

Chapter 2: Contacting the Right Phone Operator

The steps for making a collect call to God require that you contact an operator who can help you put the call through. It is not just any operator that you seek. You need an operator that speaks your language. If you only speak Spanish then you can't talk to an English-speaking operator and expect our requests to be understood. You need a Spanish-speaking operator. You also need to find an operator that will take the time to carefully listen to your request and then have that request passed on to God with a minimum of distortion. This is a very important part of the process. Connecting to the wrong operator can result in a distortion of your message, and perhaps contribute more to your confusion than to your enlightenment. In some instances, like meeting with a fraudulent operator, the meeting could be harmful. Spiritual abuse creates as much trauma as other forms of abuse. You need a skilled operator who can sit in the phone booth with you and act on your behalf when you request the collect call.

There are many different types of phone operators, and like any service some are more skilled than others, some are better suited to your specific needs and some are simply frauds. You must be wise enough to find the right operator, the one who will act on your behalf in placing the collect call. You must try, with all earnest, to avoid frauds. Not only do they waste your time, but they can also cause great distraction and confusion. Take the time to understand the characteristics of skilled operators and continue only with an operator (or a mystic seeker under supervision of an operator who has these characteristics) if s/he is an example of these characteristics.

As I describe the characteristics of skilled operators I will be referring to literature on the lives of mystics and healers. I will also be using my own life as an example. I offer this personal example not as braggadocio, and I offer it with a great deal of caution. It is offered with the intent to help clarify, not as a form of judgment, or as condemnation of any other person's life. I offer my life to the reader in the same manner that I offer it to God – with great humbleness in my heart. I offer it with a great deal of caution to myself, for I do not wish to become anyone's "guru". My life is just an example, a testimony, and nothing more.

I am also cautious in using my life as an example because of the connotations attached to the terms "mystic" and "healer". These can be negative connotations with imaginations about what transpires when meeting a "mystic/healer" (or about what did transpire after the meeting is over). I have written about these terms here, and elsewhere¹, in hopes of providing clarification without judgment. I know that there is a "supernatural" connotation, and an "occult" connotation. I do not believe either of these to be applicable. I know that there can be romantic and "worship" imaginations. I also know that there can be connotation of "Godly perfection" attached to these labels. I do not meet that perfection. I am a man who offers his life in the service of God and who struggles to do this well. I believe that all the mystics and healers have demonstrated their humanness and in doing so have shown themselves to be like us. In showing themselves to be like us they also show us that the sacred path of healing is available to us – all of us.

I have endeavored to show my humanness in this book as well as the characteristic of the mystic/healer. This combined presentation of mystic traits and humanness can show us that the sacred journey the mystic takes is just like the struggle that we all face. It is the struggle for meaning, to find our purpose in life, to be compassionate toward others, and to have a relationship with God. Operators have learned a bit more about the struggle, a little bit more about having a relationship with God, and a bit more about existing as a being of compassion. In addition they have lives that exemplify and support this acquired knowledge. But they still face the humanness of daily life. It is this balance that the operator will share with the mystic seeker as part of making, and processing, the collect call to God.

True mystic/healers are not to be feared, as their purpose is to be true phone operators and to place the collect call for you. The true operator has characteristics distinguishable from frauds and from mystic seekers. Unfortunately there are many frauds that seek to take advantage of people's hunger for God. Frauds can injure people in the deepest ways through spiritual betrayal. The wounds that accompany spiritual betrayal are as deep as any trauma one could experience and with equally devastating consequences in a person's life. This is why it is important that people understand the difference between frauds and true phone operators.

In exploring Dante as a possible mystic author James Collins writes:

“Perhaps the greatest difficulty in writing about anyone as a mystic is the sheer breadth of the term ‘mystic’. It has been in use since pre-Christian times in the Western tradition and similar terms and concepts have been common to the religious traditions of the Near East, the Far East and many other ancient religious traditions.”²

I am not attempting in this book to provide a historical critique of the term “mystic”. The reader should turn to other sources for this.³ In this book I use the term mystic as identical to the terms mystic/healer and phone operator. This is not to say that the term mystic cannot have a broader application, and it appears that throughout history it has. It just means that I have limited the range of definition for the purpose of this analogy. I am not, as some authors⁴ have, equating the development of genius or “expanded consciousness” with the label of mystic/healer. The focus here is on describing the characteristics of someone skilled at being a phone operator. If their biographical information indicated that they served in this role then information about their living that role was embraced herein and sometimes directly quoted. According to the biographical information Dante did not fit the role.

In addition to biographical information, I have included information from other researchers who have studied the mystical traditions, even though they themselves may not have been mystic/healers. I offer the information in this book, and the steps to finding the right operator, as guidelines to help people avoid the “false prophet”. I include my own life as an example simply to help people understand these guidelines more clearly. I offer my own life experiences with great hesitancy because of the

misinterpretations that are likely to follow, but I think my personal experiences bring a sense of human character to what would otherwise be a technical book.

The genuine mystic seeker will learn to leave the fraud, hopefully quickly, and seek out the authentic phone operator. It is only with an authentic phone operator that the collect call can be placed. My hopes are that my writings will reduce the suffering associated with false mystics and false prophets. The steps for finding the right phone operator include the following:

1. Knowing the general characteristics of skilled phone operators.
2. Knowing what it should sound like when you contact your operator.
3. Understanding the conversation with the operator.
4. Making the effort to find YOUR operator.
5. Sharing the sacred healing relationship

These steps are described below. Certain other points are given brief clarification; particularly the difference between using the direct line to God and using the collect call line. Additional clarification on these differences is provided throughout the following chapters.

Knowing the General Characteristics of Skilled Phone Operators

When you are searching for a phone operator it would be best if you could locate one that is skilled or at least one who is supervised (being trained) by one who is skilled. There are some obvious reasons for this. You would like your call to go through to the designated party (and not to some other party). You would like your call to go through with the proper “collect call request” associated to your name (your true nature). You don’t want it associated with some other person’s name (or some inaccurate representation of you) and you also don’t want your collect call request to be misrepresented. Finally, you need an operator who knows how to use the phone booth properly. This is what you should seek when looking for the right phone operator.

There are ways to recognize skilled operators. Skilled operators are known more by what their life has demonstrated, by their personal characteristics, than by the words they have written. You should be able to recognize many of the characteristics upon meeting the skilled operator. These should also be characteristics spoken of by others who have met, sat with, the mystic/healer. It is the life, the being, of the skilled operator that speaks though all the people she/he has met.

What are the characteristics of skilled phone operators? As mentioned above an operator can be a mystic, nurse, healer, prophet, priest, counselor, rabbi, guru, nun or shaman. They have been a part of our culture since the beginning of recorded history. They are servants to God acting as spiritual guides for people seeking to know God. They are not your average person who seeks spiritual growth and who wishes to share

their experiences with you. They are not the people who profess to have been “converted” to a particular religious belief and now want you also to be converted to that same belief. Most importantly, they are not quacks taking advantage of your spiritual needs. Instead, operators are gifted spiritual guides whose calling is such that they are skilled at being present for you, and only you, in whatever way you know God.

The mystic/healer is not a “special” person, but rather presents us with an example of what is possible for each of us, within our own sphere of influence. There is danger in thinking that any one person has “more faith” than you or I. It is better to think that the person has traveled further on their journey and is willing to share the wisdom of that journey with you.

