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### **BOOK REVIEW**

**TITLE:** MANY LIVES, MANY MASTERS

**AUTHOR:** DR BRIAN WEISS

**PUBLISHER:** SIMON & SCHUSTER INC.

**DATE:** FIRST PUBLISHED IN THE USA IN 1988

The author's goal in writing this book was to share the information about the positive therapeutic effects of Hypnotherapy he used with one of his clients - in particular past life regression therapy. The object or goal of the book is not just to recount the success of using this technique, but also to recount details of some of the lives she has lived - those which had relevance to her issue, as well as the fact that the author himself received information from enlightened beings (referred to as Masters in this book) by them using Catherine as a channel.

### **SUMMARY**

At the time that Dr Weiss started compiling this book, he held the position of Chief of Psychiatry at a large university-affiliated hospital in Miami. He had always distrusted anything that could not be proved by traditional scientific methods, practicing along the narrow conservative paths of his profession.

He then met Catherine, a 27 year old client who sought his help for anxiety, panic attacks, and phobias, which led to serious depression. He initially used conventional Psychiatric therapeutic methods to try and assist her, but when these methods hadn't helped after 18 months, he decided to try hypnosis. The events that unfolded from then, involving past-life regression over many of her lives, and the positive results the client experienced from this therapy, were so incredible to him, that he felt compelled to share this remarkable case history with the world.

The fact that the author seemed to have been selected by the 'Masters' or enlightened beings which Catherine communicated with in the 'space between lives' (or soul journeys) as someone to impart and teach this information to others heightened his desire to write this book. From this point on, his career took a completely different turn. He has since used this therapeutic technique on many other clients, with all achieving equally positive results. He has subsequently written several other books on the subject, and achieved world-wide fame.

## **CRITICAL ASSESSMENT**

The main point of the book is to inform the world of the fact that life is more than meets the eye, and goes beyond our five senses. He wanted to share the remarkable fact that as evolving souls we live many lives for the lessons we can learn during those lives, lives which can be recalled vividly while in a subconscious state. More importantly he wanted to highlight the fact that we can carry karmic residue from previous lives into our current lives which can plague us with debilitating issues, and that these issues can best be resolved through past life regression work. Most importantly, he wanted to share the lessons and information he learned from the 'Masters' – the enlightened beings or spirits who spoke to him from the spiritual realm through Catherine. He knew he was taking a risk in doing this, as the information this book holds went against everything he had learned and experienced as a conventional Psychiatrist up till that point, and as such he could be ridiculed or spurned by others in his profession, possibly leading to the end of his career as he knew it. However, he realized that in writing this book, the information that he has shared in it would be far more beneficial than anything he could do on an individual basis in his Psychiatry office.

The author has written this book in chronological format, detailing exactly what his client shared with him during her regression sessions. He kept extensive client records, both written and taped, which has enabled him to relate this information concisely and chronologically. He has also shared the continual improvement his client experienced regarding her issue as a result of these sessions throughout the book, up to the point when she felt she no longer required further therapy.

The author begins his tale with his first meeting with Catherine. He details how she was referred to him by one of his colleagues, although she took several weeks to make an appointment with him. He spent quite some time getting a detailed history from her, and then embarked on an 18 month course of intensive psychiatric treatment with her, attempting to delve into her childhood memories for the cause. However, she did not have many childhood memories and did not experience much improvement, continuing to be plagued with anxiety and panic attacks. She was terrified of the dark, of water, and of being closed in. She continued experiencing palpitations. He wanted to try Hypnosis with her, but she was reluctant. He relates in the book that he would normally prescribe medication for patients with such a condition, but that Catherine refused to take any medication. He felt that he had hit a wall with her, not really knowing what else to do.

The turning point came when Catherine told him that while visiting a museum, she had inexplicable knowledge of Egyptian artifacts. He again suggested Hypnosis, being an excellent technique to remember forgotten incidents, as he felt she may have developed this knowledge from forgotten events in her childhood. This time she agreed.

Up until his experience with Catherine, Dr Weiss had only ever used Hypnosis for regression in a current life. In her first regression session, he regressed her back to

the age of 2, and no particular event showed itself to be the cause during this process. It seems to me that he did not use the affect bridge for this regression (The Art of Hypnotherapy by C Roy Hunter, Pg 82,83 and SAIH CC4 Curriculum), not encouraging her to connect to an emotion which could be traced back. I don't think he was aware of this particular technique at that stage. He seems to have simply regressed her in terms of chronological age, which to may not have been as effective. He then stopped regressing her in this life once she went back to the age of 2. I would have continued regressing her to an even earlier age, continuing back to when she was in the womb, as so many issues people suffer with have connections to their birth, or in utero. However, this may be a moot point in this case. He then instructed her to go back to the time from which her symptoms arose, and was totally unprepared for what came next.

