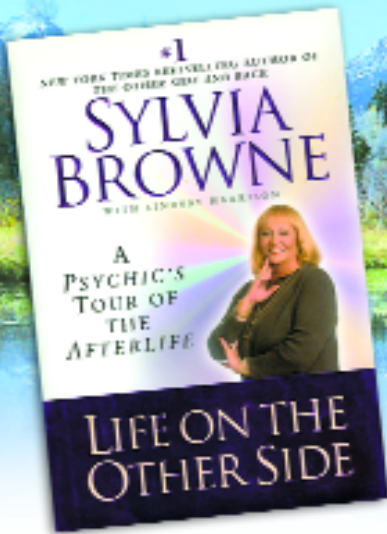


Understanding the Other Side

Linda L. Ulrich



The Other Side is reality, as real as the ground we walk on, the bodies our spirits inhabit, and the air we breathe. And the truth about the Other Side is more thrilling, comforting, loving, and empowering than any fairy tale could every be.

—Sylvia Browne

Have you ever asked yourself these questions: Why was I born? Why does God allow such evil and pain in the world? What happens after I die? Most of us have asked such questions, and have never received satisfactory answers. In her recently published book, *Life on the Other Side—A Psychic's Tour of the Afterlife* (Penguin Press), Sylvia Browne offers a fascinating glimpse into the realm most of us call heaven. She has spent years researching and helping others find their way through life's challenges. She also had some interesting personal experiences that demanded her putting pen to paper. Much of what she writes about I too have personally

experienced, so I found that confirmation very exciting.

Why were we born? What is life all about? Why is life so unfair—or is it? Sylvia answers all of these questions by describing what actually happens on the Other Side. One insight she presents is that we don't just live one life and then we die. God offers us many, loving and compassionate opportunities to experience embodiment, so we can learn, grow, and evolve in a different way during each lifetime. Our divine goal is spiritual advancement through *Self Love*. Self love entails valuing one's birthright as a child of God, so much so that one would never deliberately harm oneself. If that did start to happen, the soul (or, as she calls it, the individual spirit) would find the strength, courage, faith and assistance to put a stop to it immediately.

Why does God allow so much pain in the world? The answer given by Sylvia will surprise most of you. Pain offers each of us an opportunity to

learn true compassion and divine love. It provides us with a lesson which, when learned, allows the pain to be healed, either for ourselves or for others. She states that the highest offering a spirit can make in an embodiment is to be born with a serious physical, mental, or emotional defect. Having such impediments allows the spirit to be a lesson for others to learn from. In this sense, the blind child can teach us how to really see and the mentally retarded adult can show us how to love. When a spirit takes on an embodiment that will contain extreme suffering, abuse, neglect or torture, they provide an example for the rest of us. The underlying goal is to prod mankind into changing social behavior through new laws, civil movements, and individual awakenings. When society finally sees and understands the suffering and pain of an abused child, a hate crime, the neglect of the poor, or the abandonment of an entire group of people to disease, torture or starvation, others begin to demand change and to

stop such abuses. The Civil Rights Movement of the '60s was filled with a whole generation of individual spirits awakening to how much it hurt to be abused through racial hatred and social isolation.

How does a spirit choose a lifetime?

While on the Other Side, each of us experiences a non-judgmental "life review" using a device called *The Scanning Machine* and gets the opportunity to study (ours and others') past lives through study in *The Hall of Records*. We may then consider what we can manage to undertake in our next lifetime to advance not only ourselves, but those around us. Sylvia writes that we choose our parents, spouses, lovers, friends, and our jobs and bosses. We also choose the nasty people we will encounter along the way, the places we will live, our gender, every aspect of our appearance, our education, and even the pets and animals that we will encounter in our lifetime. Much of what we do on the Other Side is in preparation to be born and to start a new life.