In discussing Augustine’s “Confessions”, Professor John Dunne, stated the following:

“The difficulty of standing before God is the difficulty of communicating with God. It is easy enough to address to God the questions one would ordinarily address to other men [women] or to oneself. It is easy enough to do this for a moment or for an experiment, that is. But it is difficult to keep it up when no answer seems to be forthcoming from God. Augustine apparently believed that an answer is to be found in the events of one’s life, that these events are a revelation of God’s will or purpose in one’s regard.”⁵

Because the mystic/healers have traveled further, these gifted phone operators have characteristics that are unique to their calling. These characteristics are demonstrated in the events of their life. Some of their presenting characteristics were described in my writings about healers.⁶ Expanding upon those descriptions, skilled operators can be considered to have the following characteristics:

1. They speak of knowing the “oneness” of God.
2. They demonstrate a deep holistic empathy that promotes healing.
3. “Mystical” experiences have been a part of, and have changed, their lives.
4. They exhibit a profound sense of spirituality.
5. They come to know that they are called.
6. They have spent many years following their calling.
7. Testimony is given.

These characteristics are described below. The reader (mystic seeker) is asked to make careful note because these can serve as guidelines for finding a skilled phone operator.

They speak of directly experiencing the “Oneness” of God

The wise mystics of the past, from every corner of the world, have spoken in unison on the topic of experiencing oneness with God. “The mysterious nature of this

oneness cuts across all spiritual diversity.”⁷ They describe this as the single most fundamental aspect of a spiritual life. Some have even said it is the single most important aspect of human existence. When we understand this sacred healing relationship of oneness in ways that extend to every fiber of our being then healing changes will occur. We may not be aware of these changes, nor be able to predict them, but they will occur and we can be guaranteed that they will occur. We do not need to seek them, deny them, profess them or desire them for they are a guaranteed consequence of this oneness with God.

For the mystic the “true greeting of God” is “never as a theological construct or abstraction, but as a fecund, living, moving reality, one that is imprinted, moreover deep in the human soul”.⁸ My relationship with God is as tangible as the one I have with any living being, but infinitely more trusting, reliable, compassionate and wise. It is simultaneously an internal and an external relationship. It is a relationship that is both within me and within others, and also outside of me and outside of others. It is infinite and yet personally embracing. I experience these apparent dualities not as dualistic but as different views within a state of unitive existence – a state of oneness. My relationship with God is also a relationship that is mirrored in the relationships I have with others when moments of oneness are shared.⁹ The expression of oneness is not merely abstract, but is a living phenomenon that can be shared, and understood, through direct experience.

“The common theme running through all spiritual literature in its attempt to define God is the sense of a relationship between our limited consciousness – the separate self – and an overarching consciousness – a unified whole.”¹⁰

When skilled mystics and healers speak of their relationship with God they speak of oneness. This concept of oneness is the focus of their writings, whether in metaphor or in logical discourse. In her book on women mystics author Carol Lee Flinders stated that the life of the mystic is not the same as the saint (or theologian), but it is a heroic quest involving an experiential discovery that God is all meaning.¹¹ It is an experience of oneness in which the mystic is enveloped and transformed. Oneness is a critical component of the mystic’s path to knowing God. Oneness is that phenomenon that authors struggle to accurately describe in words:

The journey is to “make oneself zero by gradually withdrawing all desires from short-term personal satisfaction (a state of empty desire) and unifying them (into oneness) – focusing them all into a single driving need, the need, quite simply, to see God” (parenthetical comments mine).¹²

“All mysticism is characterized by a passion for unity.”¹³

The struggle to convey this oneness through the use of words and through life is part of the phone operator’s role. This experience of sacred oneness is The Way (The Truth, The Life, The Tao), a path that is never changing but always individually experienced.

A mystic sees beyond the illusion of separateness into the intricate web of life in which all things are expressions of a single Whole.”¹⁴

An Indian mystic named Amma stated, “When there is no mind or ego, then you are one with the whole of existence, and the universe with all its being are your friends.”¹⁵ This teaching about the path of Oneness must be part of the phone operator’s way of being and interacting with others. If it is not then you should leave and find a different operator.

This discovery of the Oneness experience is also marked by a description of the *empty self*, because in the Oneness experience everything is perceived as unity and there is not a separate self. In a review of Christian mystics over the centuries there is frequent reference to this empty self-perceptual state with such terms as “spiritual nudity”, “self emptying”, “the void”, “path of self stripping”, the “self abandoned man”, and “dying to self”.¹⁶ Eastern mystics also describe the concept of the empty self as part of the mystic path.¹⁷ In Sufism there is the “doctrine of passing away in God (fana)... when self as well as the world has been cast aside the mystic has passed away into God.”¹⁸ The path of “no-self” has been described as the contemplative path to knowing God.¹⁹

As mentioned previously I prefer the term empty self, as I believe it more clearly represent the perceptual state experienced during the mystic/healer’s journey. The term “no-self” has too much of the ascetic influence, which for me still contains the desire to be “rid of self” as if it were some disease (or the “root of all evil”). The concept of the empty self can be pictured as a soft letting go, like pouring water from a cup. The cup is still there. We do not need to try to break apart the cup through some self-mortification technique. But the cup is empty and we wait for it to be filled through the experience of sacred oneness. When the cup is filled it is like taking that first sip of some exquisite drink (e.g., freshly squeezed orange juice, gourmet coffee). At that moment there is no cup just the experience. This is the nature of the empty self.

Sufism, is the mystical tradition that has, like in other religions, provided an abundance of reading material from mystics claiming direct experience with God. This has served as a foundation for the development of an Islamic religion.

“The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost, the Universal Self is found, or, in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God... All leading ideas of Sufism are developed from this cardinal principle.”²⁰

The “falling away of self” so that the mystical illumination experience may occur is the basic definition of the empty self.

The concept of empty self is not an easy concept to integrate into one's way of life. I am still discovering new aspects of the empty self. Currently I am exploring the balance between letting go and personal-responsibility. I do not see myself not as a puppet at the end of God's strings, but rather as a man with the freedom to choose and to interpret. It is in the choosing and interpreting that I discover myself and then see how to let go of, or empty, myself. But in order to empty myself and let God enter my being fully in every moment I have to first know myself deeply in that every moment. My "knowing" of God is directly connected to my knowing of self, my emptying of self, my compassion with others, my sitting in the between and my personal responsibility to do (or not do) each of these. But if I were to release myself from personal responsibility then I would also release myself from the diligence of mind, body, soul and heart that must accompany the life of the mystic/healer. Following such release, I would then consider myself not on the path of "knowing" God. One cannot say, "I have known God and I wish to share it with you" while living a life that does not match this knowing. This is what is meant by personal responsibility.

Perhaps one could argue that from the place of the empty self, and the place of oneness, there is no doing. I have proposed such and offer that idea again in this text. But, we also experience times of separation from the state of oneness. It is in those times that personal responsibility is a guide for returning to a life of sacred character.

One could argue that since God is ever present then God is never absent from us and God knows what will unfold in our lives. However true this statement may be it is also clearly evident that there is suffering in peoples' lives and that people feel the need to be closer to God. The idea that God is ever present helps us to know that we can always use our personal responsibility to seek ways to be closer, to improve our knowing and our relationship with God. God is not separate, but rather we are sitting outside the oneness trying to make that phone call and all we are getting back is static.

There have been many people who have written about how to "know" God, or how to do "God's work", or listen to "God's will". Some may be spiritual teachers who offer their own ideas without having had the types of direct experiences and characteristics associated with the mystic/healer's life. Such teaching can be useful but should be processed with wisdom. The people who think they have talked with God include a broad diversity of teachers and likely include many mystic seekers on the road to spiritual wisdom. It also includes people who are "false teachers".

There are three assumptions about those who profess to have "known God's will":

1. Many state to have known God's will, but few demonstrate the characteristics of the mystic/healer with direct experience of God.
2. There are people who may believe they have had direct experience with God, and they have not.

