feeling it in a different way. This is a gradual process so no-one should be rushed.

I have spoken to and coached many people who have started to experience the beautiful sensation of embracing their guides or Angels in completely different ways. Some are just starting to have spiritual experiences, such as visions or sensations they don't understand, or they feel somehow different by sensing a different energy around them ... every one of them has told me a different story because the experience is individual to them.

CHANNELLING MEDITATION

If you are new to channelling, try the guided meditation on the CD with this module, in which you will be guided to open up your chakras and third eye to receive sensations, sounds, images and messages from your guides.

At first you may find this difficult and not be sure about which messages are 'real' and which are 'made up' by your mind. Keep notes and then review them after a few days and weeks to see how relevant they were. Over time you'll begin to tune in more with the messages you receive and be able to discern the real messages of importance. The following sheet is a useful template for recording your meditations.

CHANNELLED MESSAGES

Date.....

Sensations / Sounds / Visual Images:

.....
.....
.....

Messages you heard or 'sensed':

.....
.....
.....
.....

What does this mean to you immediately after the meditation?

.....
.....
.....
.....

What happened later (if anything) that gave you a better understanding of the message?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

MEDITATION, CHANNELLING AND PROTECTION

I have a word to say to those of you reading this who want to take this further: when you start to connect to spirit through deep meditations, it is very important to be sensible and have some guidance. I would not advise you to do this just for the fun of it. There are those who believe you would be wise to put some protection around yourself because you don't want to encourage connecting with unwanted spirits. I don't want to frighten you — but it can happen. People here on Earth are not always nice ... so why should they be different once they have passed over? Personally, I believe that most people leave their negative karma behind when they pass over — but there are various different thoughts about this.

There are various beliefs and different styles of meditation, such as Transcendental, Hindu, Buddhist, Shamanism and many others, each practising a different concept. It might be worth your while to look into which practice suits you best before you follow any one of them too far.

I personally have *never* experienced anything nasty, perhaps this is because I don't draw that sort of energy to me. I *know* my guides protect me at all times. To give you another example of why I think this is the case, let me tell you that I have never watched a horror movie in my life. I don't watch violent programmes, thrillers or anything to do with crime. I don't want to experience nightmares or even think about such things, and therefore avoid attracting anything negative or unwanted or that makes me feel uncomfortable into my presence. Some people love to dance with the dark side of spirituality but this can be dangerous. Negative energy attracts negative energy.

Opening up to channel can be a life changing experience but it is usually a gradual process, so don't be frightened. There are various ways to meditate and channel so I will just mention a general non-religious way.

When you start to channel, at the beginning of your meditation ask for your psychic centre to be open; mentally picture your guides and door keepers standing close by. We each have four door keepers who keep us safe; many people like to imagine a coloured cloak around them, which is a form of protection. Visualise this cloak in whatever colour you like — but blue is a good healing colour. Then state your intention, which of course will be for your higher good. When your meditation is over, do remember to ask for your psychic centre to be closed down until you choose for it to be opened again.

If you are ever doing a meditation which feels uncomfortable, stop and ask that spirit to 'go back to the light'. Come out of the meditation and cleanse yourself by gently brushing your body with your hands to clear any negative energy that may still be with you. Rub your hands together first so they become slightly hot, and then gently cleanse the whole of your body from head to toe. Or if you have crystals, dowse them over your body.

Connecting with your guides and Angels is a wonderfully uplifting experience that will help you see the world in a completely different way. It's a skill that can be learned and you do not have to be spiritually evolved or to have been psychic all your life. You *do* need patience, perseverance and a strong desire to make the connection. It gives you a real feeling of peace, that you are not alone, and that our world is made up of love. You begin to feel that love, and you will be able to share yourself with others in a new way because your life will feel more complete.

I highly recommend the book that helped me at the very beginning, which I will mention again. It is called *Opening to Channel* by Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer; there are plenty of other books which may help. Alternatively, seek out someone who belongs to a Circle, with whom you can share your thoughts and experiences, and who can guide you.

I hope you have a wonderful journey when you open your door to a new life — because your life will never be the same. Enjoy it.



SPIRITUAL EXTRAS

SPIRITUAL ORBS

We talked earlier about the energy that surrounds you and that one way to see this is to have an aura photograph taken.

