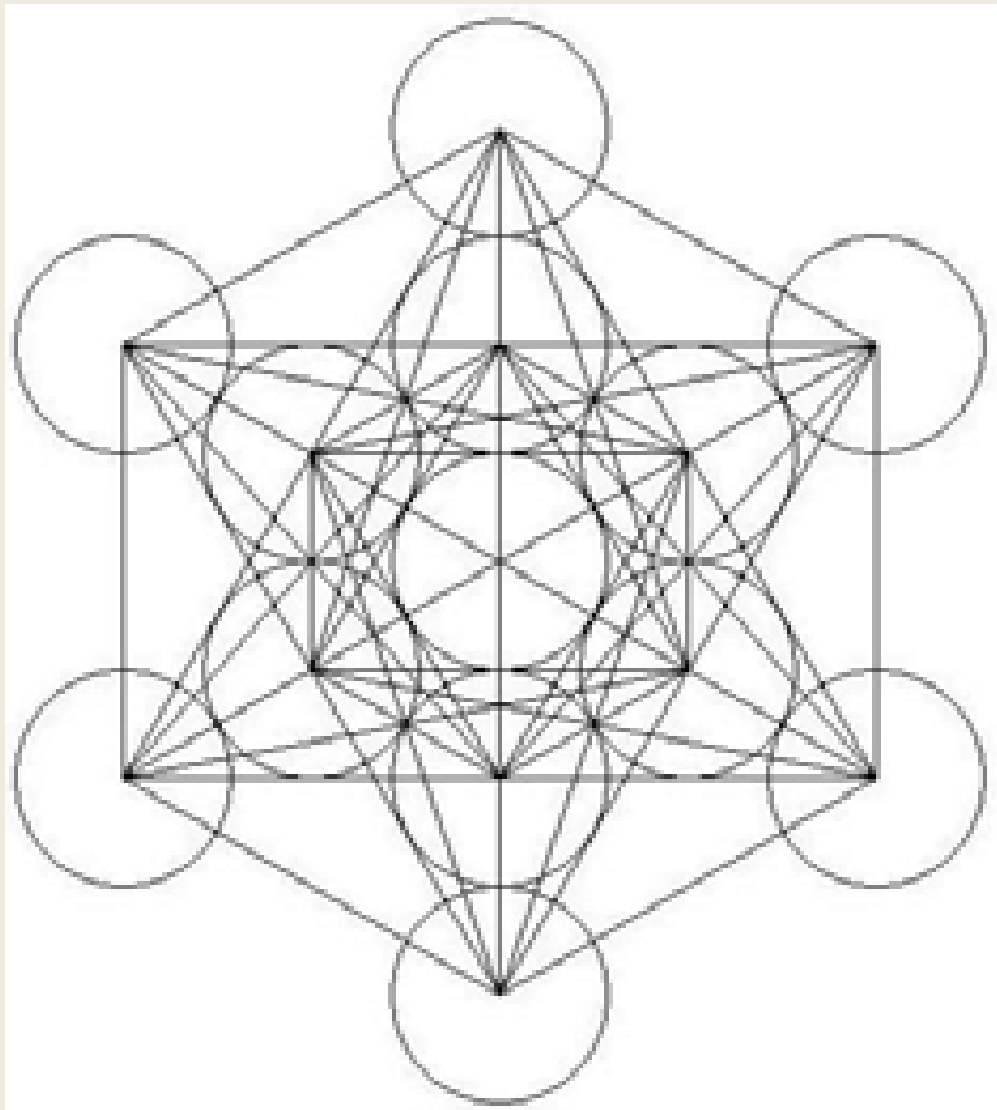


Thinking Outside the Box

Adele Ryan McDowell, Ph.D.



Contents

Welcome, Class, to Advanced Uncertainty.....	3
Were you Cleopatra?	6
Here's looking at you: past life exercise	8
Angels and other invisible allies are waiting for your call.	10
The shaman, the mystic and the psychotic.....	12
Messages from the other side.....	16
Slip-sliding through the dimensions	20
Spiritual funk: untethered and free falling	23
A blessing for times of crisis and chaos	25
Author	27

Welcome, Class, to Advanced Uncertainty

Is your world more down than up? Has sideways become your new vertical? Have your health, sanity, relationships, plans, money, housing or employment concerns been in a bucking-bronco state of flux? Have global warming, political warring, economic forecasting, ecological nightmares and cresting costs of living upped your blood pressure, lowered your sleep quotient and played havoc with your moods? Are you cranky, hypervigilant and more fearful than you care to admit? Is it mind-numbing to ascertain what is or what isn't dangerous in your food, environment or medicine cabinet?