3. There are people who state they have had direct experience with God and who have, and whose lives demonstrate they have.

These three points are the basic assumptions for any argument addressing the claim of a direct experience with the oneness of God. The problem with arguing about the “truth” of someone’s claims in these matters is that you can never refute one’s experience, or their feelings. You cannot say to the person, "You didn't have that experience" or "You didn't feel that way". There is no way to argue with a person on this matter. Their perceptions of the experience must be accepted as their perception, or their personal encounter with reality. It is their “truth” and there is no changing that.

What can be argued, and clarified, are the following: 1) the details of the experience (does it match other documented encounters with God), 2) the process, or hermeneutics, used to interpret the experience as related to knowing God (in what ever form it is known by that person), and 3) the processes used by the person to integrate the experience into personal life (does the experience express itself in the person’s personal life in a sacred manner). Clarification along these lines is something skilled phone operators do with regard to their own sacred experiences.

These points of clarification are what I believe to be the foundations of spiritual discernment - and they almost always accompany spiritual communication with God. Each of these points is slightly different from each other and it has been my understanding that sorting these out is something most people have great difficulty doing without assistance. The story that follows provides an example:

A person came into my office seeking a “substitute” therapy session because of a vacationing therapist. Upon meeting the first comment directed at me was, “You have such a large aura. I can feel it.” As this was said I could also sense a brief, and distant feeling, spiritual connection. The conversation quickly moved toward spiritual matters (MS = mystic seeker, PO = phone operator).

MS: Seeing you reminded me of something that happened to me 3 years ago.

PO: What was that?

MS: It was something unbelievable that happened while I was working out in the gym. I was exercising when all of a sudden I felt this feeling come over me. It was a special feeling I had never had before.

PO: Can you describe that feeling you had?

MS: It felt like I was able to do anything, like I had been given all these special talents and that I was special. I was very excited and happy. I had this free floating feeling and not a care in the world. I think God was trying to tell me something.

PO: What happened next?

MS: I left the gym and went home.

PO: Did anything seem different in your life?

MS: What do you mean?

PO: Did you act differently after the event in the gym?

MS: Well, I did think that I had a special talent to get people to do anything I wanted. I used this on others to give me things I wanted. It was sort of like magic.

PO: Anything else?

MS: I started reading everything I could get my hands on that dealt with expanded consciousness. I was trying to find some way to make this happen again.

PO: Did something like this happen again?

MS: No! I have tried to find it but I can't. I feel empty, lost, and sometimes very alone. I often hear myself saying what a terrible person I am. I can't seem to get that to change. I feel stuck in these feelings with no way out.

PO: Would you like to move out of this feeling of being stuck, here and now?

MS: Yes I would, but I don't think it is possible. I don't believe in miracles.

PO: You would rather stay in that stuck feeling?

MS: No! That is why I go to therapy and get medications from the doctor. I am trying my best to find a way out.

This brief discussion continued back and forth during the session as we explored why the "stuck, dark, feelings" existed and what choices were being made regarding their removal. The session ended amicably but without clear movement toward healing. There was no agreement to move beyond the darkness or to revisit the mystical moment.

The reader may draw several conclusions from the above meeting. In presenting it I am illustrating the following: 1) the discussion focused on helping the person move toward well being through understanding, 2) the meeting presented the opportunity to move toward well being through experience, which was refused, and 3) the meeting clarified the person's spiritual views on the event, particularly in terms of life effects,

without judgment. The door to moving into the sacred healing relationship remained open the entire session. The question remains: Is this an example of a person having direct communication with God?

“In spiritual direction situations, one is not only interested in specific thought, images and perceptions a person might have about God, but also with the atmosphere in which such phenomena occurred.”²¹

In interpreting what St. John of the Cross said about discernment, Gerald May offers the following:

“If an experience were truly and directly of God, he felt, its truth would become evident naturally in one’s life. If it were of something “else”, it would certainly not be worth the attention.”²²

The confusions that can arise around interpreting consciousness-shifting events with regard to leading a sacred life can be difficult. This is why contacting a phone operator can be quite useful and why maintaining a direct line to God is so very difficult. Before seeking a direct line to God, it is wiser to remain a mystic seeker for a while and use an operator to help you get prepared. A skilled phone operator will help to clarify how you process your understanding of spiritual communication experiences in order to help you become better prepared for the next mystical illumination experience.

Whether you’re preparing for the next collect call or moving on to developing a direct line your beliefs affect your processing and your processing affects the level of “static” in the phone line. It is a fact that people will believe what they believe is the truth and that they will need “proof” to believe differently. Moses questioned the burning bush, "How will people know that it is you that sent me". It is an age-old question for which there are lots of debates but little resolve. It is a fact that our current finite understanding limits our relationship with the infinite God. That is not the issue with regard to developing sacred communication because that is a constant and unchangeable. Rather, the issue is can people learn to sit in the sacred relationship (the phone booth), walk through the healing mystical event (make the phone call) and then do the work necessary to process what has transpired in a sacred manner (integrate into life). This is where discernment has its most important role. This is where a skilled operator can be of great help. It is helping people to understand how they are processing their (emphasis on their) personal relationship with God.

At any time we can:

- Think about God.
- Formulate ideas about knowing God.
- Receive, through study, clarity about our relationship with God.
- Share our clarity with others.
- Have an understanding of our “calling” from God

- Share this understanding with others.
- Participate in rituals related to thinking about God.

But none of these activities, although helpful in strengthening faith, equates with directly experiencing the oneness of God. Belief that these activities do correlate with directly experiencing the oneness of God described by the mystics should be examined carefully, hopefully with the help of a skilled phone operator. Because one studies about God, or meditates in solitude about God, or claims to be an “expert” on God, this does not make the person a mystic/healer.

It should be clear that there are people who believe to have had communication with God but have not. These are people who may be confusing (through their personal method of processing) other types of personal experiences with those that are divine in origin. Helping these people become aware of their processing can be a very difficult task for even the most skilled phone operator (and also difficult for the mystic seeker). Anyone who is forced to see the fallacy of their “believed experience” before they are ready to process the structure beneath that belief will most likely run away (avoid, deny, attack, etc. – the habitual relationship). Before people can see clearly the nature of their beliefs they need to learn to be prepared. They need to be prepared to accept information about improving one’s relationship with God prior to being “forced” to face the “fire of righteousness”. There is a compassionate way that prepares a person to change. It is also the responsibility of the phone operator, the mystic/healer, to offer compassionate help in this matter.

The "evidence" that a mystic had a "direct experience" is largely what this book is about. In addition this book is tied to the “evidence” offered in my previous publications that describes the nature of the healing relationship.²³ The true mystic/healer offers the sacred healing relationship for people to access – like accessing a phone booth. These two types of sacred experiences (dramatic healing events and mystical events) are closely related. In order to understand the nature of the mystic/healer’s relationship (which you need to do in order to find the right phone operator to help you place the call) you should understand the nature of these two types of sacred experiences. Such understanding is greatly enhanced through the direct experience of sitting with the mystic/healer and receiving spiritual direction.

I do not believe that everyone who claims to have had a direct experience with God fits into the definition of being a mystic/healer – the phone operator. If more people did live the life of the mystic/healer this world would be a very different place. But I am afraid that most people are not living this way, nor do they seem to consciously know how to live this way.