On my first aura photograph that I had taken you can clearly see a large white circle of pure white which I believe is an Orb on my throat. There are many theories as to what a spiritual Orb is — but one thing it is not is a trick of light in photography. There is no way that this Orb (which you can see on my website www.sheilasteptoe.com) can be anything other than from spirit or the Angels. Orbs can vary in size and sometimes there maybe more than one in a group photograph.

Angela who took my aura photo said that this Angel Orb was there to tell me that speaking was to be my profession, and that my guides would always be with me helping me with my speech and words. That is why it was on my throat, because that is from where we communicate.

Diana Cooper, who is known as the angel lady because she has made a study of Angels, has on her website many Orb photographs taken all over the world. She has written a book about them too called Enlightenment through Orbs. She also mentions that Scientists have verified that Orbs are not lens imperfections or caused by light refracting off particles of dust for instance. In fact, they have concluded that the only possible explanation is that there exists some form of light source within the camera view.

HYPNOSIS AND CONNECTING TO YOUR MIND

One last thing I would like to add is a quote from Michael Newton's book Journey of Souls, which gives a brilliant description of our soul and mind connection:

'How is it possible to reach the soul through hypnosis? Visualise the mind as having three concentric circles, each smaller than the last and within the other, separated only by layers of connected mind-consciousness. The first outer layer is represented by the conscious mind which is our critical, analytic reasoning source. The second layer is the subconscious, where we initially go in hypnosis to tap into the storage area for all the memories that ever happened to us in this life and former lives. The third, the innermost core, is what we are now calling the superconscious mind. This level exposes the highest center of Self where we are an expression of a higher power.'

'The superconscious houses our real identity, augmented by the subconscious which contains the memories of the many alter-egos assumed by us in our former human bodies. The superconscious may not be a level at all, but the soul itself. The superconscious mind represents our highest center of wisdom and perspective, and all my information about life after death comes from this source of intelligent energy.'

LIFE AFTER DEATH

What happens after you die is not a mystery. Because your soul is of the Universe, you return there. Since your physical body belongs to the Earth, when you pass on, your body stays here. Because everything is energy, all things gravitate towards the same energy. While you are alive, because as matter you are *heavy*, gravity keeps you grounded. This is one way to explain life after death: there is no death. Your soul continues on a spiritual journey.

Some regard even talking about death as off limits, presumably on the grounds that if they don't think about it, it won't happen! Birth and death are the two certainties in life. Your soul is well prepared for death; it knows it will not be destroyed because it is just going home. We all come from the same source (our birth) and will go back to the same source (our death) and many describe that as a feeling of going home, a joyous event.

You leave your physical body behind but the main essence of you — your soul — goes home. You leave all your mental and physical pain behind, and as the expression says: 'You can't take it with you when you are gone' — meaning all the material things we accumulate.

You fear death, I am sure, because of leaving behind your loved ones; also your loved ones don't want to let you go either. But we are never really far apart, because in the spirit world we can look after and watch over our loved ones. And we will be reunited one day.

Your soul never dies; it merely moves to a different layer of consciousness. We are all eternal. Death is not darkness, but light. Your soul returns to the light.

You return home to your soul family (see below) which is now understood to be nothing other than a higher level of consciousness, or the first level in the Astral Plane — and from everything I have read, it is blissful. There are many other, higher levels which I will explain later, where our guides, masters and Angels hop about from one realm to the other. I have to say it sounds like fun 'up there' — but we will learn more about that shortly.

We are all made from energy. Your soul, the core of your being, comes with you life after life — but you take on a different persona and body in each life time. We have all lived as male and female previously, and learned many things in each lifetime.

Sometimes you come back to teach what you have learned. You may have experienced something in a previous life, which affects you in this lifetime. For example, many people who have a fear of water have found, in a past life regression session under hypnosis, that they drowned in a previous life. Once this block is cleared, their fear of water disappears.

Apparently, we choose to return to Earth. The reason for doing this varies from person to person — but you agree with your spiritual Masters and your guides, before you come here, what it is you need to learn or experience. Some come to teach, others to learn to

be loved or how to deal with an emotion such as anger, jealousy or a separation. Despite what you may have been led to believe, it isn't always something major. Some may have many lessons, others just one or two. Often, you have experiences which are simply 'triggers' reminding you in your subconscious mind that you are on the right path.