Do you wonder what the devil has happened to your world, and is your life going to hell in a hand-basket faster than you can shout a four-letter expletive?

Welcome, Class, to Advanced Uncertainty.

You are an advanced soul to be here.

Please know that you have logged many a lifetime and buckets of experiences to earn your spot in this graduate course. You are the *crème de la crème*. Granted, it may not feel like it at this very moment as you constantly juggle chaos, crisis and uncertainty. Not only have you earned this placement, you also volunteered, brave souls that you are. You have volunteered to shepherd the new high-vibratory, cooperative, peacemaking energies into the world.

Further—and I ask you to refrain from tossing tomatoes at my head at this juncture—all your daily concerns and issues hold your fingerprint. No, I am not blaming you. I am reminding you that on a soul level you co-created



these energies and experiences because they are the fastest, most expeditious and direct way for your soul to grow and develop. And growing pains (and the attendant panic) frequently come with this soul growth package. Ouch, right?

Yes, I see a hand in the back of the room?

How do we deal with all of this raging uncertainty?

Excellent query. Here are some possible ways to help you refind your balance amid the upside-down roller coaster of life:

GO WITH THE FLOW

That's right. No pushing, no judging, no micromanaging or overthinking. There is no forcing to be had. Simply go with the flow and follow the energies that present themselves. Allow yourself to surrender to the universal oneness.

KNOW THE ANSWER TO THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS

1. *What makes you safe?*

Is it being in nature, surrounded by others, trust in the invisible realms, or a deep connection with a certain someone? Perhaps it is room to breathe, space to run, time to be or togetherness with others? Maybe it is having a Swiss Army knife, a first-aid kit, some cash, food, water or chocolate?

2. *What makes you sane?*

What are your personal grounding elements that make you feel less scattered, overwhelmed or crazy? What helps you mentally and emotionally reboot? Perhaps it is creating order, making beauty, being understood, having choices, being heard, expressing yourself, discretionary time, a place to clear your head, a heartfelt conversation.

ANCHOR THE LIGHT

This is essential to your well-being. Here's how:

- a. Align yourself with present time, present tense and the present of the present. In other words, be in the here and now.
- b. Operate from your heart space. Allow yourself to become more open, compassionate and intuitive as you check in with your heart first.
- c. Search for joy.
- d. Practice gratitude; it changes your vibration.
- e. Smile from the inside out.

- f. Practice self-love. This is not psychobabble. This is an important concept and one that is very hard to practice and incorporate into your thinking. Remember: you carry a spark of the divine within you. Honor that. Acknowledge that. See, sense, feel or know that. Act from that place of non-judgment and total, compassionate acceptance. This is, indeed, graduate work; make no mistake about this.
- g. Surrender your personal remote control of the universe. That's right; let it go. Drop it, please, and step away from the device.

HOMEWORK

Class, for your homework I want you to

- 1) Answer the two aforementioned questions;
- 2) Practice several of the methods given for anchoring the light;
- 3) Clock in three separate experiences of having fun—laughter must be included during the course of the week.

Were you Cleopatra?

Or, maybe, Julius Caesar or William Shakespeare or Marie Antoinette? Discussions of past lives are often met with a bit of a smirk. Do you really believe? And the answer is, “Yes, I do”.

I look at past life information in a number of different ways. It serves as a teacher; it explains talents, predispositions and interests; it illuminates personal archetypal patterns; and it expands our consciousness beyond the three-dimensional being we are at this moment and thereby enhances our soul growth.

Wikipedia tells us that the word *reincarnation* is derived from Latin, literally meaning “entering the flesh again.” If you accept past lives, you believe, like a solid majority of the world, that reincarnation—the concept of a soul’s recycling throughout different lifetimes wearing a new robe of flesh on each occasion for the purpose of soul growth and soul balancing—is real. Thus, depending on how many spins of the karmic wheel you have had, you are an old soul with many experiences or a new soul who is still learning the ropes on a soul level.



The beauty of reincarnation is that each of us has had a chance—via different lifetime experiences—to sample genders, ethnicities, body types and sexual preferences. We have known hunger, abundance, slavery, love, war, plagues, happiness, murder, children, rape, travel, prison, societal strictures, hardscrabble living, idyllic lives and the like. In other words, the panoply of life has been played out by our souls. In one lifetime, we have loved this one and hated that one; in a later

lifetime, we have taken the opposite point of view in order to learn from all points of the spectrum.

Clearly, the soul is a profound teacher. We have all been one of the bad guys—murdering, plundering, raping—and we have all been one of the good guys too. The karmic wheel is forever turning, and our soul is choosing what adventure to have next in order to develop our compassion, sense of service and, ultimately, understand the oneness of us all. And if we really come to understand the oneness of us all, there will be no need for war and we will mitigate religious hatred.