Thinking in such terms places an enormous responsibility on each one of us to complete the goals of our lifetime to the best of our ability. Will we come up to the expectations that we could see so clearly on the Other Side, or will we succumb to the

temptations of a planet full of distractions and opportunities to serve only selfish desires, hatreds, lusts, and demands? This does not preclude having a life full of joy, fun and pleasure; rather, it opens up the concept of working to remain alert to attuning to the inner voice telling us to do good, and to work to change ourselves for the better.

the picture starts to become much clearer.

Perhaps such concepts are too idealistic and mind boggling to accept. But as Sylvia points out in her book, it is the small, everyday, minutiae of life that matters. Often we only think about achieving big goals, but every big goal is made up of many tiny, and seemingly

insignificant decisions and actions. All of these choices determine the direction our life will take. Will there be progress, stagnation or regression? The free-will choices made by each individual spirit, day by day, create the final outcome.

Before you drop into self-incrimination or self-doubt, rejoice! God is patient and loves you as you are. Earth is a

schoolroom created for the spirit to learn, to grow, and to gain knowledge and understanding. Many people believe that it is as punishment for our sins that we are born, suffer, and die, and then we go back to heaven where they really want to be. Sylvia writes that the opposite is actually true! Spirits can hardly wait to find a womb to be born from. The challenge on the Other Side is getting a spirit *not* to take on too much pain, suffering or hardship during an embodiment. A *Council* of advanced spiritual elders assists each spirit in selecting the details of an embodiment, along with our own personal



THE SCANNING MACHINE

From *Life on the Other Side*. Illustration copyright © 2000 Christina Simonds.

How can such an understanding of individual responsibility relate to the real world? Ask yourself the following question. How can one insignificant life change anything? How can a single raindrop create a rainstorm or a hurricane, one snowflake create a snowstorm or blizzard? What one individually thinks, feels and acts upon affects the whole. We individually have a profound effect on our family, our city, our nation, and our planet. When we honestly ponder the direction of our life, our everyday actions and non-actions, and our true goals in life,

Spiritual Guide, who remains with us during our entire embodiment. This is the loving, kind, and guiding voice of our conscience.

We all wanted to be born? How amazing is that? Not only did we choose to be born into a physical realm, but we also chose to go back to the Other Side and to the Light. Some spirits choose suicide, due to selfish reasons, but after a period of healing and reevaluation, they will reembody to have another chance. Some choose the *Dark Side* (and no, this isn't *Star Wars!*), but every spirit choosing the Dark Side must immediately reembody in order to try again. God created us all, and wants each of us to become more like the divine that resides within us. No one is left out of the plan.

What happens when I die?

The passage to the Other Side is a through a *Tunnel of Light*, where we are greeted by relatives, friends and kindred spirits. Everyone who enters through the Tunnel of Light is welcomed, loved and nurtured, as needs be, due to the type of life they have just left. So if one has suffered a terrible illness or abuse, healing these wounds is undertaken immediately. Each returning spirit is welcomed back into the fold. There is no separation or isolation, and there are no cliques on the Other Side. There are just individual spirits who are healing, learning, and preparing to reembody to help mankind embrace a higher calling of service. Since only divine love is the acting principle, this realm is full of peace, love, serenity, happiness, and joy.

One special proviso for any

reembodiment is the *Veil of Forgetting* that removes all memory of the Other Side, and what our past embodiments have been like. Those of us who have had portions of this Veil lifted, while still in a physical embodiment, have the added responsibility of knowing what our real responsibilities and duties are, which makes us act very differently at times. Knowing about a past embodiment is like doing double-duty on earth. It's as if you get to see your old exam papers and can review the answers to questions that God asked you on those exams. For the majority, the Veil of Forgetting is an act of divine mercy. Too much knowledge (including the memory of traumatic past lives) could harm a delicate spirit.

Are you curious to learn more? Want to find out what other insights Sylvia Browne has to offer in her book? Check it out from the library, and begin to unravel the mystery of your own life and personal mission. It is more joyous than it is sad. It is more inspiring than it is ponderous and burdensome. When you live with this type of knowledge and understanding, life becomes a wonderful opportunity to grow and to serve. ■

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