



Chapter 1

Social Signs That a Shift is Happening

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Summary

The violence, oppression, and injustice in the world today are manifestations of thousands of years of human immersion in third dimensional experience. In the darkness before the dawn of a profound awakening of global human consciousness, our media give the impression that things are worse than they really are. Some conventional signs of human betterment include the global abolition of slavery, the elimination of the death penalty in most countries, a decline in the number of armed conflicts in the last ten years, and the cleansing effect of corporate greed, priestly and military misconduct being made public and held accountable. The decline in the number of armed conflicts is especially surprising, but four different organizations using different criteria find the same trend. Many signs of individual and cultural shifts in human consciousness are occurring with increasing frequency and intensity but are largely ignored by mainstream mass media. Signs of positive cultural change include the dramatic development of a new “transmodern” cultural identity in the last forty years, reawakening of the secular and sacred feminine, increasing public availability of formerly secret indigenous and ancient spiritual knowledge, and global human interconnections made possible by the internet. At the individual level, millions have experienced awakening to a larger reality that lies beyond our purely physical experience through spontaneous spiritual awakening, near-death experiences, and extraterrestrial contact experiences.

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One of the indications that we are approaching a great shift in human consciousness is that so many books are being written on the subject. A statistical analysis of the titles of books published between 1800 and 1990 found that about *eighty-five* percent of the books with the word “consciousness” in the title had been published since 1970 (Radin, 1997:265).

I admit that if you depend upon the daily newspaper, radio or television for your information about what is happening in the world you won't find much that is positive. From my perspective there is good news and bad news about the mess humanity and planet Earth seem to be in. The good news is that the bad news isn't going to continue much

longer. The bad news is that dealing with bad news is part of the process we have to go through. A person who is seriously ill often reaches a crisis where symptoms get worse, the fever reaches a peak and then breaks. When the fever breaks everyone heaves a sigh of relief because from then on it's a simple matter of recovery and healing. Global warming and the greater extremes of weather that are occurring planet-wide are an indication that planet Earth is approaching the crisis point. Hot spots of violence, epidemic poverty, and the resurgence of infectious diseases suggest that the more than six billion humans on the planet may be reaching a crisis point as well.

It would be intellectually dishonest of me to deny that there aren't a lot of grim things happening on the planet these days. In the environmental arena, where I devoted thirty years of my life, the situation is even worse than is reported in the mainstream media. The bad news does not discourage me because I see it as the darkness before the dawn. I see many, many signs that the old ways of thinking and acting that create the bad news reported by the media are changing. In this chapter I will briefly discuss some of the things that contribute to the darkness but will focus on the positive signs that I see. These include profound changes in the direction of human betterment when viewed from the broad sweep of the last five thousand years of human history, and dramatic signs of positive cultural change in the last forty years.

1.1 Darkness Before the Dawn

When the moon sets before dawn, a darkness descends before a brightening on the eastern horizon heralds the rising of the sun. In recent human history the night was darkest during the Second World War during which an estimated 56 million people died, mostly civilians. To continue with the dawn metaphor, the sky has been brightening in fits and starts ever since. Here I offer some thoughts and perhaps a different perspective than you will find in the mainstream media on things that are contributing to the darkness.

1.1.1 The Media: Bad News Sells.

The mainstream media are caught in a trap because bad news is dramatic and so it focuses on the traumatic to attract an audience. Never mind that the vast majority of humanity lives day-to-day in relative peace troubled more by the fear that the violence reported in the media might intrude than by actual violence. Physician Andrew Weil notes that bad news has a generally adverse effect on our mental state (Weil, 1990:116). There actually *is* a lot of good news in the world today, but you have to know where to find it. If you would like to bring some of it into your home each month, I recommend subscribing to *YES! A Journal of Positive Futures* (www.yesmagazine.org). Please keep in mind that the good news that I offer in this chapter only scratches the surface. I have confined myself to sources of information from our Euro-American culture which represents a little more than 10 percent of the global population. Occasionally the mainline media presents a few sound bytes of human interest good news, but the good news that is happening throughout the world is well below its radar screen. If you would like a glimpse of good things happening elsewhere I recommend reading the stories from Brazil, Bangladesh, India, and Kenya in *Hope's Edge* by Francis Moore Lappé and her daughter Anna (Lappé and Lappé, 2002).

1.1.2 The Criminal Injustice System.

It's hard to imagine anything crazier than the state of the American criminal justice system. We have far more people in prison per capita than any other country in the world. In 2005 the U.S. incarceration rate was 737 per 100,000 population, 21% higher than Russia's rate of 611 (which has a declining rather than increasing prison population) and more than *six times* higher than Communist China's rate of 118 ("New Incarceration Figures: Thirty Three Consecutive Years of Growth," www.sentencingproject.org/pdfs/1044.pdf). From 1980 to 2000 money spent on prisons increased six times as much as money spent on

education (*Yes!*, The Page That Counts, Fall 2001:11). Participants in prison college programs are known to have significantly lower reincarceration rates, yet the number of such programs decreased from more than 350 in 1982 to 8 in 1995. (*Yes!*, The Page That Counts, Fall 2001:11). In 2003 the number of Americans under the control of the criminal justice system (individuals in prison, on probation and parole) grew by 130,700 to reach a new high of nearly 6.9 million, or 3.2% of adult population in the U.S. (*New York Times*, July 26, 2004).

We continue to build more prisons, yet during the 1990s U.S. crime rates nose-dived. Homicide, burglary, and robbery rates fell more than 40 percent, and none of the common theories explain why (Richard Rosenfeld, "The Case of the Unsolved Crime Decline," *Scientific American*, February, 2004:82-89). In 2004 the Justice Department reported that rates of property crime and violent crime other than homicides remained at a 30-year low (*New York Times*, September 13, 2004). Furthermore, according to a survey by U.S. Departments of Justice and Education, crime in U.S. schools dropped fifty percent from an annual rate of 48 violent incidents per 100,000 students in 1992 to 24 incidents in 2002 (*New York Times*, November 30, 2004).

Furthermore, the heavy hand of law enforcement falls preferentially on minorities. Even though the rates of drug consumption are about equal among white and black populations, blacks are imprisoned for drug offenses at 14 times the rate of whites (Jerome G. Miller, "The American Gulag," *Yes!* Fall 2000:13-17). Annually about 10,000 wrongful criminal convictions occur, and since 1900 20 people have been executed who were later found innocent (*Yes!* The Page That Counts, Winter 1999/2000:11). I know I've thrown a lot of numbers at you here, but let me give you one more set as food for thought. The Netherlands has Europe's most liberal drug policy. Guess what percentage of teens there smoke marijuana? The percentage is 23% compared to 41% of American teens who smoke marijuana (*Yes!* The Page That Counts, Summer 2001:11).

1.1.3 Pestilence, Famine and More.

As I was doing research for this section on the Darkness before the Dawn I found myself getting bogged down in masses of dismal statistics. There are not many positive trends like the decrease in the number of wars and armed conflicts described later in this chapter. The Worldwatch Institute's annual reports on the *State of the World* and *Vital Signs*, contain few positive social or environmental indicators. Income inequality is increasing, infectious diseases are on the rise, malnutrition (both from too much and not enough) is epidemic, and gender inequity is rampant. Most environmental quality indicators are steadily deteriorating. The situation looks hopeless only as long as we cling to third-dimensional ways of thinking. The rest of this chapter focuses on concrete, positive social signs in our physical reality that things are better than they actually appear on the surface. The next five chapters offer an ever-increasing broadening of perspective on the human condition, which by Chapter 6 I hope will make it clear that humanity has mind-boggling capacities for healing itself and planet Earth.