She started describing an event which did not make sense to him, and confused him, so he asked her what year it was, and she replied that it was 1863, and that her name was Aronda. He asked her to go forward several years, and she related that she had a child, Claestra, who was Rachel (her niece in her current life). Dr Weiss was very confused, not being able to understand how her child and her niece could be one and the same person. He then moved her forward to the time of her death. She apparently died in a flood or tidal wave, trying to hold on to her baby.

As I read about how she died, I immediately recognized the link between her clearly traumatic death in this past life, and her intense fear of water. However, Dr Weiss makes no connection in the book between her traumatic death in her past life, and her fear of water in her current life in his book. It's possible that he was so new to dealing with past life regression, that he did not recognize her drowning to be one of the causes of her current condition. If he did, he does not draw this link in his book. His mind was still reeling from what he was hearing from her, and he was trying to make sense of it, wondering to himself if she was suffering from Schizophrenia or hallucinations. Fortunately his gut instinct told him that he had stumbled upon a case involving reincarnation, something he knew very little about at that stage.

He then asked her if she remembered anything else, and she remembered fragments of 2 other lifetimes, one involving getting very ill from drinking contaminated water. Again I recognized a possible link to her current fear of water, although again he makes no mention of recognizing this link himself. Impulsively, he asked if he had been present in any of her lifetimes, and she responded that in 1568 BC he had been a teacher, Diogenes, who taught her, although she did not understand what he was teaching. I'm not too clear why he asked her about his possible involvement in her life at this stage, as this was before her revelations regarding her Masters communicating through her. To me it doesn't seem to be a particularly client-centred question.

He then ended the session.

Dr Weiss relates how when Catherine arrived for her next session a week later, she announced that her lifelong fear of drowning had disappeared, and her fears of choking had diminished. She also no longer was having nightmares about a

collapsing bridge. I find it quite fascinating that she experienced such healing from simply revisiting these past-life events. As a Hypnotherapist I would normally follow a resolution process and a karmic cleansing process once an apparent root cause has been uncovered. I'm not sure he knew enough about this yet, but it's clear that simply going back to an Initial Sensitizing event in a past life was sufficient to start the healing process.

She happily went into hypnosis again, and spontaneously regressed back to the same past life as Aronda, when she was a servant in the Royal house, and her duty was to prepare bodies after their death. She proceeded to describe what sounded like an Egyptian concept of death and the afterlife. To me, this could explain her unexplained knowledge of Egyptian artefacts in her current life. The writer does not mention this possible connection. She then left that life in her session, rested, and then entered another life, again one of the same lives she had regressed to in the previous session. She said it was 1536 BC, and that her father in that life was Edward, her paediatrician in her current life, and that he knew Dr Weiss, and told her that she should listen to him and what he could teach her. He progressed her to her death in that past life, and ended the session.

In her next session, she regressed to yet another life, as a boy called Johan, and Dr Weiss progressed her to her death in this life. At this point in the book, on page 41, Dr Weiss mentions that he was still looking for the single overwhelming traumatic event that could either cause or explain her current-life symptoms. I find this rather strange, as her drowning in her life as Aronda was clearly traumatic, involving water, one of her major fears, and having already regressed to that life and her death in that life, she was already experiencing relief from her symptoms. So in my mind, he was missing a huge clue here, or maybe he did pick up on it and just didn't explain the link in his book. Also, she suffered from many fears, and he deduced that it may not have been just one traumatic event which caused all her symptoms, but rather the daily influence of smaller negative forces which had to be recognized and resolved with as much attention as that paid to a single overwhelmingly traumatic event.

My personal experience is that when a client regresses to a particular event in a past-life, it is not always apparent to me as the therapist what the significance of that event is, as often it seems as though nothing major is happening. However, when in hypnosis in a subconscious state, clients are very connected to the collective consciousness, and if asked what the significance is of the event they have regressed to, they will always understand it, and the the link between that event and the issue they wish to resolve. Dr Weiss, being relatively new to this type of therapy, does not seem to be aware yet that clients can usually join the dots subconsciously, so he is left attempting to do that himself, without the benefit of that subconscious clarity.

During her regression to her life as Johan, she recounts being murdered, her throat slit with a knife – yet another traumatic event which would have contributed to her current-life fears. Once again, Dr Weiss does not make any mention of how this traumatic death could have been connected to her current issues. He reports that

she then recounts drifting up to the clouds, and then being born again into a new life.