We each have free will and can choose to lead a completely different life if we want to. There is no right or wrong way to lead your life — but hopefully for your spiritual growth you are being the authentic you.

This can be hard to understand ... but many people's lives are taken from them at an early age. That is part of their destiny. For whatever reason, their time on Earth has been completed. A friend of mine, Sheila, always said she never wanted to grow old. She had a sort of inner-knowing that she was not meant to be here to live through old age, and she died in a car crash at the age of fifty. Her family and friends will never know why, but she does; as do others when they pass over to the higher realms.

Your Higher Self knows what you need to achieve in this lifetime. By connecting to it, you can access your life's plan. As we discussed earlier, you can access this through meditation, dreams and intuition. Your spiritual helpers and Angels just remind you and give you gentle nudges with guidance, and can help you accelerate your personal and spiritual growth.

Many people continue a pattern to their lives which they may have experienced in a past life. Or they may have come here to experience it for the first time — for example abuse or suffering. Remember we talked about The Boy Whose Skin Fell Off? He understood this concept brilliantly. Once this is recognised and the patterns change, you have dealt with your lesson and it will not happen again in this lifetime — or even in a future lifetime — unless you let it happen.

Is this karma, as some people say? Theories about this differ, and the saying What comes around goes around may be true. However, if you do horrible things or experience trauma, could this be related to something in your past? Many 'channelled' books say that this is not always the case, because karma is also an opportunity to learn and to practise love and forgiveness. Karma is also an opportunity for atonement; to wipe the slate clean and make things up with those you have wronged in the past.

Karma is about love and knowledge, and is mentioned in nearly all religions, so you must remember that we are all responsible for our own actions.

MY EXPERIENCES OF DEATH

I would like to share with you a couple of experiences, to help you see that there really is no death. We merely pass onto a higher dimension, still connected, and we can still communicate with each other because we are all made up of the same energy. We do this through our open psychic centre, or telepathically through our thoughts and intuition (which I talked about earlier). There is nothing to fear.

This was demonstrated for me in an amazing but very sad experience: the sudden death of my friend Theresa's husband Adonis. It was a terrible shock and a tragedy to us all, and also was the catalyst for bringing up painful emotions I thought I had buried years before when my husband left me. Adonis's death was sudden and horrific. The post mortem stated that he had died of a heart attack but to Theresa that didn't ring true; she was going through turmoil trying to work things out. He'd died at home in her arms after a horrific attack, too quickly for him to be able to tell her what was happening.

He had previously visited a dentist to have a wisdom tooth out — but, being a man, had taken some painkillers before he got there. The dentist then gave him some more, and Adonis's ulcer burst, contributing at least partly to a heart attack. How do I know this? Because I relived it at midnight one night a few months later! I felt all the acid in my body come up into my throat; I was gagging and I thought I was going to die. Thankfully it subsided as quickly as it happened — but for those few moments it was a living hell.

My second experience happened few days after Adonis's death. A dozen of our spiritual Circle members held a Healing Circle for Theresa but not all of us could make it. One of our missing members, Anthony, came through telepathically to my psychic centre and asked me to say that he wished to be remembered; he was there with us and wanted to send his love to Theresa. I passed on this message, which we all thought strange because he was one of the people not present. He had always loved being part of the Circle but had not attended for some time.

Another member of the group, Sharon, picked up on this because she had been concerned about him for a while. The very next day she went with a friend to his house, only to find that he had passed away in his sleep in his bed, a few days previously. So he had been with us ... *in spirit*.

Why Adonis and Anthony chose me to experience these events I am not sure. I am not a medium. That's perhaps why Anthony chose me to connect with, because it was not the sort of thing I would normally have picked up on, let alone conveyed.

People who have died are merely living in a different dimension to you and me. We will meet them again when we ourselves pass over as a soul. Michael Newton, in his book *Journey of Souls*, has done pioneering research on the subject of what happens when you return home.

When you return 'home', you (your soul) are met (in general) by your guides and your soul groups, and all of you are surrounded with pure love. They appear as beings of light, made up of vibrant energy far more powerful than you can imagine. You go through a process of de-layering and healing — otherwise you would have difficulty in connecting to this higher vibration and light. Many people who have had near death experiences talk about this light.