For the record, I know I was not Cleopatra. I do know I have had multitudinous lifetimes in ancient Egypt -- experiencing a bit of everything, frequently a slave as well as a scribe. I also know I flubbed one of my initiations in the Pyramid and my fears called forth a myriad of snakes. I think you can still hear me screaming.

As with dreams, I often read past life information as symbolic. What I have gleaned may or may not be accurate; my soul knows the truth. But it does tell me that my soul has carried forth, day in and day out, lifetime after lifetime. That makes me feel stronger, more resilient and accepting that all things are possible because, after all, the soul is eternal.

And if we accept that the soul is eternal, the idea of death becomes less scary and mysterious. It becomes, instead, the great shape shift or, as Chief Seattle said, “a change of worlds.” I like that.

Here's looking at you: A past life exercise

Are you ready to remember? Here is an exercise that I call Mirror Time. It will allow you to see some of your past life faces.

1. Place yourself, seated, in front of a mirror so that you may comfortably see your face. Ideally, you will have placed a candle in front of you with the flame level with your heart.

(Note: If you wear glasses or contact lenses, remove them so that your eyes may go soft. If you are very nearsighted, you will need to be very close to the mirror so you can actually see your face. Be careful. A candle, for you, may be contraindicated.)

2. Using one or two fingers, gently circle your heart chakra (at the midpoint of your breastbone) in a clockwise motion, i.e., go left.
3. Allow your eyes to go soft, try not to focus on anything save lightly seeing your face, take in some deep breaths and set the intention that you are open and would welcome seeing some of your soul faces.
4. With some practice and increased relaxation, you will begin to see your faces, flicking by like cards on a Rolodex. Try not to think too much; just allow it to happen. If you start analyzing and questioning yourself, you are going to lose some momentum.

I first did this exercise 25 or more years ago. My heart was pounding. I was excited and nervous and, of course, hoped I was doing it right. It took a good 30 minutes for me to begin to see my face morphing into other faces. I was convinced I was making it up, but over time and with repetition, I began seeing some of the same faces. I certainly didn't see anyone famous, but I did see male and female, young and old, thin and not so thin, and a variety of cultures. It was a kick and gave me broader perspective on myself and life. I realize my soul has been around the cosmos quite a few times and holds a fair bit of experience.



Angels and other invisible allies are waiting for your call

Can you just picture it? A huge room where there are angels and guides hanging out, flipping through *People* magazine and waiting for our calls. The image tickles me to no end.

“All lines are open. Call now for some readily available assistance from the other realms.”

I don't know about you, but I can be stubbornly resistant to help—even if I am up to my neck in muck. “Oh, nooooo,” I say, “I can do it myself.” Really, how limited am I? There is help at the ready—and mighty powerful help, I might add. And, yet, there are days when I persist in my obstinacy until I stop my monkey-mind madness, take a few deep breaths, get quiet and surrender. Surrender ... it's always the ultimate threshold before the next step of growth and rebirth.

The way I understand it, we humans have to be open to the connection and ask for the help. The invisible allies cannot take action until we ask for it; hence, the waiting room and why there are invisible-ally operators standing by, waiting for our call.

Years ago, Trudy Griswold and her now-deceased sister, Barbara Mark, wrote an international best seller called *Angelspeake: How to Talk to Your Angels—A Guide*. Their book details a step-by-step plan for developing communication with your angels.

One of their methods, if memory serves me accurately, is to begin daily correspondence with your angel. For example, you would begin your



entry with “Dearest (Your Name Here), I love you and ...” You then write down whatever comes from your angel. I realize this might feel contrived, especially at first, but if you are open, willing to have some fun, not judge and try this practice with some regularity for a few weeks, you may find yourself pleasantly surprised.

Peggy Black, who describes herself as a transducer, scribe and witness, has brought forth Morning Messages from the Star Folks to awaken all of us to our multidimensional selves. These messages speak to resonance, compassion and joy. They are accompanied by very fun line drawings. They are upbeat and uplifting.

Allow me to share with you Message No. 1:

It is your birthright to awaken.

We have an open frequency to you. It is always, has been, will be. You decide the volume, the connection, the awareness. We have been like soft music in your background. There are times it catches your attention and times it is just there. When you vibrate joy, gratitude, love, and compassion, our contact—our presence—can stream with you into all your projects, activities, views. Fear, worry, judgments close the flow.

We invite you to make a practice of allowing yourself to still your activity and be quiet for a few minutes several times a day. As you practice and use this simple tool, it will become easier and quicker to reach your state of balance. This allows your body-mind-emotions-spirit to realign.