1.2 Some Conventional Signs of Human Betterment

As my father, Kenneth Boulding, reached the end of a long and brilliant career as an economist, peace researcher, systems thinker, and social philosopher he focused his attention increasingly on the question of human betterment. How, he asked, do things go from bad to better rather than from bad to worse? If we look at the broad sweep of human history during the past 5,000 years there are quite a few things that have gone from bad to better.

1.2.1 Abolition of Slavery.

For most of human history and in most “civilized” cultures slavery has been a given until recent human history. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, when most former Spanish colonies abolished

slavery as they gained independence, an increasing percentage of the population of the world has been free of the scourge of slavery. This process culminated in 1948 when the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which prohibits slavery in Article 4. This was strengthened in 1956 with the *Supplemental Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery*. I do not mean to minimize the suffering of the estimated 27 million men, women and children slaves in the world today and encourage anyone who feels drawn to support efforts to truly abolish slavery to check out the organization Free the Slaves (www.freetheslaves.net).

1.2.2 Abolition of the Death Penalty.

In contrast to the United States, which ranks behind only China and the Congo in the number of people that its legal system executes annually, a remarkable change has occurred worldwide. An article in *The Economist* (“The Cruel and Ever More Usual Punishment”, May 15, 1999) about the death penalty in the United States notes that in 1965 only 12 countries had completely abolished the death penalty, while an additional 11 had abolished it for ordinary crimes. In 1999, 68 countries had eliminated the death penalty for all crimes, 14 allowed it only for extraordinary crimes, and 23 had ended its use in practice (i.e., had executed no one for at least ten years or had made an international commitment to use it no longer).

1.2.3 Recent Decline in the Number of Armed Conflicts.

When I was in high school in the early 1960s my father helped start the Center for Conflict Resolution at the University of Michigan. At the same time my mother laid the groundwork for the formation of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). How did she do it? The Conflict Resolution Center kept receiving letters from people all over the world who were starting to do similar research, but no one at the Michigan center had time to respond. My mother half-jokingly

says that she began what eventually became the *IPRA Newsletter* by compiling information contained in letters that ended up in the Center's wastebasket. Out of those humble beginnings the International Peace Research Association now has members in 100 countries. IPRA is just one of many other organizations that have the knowledge and experience to resolve conflicts without violence. It's not that we don't know how, the question is when will those with political power begin to use them?

As a teenager I opposed the war in Vietnam. As a young parent I opposed this country's covert war in Central America. In early middle age I opposed the first Gulf War. Now in late middle age I find myself opposing the second Gulf War. I suspect that a lot of people are ready for the violence and killing to stop, and I see some concrete signs that merit cautious optimism.

- The National Defense Council Foundation (NDCF) has tracked major conflicts since the early 1990's, and their graphs show a general downward trend since 1993 (world conflict lists from 1997 to 2002 can be found on their website: www.ndcf.org). In 1997 NDCF identified 67 major conflicts around the world which decreased to 53 in 2002 (a 21% decline). In 2003 the Foundation stopped tracking major conflicts because the threat of terrorist violence now means that no place on the planet is free of the threat of a terrorist attack.
- The German Arbeitsgemeinschaft Keriegsursachenforschung (AKUF Working Group on War Causes), a conflict research group at the University of Hamburg, annually updates statistics of wars and armed conflicts. Both wars and violent conflicts peaked in the early 1990s. By the criteria this group uses, armed conflicts declined from a high of 55 in 1992 to 27 to 28 since 2003, a drop of around 50%. The number of wars dropped 31% from 62 in 1993 to 42 or 43 since 2003 (Worldwatch Institute, 2007).

- The Center for Defense Information (*Defense Monitor*, January/February 2003) reports that the number of major conflicts (defined as conflicts with more than 1,000 casualties) declined from 38 at the end of 2001 to 30 at the end of 2002, a 21% decline).
- The Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) reported a decline from 24 to 21 major conflicts (a 12% decline) during the same period reported by the Center for Defense Information (SIPRI, 2003). The downward trend in major conflicts has continued since 2003, with the years 2005 and 2007 seeing 17 major conflicts, a 29% reduction since 2001 (SIPRI, 2007)
- Jerry Mark Silverman in an analysis of a wide range of statistics related to terrorism and conflict found all trends, except for Iraq, to be stable or declining. For example, using another set of data on major inter- and intra-state conflict for the period 1945 to 2005, Silverman found that inter-state conflicts peaked in 1987 (a significant year—see Section 7.4.4) and dropped to 2 in 1992 and have remained around that low level since. Combined inter- and intra-state conflicts since 1945 peaked at 57 in 1991 and declined steadily to 26 in 2005, a decline of 54% (“Real Intelligence Estimate, By Numbers: Terrorism and Conflict Not Up Worldwide,” *National Interest Online*, October 3, 2006, <http://www.nationalinterest.org/Article.aspx?id=12358>).

I find it encouraging that five different organizations, each using slightly different methods for defining major conflicts, suggest that we are moving slowly towards becoming a more peaceful world.

1.2.4 Geopolitics: From Bad to Not as Bad.

In Section 7.4.4 I explain why 1987 was a pivotal year in the changes in human consciousness that are happening. I think it is instructive to

compare the geopolitical situation in the world now (2007) to what it was like twenty years ago:

- The cold war is over. The iron curtain has fallen, most dramatically symbolized by the tearing down of the Berlin wall in 1989. The threat of global destruction by nuclear war has passed.
- In 1987 there was no glimmering of hope for resolution of the three-hundred-year conflict between the Protestant and Catholic Irish in northern Ireland. Today it is not a question if it will be resolved, but when.
- Who would have imagined in 1987 that the system of Apartheid in South Africa would be swept away in 1994 with the end of Nelson Mandela's 27-year imprisonment and election as President of the Country? Even more remarkable is that the new government chose to begin to heal the wounds by setting a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a means to achieve restorative rather than retributive justice.
- I recently asked a niece who is studying for a PhD in Latin American Studies what she saw positive happening there. Her initial reaction was to shrug her shoulders and say “not much.” But then she thought a few minutes and with an expression of surprise on her face said: “Actually things are a lot better than they were ten years ago—there are democracies rather than dictatorships in most of the region and the worst civil wars are ended.”
- To follow-up on her statement I did some checking. Elections in 1990 marked the end of civil war in Nicaragua, and the civil war in El Salvador ended in 1992. The extremely bloody 30-year civil war in Guatemala ended in 1997.

- Although the 1989 democratic uprising Tiananmen Square in Beijing was brutally crushed, the image that endures is the picture of a tank stopped in its tracks by a lone demonstrator holding a flower. In China the question now is not if freedom will become more widespread, but when.
- When President George W. Bush began to threaten to invade Iraq in 2003 it sparked peace demonstrations around the world at a scale that has never been seen in human history. There were also large-scale demonstrations throughout the United States. The tremendous human expression of desire for peace rather than war was real despite minimal coverage by the mainstream media in the United States.