“Mystics have let God catch them and hold them close. That’s why they can converse with him so intimately... Most of us will never experience mystical phenomena.”²⁴

The life of the mystic is glaringly different from the average man who thinks God has "sent him a message". It is different than the person who is seeking spiritual development (see Appendix) and had some "spiritual" experiences. It is different from the theologian who studies the word of God or the preacher who speaks about the word of God. Mystics have directly experienced the oneness of God and it has transformed their total nature. The transformation yields a person with characteristics described here and in my other writings on the oneness experienced by skilled healers.²⁵

This transformational aspect of oneness, combined with personal responsibility, then becomes a crude description of how one develops a direct line to God (discussed in more detail in a later chapter). Communication with God involves sitting with, experiencing, understanding, and passing on, this idea of a sacred healing relationship within the concept of oneness. The concept of oneness directly links to the idea of compassion, which is another universal characteristic of healers and mystics. This is a critical descriptor of the skilled phone operator – they accept the personal responsibility to live as a compassionate being who embraces oneness.

I define compassion as composed of two elements – empathy and wisdom. I have proposed that empathy can be developed to the level of oneness.²⁶ This development is enhanced through the personal responsibility of proper practice, and proper being. Wisdom accompanies this development. Wisdom is the skilled application of knowledge in balance with empathy. Wisdom is the courage to use the skills that accompany this empathy oneness, this holistic deep empathy, for the promotion of well being in our society. The healer/mystic speaks of communication with God as containing this compassion in balance with oneness. It is the foundation, or the phone lines, upon (or through) which sacred communication occurs. Remove the phone lines (or the satellites for cell phones) and then it is extremely difficult to have a clear and static free conversation. Deep, and almost unshakable, compassion (empathy plus wisdom) is a dominant feature of the mystic/healer who sits in the between placing the collect call for the mystic seeker.

They demonstrate a deep holistic empathy – halopathy – that promotes healing.

Operators, mystics, have also demonstrated a deep holistic empathy, which I have termed halopathy.²⁷ Halopathy is a deep state of compassion that facilitates well being and miraculous healings. The lives of mystic/healers contain miraculous healings and deep compassion – halopathy – is part of those healings. The lengthy treatise previously given to halopathy has been necessary because it is a doorway to profound mystical/healing experiences. It is also frequently misunderstood. Our relationship with God cannot be separated from the path toward well being and healing. Halopathy, as a path to well being, needs to be understood in order for man to make the next paradigm shift – a greater frequency of communication with God and an improvement in well being among more people accompanied by a shared acceptance that crosses both cultural and religious boundaries.

Halopathy has many characteristics, but for the sake of brevity let us say here that it is a way of deeply connecting to the essence, or soul, of another. It is a holistic process that promotes well being and spiritual insight. It is profoundly compassionate with a compassion that need not be spoken because it is experienced as part of the relationship. It is also a revealing compassion, one that stimulates new insights and personal growth. This is the relationship that skilled phone operators offer to those seeking to make a collect call to God.

“Compassion has nothing to do with achievement at all. It is spacious and very generous. When a person develops real compassion, he[*she*] is uncertain whether he [*she*] is being generous to others or to himself [*herself*] because compassion is environmental generosity, without direction, without ‘for me’ and without ‘for them.’ It is filled with joy, spontaneously existing joy, constant joy in the sense of trust, in the sense that joy contains tremendous wealth.”²⁸

The deep compassionate relationship that is a required component of communication with God could be defined as “love that is without love”. This is not an abstract, nor is it “infantile or unrealistic... for such unconditional love does exist.”²⁹ The problem is that many people do not know what it is like to share this state of unconditional love with another. We do not know what to expect from people (like skilled phone operators) who offer such a relationship. We attempt to incorporate our understanding of this compassionate relationship by using our previous knowing of relationship, using our relationship history. But this seldom works and frequently leads to confusion. This relationship confusion is often centered on “what did he (*she*) do to me to make me feel this way” or “I only feel that way when I am with that person.”

It is important to note here that the halopathy component of the relationship is not something that is done by the operator (this is discussed elsewhere³⁰). Nothing need be *done* and nothing need be *said* that indicates the operator is “trying to do something” or trying to “make something happen”. Rather halopathy is experienced as part of sitting with the mystic/healer, in the between, without doing. It is the radiance of sacred compassion that is experienced without doing. Such is the same when communicating with God. This is part of describing the relationship experience – moving (growing, developing) without doing. Combined with “love that is without love”³¹, they help to illuminate the sacred mystery within the divine communication process.

In order for skilled phone operators to offer halopathy they will have completed a “death” and “rebirth” process that starts the operator on the path of deep compassion, empty desire and the empty self. This is necessary because this is the path to awakening the soul. This is a part of the operator’s responsibility, part of the calling to be an operator, and a part of the teachings that will be passed to you when you sit with the operator to make the collect call. This is learning about “the between”, halopathy and sitting in the phone booth.

Halopathy has not been the term used by other writers to describe the deeply compassionate nature of the sacred relationship that may occur when meeting a mystic/healer. Instead it is a concept that is alluded to throughout their teachings and their biographies. These humble people called to serve God, and then labeled as mystics, also presented with an “aura”, a “presence”, which radiated compassion. It is this compassionate presence, as a servant of God, which is an essential quality of the sacred healing relationship. It is something that should be directly experienced when meeting your phone operator.³²

It is the mystic/healer’s nature that is the greatest testimony to the truth of their character. When you sit within the radiant space of the phone operator it is experienced (provided you are prepared). It is not just speaking about knowing God, but the mystic/healer demonstrates a life that is consistent with having shared many communication experiences on that direct phone line to God. These direct God communication experiences have caused changes in the mystic. These are changes that cannot only be seen in the mystic’s teaching but in the mystic’s presence. They are universal characteristics and can be described as “openness, presence, being, seeing, spontaneity, and joy”.³³ These are characteristics similar to those I have described for gifted healers.³⁴ These characteristics all fall under the three facets of sitting within the between – empty self, compassion (with empty desire) and sacredness (oneness with empty desire) and are part of the mystic seekers spiritual development. A brief discussion of the descriptors of spiritual development is presented in the Appendix.

The mystic/healer is one who not only speaks of unbounded compassion and sacredness (oneness), but also directly shares this with others through being. It is within the sacred healing relationship that the operator can directly communicate this being experience of compassion and sacredness. This is something that exceeds words, doesn’t need words, can occur without ritual, and without dogma. It is a very important characteristic of the skilled phone operator.

It is important to note that this compassionate sacred presence can be experienced directly. It is not an abstract concept. It is not something that happens to only the gifted master after years of devotional study. It is not something that happens only in a religious setting, or just when someone is in prayer, or just when someone is in deep spiritual meditation (like on a retreat). It is not something restricted to people who have led a “religious” life. The compassionate presence is available to everyone who genuinely seeks it. Anyone who sits with the mystic/healer, who genuinely wishes to make the collect call and who has come prepared, can experience the radiance of sacred compassion. It is a way of being with all living things, and it is especially evident in the human interactions involving the mystic/healer. It is a radiance that can be experienced without words having to be spoken. These halopathy interactions, deep sacred holistic moments, can have qualities that resemble mystical experiences.

“Mystical” experiences have been a part of their lives

“The mystic experience lies at the very depth of human spiritual consciousness. It is one of great intensity, power and energy matched by nothing else... [It is at] the heart of all religion, the point of light to which all seekers are drawn.”³⁵

Caution should be used when using the word “mystical” to describe an event we have experienced. The reason is that the word is heavily laden with cultural nuances and individual interpretation (sometimes strongly negative). You should try to clear yourself of these biases before reading further about the nature of mystical experiences. Authors differ on the way they characterize a mystical experience (see Table One). Mystical events that are often associated with the sacred nature of the operator can be described under three categories: 1) **dramatic healing events**, 2) **the epiphany**, and 3) **miracles**. These three categories of mystical events are described below.

