

Surfing on the Edge of the Unknown

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I work as an intuitive mentor. I combine my training and perspective as a Lorian priest with newly emerging energy healing methods and coaching techniques. My intention is to help people learn how to stand tall within themselves, to thrive and be of service to the future. Especially in a present that appears increasingly dysfunctional.

My “practice specialty” is working with what psychology calls the highly sensitive temperament. A sensitive person has probably had a lifetime of being told or thinking about themselves that they are just too sensitive, cry too easily, take things in too deeply. “What is wrong with you?” they hear from others, or ask themselves. They are fed up with themselves, tired of feeling victimized, tired of trying so hard to be perfect, tired of trying to save the world to make it a safe place for themselves to be, tired of trying to avoid the shadows and pain then feel inside.

Often I am asked this question: “How can I get rid of this awful sensitivity?” The asker wants me to tell them how to make their sensitivity go away so that she or he can just “be normal.”

I believe that we sometimes try to use our self-help techniques, and even religion or our spiritual beliefs, to “beat up” what we don’t like about ourselves in the hope that whatever it is will go away, and then we will be a better person. But in my experience, no one, including me, has ever been convinced to think more highly of themselves by a beating. Surely the best use of “self-help” and spiritual awareness is to open ourselves to discovering the goodness that is already inside us, and allowing it to bloom.

I suspect that exceptional sensitivity is pointing towards a deeper capacity for being human than we have been aware of. Our sensitivity can open access for us into deeper senses that go beyond seeing, hearing and touch into a more subtle realm. I think that many sensitive people have been given a gift that we haven’t been receiving.

How can Incarnational Spirituality help us to understand and utilize exceptional sensitivity for our own good, and for the good of the world?

I come to this question from being sensitive myself. I also come to it from a lifelong exploration of what it means to receive spiritual insight. It has taken me forever to understand that spiritual insight comes to me through my body as subtle perception... not as visions, not by hearing the voice of God or the angels in my head, like I thought I was “supposed to.”

Hearing and seeing seemed to be the accepted channels for how “everyone else” did it. That way of receiving guidance has been honored and revered and respected over human history, and I thought there must be something wrong with me that this never happened for me.

But through Incarnational Spirituality I have come to see how it works for **me**. And without IS I would not know this!

I continue to learn how to extend my sensitive awareness, my subtle perception, just beyond my body, and then feel into and translate into a felt sense the awareness and information that comes to me.

The very first time I did this was when I lived in the Findhorn Community in the 1970s. I was in my thirties. I had been at Findhorn for about four or five years when I had this experience, which really, looking back, changed my life. I was the focalizer of a three month program called the Essence of Findhorn that was meant to introduce about 30 people from all over the world to a new way of thinking about a living, loving, embodied spirituality. It was a very practical program. There was some study of esoteric principles, but mostly we were involved in coming to understand how to put those principles into practice in our daily lives as individuals, as a group, and as we participated in the life of the community itself.

At some point in the last month of the program, a participant who was a therapist from Canada, seemingly quite healthy physically and spiritually, somehow came to the determination that she could now best serve her life purpose by dying. She took to her bed, and began to refuse all food. She didn't share her intention with anyone, and people just assumed that she was ill.

Some days later, a friend of hers came to ask me to visit with her. I went to see her and learned for the first time about her intention. I had never been confronted with a situation like this and didn't know what to do. On the one hand, I wanted to honor her sovereign presence and right to choose for herself. On the other hand I didn't want her to die!

She was open to talking with me, but I felt her life seeming to hang in the balance in this one moment. Rightly or wrongly, I sensed that what I said and how she responded would determine whether she chose life or death. But I had no clue what to say, or even how to evaluate a situation like this.

Interestingly, because I had never experienced voices or visions, much of my time at Findhorn (and now my whole life!) had been about learning how spirituality worked for **me**. Early on, surrounded as I was by people who heard the voice of God and spoke to the fairies, I felt that I had to decide whether I was "spiritually slow," in which case I should hang it up and just try to live a "normal" life. OR, did spirituality work in a different way for me? If this, then my job was to figure out **how** it worked for me. I had determined that I was going to explore this latter option.

Over time I had learned how to do what I thought of as following the road signs of my life, and humanity's life, including having an eye on the rear view mirror, for clues about how Life and Spirit worked. I realize now that this was great training in learning to trust my inner intuition rather than depending on God or some other Wise Authority who would Tell Me What To Do. But if ever I had needed some wise authority to tell me what to do, sitting at the bedside of this weak lady watching the very life force ebb from her, right now was it.