1.2.5 The Ugly Truth Cleanses.

There is another positive change that I see happening in the United States. It seems to be getting much harder for ugly truth to remain hidden. I have a friend who recently told me that when she reads the newspaper, especially news items with statements by government officials, she finds herself saying, “That's a lie...that's a lie...and oh, yes, that's a lie too.” It seems like our national government has become a cartoon parody of the absurdity of arrogance, power, and wealth.

The Enron scandal of 2002 exemplifies the increasing difficulty of disguising the excesses of corporate greed. New revelations of misconduct by Wall Street brokers, pharmaceutical and other corporations are being publicized on a continuing basis. The long-hidden secret of sexual abuse by a minority of Catholic priests is now common knowledge. News reports continue to reveal a widespread pattern of abuse and torture of prisoners in Afghanistan, Iraq, Guantanamo Bay by U.S. military personnel and CIA interrogators. Since the 1960s a gradually increasing number of former intelligence officials, scholars, and journalists have published books detailing illegal covert operations by the Central Intelligence Agency throughout

the world (see references listed in Table 1-4).

Until recently this literature was read by a relatively small audience, but that seems to be changing. For example, John Perkin's book *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man*, made the New York Times bestseller list (Perkins, 2004). For peace and justice political activists there isn't much new in Perkins' description of how he worked for ten years as a high-paid consultant helping U.S. intelligence agencies and multinational corporations cajole and blackmail foreign leaders into serving U.S. foreign policy while lining the pockets of private corporations. What's new is that his message is reaching a much wider audience.

We are still early enough in the process of recognizing and dealing with ugly truths that it may be hard to see the good that will come from the fact that they are surfacing. Nevertheless, I firmly believe that by acknowledging the ugliness, we create for ourselves the opportunity for cleansing and forgiveness as a society. By doing so it becomes much harder for individuals to continue the abuses of power and authority.

1.2.6 The True Battleground for the War on Terrorism.

I'm going to offer a perspective on terrorism that may trip your strangeness circuit breaker, so take a deep breath before you continue reading this section. I would like to suggest that the insecurity we have felt since the tragic events of September 11, 2001 is a good thing. Before elaborating on that I would like to share a story that I heard my mother tell many times. Her family emigrated to the United States when she was three years old. Her mother had not really wanted to leave their homeland and as a child my mother heard many stories of what a wonderful place it was. Norway became an almost mythical place of wonder and safety in my mother's mind. If she didn't like what was happening in her life, she would be comforted by the thought that if things *really* got bad she could always go back to Norway. That changed in April 1940 when the Nazis invaded Norway. At the age of

twenty my mother realized that there was no safe place on this planet as long as nations had the weapons to wage war. From that time on she devoted her life to the cause of disarmament and peace. As a teacher, lecturer and writer she has encouraged and inspired tens of thousands in their commitment to build a peaceful world.

September 11 provided a similar wake-up call to the American people, as the train bombing in Madrid has for Europe. There is truly no safe place on the planet from the possibility of terrorist attack. I see the true battleground for the war on terrorism as lying within our hearts, not in restricted civil liberties, security alerts, and preemptive wars. You can't disarm terrorists the way you can disarm nations. We can, however, stop manufacturing the weapons that terrorists use (most of which come from the United States), and, more importantly, we can seek to address the social and economic injustices around the world that foment terrorism.

The U.S. government responded, all too predictably by declaring an old-fashioned war on terrorism and the mainstream media has meekly followed its lead by feeding the fear that serves the interest of both those who are in power and the terrorists. There seems to be almost a complete disconnect between our government's response to the attacks and accounts I have read of the courage, cooperation, and sense of community that filled New York City in the following months. We are still in the darkness before the dawn, but I see glimmerings of light in such organizations as September 11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows (www.peacefultomorrows.org) and Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation (www.mvfr.org), an organization which opposes the death penalty. Each report of the latest terrorist attack gives us the opportunity to replace anger with forgiveness and compassion; each terrorist alert an opportunity to face and release our own fears.

1.3 Some Signs of Positive Cultural Change

I see multiple strands of positive cultural change that serve as indicators that humanity is in the midst of a major shift in consciousness:

- The spontaneous and unorganized emergence of a new, transmodern cultural stream in the United States and Europe (Section 1.3.1).
- A similar spontaneous and unorganized reawakening of a sense of the sacred feminine (Section 1.3.2).
- An unprecedented infusion of indigenous wisdom into the dominant Euro-American cultural stream (Section 1.3.3).
- The recent availability of secret spiritual knowledge from ancient civilizations (Section 1.3.4).
- The growing global communications network, especially the internet (Section 1.3.5).

1.3.1 The Rise of Transmodern Culture.

Charles Reich, a Yale Law Professor called it the “Greening of America” (Reich, 1970). I was a member of the sixties generation that was confident that it would change the world, but when the hippies became Yuppies (young upwardly mobile professionals), and then simply Baby Boomers, I experienced a profound sense of disappointment in my generation and myself. It seemed that the greening of America gradually turned into a greeding of America. By the early 1990s I had little patience for talk of a shift in human consciousness, so I will not be surprised if you are not impressed by talk of a Transmodern culture. Nevertheless, something interesting has happened since the cultural ferment of the 1960s. P.M.H. Atwater, who has studied changes in human consciousness primarily through the

near-death experience said it this way:

So here we have a grass-roots movement, unplanned and without leadership, of people discovering who they really are and responding to the need for change. And they're doing it on their own because it "feels" right. And their numbers are awesome (Atwater, 1994:213).

How awesome the number were became evident when the Fetzer Institute and the Institute of Noetic Sciences sponsored a survey of worldviews held by Americans (Paul Ray, 1996, "The Rise of Integral Culture," *Noetic Sciences Review*, No. 37, Spring: 4-15). Sociologist Paul Ray conducted in-depth interviews with a cross-section of the U.S. population and identified three main cultural streams:

- ***Heartlanders***, who typically accept Jesus as their personal savior and accept the contents of the bible as literal truth. Most believe that homosexuality and abortion are a sin. They hold to traditional family values and believe that secular modern culture undermines those values. This subculture dates to the 1870s, and currently represents a little more than one-quarter of the adult U.S. population.
- ***Moderns***, beginning around the 1920s, embrace technology and the material benefits that it provides. Most place a high value on success in career, and enjoy the material comforts that financial success brings. They have confidence in the ability of technology to address problems related to human health and the environment. Moderns exemplify the dominant cultural stream today making up almost half of the adult U.S. population.
- ***Transmoderns***, beginning around 1970, resonate with the idea of voluntary simplicity (although they may not practice it), and that material success is *not* a high priority. They are idealistic, and believe that health comes from the integration of mind, body and

spirit. Even though they represent a new subculture, they represented about 25% of the U.S. adult population in the mid-1990s.