In the “Healing Relationship” this writer described the experiences associated with dramatic healing events. Both participants and healers reported a shift in perception accompanied by a sense of the sacred.³⁶ This is very similar to what has been reported to be associated with religious healing events.³⁷ The overlap between the life of the mystic and the life of the healer (including miraculous healings) appears to be a common theme throughout history.³⁸ This healing presence is likely to be a consistent characteristic of skilled operators.

When an individual encounters an operator it is almost always both a healing and a spiritual (or mystical) experience – for both people. James Redfield³⁹ stated that people do discover insights into themselves through spiritual events and describes these events as having the certain characteristics (listed in Table One). Authors Robert

Table One: Comparison of the General Characteristics of the Mystical Experience

	William James	R.M. Bucke	D.T. Suzuki
Truth	Noetic Quality: “truth” is revealed	Intellectual illumination	Intuitive insight, authoritativeness
Beyond Words	Ineffability		
Quick	Transiency	Suddenness	Momentariness
Good		Moral elevation, loss of sense of sin and fear of death	Feeling of exaltation, positive character, affirmation
No-self	Passivity		Impersonal tone
Vision		Experience or vision of light.	
Infinite		Sense of immortality	Sense of the beyond
Physical			

Comparison of the General Characteristics of the Mystical Experience (con't)

	W.T Stace (extrovertive)	W.T Stace (introvertive)	Deepak Chopra
Truth	Reality is objectively being experienced	Reality is objectively being experienced	
Beyond Words	Ineffability	Ineffability	
Quick			Energy streams into body
Good	Feeling of blessedness, joy, sacredness	Feeling of blessedness, joy, sacredness	Sensations of discomfort lessened
No-self	Paradoxicality	Paradoxicality	Looking down from above (on self)
Vision			Colors and sounds are heightened
Infinite	Sense of Oneness with all things	Oneness with the "void", emptiness, nonspatial, nontemporal	
Physical			Floating, weightless, breath changes

	Ullman and Reichenburg – Ullman	James Redfield	W.G. Jilek
Truth	Clarity of thinking, experiencing a vast reality		Discovery of meaning
Beyond Words			Cannot be verbally communicated
Quick			
Good	Relief of suffering	Euphoria, needs are met, a sense of safety	Feelings of renewal, healing
No-self	Acceptance and release of desire		
Vision			Spirit visions
Infinite	A sense of Oneness that pervades all life, nontemporal, nonspatial	One experiences a "connection"	A connection to the "Creator", nonspatial, nontemporal
Physical	Transcends pain and pleasure	A sense of lightness	Lightness, heightened perceptions

Ullman and Judyth Reichenburg – Ullman in their review of mystic’s “stories of enlightenment” focusing on “those beings who were not fully awakened at birth but went through a describable process of transformation.”⁴⁰ The authors review the mystical transformation stories of many people, across a diversity of cultures, and arrive at “some qualities that seem common to the enlightenment experience”.⁴¹ These are listed in Table One. Table One includes descriptions of the “general characteristics” of the mystical experience offered by Deepak Chopra⁴², W.T. Stace⁴³, William James⁴⁴, R.M. Bucke⁴⁵, D.T. Suzuki⁴⁶ and W.G. Jilek⁴⁷ (research on shamans).

The sacred healing work done by healers has been described as involving a shift in perception that includes the following characteristics: time loss, strong emotions, physical changes, perceptual changes, feelings of renewal, discovery of meaning and a sense that the experience cannot be directly communicated.⁴⁸ All of these authors’ descriptors can be combined to yield the characteristics associated with mystical (healing, transformative) events.

From this list of characteristics I place the most emphasis on the observation that ***with the mystical event there is a sense of clarity and discovery of insight (wisdom) that accompanies a deep experience of compassion.*** It is the imparted insight and the accompanying deep compassion that serves as the foundation for personal transformation. Without the insight within this imparted compassion (compassion being defined as empathy + wisdom) one is left with only a “feel good” experience and this “feel good” experience can easily be confused with a wide range of phenomena. It is easy to get lost chasing the “magic feel goods” of the experience. Evelyn Underhill stated that research on the nature of mystical experiences has separated its “substance” from “the psycho-physical accidents of trance, ecstasy, vision and other abnormal phenomena which often accompany it.”⁴⁹ Mircea Eliade stated that mystical light experiences had one “factor in common: they bring a man out of his worldly Universe or historical situation, and project him into a Universe different in quality, an entirely different world, transcendent and holy.”⁵⁰ It is the view from this “different world”, this shift in perception, that supports the transmitted insight and compassion accompanying the mystical experience. These are the most significant characteristics.

The “feel good” effects are side effects and are not reliable indicators of the mystical experience, but they are very marketable. People like to feel good and skilled “magicians” will package what they term mystical training or meditation training into a “feel good” package. This pretty package with its magical illusion of inner change is not testimony to the sacred process associated with the making the collect call. If the “feel good” effects are all that are associated with the mystical experience then the journey to seek them is filled with danger. “One needs to become the sort of person through whom mystical experience can evolve, and who can evolve through mystical experience.”⁵¹ It is not possible to take this journey of spiritual evolution if one pursues only the “feel good” effects.

Sitting with the mystic/healer is transformational, but not always just a “feel good”. The mystical event is transformative because of the imparted deep sacred compassion. It is a compassion that stirs the soul to review all relationships – not just to walk away feeling good. The reliable indicator of the collect call is the personal transformation, the fruit that has ripened. The collect call should be personally experienced through the sacred deep compassion, stimulating change in one’s perceptions of the three components of the between, and be shown in the testimony of its effects in the person’s life and relationships. If it does not do this, if it remains as simply as a feel good, then it will have no lasting effect and be as a seed thrown on barren rock.

The healing events of which I have been blessed to be a part of have included entry into the “phone booth”, a connection with God that illuminated the room, and a transformation of both parties (phone operator and caller). At times the light of compassionate healing has been so bright it brought tears to my eyes (related to the intense joy and infinite beauty of the experience) and a deep humbleness in my soul. Other times the light was a whisper, an almost imperceptible yet stimulating change on a miraculous level that always left me surprised and in awe. Whenever a person freely desired to enter into the healing relationship something always happened and it always had a beneficial effect. It did not need to be “glorified”, because the spiritual praise was known and became spoken. It did not need to be “analyzed” because all questions were all answered at that moment. The moment of transformation is itself pure. This only changes after we leave that moment and return to our lives attempting to integrate, process, the experience. The shift in perception that accompanies the pure transcendence⁵² of the moment contains insights that should not become lost in the “mess” of our lives. We should try to be “in the world” but not “of the world”, attempting to keep the insights we have gained fresh and clear.

There could be a link between experiencing the shift in perception and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment along the mystical way, including the acquisition of insight through clarity. Mystic/healers over the centuries appeared to have acquired a wise knowing of the properties associated with shifts in perception accompanying a mystical event. Some mystics tend to see the trance state (the shift in perception) as “the pinnacle and ultimate goal of the mystic path.”⁵³ Meditation has for centuries been linked to the path of spiritual enlightenment, both through Buddhist and Christian (chants, solitude, prayer) teachings. The apostle Paul of Tarsus was an ecstatic mystic describing several mystical illumination events, the most well known happening on the road to Damascus. But meditation and shifts in perception, although part of the mystical way, are not required components of religion. In addition the practice of meditation and shifts in perception do not necessarily make a person a skilled phone operator. William James in his classic study of religious experiences, from a psychological viewpoint, suggested that the spiritual nature of the experience came not from a person’s religious background, but from within their being in relation to the experience.⁵⁴ The effects of the mystical experience come from how we sit in relation to that experience – how we sit in the phone booth.