I really wasn't in the habit of praying, because I just wasn't sure anyone was listening to me. But now I sent out a quick, mostly wordless but deeply heartfelt inner request for help. If I had been able to put it into words, it would have been something like: "If I can offer any help for this woman here, please help me to do this."

Nothing happened, of course.

However, I thought of a question to ask her. I don't remember what it was now, but it was something very simple, something about what she liked to do, what brought her joy. I knew I didn't want to be judging her, or telling her what she should do or not do. We just talked for a long time about simple joys and pleasures. I didn't have a plan. I would just find what felt like a good next thing to say to her coming into my mind literally a split second before I said it. Whatever was there, I would say. It didn't really feel different from how I talked normally.

Over time though, there was a progression, and at one point we were talking about the beauty of the woods that surrounded the building where the Essence Program was being held and where the participants and I were also living. It was a big old stone Scottish hotel, built as a healing spa in the 1800s, on land that had been held long ago by the Druids as sacred. It came to me to ask her if she would like to walk there in the woods with me. I didn't frame the question with a purpose, like trying to get her out of bed or on a path to change her mind about dying. At the same time, of course, it seemed to me that attending to the beauty and vitality of the living world was a pretty good life-generating prescription. I understood intuitively that this was a tiny step in the direction of living, and that I could only offer it, exceptionally delicately, and gently. It was for her to take it, or not. I knew that living, or not, was her decision. After a time she said she would like to do that.

We made a date for the next day. We did take that very short, very slow walk into the beautiful powerful healing trees. I learned later that she had decided on her own to eat a little bit of soup beforehand, so she would have enough energy to stand and move. And as far as I know, she is still standing and moving on down the road of life...

As for me, I continue to explore how spirituality and guidance work for me. And they do! I am still learning how to translate the wisdom in my body's sensitive awareness, my subtle perception, into conscious understanding. I work with clients now in much the same way as I did in this story. I still completely trust the thought that comes to me the split second before I need it. Always it leads unpredictably into the next one, which might be even better. I still focus on what is the smallest thing that can bring joy. If this moment can unfold from joy and delight, it creates a good foundation for the next moment to do the same. I still always feel like I am surfing on the edge of the unknown, trusting my instincts to keep me upright and moving forward. So far so good!

Another way that my spirituality works for me now: I will have a deep question (I am chronically curious). I will be holding myself in the field of this question as it radiates deeply inside me. Often I will find myself awakened in the night, not with the answer, but with a kind of doorway... a feeling into... the imagination... of a pathway... toward an answer. I will be in a kind of sleepish awakesness for several hours as the question opens out in me.

I am holding this question deeply, there in the night, not asleep but not exactly awake, but also not in some mystic trance state either. I often feel like I am sitting in the center of the Sidhe stone circle, and I will find myself utilizing the card deck structure to find practical answers to the question. Lorian's Sidhe card deck is a very powerful imagination/intuition stimulator here. I sense am partnered with the Sidhe in some way. Not in direct "guidance" (as in "this is the answer to your question") but in a kind of perpetual invitation to explore.

I am always translating the concepts of Incarnational Spirituality into my own felt experience.

Still no voices or visions, and I don't know if I have ever experienced an actual "subtle being" in the way others have described. I haven't ever consciously seen the nature spirit of the tree it is serving, or an elemental, or beings of other realms. I trust that they are there, and I communicate with and to them. (Though there was that one time when I was feeling deeply sad, and I leaned up against a tree in our front yard. I felt the tree reach out and put its "arms" around me, to comfort me. I don't know whose arms those were!)

I have learned the most from being aware of the living presence that flows throughout nature. My primary way of connecting with the world is through "becoming the presence of the thing." For me, the subtle environment is how I experience the environment, as alive with presence and meaning.

The tree is a tree is a Tree. Or a sheep is Sheep. Or a landscape is the Landscape Deva. Or a dog, or the weather, or my house, or a machine, or an idea, or a plan, or a person's behavior. My 'way in' is by becoming the presence of the thing...going inside it, feeling and sensing **how** it is who it is, how it is the information space that is its presence, how it co-exists in its environment, where there is movement in it, and maybe how it wants to move on or change.

When I do this, I feel like I "become" a whole other realm of information and awareness. I am still me, intact, but I now have more awareness and information available. It is an instant, deep, layered awareness, that holds itself open to my deeper exploration. I do my coaching mentoring work this way too, and my parenting, and now my grandparenting—my life, really.