My thumbnail sketch of these three main cultural streams is grossly oversimplified, and they actually share important common values, such as a desire to rebuild neighborhoods and communities and the majority of individuals in each group see nature as sacred. Interestingly, a *minority* of all three groups are optimistic about the future, so I think these labels should be applied (or worn) lightly. It does seem quite astonishing, however, that a quarter of a century after its inception there were 44 million adults that fit the cluster of attributes associated with the Transmodern subculture. Follow-up surveys in Europe identified a similar division and population percentages in each group, and when Paul Ray wrote a book about the phenomenon, published in 2001, the number of adult Transmoderns in the United States (they use the term “cultural creatives”) had grown to 50 million (Ray and Anderson, 2000).

Another interesting thing that Ray found in his interviews with Transmoderns is that most felt a sense of cultural isolation and of being in much more of a minority than the actual statistics indicate. The sense of isolation and tendency to focus inward on personal growth has meant that many Transmoderns have not been politically active. A very new development that I have observed is that virtually *all* of my Transmodern friends began actively engaging in the political process during the 2004 presidential campaign.

Although I identify myself as a Transmodern, I want be clear that they are not an elite that is going to make the Great Shift in human consciousness, leaving everyone else behind. The Shift is for everyone, but it seems likely to me that Heartlanders and Moderns who hold tight to all aspects of their current worldview, and even Transmoderns who are set in their way of thinking, will find the Shift much more disorienting than those who recognize what is happening and commit

themselves to being part of it.

1.3.2 Reawakening of the Secular and the Sacred Feminine.

The lot of the female gender has not been an easy one for the last 5,000 years of patriarchal domination. Throughout this time period women have succeeded in resisting this domination, as chronicled in my mother's book *The Underside of History: A View of Women through Time* (Boulding, 1976), but until the last hundred years or so they have been few and far between. After all, women received the right to vote in the United States only in 1920. The growing impact of the secular women's rights movement in the United States roughly coincides with the rise of the Transmodern subculture, although members of the more politically active aspect of the movement probably have been more closely aligned with a Modern worldview.

More recently there has been a true reawakening of interest and experience of the sacred feminine. Marija Gimbutas, professor of European Archaeology at UCLA in her seminal work *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe, 7,000-3500 B.C.* (Gimbutas, 1982) showed that male dominance is a relatively new phenomenon in human evolutionary history (see, also Gimbutas, 2001). Her richly illustrated book *The Language of the Goddess* has more than 300 pages devoted to ritual images of the Goddess (sculptures, pottery, carvings) from the Neolithic and Paleolithic; only 10 pages relate to male gods (Gimbutas, 1989). This is not revisionist archeology either. Only 2 to 3 percent of all Old European figurines are male (Gimbutas, 1989:175). Art Historian Elinor Gadon has made available images of the Goddess from the Ice Age to the present in her book *The Once and Future Goddess* (Gadon, 1989).

Sue Monk Kidd, a southern Baptist who had a successful career as an inspirational Christian writer, chronicles her gradual awakening to the sacred feminine in her book *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*:

Today a lot of women are seeking feminine images of the Divine. More women than we can imagine have embarked on the quest, enough women to set in motion a whole shift in our religious paradigm. I've met countless numbers of these women—married, divorced, and single, some of them Christian theologians and ministers but also insurance agents, real estate agents, nurses, students, psychologists, travel agents, schoolteachers, mothers who stay and home and work, artists, writers, accountants to name only a few—all of whom are talking passionately about the return of Mother God or Sophia or Goddess. I've been struck by how these women's lives are anchored in the “real” world, how bright and unique yet ordinary they are. The Divine Feminine is returning to collective consciousness all right. She's coming, and it will happen whether we're ready or not (Kidd, 2002:99).

Another indication of the reawakening interest in the sacred feminine is the fact that Dan Brown's thriller *The Da Vinci Code*, which deals with the “hidden” history of Mary Magdalene's marriage to Jesus and continuation of his lineage through a daughter, has been a runaway bestseller (Brown, 2003). This novel has spawned a host of books about the fact and fiction behind the novel. Many, written from an orthodox Christian perspective, claim to expose it as a hoax. Dan Burstein has compiled a more balanced view in *Secrets of the Code*, which has contributions from four dozen scholars, theologians and other writers (Burstein, 2004), many of whom question the orthodox patriarchal Christian viewpoint.

Although misandry (hatred of men) is evident in some of the more radical elements of the feminist movement, the reawakening of the sacred feminine that I am seeing represents not so much a swing of the pendulum back to the Paleolithic/Neolithic female dominance as a shift to a center point of balance between the feminine and masculine. Carol Bridges in her book *The Code of the Goddess*, a brilliant recasting of

the patriarchal Chinese I Ching and Feng Shui into feminine terms, says it well:

We began en mass in the 1960's to uncover the principles of the feminine half of the life force. The right side of the brain, the art of peaceful living, the caretaking of the planet as a whole, the revaluing of women's roles and the discovery of ancient Goddess civilizations are just a few of the powerful trends which broke through the eggshell of our cultural conditioning. We have passed through many variations on the theme of women's liberation, but the real story is one of mythical proportions, going beyond any failures of the cause we espoused in those early days of awakening. The real story is that we are part of a new Creation...

*In the coming cycle of time, as we reclaim the sacredness of Earth, we will have the opportunity to know again the full expression of both our male/yang and female/yin aspects of ourselves, for the Goddess is not the opposite of God. Women will not be taking over men's roles. The Goddess is a harmonizing, balancing force that will allow both women and men to open to their full range of compassion and use their full measure of intellectual and physical tools (**Bridges 2001:1,2**).*

Thus the reawakening of the feminine has two aspects: 1) women reclaiming a sense of self-esteem and power, and 2) males getting more in touch with their feminine side. P.M.H. Atwater has found that this is a common consequence of a near-death experience (see more about NDEs in Section 1.4.2 below). Although Atwater has found no significant gender difference in the near-death phenomenon itself or most of its aftereffects, NDE females generally became more assertive and outspoken while men became more thoughtful, caring, and emotionally expressive after the experience (Atwater, 1994:122).

1.3.3 The Gift of Indigenous Wisdom.

In the Introduction I noted that in the early 1990s I came to the conclusion that we had passed the point of no return in the damage we were doing to Planet Earth. I thought that the only way for a positive future was to return to the intimate connection with nature reflected by indigenous worldviews. Ishmael, the wise gorilla in Daniel Quinn's novel with the same name, called the trauma of separation from that natural world that resulted from the shift to intensive agriculture as the "Great Forgetting" (Quinn, 1992—this is a novel that expanded the consciousness of a lot of people). In order to convince ourselves that we were better off than hunter-gatherers we invented the myth of the helpless savage, one step ahead of the saber-toothed tiger and days away from starvation. Although it is not universally true, the hunting gathering way of life wasn't so bad. Typically the "original affluent society" required less than four hours a day to meet basic needs for food and shelter (Sahlins, 1972; Gowdy, 1998). For those of survived the first five years of life, the average life expectancy was higher and health was better than agricultural societies which were subject to wars, droughts and famines. Relationships between men and women were generally egalitarian.