We encourage you and others to listen to the guidance within, to make time for stillness and be receptive to what is being offered. It is your birthright to awaken. This is the lifetime to honor your total magnificent, multidimensional Self.

Consider opening yourself to the grace of your invisible allies. Operators are standing by.

The shaman, the mystic and the psychotic

It sounds like the beginning of one of those three-person jokes: the shaman, the mystic and the psychotic walked into a bar. But this isn't a joke; this is more of a pondering aloud on the line between sanity and insanity, delusion and reason.

What prompted these ponderings was that I had to hospitalize someone this week. As a psychologist with a high functioning caseload, hospitalizations happen infrequently. They are not the norm for me. I always feel like a little part of me has died when the deed is done, and the patient has been admitted into the local psychiatric hospital.

Hospitalizations, while often necessary, can be, like most experiences, both beneficial and detrimental to the patient. Variables like medications, staff and hospital population and culture can influence the experience.

A psychiatrist pal of mine contends that if patients were compliant with their psych meds, there would be a drastic decrease in hospitalizations. I think she voices a common theme among the psychiatric community.

That said, years ago, I heard another psychiatrist allow that hospitalizations were necessary when the patient needed community.

I like that idea. Don't we all need community, be it family, friends or institutions, to hold us during our vulnerable moments? Not so ironically, that psychiatrist is also a nun. She understood, I believe, from a broader perspective.

This reminds me of a shaman story:

There was an adolescent



girl who had stopped talking and eating and was generally nonresponsive. Her parents were very worried and had desperately tried, to no avail, to find the right treatment for their daughter. The experts they consulted had no idea what was wrong with the girl, and no one could identify her malady. As a last resort, the family took their daughter to a shaman in an outlying village.

The shaman assessed the situation, undoubtedly by reading the girl's energy and communicating with his spirit guides.

The shaman told the family to return in one week's time. He then called for some of the women of the village and instructed them to bathe the girl several times a day. While doing the bathing ritual, the women were to sing certain healing songs to the girl. And so they did.

After several days of this loving, holding treatment, the girl moved out of her nonresponsive state and returned to her normal self. The unconditionally loving, communal acceptance and nurturing of the women, coupled with the power of the bathing ritual, had allowed the girl to heal and to return from her inner hell, where she had been reliving the rape she had just endured.

What happens when we lose touch with reality? Is there a way to come back beyond the convention of psychotropic drugs?

This week, the young man I had hospitalized had also lost touch with reality. He heard voices and had found, among other scarier conclusions, a union with the divine. Was my patient having a mystical moment or was he psychotic? Or could it have been both?

Joan of Arc was considered crazy by some because she admitted that she, too, heard voices; actually, she heard the voice of God.

From writer Lucretia B. Yaghjian, we have this delectable bit:

Captain Robert De Baudercourt: "How do you mean, voices?"

Joan of Arc: "I hear voices telling me what to do. They come from God."

De Baudercourt: "They come from your imagination."

Joan of Arc: "Of course. That is how the messages from God come to us."

The voices told Joan to enter into battle in order to save her country. For her efforts, Joan of Arc became a national hero of France, and the Catholic Church canonized her, making her St. Joan. Both a hero and a saint: this is not bad for a woman who heard voices and, concomitantly, acted on her guidance.

I have worked with another young man, who had served in Iraq. As a result of the intense heat and overnight duty hours and lack of sleep, he had, to my way of thinking, a psychotic break, *psychotic* meaning that his reality was distorted and delusional. Now, he wonders if his mind is controlled by aliens—aliens as in extraterrestrials.

The idea of ETs does not scare me off. The thought of mind control, however, sends up warning flares.

John Mack, now deceased, was a Harvard University psychiatrist and professor. He made a name for himself by facilitating psychotherapy groups for individuals who had experienced contact with extraterrestrials. Mack was not ousted from the ivy-clad walls of Harvard. In fact, years ago, I heard him speak on everyday psychiatric diagnostic matters at a Harvard conference.

In my shamanic work, I have had contact with Star people, animals, elements in nature and the dead. I hear voices; I see things. Am I nuts too? I am sure some of you would say yes, but, really, are you so certain that my experiences were impossible? They were very real to me, and served as healing tools in my work with others.

In the 1990s, as a part of a research project, I began a series of screening interviews in a search for candidates for a psychospiritual group I was forming. I asked each candidate the usual clinical assessment questions, which included inquiries regarding hearing voices and having visions.

From a clinical standpoint, hearing voices and having visions is considered delusional and psychotic. From a shamanic as well as mystical perspective, these are not considered criteria for concern. Clearly, context is everything. It all depends on the lens with which you choose to see.

See, the light does get tricky here.