Fortunately Dr Weiss had read that soul groups reincarnate together again and again, working out their karma over many lifetimes. He therefore wanted to verify this information, so repeatedly instructed her to observe the significant people in the lifetimes she regressed to, to see if she could identify them as significant people in her current life. She recognized souls repeatedly in her past life regressions. I myself have had this fact verified in most of the past-life regression sessions I have had the good fortune to facilitate. Clients involved in past-life regression sessions usually effortlessly recognize souls from their current lives.

Dr Weiss states on pg 43 of his book that Catherine was becoming increasingly more psychic between sessions, even being able to predict winners of horse races effortlessly in her current life. This is not something that I have ever noticed with any of the clients I have facilitated past-life regression sessions with, and I am not aware that it is a common response at all to past-life regression sessions. However, I am left wondering whether it could be a result of many past-life regression sessions facilitated with one client. Typically, modern Hypnotherapy does not necessarily involve repeated past-life regression sessions in order to resolve an issue. A client can be regressed to one or more lifetimes in one session, where trauma from incident(s) in those lives can be resolved in that session. The Hypnotherapeutic model is usually to reach the root cause of an issue and resolve it within just a few sessions at most. However, Dr Weiss was, first and foremost, trained as a Psychiatrist. Psychiatric therapy typically involves weekly or more frequent sessions over many sessions spanning months or even years. So this is the therapy model he naturally followed, probably believing it was necessary. I would like to do some further research in the future into whether other clients experience this psychic response from several or many past-life regression sessions.

In a subsequent session, Catherine spontaneously moved into a soul state immediately after a past-life death event, describing it as a place to re-energize. Soul journey work, following a past-life regression, can be particularly healing and comforting to clients, so I will usually guide my clients on to soul journeys once they have moved through a death in a past life (as I have been trained to do). Dr Weiss did not guide her to do this – she did so spontaneously – fortunately, as it was from this realm that her Masters channeled information through her for his benefit. Her voice changed at this point, became louder and clearer. She mentioned that it was a place to learn, and specifically that Dr Weiss was to be her teacher. Dr Weiss realized that her voice, tone, phraseology etc was different, but did not realize at the time that although Catherine was the one speaking the words, the thoughts had not come from her, but rather through her. Later in the session she identified what she called ‘the Masters’, highly evolved souls, who were actually speaking through her, using her as a channel, speaking directly to him. Curiously, upon being brought back to the present, she could not consciously remember the details of her soul journey or of the Masters speaking through her, although she remembered the details of the past lives she had regressed to. Having facilitated many soul journeys with clients myself,

I am curious that Catherine could not consciously remember the details of her soul journey, as all my clients have been able to. I assume that it had something to do with the Masters using her as a channel, and that perhaps these evolved souls realized that she was not ready to be aware of this information consciously, and so blocked it from her conscious memory.

In one of her subsequent sessions, Catherine again spoke in the voice of the Masters, and relayed information about Dr Weiss' life and family that Catherine could not possibly have known about, providing reasons for the death of his firstborn son, and what it was meant to teach him, specifically that medicine can only do so much, and that it's scope is limited. This information had a major positive impact on the writers life – on his beliefs, his outlook on life, and his attitude and personality.

While being used as a channel of communication by highly evolved souls is clearly not a common experience clients have, I believe it does happen. I myself have experienced something similar with a client of mine, although not quite as dramatic. The first such incident I was involved with did not actually involve past life regression. I was in fact facilitating a Parts Therapy session for a client who had an alcohol addiction. I followed a process of calling upon the parts of the client involved with the issue, and noticed that during the negotiation and mediation process between the participating parts, the clients voice changed, and he proceeded to refer to himself in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and the words being uttered seemed to be directed at me. I had recently read this very book, so realized immediately what was going on, and having been trained to 'always deal with whatever comes up', I dealt with it as best I could. The difference is that the client clearly remembered the experience once out of trance, and verified that he indeed was being used as a channel. He interestingly also had psychic skills.

Dr Weiss continued to conduct past life regression sessions with Catherine on a weekly basis, and she regressed to many more, also experiencing many more soul journeys in between lives. Then, in a subsequent session, Catherine started describing her current life, reliving traumatic experiences in this life. She could not understand why her father was being so awful, and Dr Weiss then suggested that she approach her Higher Self to gain some perspective, as he had recently read about people being able to do this. She responded that her father had never wanted his children, and that her brother had been conceived before her parents were married, and was unplanned. Catherine had never known this consciously, and was now exhibiting a wisdom and perspective about her life that had previously been restricted to when she was in a soul state during regression. Although not in contact with the Masters during this session, she was demonstrating her connection to the collective consciousness in this state. This is something I have had the privilege to witness many times during sessions I have facilitated. When clients are connected to the collective consciousness, in a 'superconscious' state, they demonstrate tremendous wisdom and perspective about their lives, both past and present.