In the early 1990s as I delved further into the contrast between indigenous and technological societies, I was surprised to find that I was not alone in considering indigenous ways to be a viable, even necessary alternative to the headlong rush to destruction that technology seemed to be taking us. The human ecologist Paul Shepard began making the case for the psychological benefits of the hunting-gathering way of life in the early 1970s with his book *The Tender Carnivore and the Sacred Game* (Shepard, 1973) and summed up his life work in the posthumously published *Coming Home to the Pleistocene* (Shepard, 1998). A similar message was presented by former advertising executive Jerry Mander in his book *In the Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology & the Survival of the Indiana Nations* (Mander, 1991) and by ecopsychologist Chellis

Glendinning, in her book, *My Name is Chellis and I'm in Recovery from Civilization* (Glendinning, 1994). Daniel Quinn, after his devastating critique of modern culture in his novels *Ishmael*, *The Story of B*, and *My Ishmael* (Quinn, 1992, 1996, 1997), proposes a new form of tribalism that does not require a rejection of technology in his book *Beyond Civilization* (Quinn, 1999).

I now recognize that it is not a matter of coming home to the Pleistocene, and with my new perspective I see that something amazing has been happening in the relationship between indigenous peoples and the dominant culture. From the beginning, indigenous peoples have shared some of their wisdom, such as the Sioux medicine man Black Elk (Neihardt, 1932), but on the whole they kept their most sacred practices to themselves. In the late 1960s, when the Transmodern cultural stream was in its infancy, something changed. Readers began to be introduced to a different reality as perceived by the shaman with the best-selling writings of Carlos Castaneda and Lynn Andrews.

Carlos Castaneda created a new genre of writing that I will call shamanic autobiography. The typical shamanic autobiography is written by a non-indigenous person whose frame of reference is thoroughly anchored in the dominant white culture. The author through mysterious, or not-so-mysterious circumstances in the case of Carlos Castaneda (he met Don Juan as a result of his anthropological studies), meets an indigenous shaman or shamaness who takes the person on, often unwillingly, as an apprentice. The author/apprentice describes incredible events which include often terrifying initiatory experiences in the spirit world. The author/apprentice is instructed to tell his or her story to the larger world. The story is presented as true, although some names may be changed to protect the privacy of individuals involved, and reads like a novel or an adventure story.

Castaneda came under severe criticism by his fellow anthropologists for losing professional objectivity and has been accused of fabricating the experiences described in his books (DeMille, 1978, 1980; Noel,

1976). Although I remember when his first book came out in 1968, I never felt drawn to read Castaneda until I began writing this book. Reviewing his entire corpus of books provides a fascinating view of the evolution of Castaneda's own understanding of his experiences. His first four books describe in more or less linear time his direct encounters with the Yaqui Shaman Don Juan (Castaneda, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974). The next three continue in more or less linear time, although the time sequence becomes more blurred, with his continued shamanic training with Don Juan's wife Florinda Matus, called La Gorda in the books (Castaneda, 1977, 1981, 1984). His first seven books can be read as a series of novels. *The Power of Silence* (Castaneda, 1991) is the last book that Castaneda wrote under the guidance of Florinda Matus and represents an “intellectual review of the thoughts of the shamans of ancient Mexico” (Castaneda, 1998:287). Castaneda's subsequent books, although still very autobiographical present his shamanic experiences in a more systematic framework (Castaneda, 1993, 1998, 2003).

Lynn Andrews is another one of the early shamanic autobiographers, and as Castaneda was stretching the minds of baby boomer males in the 1970s and 1980s, she began stretching the minds of females in the 1980s. Andrews, a privileged, white southern Californian, first traveled to Manitoba, Canada to become an apprentice to the Cree shamaness Agnes Whistling Elk in 1973 (Andrews, 1981). Later she was initiated into the Sisterhood of the Shields (Andrews, 1984), the only white woman out of a total of forty-four representing different indigenous cultures around the world. The Sisterhood is committed to preserving ancient female shamanic knowledge as a way to help Mother Earth return to a state of wholeness. Her shamanic adventures introduced her to Mayan practices (Andrews, 1985) and Australian aboriginal practices (Andrews, 1987—see Table 1-4 for a complete listing of her autobiographical books). Again, as incredible as the events she relates seem to be, she presents them as true, although as with Castaneda she may fictionalize names of real people. One name that she does not fictionalize is that of Hyemyohsts Storm, the Native American novelist

(Storm, 1972, 1983) who is instrumental in helping her first make contact with Agnes Whistling Elk (Andrews, 1981).

Shamanic autobiography is intended to stretch our conception of reality, and the events described often strain our credulity. We are often asked to loosen our conception of linear time. For example, the anthropologist Hank Wesselman's initiations into Hawaiian Kahuna practices arise from connections with the mind of a descendent 5000 years in the future (Wesselman, 1995, 1998, 2001). Is this fact, as it is usually presented by the author, or fiction? I'm not sure if it really matters if the reader thinks it's just a good story or accepts it as "real," reading this kind of book is just one of the many ways information is being made available about the larger reality that lies beyond the purely physical. I see these stories as a gift from our indigenous brothers and sisters, and the brave souls who volunteered to incarnate as innocent white folks who had no idea what they had set themselves up for in their current tour of duty in the Earth School (skeptical readers may want to put that last sentence into their this-is-too-weird-for-me-to-deal-with-right-now mental file folder until you've read the evidence supporting consciousness after death and reincarnation in Section 3.3).

Once I became aware of the genre, I was amazed to find how many examples there are. Except for Carlos Castaneda and Lynn Andrews, the large majority have been published since the Harmonic Convergence in 1987 (in Section 7.4.4 I talk about the significance of this event). The authors seem to be about equally divided between males and females. I find the latter point interesting, because the anthropological literature on shamanism focuses more on male shamanic practices. The Mesoamerican Toltec nagual tradition is prominent (Castaneda, *op cit.*, Gregg, 1993) and is available from indigenous sources as well (Nelson, 1997; Ruiz, 1997; Sams, 1993, 1998). The Inkan tradition of the Andes and Amazon has been transmitted to Alberto Villoldo, an anthropologist (Villoldo and Jendreson, 1990, 1992) and Joan Wilcox (2001). I have already mentioned Hank Wesselman's initiation into the Hawaiian Kahuna

tradition (Wesselman, 1995, 1998, 2001). I recommend his books especially to skeptics, because as an anthropologist he never lost his scientific objectivity as Castaneda was criticized for doing, and chronicles his efforts to understand his experiences from a rational point of view. Midwestern-born writer James Hall and South African-born Californian Nicky Arden were drawn to South Africa where they were initiated into the sangoma healing tradition (Hall, 1994; Arden 1996). Hall now lives in Swaziland and practices as a traditional healer. Marlo Morgan, a conventional Midwestern housewife was called to Australia to learn the ways of one of the last bands of Australian aborigines to freely travel the Outback (Morgan, 1994).

As I see it, shamanic autobiography, by introducing the indigenous worldview through the changing perceptions of individuals who began with the frame of reference of the dominant culture, makes it easier for others in the dominant culture to stretch their own frame of reference. I recognize that the genre has its detractors. Within the indigenous community some of the authors mentioned above have been criticized for benefiting financially from knowledge that was freely given to them, which is the way it is offered in most indigenous traditions. Academics in the dominant culture, already cited, decry the lack of objectivity and unverifiable nature of these accounts. Reasonable people can react positively or negatively to the same book. I personally do not resonate to the writing of Carlos Castaneda, but I have met many who have been profoundly affected by his books. If you feel drawn to this genre I have provided a reasonably comprehensive list in Table 1-4. Let your intuition guide you to the sources that may be useful on your own journey into the larger reality.