The sheep. The neighbor's new flock is 30 ewes who are all pregnant. I have been walking our dogs near and through them every day, getting to know Sheep up close and personal for the first time. Becoming Sheep. Who are you as a presence in the world, Sheep? I am surprised to find them so alert yet quiet inside, a certain kindness and peace there, and very curious. Who knew sheep were so curious?

It is interesting that the word for "one sheep" and for a "group consciousness of sheep" is the same word. I am surprised to find a depth there that I hadn't expected, given the metaphors that people use about sheep. Recently when I walked to them, they felt different. The whole flock felt somehow more expansive, quieter, there was a stillness there that I hadn't felt before. Then I learned that the day before, the first two lambs had been born. So these ewes are becoming Mother. I recognize the field of mother, Gaia mother. I have volunteered to help with the lambing if the need for help arises. I know birthing and mothering.

Knowing these sheep also challenges my sensitivity to the powerful reality of real-life environment, of wholeness, and of predation. The sheep are being raised very humanely. They are good neighbors for me. As I get to know them I love them. But the lambs will be sold for slaughter as organic lamb chops. How can I bear that? I will need all my subtle awareness to deal with this reality as it unfolds, because I experience these sheep as co-walkers, as presence, as relationship, and as a communion of mind and heart with an Intelligence and Presence. It is also here that I will find the understandings that will help me to hold this experience, and maintain flow within it.

Another example:

One early summer day I noticed a huge bumblebee in our kitchen window above the sink. Huge! Maybe it was a queen bee. Nearly two inches long. I have never seen such a large bee. I turned away to get a jar to catch and release her, but when I turned back, she had disappeared. Not to be seen or heard anywhere. I was baffled.

My looking away had taken only a few seconds. Where could she have gone? I looked and looked. I wanted to release her, and I really didn't want to step on her, or discover that one of our dogs had engaged with her.

No luck. So I carried on with my day, deciding that she must have somehow flown back out the open door in those few seconds.

The next day, I had just finished my lunch and was settling in to work at the computer again, when I heard a loud buzzing near the sink. I thought of the bee. Again, I looked and looked, but no bee on the windows, walls, flying around. I even picked up the small lidded compost bin to carry outside, because it sounded like there might be a bee trapped inside.

But no—there she was—crawling out of the drain in the sink, from the cavity down where the incinerator is!! Wet, bedraggled, bemused, and very irritated, but miraculously alive! How did she survive two days of sink use??

Quickly I put a dishcloth near her and she climbed right up on it, so I took her outside and deposited her, still on her cloth, in the big tomato pot.

Then I set about doing an energy work process that utilized my sensitive awareness in a new way.

I imagined into connecting with my own sacred human-ness, sovereignty and Self Light. I sent appreciation to the "holding spaces" of the dishcloth and the tomato plant and the deck, even the depths of the sink. I invited a connection in myself with the earth, and with the spirit of bees.

I felt into what I wanted for this bee....I wanted the feeling of radiant vital energy moving in her body, if that was right for her, and the feeling of flying. I called on the sun.

The image of a butterfly came into my imagination to represent flying (part of my mind argued with the butterfly image, but I let it be there...). The Forest Pansy Tree growing next to the deck suggested itself as an ally too.

I focussed on the bee, imagining myself bee-ing her, drawing the healing and vitalizing energy of the sun into her body, feeding her internally, drying her on the outside. I just held her in this blessing field, wishing her well.

The bee began to groom herself, her front legs moving rhythmically back to front, from her midsection and up and over her face. She rested at intervals, sometimes leaving one leg up in the air above her head for a few minutes as she sat motionless. She turned herself to the sun in different directions. It was fascinating to watch.

Suddenly, she was gone.

I spent some time looking into what a visitation from Bee as a totem animal might mean at this time in my life. I know that she brought her own gifts and blessing to me. And she gave me the opportunity to reconnect her with her own Bee-ing and life Presence. Be...

But I also thought a lot about how I had utilized my sensitivity in a positive, generative way that made a difference for a tiny piece of the world.

I realized that my sensitivity was somehow giving me access to an inner awareness in myself that was definitely spiritual, sacred, and powerful in a lightly-held way.

I considered more deeply what I had done almost instinctively. I was wondering, what did it actually feel like to use the deeper subtle senses that my sensitivity gave me access to? I sat with each image that had come to me, trying to open my awareness to the information being offered by these subtle senses.