One day, Catherine arrived for her session looking particularly serene. She informed the writer that she had spoken to her father on the telephone, and decided to

forgive him for the hurt and pain he had caused her. This act of forgiveness appeared to provide her with a profound sense of peace. It seems that Catherine decided of her own volition to forgive her father. It was not something that Dr Weiss suggested during a session in order to provide resolution and healing, supposedly because he was still finding his way with Hypnotherapeutic techniques. Suggesting forgiveness for the perpetrators of trauma (intentional or not) in present or past-life hypnosis work as a means for resolving issues is very prevalent in Hypnotherapy today, and one which I use extensively in my practice, having been trained in this method thoroughly. It is phenomenal to witness the healing and resolution that can be achieved should the client wish to follow this suggestion.

Catherine continued with many more past life regression and soul journey sessions. In one of these sessions she recounted how she developed a disease which sounded like leprosy, and she and others with the same disease were put into a cave, and the entrance to the cave was then sealed in order to isolate them from the rest of the community. She died in this cave. I immediately recognized the link between her death in the cave in this past life, and her fear of closed spaces and darkness in her current life. However, the writer once again does not refer to this link, so it is unclear whether he realized that this traumatic death may have been the cause for her fear of closed spaces. He also does not mention that he asked Catherine if there was any connection while she was in a subconscious or superconscious state. I would have done so.

It's also curious that Catherine was not interested in being told any of the information she revealed while in her soul state between lives, or of the information she channeled from the Masters, considering that she remembered none of it post-trance. She simply did not want to know. I'm left wondering if this was by design from the Masters – that they knew she was not ready for it, would not understand it yet, and also that the information channeled from the Masters was more for Dr Weiss than for her, so they blocked her from recalling it at that stage. She continued to remember the details of her many past-lives, and also continued to improve regarding her issues.

During one session, she and Dr Weiss managed to make the connection between a choking experience in a past life, and her anxiety in her current life about undergoing vocal cord surgery. What also became clear in this session was that Catherine was subconsciously aware while she was under anaesthetic for this surgery, and could recount in hypnosis exactly what was said and done by those in the theatre with her, causing her great anxiety upon awakening. This was quite a revelation for Dr Weiss, who had never realized or considered this possibility before.

In Chapter 11 of this book Dr Weiss recounts how he was jolted awake in the middle of the night by a vision of Catherine's face looking upset. He discovered that at about the same time, Catherine had woken up with a panic attack, but then calmed herself by imagining Dr Weiss' face, meditating and relaxing. He realized that he had developed a telepathic bond with her. I find this phenomenon quite amazing. He

also recounts that Catherine was becoming more psychic, as well as himself, and wonders if the Masters were responsible for this. Of this I have no doubt.

Later in this chapter Dr Weiss recounts how the Masters informed him through Catherine that human beings would ultimately destroy themselves, as they were not following the example of nature, which is always balanced. Humans seem set on a path to destroy. He wondered to them during a session as to what he could do to make a difference through teaching, and was told that he would not be able to reach everyone this way, and that humankind would learn through the process.

His mother-in-law was dying of cancer, and because of his experiences with Catherine's sessions, he was able to comfort her regarding the fact that her soul was immortal, and guided her on her death bed regarding her transition into her soul state. He found that this helped her, himself and his wife with their grief. I too have found great comfort in knowing about the fact that our souls are immortal, and that we revisit the spirit world between lives. As a direct result of my work with past life regression, I no longer fear death.

On page 171 of the book, the writer is describing yet another past-life experience Catherine was having, and tries to move her forward in that life to just before death, but he notes that she is not particularly suggestible during a past-life experience, and that he could not 'suggest away' her actual memories, or to change the details of what had happened or been remembered. As a hypnotherapist who has been drilled as to the importance of always remaining client-centered during sessions, I am left wondering why he would even want to do so. Surely the memories she went back to were significantly important to consider regarding the impact they might have had on her current issues – I am curious as to why he would feel the need to try and suggest anything different, and why he would not 'deal with whatever comes up'.

The Masters came through in a further session, explaining how we need to move through 7 planes before we return in another life. They explained the concept of karma, and how it impacts our lives and the subsequent life choices we make.