Initiating members of the dominant culture into ancient practices is not the only way indigenous knowledge is being made available. Increasingly, indigenous peoples have been speaking directly to us in their own voices; the Kogi of Colombia, South America (Ereira, 1992), and Native American elders (Wall and Arden, 1990; Wall, 1993), and the Dagara of West Africa (Somé, 1994), to name a few (see Table 1-4

for more examples). Beginning in 1999, a remarkable organization called the World Council of Elders was organized (www.worldcouncilofelders.org). Indigenous and Native Elders from all over the planet have come together to help integrate ancient wisdom and sacred knowledge with modern cultures and technologies and assist humanity and Mother Earth realize unity, harmony and full spiritual awareness.

1.3.4 Availability of Secret Ancient Spiritual Wisdom.

For thousands of years spiritual knowledge of ancient civilizations, such as Egypt, Tibet, China and India was kept secret, guarded by its keepers and revealed only to initiates to the inner circle. Drunvalo Melchizedek (1998:51) notes that in the mid-sixties the veil of secrecy was lifted. Spontaneously spiritual traditions all over the world began to share details of spiritual practice that were normally only given to individuals who turned their backs on the outward world and devoted their entire lives to a focused spiritual path. Many thousands of Americans and Europeans have spent time in Ashrams with Indian gurus and had their lives changed. Indian gurus came to the United States and attracted large followings, as did Buddhist teachers from a variety of traditions. More importantly, the wisdom and techniques taught by spiritual teachers of all stripes is now available through printed and audiovisual media.

In addition to the widespread availability of Eastern spiritual teachings, Christianity is experiencing a renaissance of its own. The Gnostic Christian texts at Nag Hammadi in Egypt, and the Essene scrolls in caves at the Qumran above the Dead Sea in Israel were discovered in the 1940s, but it is only recently that the fresh perspectives they give of Jesus and Christianity have become widely available. Access to the Dead Sea scrolls was strictly limited to a small group of eight scholars until 1991, when they became available to the public. It was only about a decade earlier (1978) that the first edition of the authoritative translation of the Nag Hammadi texts was published (Robinson, 1988).

They contain many stories, parables and history that were not included in the canonized version of the Christian Bible in the fourth century.

Here are a few examples of secret ancient spiritual wisdom and techniques now being freely available:

- The Jewish Kabbalistic mystical tradition has been presented in such diverse ways as its relationship to transformative psychology (Leet, 2003), spiritual healing from the perspective of a modern kabbalist and Buddhist practitioner (Shulman 2004), and its relationship to the human energy field (Myss, 1996).
- Many long-secret Tibetan spiritual practices are now available through teachers and books. For example, the healing and spiritual power of Tibetan singing bowls was secret knowledge until recently (Gaynor, 1999:110-111). Now they are being used in a wide variety of settings.
- Sexual energy has been known in many spiritual traditions to have the potential for expanding spiritual consciousness. Most books in the English language have emphasized the carnal rather than the sacred aspects of sex. Some recent books that emphasize the sacred and spiritual aspects of sex present Taoist tantric sexual practices for couples (Riley, 2002), yogic celibate tantric practices (Sovatsky, 1999), and Egyptian sexual alchemy (Kenyon and Sion, 2002).

1.3.5 The Internet: Glimmerings of Global Consciousness.

Much has been written about the transformative potential of the Internet. Ray Kurzweil a leading authority on artificial intelligence noted that in 1999 the unused computing capacity of the Internet worldwide was equivalent to the capacity of a single human brain (Kurzweil, 1999). He predicts that within thirty years machines will attain a level of self-awareness that cannot be differentiated from

human consciousness. Ray Kurzweil's vision of the future, where human biology may actually be seen as a liability is not particularly attractive to me. Although I love computers as word processors, until recently I avoided the Internet. I agreed with transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilbur's view that the Internet rather than being a catalyst for global human consciousness, is more likely to rise no higher than the dominant level of consciousness of its users, which in his opinion is not very high (Wilbur, 1996:309). When I told friends that I chose not be connected with the Internet more often than not they reacted with envy, speaking with a sigh about the amount of time they spend dealing with email at work.

Since my own transformative experience (Section 2.2.2) I have come to view the Internet differently. When you think about it, it is remarkable how the Internet has evolved in less than 40 years from a tiny, secret connection of 4 computer nodes to a worldwide web of over 162 million servers containing over 3 billion “pages” of information and connecting nearly 600 million people with each other (Peter Van Ness, “How the Internet is Transforming Human Consciousness through it Transformation of the Workplace and Business Relationships,” presented at Internet Research Conference, Maastricht, the Netherlands, October 13-16 2002).

Even more remarkable is the way Tim Berners-Lee, a Swiss scientist who first developed the world-wide web in 1989, had the vision to turn something that was originally developed for secretive military purposes into a system for communication that would be available to everyone (can it be coincidental that 1989 was also the year the Christ Consciousness Grid was completed?—see Section 7.4.1). He accomplished this in 1994 by founding the World-Wide-Web Consortium which ensured that access to the web would remain available to everyone at no cost. Previously it had been available only to those who were specifically allowed access to computer networks (Berners-Lee, 1999).

I now agree, with Jean Houston, co-director of the Foundation for Mind Research that “Despite its shadows, the Internet nevertheless is our most promising road to transcendence” (Jean Houston, “Cyberconsciousness”, *Yes!* Spring 2000:27-30). Scientist and transcendent thinker Peter Russell in his book *The Global Brain*, sees the Internet as the most dramatic element of a global integration involving all telecommunication systems—artificial satellites, fiber optics, digital coding, computerized switching, faxes, video links—that weave into an ever-thickening web of information (Russell, 1983). As Peter Russell stated more recently:

We, the billions of minds that make up this huge “global brain,” are being linked together by the “fibers” of our telecommunications systems in much the same way as are the billion of cells in each of our brains (Russell, 1998:28).

1.4 Some Signs of Individual Awakening of Consciousness

In the previous section I have outlined broad socio-cultural developments that suggest large-scale shifts in human consciousness. These larger trends have been fueled by the collective influence of three types of individual consciousness expansions: (1) spontaneous spiritual awakening, (2) near-death and related experiences, and (3) extraterrestrial contact experiences.

1.4.1 Spontaneous Spiritual Awakening.

It used to be that anyone wishing to experience spiritual “enlightenment” had to choose a specific spiritual discipline and devote his or her life to it. This was not the case for Eckhart Tolle. For the first 29 years of his life he experienced almost continuous anxiety interspersed with periods of suicidal depression. Not long after his 29th birthday he awoke in the middle of the night and was engulfed by the most intense feelings of despair he had ever felt. He felt drawn by

an intense vortex of energy into a void, after which he had no recollection of what happened until he awoke the next morning to the sounds of a chirping bird and transformed into a fully realized, enlightened human being (Tolle, 1999:1-2). Another sign that we are in the midst of a Great Shift is that his book, *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment* (Tolle, 1999) has become a runaway best seller. Less well known, is Tony Parsons, an Englishman who led a conventional life until experiencing enlightenment while walking with bare feet on the grass in a park (Parsons, 2000).