The sun felt like the sun would—warm vital, energetic, expansive, powerful, inviting of growth, and willing.

The spirit of Bee felt somehow like it was made out of the brightness of sun, fierce and mighty, a generative force. The *feeling* of what the sun would *sound* like if you could *hear* a piece of it. (Just a little synaesthesia to spice things up a bit!)

The soul of the earth felt like a large loving holding space, an embrace of Presence. It looked like a female being with a vast flowing garment that held all the living beings on the earth in its folds. The bee was there.

The butterfly was not actually a butterfly, but as an image it represented for me of a kind of light, lifting, dancing *shape* of flying, not the way an actual bee flies, but a sense that I felt the bee needed in order to imagine herself taking flight again.

The Forest Pansy tree was an interesting surprise. When we were landscaping our yard the summer before, and picking out trees to plant, the landscape designer asked me to go to the tree farm to look at a Forest Pansy that she had selected. When I went, I saw that it was lovely. But to my astonishment this other tree next to it just sort of reached out and enfolded me. So that was the one we planted in our garden near the deck...who partnered with me in rescuing the bee.

This tree is beautiful and has a very wise, graceful air about it. It seemed to be offering a kind of

radiance, maybe a kind of life force. But very subtle. I don't quite have words to describe what its presence felt like. Cool, expansive, like hearing and feeling a "light breeze of light" through leaves. Also a kindly Presence of partnership.

As a sensitive person I am always going around thanking and blessing and loving and appreciating the world, talking to and "saving" bits of it as I can.

I realized that each of my images was a collection of impressions that was carrying information, meaning and awareness, before my brain knew exactly how to translate it into words and understanding. In a way, these subtle perceptions were registered in my whole body, not just in my mind.

I am learning that I am utilizing subtle sensory organs, beyond my physical sensory organs, that have their own unique way of delivering information. This could be spiritual information that is every bit as valid as visions and voices. Even though I have never experienced visions and voices, it seems second nature to me to have knowing through these subtle senses.

In order to translate subtle perception into words, I hold the multi-layered image, or awareness, in my mind, also in my body and heart, until words begin to come to me that carry the sense that the image does. The words come slowly, but I know when they "feel" right. And after I write them or speak them, I can feel the goodness of them in my body, a wonderful feeling.

The actual sensation contains everything as a wholeness, and I know its meaning right away without words, even though there is a much deeper richness there that continually opens to my exploration. Finding words helps to make what I know conscious to me.

Working with subtle perception is also a way of being in the world that can create change. One of the characteristics of being "so sensitive" is feeling overwhelmed by the pain, drama and disfunction that is always unfolding around us, and wanting to hide away from it to protect a sensitive spirit.

Learning how to stay present in an overwhelming situation, sensing what is needed, calling upon allies that can help, and then tapping for and radiating a calming, healing presence—this gives us a way to use our sensitivity to make a difference, without having to tough it out and soldier on like we usually do.

This was just one bee that I worked with. But in a way she represented the world! I would guess that you have done many similar acts.

The next time you have an opportunity to make a difference, whether it is with a single bee or a difficult situation, try this: ground yourself, use your subtle senses to feel into what is needed, invite inner help. Feel their presence inside you, whether you can see them with your physical eyes or not (knowing that you have the right to refuse or deny any energy that doesn't feel right). You become a portal through which helpful energy can flow.

David Spangler says:

The premise is that we are continually immersed in a living field of creative energy which configures to the patterns formed by our subtle energy field (or subtle bodies) much like a flowing river configures to the shape of a boulder lying in the river bed. This configuring can affect the probability of synchronistic events occurring as the world's energy seeks to

replicate the information, the connections, and the patterns formed in our own personal subtle field.

The second premise is that all subtle energy is malleable and susceptible to being shaped by thought and feeling. This gives us a tool to use in doing the art of manifestation. By shaping our subtle field, we have a way of shaping the world field that surrounds us.

As spiritually sensitive people we are learning how to navigate the world in greater wholeness. Using our subtle perception helps us to contribute in positive ways to conditions and areas of the world that need help or healing. This includes increasing our ability to affect and shape the future, our own included. Working with the subtle aspect of the world enhances the wholeness of all incarnations, including that of the earth itself.

The best reason of all to explore subtle perception is that it feels so good! It is so comforting and delicious to *be at home*: at home in the community of Humanity, at home in the earth, at home in our bodies, at home in our incarnation.