Learning to sit in the phone booth with proper intent is a very important part of any event that is described as mystical. The halopathy relationship is viewed as sacred and spiritual establishing it as something holy and without malice. This is a way to more clearly delineate it from other relationships that might have different intentions. Framing it as such may be a way to improve its potential effectiveness. Hundreds of studies investigating the link between prayer and healing indicate that “a simple attitude of prayerfulness – an all-pervading sense of holiness and feeling of empathy, caring, and compassion for the entity in need – seemed to set the stage for healing.”⁵⁵ This sacred attitude, or intent, is present during the healing event and is often felt by the person being healed. It is often experienced as part of a mystical experience.⁵⁶

People who have experienced a transformational healing event describe a healing experience that appears to be related to a shared event with another person who was acting as a guide (or phone operator) during the event.⁵⁷ They describe a shift in perception associated with a deep sense of well being. They were unable to describe any actions of the operator that could serve as a causal link to their experience. In addition they repeatedly state that they have difficulty using language to describe what transpired. Something had happened, stirring something within them but they were unable to put accurate labels to the process. Framing the holistic empathy relationship within the context of being sacred is a way of demonstrating a humble respect for the mystery of the process. There is a partnership, a symbiosis, between the mystical and the holistic empathy relationship. This is the nature of the shared mystical events associated with skilled operators.

Healing events are the most frequent types of miracles associated with the mystic/healer. The second most frequently cited is the “vision” or the epiphany. Moses and the “burning bush” imagery best exemplify mystical events placed under the category of “the epiphany”. God communicates a message and that message is associated with clear and obvious experiences that leave no doubt in the person’s mind that this was a message from God (and not from the imagination). It is not the same as listening to one own thoughts and writing down helpful words (as I hope to be doing in this book).

This is not to say that God doesn’t communicate to us in a myriad of ways⁵⁸. Rather it is saying that skilled phone operators (nun, guru, nurse, mystic/healer, etc.) have, within their repertoire of experiences, an event that is interpreted as communication with God involving direct sensory (visual and/or auditory mostly) elements.

These are different than hallucinations, although that is likely to be difficult to prove and is open to interpretation by the reader. Mystic/healers generally appear to people of sound mind with no history of mental illness. Although, this concept of “sound mind” is also open to interpretation. When reading the historical accounts of some mystics who battled frequent bouts of depression, or seizure like symptoms, or long bouts of physical pains from an unknown cause, one could attribute mental

illness. But one could also attribute these “ailments” to the nature of the spiritual journey in a world of suffering for these tiresome spiritual warriors. This is how they interpreted them.

Most mystic/healers have no history of having hallucinations in their past. They were not taking some type of drug at the time, nor recovering from some severe physical trauma (like a Near Death Experiences or an Out of Body Experience). Most mystic/healers do not keep having visions, they do not keep occurring in the person’s life, i.e., they do not continue to see and hear God in “real” time and space (but they do develop a better communication with God and learn to “hear” God through a myriad of channels). The number of times of these epiphany occurrences in a person’s (operator’s) life is often quite few (there are some exceptions, like Hildegard of Bingen⁵⁹). They do not continue to have “visions” on a monthly or even yearly basis. Rather the few epiphanies they do experience in a life time are each a call to change. There is an insightful and moving wisdom that accompanies the epiphany. It is life altering. It contains information on how to live a life closer to God. It is never forgotten. It is used as testimony to God.

I have had four such epiphanies in my life. The first could be considered my “conversion” at age 21 which began my explorations into the spiritual realm. The second was at age 24 – it was an auditory message with a radiant light. Again it provided guidance on my path of transformation. It was information that shaped the rest of my life, even to this day decades later. The third, in 1979, was a message that started my journey into research and writing about healing for our culture, finally leading to this book. And the fourth happened in the mid 1990’s, after 15 years of working on the request made of me to write. It is recounted here.

It was a time of great change in my life. After having a successful consulting business, centered on helping people with rehabilitation needs, I was facing dramatic changes that needed to occur. I knew that they needed to occur, but I was afraid to face them. I had received a strong spiritual message to “move to New York”. Instead of heeding this message exactly as it was spoken, I tried to live in my old home in New Hampshire and in New York – desperately holding on to both.

Soon after trying to live in both places my business collapsed. I lost my home in New Hampshire and my car. I was in great debt and had to declare bankruptcy. In addition my marriage was on shaky grounds. My life was falling apart. I knew that I had to do something different, but I was not sure what. I had applied to a PhD program and I was waiting to hear. But I was not sure if it would happen. My self defeating thoughts were constant. It took months for me to hear even the slightest clue of what was happening regarding my career requests and during these months it felt like I had nothing. No job, no school, no career, no money, no home, and no life. I felt that God had put me “on hold” and when I tried to call again all I got was a busy signal.

I saw that I was nothing, that I had nothing and that there was nothing in the future for me. This was something I had not experienced up until that time. At no time in my life, despite multiple trauma events, had I experienced something like this. I started to hide myself in my home. Then I began to curl myself up in a fetal position on the sofa. I wasn't eating well and I wasn't taking care of myself. My life was getting very dark, I felt frantic and trapped. I did not sense anything good in my life and I saw no hope. I spent days in this fetal darkness.

I was watching this happen to me. I could see I wasn't doing well and that life seemed to be closing in on me. It seemed like God had forsaken me. It felt like I was in a large auditorium, all the lights were out, there were no other people, and I was having trouble breathing. It was an empty darkness with no sounds or sights. It was a lonely, terrifying and suffocating experience. At times I wasn't sure that I could continue to exist.

Then, In the middle of this darkness, I remembered that God is **everywhere**. I thought that if God is everywhere then He must also be here, in this shroud of darkness, hidden in this ominous cloud of unknowing. I began to look everywhere. At first I could find nothing, but I did not give up because I believed that God was everywhere. I had to believe that or I had to stop believing. If I stopped believing then I did have to face the end of my existence and I was not willing to do that. Then I saw a tiny flicker of a light, like a single firefly far in the distance or like one small lone star barely lit in the distant heavens. I was happy to see that tiny flicker, but I could not get out of my seat in the theater of darkness to get closer. I was frozen. I could see the tiny spot of light but I could not move toward it.

Then, as if not allowing me to think further on being stuck in the theater chair, I kept hearing (a message in my own mind) the words, "Go for a walk". The message was repeating over and over in my mind. The words would not leave me alone and pressured me to do what I would not have done alone. It was a sunny day, a Friday in late June and I forced myself to take a walk at a local park. It was there that the epiphany occurred. Below (in italics with minor editing) are the actual words I wrote in my journal on that day.

Today I went for a walk at the park like I have a dozen times. Today I had stopped by the lake to watch the tens of rainbow fish and the exceptionally radiant sunlight reflections and I heard something different. I heard God speak to me and this is what was said:

- *Feel the infinite quiet peace of my love (This was a still peace beyond words).*
- *I am pleased with you (Like a father who is praising, embracing, his son for growing into a man).*

The last time I received a message from the Divine was in 1979 (to do the healing guidebook), 1974 before that (message to go back to school) and 1971 before that (the conversion blue light message). Each of these times were significant times in my life and so I must consider this time, and this experience, also significant. I then spent the next few hours thinking about how significant these two new messages were and how I had become “frantic” in my search (to find something to do with my life). I had become much like the learners who have worked with me in their search for well being. I felt greatly humbled and at peace. It had been a while since I had heard God directly and I realized I must go into that deep quiet stillness, away from man’s noise, so that I may continually hear God with an open heart.