Other spirits also channeled through Catherine. Dr Weiss recognized at one stage that he was communicating with a spirit who was at a lower level than the Masters, but the information was as important, clear, and practical.

On page 174 Catherine announces that Edward (the man she has been having a troubled relationship with) owes her some information about her sisters' child Stephanie, as her sister and her future husband had put her up for adoption, being teenagers at the time that she was conceived. No one in the family had had anything to do with her or received any information from her since the time of her adoption, but Catherine somehow knew that her sister would want to find her. This is quite amazing information coming from spirit. She mentions at the end of this chapter that people are now drawn to her by some sort of psychic pull because she has been freed from so many of her fears through her regression work. She again reiterates that Dr Weiss is her teacher.



A Master channels through her again towards the end of this regression session, explaining that on a certain plane, souls are able to communicate with people in physical form, or telepathically move objects, usually only if an agreement has been left unfulfilled, often because a life has been abruptly ended. I find this fascinating, as I have heard so many stories over the years of ghost sightings, or objects being moved, and always wondered what the purpose was, as people usually get very frightened by such manifestations. To me this is a very reasonable explanation for such phenomena, and I now find it comforting, rather than frightening.

Catherine reports during a session that she has lived 86 lives on earth. Of course she does not remember them when in a normally conscious state. During the course of his book, she regresses to 10 or 12 of these lives, and towards the end of this therapy course with Dr Weiss, started going back to some of those lives again. Considering the fact that the subconscious mind always knows which dots to connect, it is clear to me that the sources of the various fears she experienced in this life were from these 10 to 12 lives she regressed to. However, it is unclear whether the writer directed her to these lives by tracing back the emotions she experienced around her fears. We are just told that she went back to these lives. It seems that she did so spontaneously.

Catherine then stopped her sessions for about 5 months, until she made another appointment due to the fact that she had started having a recurring dream about a religious sacrifice that involved snakes in a pit. Dr Weiss regressed her, and she went to an ancient life where everyone around her was dark-skinned, and she had come to watch an anointing of priests, along with certain rituals.

At the end of the session, the Masters came through again, referring to the 7 different planes, and how people reincarnated into lives to learn lessons and grow. She then spoke with the voice of the Master poet, who was speaking directly to Dr Weiss. He said that Dr Weiss needed to now learn through his own intuition. He interpreted his statement to mean that there would be no more revelations through Catherine's hypnosis.

A few months later, Catherine told Dr Weiss that she had been to see a psychic astrologer who specialized in past-life readings, not mentioning to her about her past-life regression sessions. Iris, the astrologer, verified most of what Catherine had discovered under hypnosis.

Catherine attended no further hypnosis sessions, as she seemed completely freed from all her fears and phobias from before. She went on to live a happy and successful life. It is interesting to note the changes in Dr Weiss following this experience. He found himself being more psychic, more intuitive. He started meditating. He still wrote scientific papers, lectured etc, but now straddled two worlds – the physical world, as well as the greater world of the nonphysical planes, represented by our souls and spirits. He noticed that he began to sometimes have a vivid dream, during which he would be listening to a lecturer and asking questions of

a teacher named Philo. He recognized the influence of the messages from the Masters talking about intellectual knowledge needing to be transformed into emotional and subconscious knowledge. Once the knowledge was transformed, the imprint would be permanent. Philo also talked about the need for balance and harmony, which is so neglected today. He had other similar dreams where knowledge and wisdom was imparted to him in this way. He has learned to listen to his dreams and intuitions, recognizing the voice of the Masters, continuing to teach him.

The fact that Dr Weiss wrote this book and informed millions of people around the world about the possibilities of past lives and the impact of trauma from some of those lives being carried over into our current life seems to be by design of the Masters. It's clear from the book that they selected him, being a prominent Psychiatrist whose word people would trust, to be the messenger of their wisdom and information. Even though he was new to this particular Hypnotherapeutic technique, finding his way as the sessions progressed, and did not seem to guide Catherine himself, or follow clear resolution processes when traumatic events from past lives were uncovered, spontaneous healing resulted from these sessions.

This is one of first books I read on Past Life Regression work after I completed my training with SAIH. It enhanced a passion I started developing for this type of Hypnotherapy during my training. Reading about how Catherine's Masters channeled through her for Dr Weiss' benefit actually prepared me for a similar experience I had as a facilitator, as previously mentioned. This book has been very widely read globally, and is often mentioned to me by clients who approach me for past life regression sessions, so it seems that the Masters chose well when they selected Dr Weiss to spread this information around the world, and he has clearly accomplished his mission in informing the world of this amazing phenomenon human beings are capable of in a subconscious state.

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