Obviously, I am not saying all psychotic episodes are mystical. But is it possible that someone in an expanded state might truly experience a mystical moment with God? I am not so quick to disallow the possibility. And by mystical, I mean a direct experience with the godhead, in other words, a union and communion with the divine that can result in ecstasy, illumination and a rarefied sense of oneness.

What I am saying is that the line between the clinical and the spiritual is more smudged than we might like to allow.

I like that Carl Jung defined maturity as being able to hold the tension of opposites. Perhaps that is what is called for here.

Before we are quick to label and judge, maybe we should consider that there might be alternative ways of looking at life and healing. There is not always one answer. Joan of Arc would, undoubtedly, concur.

COURAGE IS THE CAPACITY TO CONFRONT WHAT CAN BE IMAGINED.

LEO ROSTEN

Messages from the other side

Once upon a time, a woman, let's call her Shirley, lost her husband to the ravages of cancer. It had been a long and arduous battle. Shirley was completely depleted on every level.

After the funeral service, everyone returned to the house. The coffee pot was plugged in; neighbors brought in food. Shirley excused herself from the din of family and friends and retreated to her bedroom, whereupon she fell into their king-size marital bed. She was utterly devastated and was totally lost without her husband, Charlie.

Then, a remarkable thing happened: Shirley felt Charlie hold her and comfort her as she lay cocooned in her grief. She wondered if she was simply imagining the very thing she wanted most in the world.

Fast-forward six months. Shirley has now sold their home and moved into a small apartment. After the movers had finished their deliveries, Shirley walked aimlessly about and surveyed the disarray. Her once-familiar furniture seemed very out of place in the plain-vanilla box of what was to be her new home, her new home without the man she called the love of her life.

Shirley was overwhelmed and, as she was wont to do, once again, took to her bed. And as you might guess, Charlie appeared again. He stood in the doorway and reassured her. Shirley told me that Charlie appeared about once a month for a number of months. Each time, Charlie stood in the doorway, leaning into the jamb in his inimitable way. On his last visit, Charlie told Shirley that this was going to be his last visit, because he knew she would be OK.

Shirley asked me if I thought she was crazy. My answer was no, I believed that her Charlie was there to hold her and help her through her debilitating grief. I was happy for Shirley. She had had the comfort and reassurance of the connection; she had received, to my way of thinking, both a healing and a blessing—and it came from her husband on the “other side.”

From my perspective, the other side is thrumming with activity. I believe that those who have gone before us are cheering us forward toward a soulful, happy and joyous life. I believe that we are less alone than we imagine. Not only do we hold the memories in our minds, but we also hold the memories in our cell tissue and our hearts.

Death does not have to end a relationship. It can continue, albeit in new forms, such as dreams, where, perhaps, you are given an answer to a question or affirmation for the next step or, simply, a loving connection that fills your empty heart.



There can be the waft of a familiar scent, such as perfume, pipe smoke, roses or even alcohol that tells you your loved one is nearby.

There can be personal symbology as well. I know one man who feels affirmed by and connected with his deceased father every time he sees a blue heron—and in an area blue herons are not known to populate. There is another woman who recognizes her deceased mother by the yellow butterflies that come to rest on her arm and hair for a good 20 to 30 minutes at a time.

There are the odd mechanical happenings, such as the woman whose deceased mother regularly turns on the radio to let her daughter know that they are still connected. Or, for another woman, there is the broken mantel clock that chimes every year on the date of her husband's death.

The messages come in all shapes and sizes. There is no one right way. It can be looking down and seeing a heart in midtown Manhattan and knowing, without a doubt, that it is a message from your mother. It can be meeting someone who says something that resonates within your heart and you know that person is the messenger for you.

It's a matter of openness. It's a matter of resonance. Are you open to the possibility? And, whatever is presented or unfolded, does it resonate within you?

I remember working with a 16-year-old girl; let's call her Cassie, who was grieving the loss of her youngest brother in an accident in the family car. Early one Monday morning, their minivan was hit hard—hard enough to flip it over. Cassie recalls that at the time of the accident she was wearing a black-and-white summer skirt. When the minivan stopped rolling, Cassie noticed that her skirt was becoming red, and she, then, realized, with shock and horror, that her brother was crushed beneath her.

Cassie felt tremendous guilt that she was alive and that her brother had perished in the accident.

In one of our last sessions, with Cassie's permission and some prior prep work, I invoked the presence of her brother and asked for a message to help Cassie heal and assuage her suffocating guilt. Admittedly, Cassie was a bit suspect of this part of our work, but her curiosity outweighed her reservations.