Ursula King wrote that when she read the stories of mystics lives she was impressed by “how often mystical experiences of union and communion occur through intimate contact with nature.”⁶⁰ The radiance of the lakeshore was exceptionally golden on that day – to the point of lighting up the trees around me. I believe it was a holy radiance. As I stood by the shore tens of brightly colored (a rainbow like iridescence) fish gathered around my feet. It was as if they came in response to the holy radiance. As I was bathed in that radiance there was no sense of me separate from the universe. It was overpowering and it drove me to my knees as my soul wept loudly with love and bliss. (Note: Over the next four years I went back many, many times after that, at the same time of day, hoping to see something similar. I never did.)

Reading over the words I wrote in my journal that day I can remember how important it was for me to hear those particular spoken words and to feel lifted up out of the darkness. I was transformed again, not so much by the visionary quality of the experience but by the message. Also in reviewing my journal entry I can see that I downplayed the “ecstatic” and “visionary” qualities of the experience and focused heavily on the transformational qualities of the message. Although there were no changes visible in my external life I knew that everything was in God’s hands and all I had to do was listen and obey. Because of my rebellious independent nature these were two things that I had difficulty doing. But there was no mistaking what had transpired and I had to admit to myself that again God was calling me into a closer relationship. As I accepted this there was then a change in how I interacted with my life.

The darkness disappeared, and although it has crept its way back slightly during many a difficult time in my life (particularly when I forget to sit in the quiet place of stillness and compassion) it has never been as deep, nor as dark, as it was then. The event also provided me with tools to help others who face the darkness. In my journey

on their behalf I have found a way to help them return to the light found in the darkness. Now when I'm sitting in the darkness with others I can help them find the light and when they have seen and experienced it I experience it again. They also become transformed beyond what would be "normally" associated with "treatment" and in doing so my transformation is rekindled. This is an unmistakable mutuality that is a part of how the healing process is defined.⁶¹

The event also gave me a deep sense of peace about my life, returning me to the sense of purpose that I had seen many times in my life. It did not matter if there was nothing visible in the external worldly life around me to which I could ascribe sacred change. But the internal changes affected how I interacted with that worldly life which also affected how that world interacted with me.

This event was clearly a transformative event for me. It has all the necessary characteristics of an epiphany, of mystical illumination. Mystical illumination is not the same as receiving a sacred message (this will be discussed later). Mystical illumination is not something that can be willed, forced, or made to occur through ritual or self-mortification.⁶² The event is quick in coming and short in staying, although the after effects should be long lasting. The experience imparts an "all embracing"⁶³ sense where everything is embraced as part of that moment. This is accompanied by a deep peace and compassion. I have not had another epiphany like event in my life since then.

I believe that the times I am facing now – even as I write this book are about "purification" and "hardening my faith". My life now is about becoming a compassionate radiant being and accepting the consequences that come with that transformation. I have enough evidence, now I must either live as a being of sacredness and compassion or choose another vocation. There is no such thing as a part time mystic/healer. There are demands on personal resources when facing paths of career, doctrine, and models of treatment, that conflict with the essence of being a mystic/healer become too draining. The epiphany, and the following service as a skilled phone operator, has called me to a path I cannot refuse (if I want to be healthy).

I judge the epiphanies in my life to be "real" and not created from my imagination. I did not consciously ask for any of them to occur, nor do I think I could (or would) know how. They were, for me, tangible experiences that not only strongly affected me but also other living creatures around me at that moment. How could I deny such events in my life? I find the same to be true of dramatic healing events. How we judge the "visions" associated with those who are called to be phone operators has much to say about how we evaluate the "truth" of the person's vision story. This evaluation process involves not only how we evaluate the person but also our internal conceptualizations around the term "soul vision" or epiphany.⁶⁴

When a mystic has a "vision" it can occur in a wide variety of ways and these variations can be categorized⁶⁵, but such analysis will not be attempted here. There

appear to be two features that are commonly associated with mystical “visions”: 1) the person often feels some form of physical draining, muscle tremors or partial paralysis, perhaps even to the point of collapse, and 2) the individual cannot “challenge or prevent the experience”.⁶⁶ Challenging the experience, and hunger for the experience, in part contributes to the physical side effects. I have experienced these physical “side effects” but I believe them to be the result of inefficient training. This is addressed briefly in the next chapter under the discussion of “Paying the Bill”. The spiritual nature of the mystical light experience, or epiphany, is undeniable. Regardless of the type of experience or its side effects, they all appear to evolve into a religious (spiritual) experience.⁶⁷ It is also something others will attest to as part of the collect call process.

It is possible to distinguish an epiphany, or soul vision, from a broad collection of internally generated sensory phenomena I will here term “mind visions”. Mind visions include gut instincts, intuitions, hallucinations, dreams, creative insights, daydreaming, fantasy, and imagination. A mind vision is not the same as a “soul vision” or epiphany, although the difference may be difficult to quantify. The difference is in the effect – the epiphany has a transformative effect on the soul and is often accompanied by some transformation of nature, and/or other living creatures (or witnesses).

Much emphasis has been placed upon the “vision” as the hallmark of the mystic.⁶⁸ This is a mistake. The “vision” is simply the sensory component, or the side effect of the experience. It should not be the focus of the mystic seeker quest, largely because it is a given, regardless of the quest. The “vision” is only one component of a multifaceted set of traits associated with sacred communication. Focusing only on the “vision” will get the mystic seeker lost. The mystic seeker must evaluate all the characteristics of mystic experiences as part of the mystic’s life and the shared experience in the phone booth.

A final category of mystical events can be termed “miracles”. Although both healing events and epiphanies can be miraculous, mystics have been noted to be involved in other miraculous events. The “parting of the sea” imagery, Daniel’s visit to the lion’s den, and feeding the masses from a single basket, may exemplify the concept of miracle. But there are miracles happening every day, around the world, even right now as you read these words. Miracles, like dramatic healing and the epiphany, are forms of God’s communication and always contain wisdom.

The two miracles in my life are like Daniel’s facing danger and being protected. The first was in the late 1960’s when I was in Vietnam. There I was in six “fire fights” where the enemy always attacked on the side of the hill opposite to me. Even though we lost most of our platoon to injury, I never got a scratch – and even more than that I never fired a weapon at a human being or had one fired at me! A second miracle happened in the mid 1980’s when I was on a bicycle and a car going 45 MPH hit me. I went into the windshield of the car and was then thrown into the dirt and gravel unconscious. The hospital staff said I should have been killed, or

even worse seriously maimed for life. I received a mild head injury (that took several years to recover from and was its own source of wisdom), but I was able to walk out of the hospital that same day. Both of these events had significant spiritual meaning for me. They were not merely “accidents” or “bad luck”. I felt that an air of sacredness surrounded each of these events, although I struggled to make sense of it.

The above two events could be described as coincidence. Perhaps most miracles have some explanation within the natural flow of physical laws and probability. But there is also the personal meaning component of miracles. Like the epiphany, this is what needs to be emphasized. I felt “protected” while I was in Vietnam, like I was there for some reason other than to shoot people, or to be shot myself. I was being protected because there was a purpose to be fulfilled and this experience was part of that purpose. I have seen that purpose a myriad of time in my life since then – the clearest of which has been helping Vietnam vets in crisis. Directly after the car hit me I was in a state of awe, admiring all the new perspectives I had on life, on thinking, and feeling. It was revealed in that moment how quickly – in an instant – everything I had developed could all be taken away. Perhaps this is a strange response for someone who had been in a serious accident.