The psychiatric profession was not prepared for the growing number of individuals who experienced spiritual awakening beginning in the 1960s often triggered by use of hallucinogens like LSD. Many of the symptoms of spiritual awakening are not all that different from the more delusional forms of mental illness, and conventionally trained psychotherapists and psychologists commonly diagnosed the experiences people reported as pathological. Stanislas Grof, a psychiatrist who was involved in some of the earliest studies of the effects of LSD came to recognize the distinction between spiritual awakening, which in its more dramatic form can become a “spiritual emergency,” and mental illness. In 1980 his wife, Christine Grof created the Spiritual Emergency Network (SEN) in response to the increasing frequency of the phenomenon. The organization served as a means for disseminating information to mental health professionals in order to help them distinguish a spiritual emergency from mental illness. It also created a toll-free hotline to help individuals who were experiencing such emergencies and developed a network of trained professionals to whom such individuals could be referred for additional counseling if they felt the need. In 1989 the SEN was averaging 100 callers a month with 46% being referred to a nearby member of the 1,100-person network for further assistance (Grof and Grof, 1989). The “typical” caller was a 40-year-old female (69%) experiencing some form of kundalini awakening (24%).

1.4.2 Near-Death Experiences

[N]ear-death states might be Creation's way of selecting helpers who might not otherwise volunteer. Transformation by choice enables one to be more in control of any trauma or confusion the aftereffects may foster. In other words, 'tis better to go willingly than to be shoved, for the spiritual will not forever be denied (Atwater, 1999:227).

One of the most dramatic signs of the Shift is the increase in the number of near-death experiences (NDEs) in the United States. This is largely a result of modern medical technology, where death and subsequent resuscitation may occur as an unanticipated consequence of routine medical procedures, and in improved emergency response that saves the lives of individuals who would have died in an earlier era. According to Gallup polls conducted in 1980-1981, 8 million adults in the U.S. had experienced an NDE and a follow-up study in 1990 found that the number had increased to more than 22 million, one person in every eleven (Lundahl and Widdison, 1997). Another estimate indicates that in the late 1990s more than 15 million adults had a near death experience (“Is There Life After Death”, *U.S. News and World Report*, March 31, 1997, pp. 58-64-cited in Atwater, 1999). Melvin Morse, an MD has estimated that the percentage of children experiencing NDEs is much higher (Morse and Perry, 1990). In Section 3.3.1 I review the scientific literature on NDEs; here I will focus on the transformative effects of the consciousness of those who experience it.

P.M.H. Atwater, who has interviewed more than 3,000 NDE individuals sees the near-death experience as part of a larger pattern that I have talked about in this chapter:

*Near death states comprise a complex and many-faceted phenomenon that is part of a much larger genre, **transformation of consciousness** [emphasis in the original] (Atwater, 1999:5).*

She characterizes the physiological and psychological effects of the NDE as a brain shift/spirit shift. By brain shift she refers to physiological changes in brain functioning that can be measured. She sees spirit shift as relating to a larger awareness of connection to the Source of All That Is and of being in Earth to assist humanity make the Great Shift. Atwater sees a difference between the near-death experience in adults and children. For adults it is a growth event. In children she sees it as an evolutionary event. For example, children with NDEs often test at genius level IQ even though there is no evidence of genetic predisposition for intelligence. She observed this in 48% of the children tested overall, and in 81% of children under 6 years (Atwater, 1999).

After-effects of NDE include loss of fear of death, greater focus on spiritual growth, less importance placed on material things, heightened appreciation of day-to-day existence, strong sense of purpose for learning, love for and helping others (Lundahl and Widdison, 1997). Tables 1-1 and 1-2 provide a more comprehensive list of possible physical and psychological aftereffects of a near-death experience. Atwater (1994) considers that many of these aftereffects closely resemble the traits identified by Canadian Psychiatrist Maurice Bucke who in the late nineteenth century studied fifty cases of individuals who had attained a high level of spiritual consciousness (Bucke, 1901).

1.4.3 Extraterrestrial Contact Experiences.

Psychologist Kenneth Ring's investigations of the NDE phenomenon came to recognize similarities between those who experience alien abduction incidents and those who have near-death episodes (Ring, 1992). Although the occurrence is not as high as near-death

experiences, a 1991 Roper poll estimated that 3.7 million Americans believe they may have been abducted by alien beings (Atwater, 1994:111). Ring (1992:168) found that individuals who experience “extraordinary encounters” (both UFO and near-death experiences) appear to “be the gateway to a radical, biologically based transformation of the human personality.” Harvard professor John Mack has also observed that the ET contact experience typically has an overall positive transformative effect (Mack, 1999). See Sections 2.2.3 and 3.7.1 for more information about the researchers I have cited here and their research.

I will conclude this chapter by saying a bit more about the bioenergetic phenomenon called a *kundalini* awakening, because it provides a way to bring together the three types of individual spiritual awakening discussed above: spontaneous spiritual awakening, near death experiences and UFO contact experiences. In tantric yoga, kundalini is a subtle form of bioenergy that usually lies dormant at the base of the spine, but can be activated by various kinds of spiritual disciplines. The “kundalini syndrome” is now recognized by western psychologists as a cluster of psychophysical changes associated with the practice of kundalini yoga. In Section 1.4.1 I mentioned that spontaneous kundalini awakening is a common type of spiritual emergency. A number of near-death researchers have observed the similarity of psychophysical changes experienced by NDEs and kundalini awakening.

Kenneth Ring developed a Kundalini Scale of physical symptoms and found that both UFO experiencers and NDEs reported feeling these symptoms at a rate two to four times higher than control groups who had neither type of experience. Table 1-3 summarizes the results of Ring's survey. For example, Table 1-3 shows that three times as many UFO experiencers reported an increase in severe or migraine type headaches compared to the control group (34.0% vs 10.3%) and twice as many near-death experiencers reported the same symptoms compared to their control group (17.6% vs 9.3%). I chose this

particular example because it happens to be one of the symptoms I experienced after my own awakening, which I describe in Section 2.2.2.

Table 1-1 Physiological After-Effects of Near-Death Experiences (Not all attributes will necessarily be experienced by a single person)

Unusual sensitivity to light and sound
Substantially more or less energy (energy surges, often more sexual)
Reversal of body clock— physically younger appearance (before and after photos can differ)
Lower blood pressure
Accelerated metabolic and substance absorption rates (decreased tolerance of pharmaceuticals and chemically treated products)
Electrical/electromagnetic sensitivity
Heightened sensations of taste, touch, texture, and smell
Synesthesia (multiple sensing)
Perception of energy—auras, chakras
Increased allergies or sensitivities
Increased psychic ability and future memory episodes
Vegetarian diet, or a preference for more vegetables and grains (less meat)

Adapted from Atwater (1999:20-22) and Ring and Valarino (1998:31-32).