Cassie was stretched out on the couch, and I was seated in a chair placed near Cassie's head. Cassie listened, with little or no reaction, as I relayed messages from her brother. I then told Cassie that I sensed that her brother was doing cartwheels down her body. Cassie began to sob; she had felt the cartwheel movements before I even uttered the words.

For Cassie, this was physical proof of a connection with her brother and served as the first step in her healing. Even better, Cassie later told me that her little brother was infamous in the family for his pride in his ability to do cartwheels. Clearly, her deceased little brother knew how to meaningfully connect with his big sister.

Children hold the faint memory of their soul time before birth and are less jaded about the possibility of the unknown. Some children see their guardian angels; others have imaginary friends. I wonder if some of these imaginary pals are more than a grand imagination but spiritual allies at the ready.

This leads me to one more story.

There was a young boy, let's call him Bobby, who was having Sunday dinner at his grandparents' house. The dinner table was full; there were Bobby's parents, his older brother and his grandmother. His grandfather, who was at the end stages of cancer, was in bed; he was too weak and too ill to be part of this Sunday tradition.

Bobby raced through his meal, and, when finished, asked if he could

be excused and rejoin his grandfather in the front bedroom. His parents gave their permission, and Bobby happily skipped off to be with his granddad.

A short while later, Bobby yelled for his family to come quickly. Everyone bolted from the table and rushed to the grandfather's bedroom. The adults checked to see that the grandfather was resting comfortably and still breathing, and he was. Bobby, on the other hand, was wild-eyed and pointing to the end of the bed.

At the end of the bed, Bobby has seen a young red-haired boy, about his age, beckoning to his grandfather. Bobby wanted to know who the red-haired boy was. His parents looked blank, shrugged their shoulders and shook their heads; they had no idea, nor did they see a red-haired boy. His grandmother, however, knew exactly who the red-haired boy is; he was the grandfather's brother, who had died as a young boy in a boating accident.

Bobby's mother came to me and asked if I thought Bobby's vision was real. I said yes, and explained that it was not unusual for loved ones to ease the transition of their relatives. They offer familiarity and comfort in making the shift from human body to soul being.

For those left on the earth plane, the loss of a loved one can feel like cruel and unusual punishment. It is hard to absorb, much less accept, the permanency of the loss. We grieve for the dead, but, in reality, we are grieving the pain of the loss of connection with our loved one.

May I suggest that there might be more than merely the physical plane?

May I suggest that there might be deceased loved ones applauding your efforts regularly?

May I suggest that if you were to widen your perspective and expand your perceptions that there might be a few messages within your reach?

You know the feeling of love and connection; perhaps it is closer than you think.

Slip-sliding through the dimensions

Has it happened to you? Are you feeling like a stranger in your own skin? Have you had moments where you felt as though you had walked through a portal? You walk into the post office and you feel—for a few seconds—as though another part of you has taken a quick trip into an alternative time-space dimension?

Have you felt momentarily altered—without benefit of substances? Are you occasionally dizzy or disoriented for no discernible reason? Have you had flashes of color or light appear—seemingly out of nowhere—before you? Have you experienced powerful symbols, unusual sounds or odd physical sensations (especially around the head and neck, particularly at night or during meditation) presenting themselves to you?

Momentarily is the operative word. I am talking about high-functioning, mentally and emotionally stable individuals who find themselves feeling—quite frankly—weird in assorted, discrete moments in their lives. It can be disconcerting, even alarming, especially if you are new to the world of energy.

If any of this resonates with you, may I suggest that your wonderfully sensitive and highly energetic self is slip-sliding through the dimensions and

opening to new energies. For many at this time, these new emerging energies are those connecting with our star families. Yes, I am talking ETs.

In the not-so-distant past, the term *ET*—as in extraterrestrial—was often met with an eye-roll and attendant snicker, a dismissive nod to the speaker's obvious craziness or the Hollywood-amplified fear of the unknown—surely-must-be-menacing-and-dastardly outer-



space demon. But these days even the Vatican allows that our space family is real. And in the coming months, more and more acknowledgment of and information about our star friends will be coming forward. Our world will, once again, be expanded by new concepts.

Energy 101, along with quantum physics, tells us that everything is energy. As our consciousness expands and awareness increases, doesn't it follow that our energies would also expand and increase? For some of you who are sensitively attuned and energetically aligned, these increased vibrations from our star friends can shake, rattle and roll the physical container. What's a body to do?