We all have had many lifetimes and we choose to return to Earth as part of our spiritual growth. You might choose instead to go to other dimensions; many people say this physical Universe is only one of a multitude of Universes, all of them foreign to human concept. I find this believable: why should we be the only beings in this Multiverse?

As I understand it, when you return to Earth some of your energy is left behind with your surviving soul group, for you to connect with when you rejoin them again after a death. I believe this is because that is where your Higher Self is, and what you connect to sometimes via the psychic connection. Communication with each other, and with you, is made via thoughts telepathically relayed; they can take on any form they want if they wish to communicate with you. That is why you sometimes see spirit in physical form — because that is what you would recognise.

If you can imagine Angels with wings, then that is what you see (if you are lucky enough). They are far more advanced than you or I will ever be. In the last few decades our consciousness and vibration on Earth have risen and we have become more advanced. That is why this whole new stronger connection is happening around the globe as we become closer.

This is the part that interests me; how I could see all these pictures like a mini-film? The answer seems to be that they are made up of energy too. They are transmitted via

light-images, thought-impulses or thermal and electromagnetic images, and one day you are going to see these too!

At some stage you seek to review the life that you have just lived; usually you do this with your guide, and you may do it in a number of ways. You might choose to go to a library of life books; on opening your own book it comes alive and enables you as a soul to watch a film of all the details of your life. Alternatively, you might review your life telepathically, or relive it. I don't fully understand how you do that yet but Michael Newton does explain it well in his book.

Whichever theory is the right one, to know that the pictures that are beamed down to me in a form of energy is astounding. So, what I see is in the same form as when I will be reviewing my life — but it takes our guides and Angels much concentration to send this down to the Earth plane.

I have also read that they can 'push' us with this powerful energy in a particular direction. This may account for what I can only describe as 'arranged meetings' — the ones that happen out of the blue. In the many books I've read there are several theories as to whether it is my Angels or my guides who are sending these messages. To me it doesn't matter. Either way, it's a privilege and I love receiving them.

Perhaps one day science will discover how powerful this energy is or how it is made up. Personally, I suspect you will only know when you return home.

LET'S RECAP...

- The Spiritual Impulse is unique in each of us – it is our way of exploring the unknown in the universe and our place in it.
- Spirituality can be part of many (some say all) aspects of life. It's important to recognise where your spiritual beliefs, values and practices fit into your world.
- All relationships have a spiritual element, but our Soul Relationship(s) are the most important and we should nurture and cherish them. It's important to discuss and share aspects of your spiritual development with your Soul partner and Soul family.
- Make learning and sharing your spiritual impulse part of your weekly routine – perhaps by reading or listening to spiritual gurus, or by joining a Spiritual Development Circle.
- Angels, Guides and Masters exist to help us on our life journey. Learn about them and try channelling or meditating in their presence. You may be presently surprised by the results you get.
- Death is part of the natural cycle and is a stepping stone to greater things. Whatever your beliefs about the afterlife or reincarnation, feel secure in the knowledge that your life here on Earth is just one small part of your Soul's journey.

Final Thoughts

You need not fear dying because we are all eternal. Your guides and Angels are only a thought away and you can connect to them if we want to — but you need to be open. They cannot reach you through a closed energy field (you).

To put this another way: imagine if you put your hand up to reach something higher than yourself. It's there but just out of your reach. That's how near they are; just a layer of consciousness away.

Follow your own spiritual path, which is unique to you.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In the final module of this programme we will be looking back at the journey we have taken together and exploring the ways in which you can Master Your Own Destiny. I will also be guiding you to create your own *Destiny Plan* for your future.

FEEDBACK.....

Don't forget to keep in touch. Send me your stories and experiences by email:

sheila@sheilasteptoe.com

Recommended Reading & Further Information

Many Lives, Many Masters by Dr Brian Weiss

Journey of Souls by Michael Newton

Ask and It is Given by Esther and Jerry Hicks

Opening to Channel by Sanaya Roman and Duane Packer

To learn more about angels, guides and orbs consider books by:

Diana Cooper

Doreen Virtue

Chrissie Astell

For personal spiritual development consider books and audio books by:

Dr Brian Weiss

Rhonda Byrne

James Redfield

Dalai Lama

Eckhart Tolle

Deepak Chopra

Caroline Myss

Neale Donald Walsch

Wayne W. Dyer

Gregg Braden

Louise Hay