Table 1-2 Psychological Aftereffects of Near-Death Experiences (Not all attributes will necessarily be experienced by a single person)

Increased love for all people and all things
Convinced of a life purpose; understanding that there is a divine purpose in life
Increased concern for our planet—Mother Earth
Deepened appreciation of nature and the environment
Loss of the fear of death, lessened fear of many things
More spiritual; less religious
Charismatic
Childlike sense of wonder and joy
Live more consciously in the moment
Nonjudgmental/accepting of others
Changes in thought processing (switch from sequential/selective thinking to clustered thinking and an acceptance of ambiguity)
Insatiable curiosity; hunger for knowledge and learning
Heightened intelligence; able to abstract easily
More creativity and inventiveness
Rejection of previous limitations and norms
Philosophical
More detached and objective (dissociation)
“Merge” easily (absorption)
More generous and charitable
Less competitive
Less stressed, decreased worry—willing to surrender to the divine plan
Less materialistic see the “big picture” of life
Disregard for time
Reincarnation beliefs
Major relationship change—divorce
Career change
Capable of forming expansive concepts of love while at the same time challenged in initiating and maintaining satisfying relationships
Exaggerated “inner child” issues
Possible bouts of depression

Adapted from Atwater (1999:20-22) and Ring and Valarino (1998:31-32).

Table 1-3 Symptoms of Kundalini Activation by UFO and Near-Death Experiencers Compared to Nonexperiencing Control Groups

Physical Symptom	Percentage Endorsement			
	UFOE	NDE	UFOC	NDC
I felt energy in my hands more often than before	37.1	47.3	15.4	14.8
I would sometimes feel a deep ecstatic sensation, something like an orgasm, for no reason	32.0	35.1	15.4	14.8
I experienced severe or migraine type headaches more often than before	34.0	17.6	10.3	9.3
I became aware of energy discharges or currents flowing through my body	44.3	50.0	20.5	13.0
I would occasionally experience sensations of tickling, itching or tingling on or underneath my skin	54.6	39.2	30.8	3.7
I became aware of internal lights or colors	32.0	43.2	17.9	9.3
My hands often felt hot	24.7	33.8	15.4	11.1
I would have sensations of extreme heat or cold move through my body more often than before	35.1	37.8	10.3	20.4
My body would occasionally shake, vibrate or tremble for no apparent reason	30.9	25.7	10.3	3.7

Source: Ring (1992)

UFOE = UFO experiencer (97 individuals), NDE = near-death experiencer (74 individuals), UFOC = UFO control group (39 individuals), NDC = near-death control group (54 individuals).

Table 1-4 Index to Major References for Chapter 1

Topic	References
1.2.5 The Ugly Truth Cleanses	CIA: Agee (1975), Cockburn and St. Clair (1999), McGehee (1983), Stockwell (1978), Governmental Misconduct: Clarke (2004), Dean (2004), Hersh (2004), Johnson (2004), Scott (2003), Stockwell (1990), Unger (2004), 9/11: Griffin (2004, 2005, 2007), Griffin and Scott (2007), Tarpley (2007), Thompson (2004), Zwicker (2006); Corporate Misconduct: Goodman (2004), Perkins (2004),
1.3.2 Sacred/Secular Feminine	Historical Perspective: Boulding (1976), Eisler (1987), Gadon (1989), Gimbutas (1982, 1989, 2001); Feminine Spirituality: Bolen (1984), Bridges (2001), Christ (1998), Duerk (1989), Estés (1992), Kidd (2002), Plaskow and Christ (1989), Spretnak (1982); The DaVinci Code: Brown (2003), Burstein (2004); Female Spiritual Autobiography: Halifax (1993), Houston (1996), Macy (1991)
1.3.3 Indigenous Wisdom	The Preindustrial Good Life: Barreiro (1988), Gowdy (1998), Sahlins (1972), Shepard (1973, 1998); Indigenous Perspectives: McLuhan (1994); Australian Aborigine: Elkin (1942), Cowan (1989); African: Doumbia and Doumbia (2004-West African Bamana), van der Post (1958, 1961-Kalahari Bushmen/San), Somé (1997, 1998, 1999a&b-Dagara); South/Meso-American: Ereira (1992-Kogi), Narby (1998), Nelson (1997-Toltec), Ruiz (1997-Toltec), Sams (1993, 1999-Kiowa/Toltec), Wilcox (2001-Q'ero); North American: Neihardt (1932-Lakota), Suzuki and Knudsen (1992), Underwood (1993), Wall and Arden (1990), Wall (1993), Ywahoo (1987-Cherokee); Siberian: Kharitidi (1997)

Table 1-4 (cont.)

Topic	References
1.3.3 Indigenous Wisdom (cont.)	<p><i>Native American Prophecy</i>: Ghost Wolf (2003), Summer Rain (1987); <i>Shamanic Indigenous Shamanic Biography/ Autobiography</i>: Black Elk and Lyon (1990-Lakota), Freke (1999), Lake (1996-Yurok-Karuk), Lame Deer and Erdoes (1992), Larsen (1996-Zulu), Mails (1991-Fools Crow), Mutwa (1986-Zulu), Somé (1997-Dagara); <i>Shamanic Autobiography by Nonindigenous Writers</i>: Abelar (1992-Yaqui), Andrews (primarily Plains Cree unless indicated otherwise: 1981, 1984, 1985-Maya, 1986, 1987-Australian aborigine, 1990a, 1990b-medieval anglo saxon, 1992-future Japan, 1993), Arden (1996-South African sangoma), Castaneda (Yaqui/Toltec tradition; Don Juan: 1968, 1971, 1972, 1974; La Gorda: 1977, 1981, 1984; syntheses: 1991, 1993, 1998, 2003), Donner (1982-Amazon, 1987-Venezualan healer, 1991-Yaqui), Gregg (1993), Hall (1994-South African sangoma), Medicine Eagle (1991-Crow/Cheyenne), Morgan (1994-Australian Aborigine), Perkins (1994 Andes/ Amazon), Sharon (1978), Summer Rain (1985, 1987, 1989, 1991), Villoldo and Jendresen (1990, 1992), Wesselman (Hawaiian Kahuna: 1995, 1998, 2001), Whitaker (1991-Amazon), Wolf (1991); <i>Westerners Favoring Indigenous Worldview</i>: Allen (1987), Glendinning (1994), Mander (1991), McKenna (1991), Quinn (1999), Shepard (1973, 1998); <i>Fiction</i>: Kaltreider (1998), Quinn (1992, 1996, 1997), Storm (1972, 1983); <i>Castaneda Critiques</i>: Demille (1978, 1980), Noel (1976)</p>

Table 1-4 (cont.)

Topic	References
1.3.4 Ancient Spiritual Wisdom	Cox (1997); <i>Christian/Essene Tradition</i> : Braden (2000), Robinson (1988-Nag Hammadi texts); <i>Kabbalah</i> : Leet (2003), Myss (1996), Shulman (2004); <i>Sacred Sexual Practices</i> : Kenyon and Sion (2002-Egyptian); Riley (2002-Taoist/tantric), Sovatsky (1999-yogic/tantric)
Awakening	<i>Spiritual Emergencies</i> : Bragdon (1988, 1990), Grof and Grof (1989); <i>Individual Experiences</i> : Parsons (2000), Tolle (1999)
1.4.2 Near-Death Experiences	See reference listed in Table 3-1, Section 3.3.1
1.4.3 Extraterrestrial Contact Experience	See references listed in Table 3-1, Section 3.7

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