My suggestions:

- **Listen to your body.** I know, I know—this is my flair for the obvious, but really, this makes the most sense. If your body wants more protein, more water, more chocolate, more rest ... whatever, consider honoring the request. Not only do you become more attuned to what your body needs and wants, you facilitate the whole process simply by attentively listening and allowing what is needed at this moment. Nothing is static: change is ever-present. Therefore, listen and listen again to refinements and course corrections as they are proffered.
- **Increase your quiet time.** Be it walks in nature, listening to classical music, staring out the window, taking long naps, saying no to the late night: allow yourself more downtime. Your physical self will adjust to the increased frequencies more easily. You are not pushing against outflow as you try to receive inflow; you create space so that you can readily receive and absorb more of the incoming.
- **Consider salt baths.** Add some salt to your bath water. It can be Epsom salts, baking soda, rock salt, or bath salts. You will give your energetic matrix a cleanse as well as a boost. If you are someone sans tub, try a foot bath; that can serve the same purpose in a more limited fashion.
- **Be like the penguin.** Energetically speaking, penguins, as you know, are expert at slip-sliding through the dimensions, taking it all as it comes without any great serious overlay. Accept. Play. Be. Allow yourself more play.

Fun is here-and-now energy. Fun and creativity serve as the great cosmic lubricants that allow your energies to flow more easily. Further, they increase the slip-sliding interdimensionality as you fully engage your active imagination, which is rooted in your psyche (think *soul*).

- **Take notes.** To help you as you walk your path, it is helpful to understand some of your personal symbology. What symbols, signs, body symptoms, sounds and dreams keep reappearing? Consider what these signs might mean to you. If you are stuck, pull out pen and paper, and dialogue. For example, if there is a repeated tightness at the back of your neck that has nothing to do with stress or injury, ask the pain to talk to you. It might feel silly and contrived when you begin, but if you persist, there will be answers. And be advised: answers can come in multitudinous forms—an overheard remark, a snippet from a TV show, a paragraph in a book, a comment from a friend. Be alert and have fun. The universe and your spiritual allies always want to help you.
- **Keep yourself safe and sane.** In other words, only take steps that keep you whole. If you feel close to your personal tipping point from all the energies, you can slow down the energies or stop them all together. You can do this through any combination of using your intentions, strengthening your auric field, tightening your crown chakra, asking your spiritual allies to slow down the energies to a manageable trickle or stop them completely. And do not be afraid to ask for help or guidance along the way. It never hurts to get some extra support when you are opening to some major energies.
- **Treat yourself gently.** This is a not a race or a competition. Needless to say, we share commonalities, but every experience is unique. We each have our own soul contracts, karma, life lessons, and soul agreements. Remember: nothing happens a minute before or a minute after it is ready. The universe's clock keeps perfect time.

And, so it is. Take very good care, dear ones. These are exciting and accelerated times.

Spiritual funk: untethered and free-falling

Ever feel like you are falling through space? Everything that held you and tethered you has disappeared and evaporated. You are simply bobbing in the cosmos awaiting your next signal. You look to the right; you look to the left. Up, down, over and around, yet there is no sign indicating your new direction.

You are all dressed up with no place to go. Your foot tap, tap, taps restlessly on the edge of the galaxy. Is anybody home?

You took the leap, you made the jump, but you are still floating and drifting through time and space. You are free-falling—and lest you belittle this stage of your development, know that this part of the adventure requires huge doses of courage. It's hard to keep the faith, much less the knowledge that there is a larger vision to be had when there is nothing—nary a blip on the screen—to call your soul forward to its larger, best self.

There was, way back when, the glimmer that gave you the push to take the leap, but the free fall has whipped and whittled away the fine light. You just feel the rush of the downward trajectory and worry what will happen or, more precisely, not happen next.

The not-knowing is crazy-making and unnerving. You are accustomed to having a focus and concomitant plan. Your heart is thumping, your mind is playing Sudoku with what-if scenarios, and your adrenaline levels are looking like Pike's Peak.



So, what is a free-falling, spiritually inclined person to do? Pull off the galactic highway and take a little snooze, or hitch a ride on a screaming meteor?

There might be another way.

Surrender to the process and allow. By fretting and crunching and cramping and knotting, you only make yourself miserable. If you allow yourself to go with the flow, the ride is less bumpy. Scariest, yes, because you have no idea exactly where you will end up, but easier and less jarring to self and psyche. And who knows, the unknown could be totally fun and satisfying. You know what fear is, now try a little faith—faith in yourself, faith in your process and faith in whatever face or name you give the divine.

Remember that law of physics that goes something like this: the more things are in motion, the more they stay in motion. And conversely, if you stop, it is very hard to get the energy revved to get going again. Therefore, if you pull the plug on your free fall now, you will have lost valuable momentum as well as the grace of your initial commitment. Stay in the game. It has your soul's handprint all over it.

A blessing for times of crisis and chaos

During these days when planetary movement is a rock-'n'-roll ride and many a wild card is being tossed into the air, may you feel the depth of your soul, the strength of your spirit and the tenderness of your heart. You are needed during these tumultuous times.

When the balance in your life has been shattered and you have been sucker-punched in the gut by loss and devastation, may you feel your angels holding you closer. You are not alone during these tumultuous times.

When you are exhausted, empty, and bone weary and feel that your legs cannot carry you one step further, may you give yourself permission to rest in the unseen arms of God. You can surrender during these tumultuous times.

When what is before you appears bleak and terrifying and you feel that hope belongs to the past, may you open yourself to possibility and allow yourself to slowly and repeatedly breathe, breathe, breathe. You can connect to creative life force during these tumultuous times.

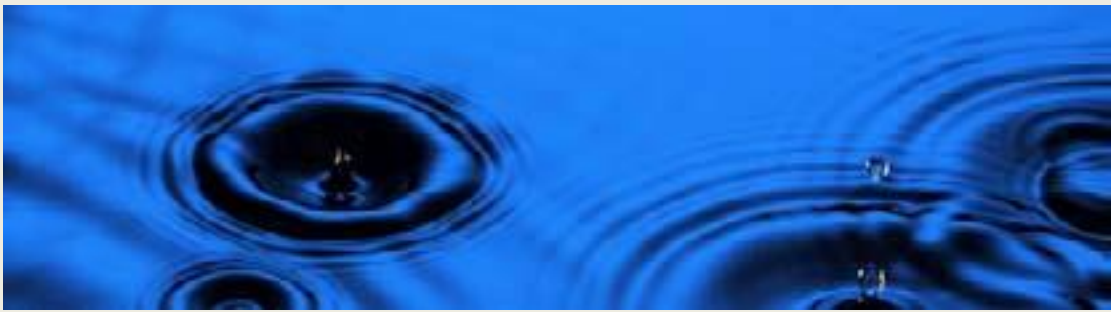
When you are unable to stand alone and find yourself defenseless and vulnerable, may you envision yourself safely held in an egg of blue light or wrapped in a cloak of purple. You can use alternative strategies during these tumultuous times.

When you are filled with terror and fear and your ears echo with an inner howl, may you find the deeply hidden and belonging-only-to-you safe, inviolate sanctuary within your being where no one can hurt you. You can have a safe place during these tumultuous times.

When you are knee-deep in pain and rolling in crazy-making grief, may you honor the profound experience of your being and become like the water that flows in myriad forms of contraction and expansion. You can, when the moment is right, find hard-won acceptance during these tumultuous times.

When you are lost and adrift with no anchor to call home, may you remember who you are and the multitudinous gifts, graces, hard knocks and experiences that make you the one-of-a-kind, kick-ass human being you are. You can be a survivor during these tumultuous times.

During these days when the planetary movement is a rock-'n'-roll ride and many a wild card is being tossed in the air, may you feel the depth of your soul, the strength of your spirit, and the tenderness of your heart. You are needed during these tumultuous times.





Author

Adele Ryan McDowell, Ph.D., is a psychologist, higher consciousness teacher and writer who came to her current place in life through the frequent and not-so-subtle prodding of the gods. She likes looking at life through the big viewfinder and is a perpetual student who believes in the power of an open heart, and a good laugh.

Dr. McDowell is a psychotherapist with more than 30 years' experience; a teacher of meditation, intuition development, and psychospiritual issues; an international workshop facilitator; and energy healer.

Adele's work focuses on helping clients find hope and balance in the face of crisis, trauma, and grief. She has worked with suicide, domestic violence, and sexual assault crisis hotlines, survivors of Hurricane Katrina, 9/11, the Joplin Tornado, clients struggling with addiction as well as those moving through profound life changes such as grief and health challenges. Adele's work integrates psychology with spirituality to help clients move through crises and restore balance by accessing core soul issues and to discover, and find comfort in, their authentic selves.

She is the author of the Amazon best-selling *Balancing Act: Reflections, Meditations, and Coping Strategies for Today's Fast-Paced Whirl*. She is a contributing author to the best-selling Shift Awareness anthologies, *2012: Create Your Own Shift* and *The Sacred Shift: Co-creating Your Future in a New Renaissance* and *Love and Oneness*, an Abundance in Manifesting book. Adele's next book is *Making Peace with Suicide*.

Adele -- a Texan by birth, upbringing, and pioneering spirit -- lives in Connecticut where you will often find her driving along the highways and byways, singing loudly in her car.

You can learn more about Adele at www.adeleryanmcdowell.com.



These articles were originally published on www.theheraldedpenguin.com from 2010-2012 or on United Press International's (UPI's) religionandspirituality.com from 2006 to 2008.

All contents of this PDF
© 2011-2012 Adele Ryan McDowell.