For a brief time following the accident, I did lose some of my faculties. I lost some of my sacred connection to life and was reminded how precious it is. I lost some of my abilities to control my impulses and attention – something I had worked on for 15 years. It was a very scary time for my family and me. My wife was worried that I would never get better – or worse burn down the house because I would walk away from a pot on the stove leaving it there to burn. I scorched several pots into ruin during those times. I lost a job that I was proud of because of my problems in controlling my impulses. It was a very humbling fall from grace with a return to the darkness. It was not like the darkness I described before the lakeside epiphany, but more like a darkness of history. I was being shown the darkness I still had connected to the history of my life by having all my protective mechanisms stripped away – violently. I was shown the frailty of my humanness. Yet at the same time I was at a place in my life where I had developed my faith to stronger levels. Now I need to put that faith to work. I needed to heal.

Despite all the personal trauma and family turmoil surrounding the accident I knew then, although ever so faintly at times, that I was in the middle of a miracle. I had to continue to look for the Divine (even though it often seemed so distant). I learned more about humility from this event than I had from anything else in my life. It was the message that everything I developed personally though my work on “self” could be taken away, and it wasn’t just someone telling me – it happened! Again there was this sense of purpose, the message more than the miracle, which I have never forgotten and I have held my life and my talents in a greater place of reverie, and humility, since then.

“When you are fully gentle, without arrogance and without aggression, you see the brilliance of the universe. You develop a true perception of the universe.”⁶⁹

“If the vision was true and mighty, as I know, it is true and mighty yet; for such things are of the spirit, and it is in the darkness of their eyes that men get lost.”⁷⁰

The strength of the visions, healings, and miracles is not in the effects but in the message, which can be as alive today as it was then. The message is sacred, to be held with gentle compassion and to be viewed without the darkness altering its significance.

The mystic/healers throughout time have described many different types of miracles. Some involve facing great danger and coming out unharmed (like Daniel in the lion’s den) and other involve the transformation of the physical world into something that is needed, at that time, to help others. There are also miracles of “super human” acts that are a testimony to faith (like walking on water). The miracles are, like the healing events and the epiphanies, all testimonies to a relationship with God. Miracles are experienced in this sacred manner initially, and they are communicated that way to others when the story is repeated. They provide insight behind the thin veil of our average perceptions into a shifted perception that has the potential of bringing us closer to knowing God. These are events that have contributed to the phone operator’s profound sense of spirituality. It is a sense so deep that every day is God’s day. Miracles do not happen everyday to everyone who asks. We do not get everything we ask for exactly how we ask for it and when we ask for it. A miracle is given freely as testimony. That is the difference between our ideas of what should happen and what happens in our sacred relationship without agenda.

I did not ask for the life threatening accident to happen to me. Yet it happened and at a time in my life when I needed to learn an important lesson about humility so I could move closer to God. I have to admit that I had been shown this lesson years before (and less dramatically), but at that time I did not integrate the lesson into my living. After this accident the concept of “humility” took on new meaning. This deeper sense of humility I have found to be one of the most important developments in my spiritual life. It is a miracle that has spread to all aspects of my life and my interactions with others.

The path of the mystic/healer contains the experiences of deeply knowing another, experiencing transformation with another, sitting in suffering and ecstasy with another and having that sense that the two of you have shared a sacred moment. After hundreds of such experiences humility is the only thing that keeps this collection of experiences from becoming dogma. Dogma does not promote well being. It only promotes ritual. In addition humility has helped me with the very difficult task of balancing personal responsibility with letting go and giving testimony.

One could say that healing events, epiphanies and extraordinary events are all miracles. I would not argue this point. This short list of phone operator characteristics is meant to help you clarify the difference between a fraud, a mystic seeker, and a true mystic/healer. Only by contacting a skilled phone operator will you have the chance of having the collect call go through.

“A mystical experience is not enough to turn somebody into a mystic. We confine the use of the name to one who enters the experience, tries to give it form, and wants to live it.”⁷¹

It is important to look beyond the solitary moment of the mystical illumination event in order to understand its deeper significance. It is also important to do this to help you clarify the difference between personal events of expanded consciousness and moments of mystical illumination. The short list of phone operator characteristics (also described in the descriptors of spirituality in the Appendix) has been provided to help in these matters. The mystic seeker needs to know the difference between the fraud and the skilled phone operator if there is any hope of the collect call going through.

The life of the operator is exemplified by dramatic healings, epiphanies, and miracles. The path of the mystic/healer is to become a sacred being whose radiance is an example, whose life is an example, of what is possible for the mystic seeker. This sacred presence, this profound sense of spirituality, is cradled in the bosom of humility. There must be this deep presence of compassion, humility, and sacredness if one is to serve God as a phone operator.

They exhibit a profound sense of spirituality

In describing the women mystics of Islam, author Margret Smith stated that they often possessed an “enveloping radiance or sakina (derived from the Hebrew Shekina, the cloud of glory indicating the presence of God, of the Muslim saint, corresponding to the halo of the Christian saint).”⁷² The mystic/healer who has been in direct contact with God will have this radiance because it is a natural consequence of having had that direct experience.

When meeting the operator you may experience a sense of great spirituality radiating from the person. This is not the radiance of judgment or of harsh power, but rather the radiance of compassion and grace. This is not the sense of “power” you might have experienced in past dysfunctional relationships. This radiance and its effects are a part of the “spiritual presence” associated with skilled phone operators. The mystic seeker can have an unspoken sense that “this person is truly spiritual”. In some instances the person may be the most spiritual person you have ever met. The old images in historical paintings tried to represent this spiritual radiance using a halo. Today that image may be archaic as the radiance is not limited to a small halo effect but rather is something that permeates the entire setting at that moment. This radiance has

its effects even if nothing is said or done. It is important for both the phone operator and the mystic seeker to understand this and to adjust the conversation accordingly.

Unfortunately, many people have not met a person of spiritual radiance, nor sat in that radiance. This includes people who have been trained as healers, helpers in the human service profession, and spiritual counselors. Sitting in the radiance with another is one of the best ways of knowing the characteristics of the phone operator. If the professed operator does not exhibit this ability then find one that does. When you find one that does you should know as much as you can about sitting in the healing relationship in order to help yourself take full advantage of your relationship with that operator.⁷³ “The surest sign of an authentic mystic and the hallmark of true sanctity must be in the radiant presence of divine joy.”⁷⁴ Leaning to sit in the divine radiance of the mystic is the responsibility of the mystic seeker. The responsibility of the mystic/healer is to be “empty” in preparation. It is important to know that you could be acting/thinking in a way that limits your ability to experience the radiance – take the time to know more about this for yourself.

Sitting in the radiance is part of the knowing how to use the phone booth. This knowing involves understanding that sitting in the radiance has its consequences, for both the operator and the mystic seeker. There are the dramatic effects of shifting into well being. There are also the effects of seeing what is preventing this shift into well being. Both of these can be difficult to endure if you come ill prepared. You may wish to run out of the room. If prepared then you may have a strong urge to return to sacred practices and to change those things in your life that prevent you from living a more sacred existence.

“Perhaps the highest charity of all occurs when we have become so pure and perfect we become mediums of God’s love in such a way that His love can pass through us without our knowing, or without knowingly having done a single thing.”⁷⁵

Skilled phone operators do not need to “do” in order for the radiant compassion to be experienced by others. Skilled phone operators have learned how to allow the radiance to shine through by breaking down their personal barriers inhibiting communication with God (by removing the habitual relationship effects).

The radiance that “shines” from the mystic/healer can be considered the “phone line”. It is the consequence of being called and practicing a sacred life. It is a radiance that comes from being rather than doing. It is the “line” upon which the collect call occurs. In addition, it is part of the phone booth (the phone line connects to the phone booth). The difficulty most mystic seekers have, particularly in the West, is learning how to sit within this “radiance” and to properly experience the mystical illumination. It seems to have become a lost part of our cultural heritage.

Experiences with mystical illumination have been a part of the history of man and are known across all cultures and major religions.⁷⁶ Mystical illumination can be

experienced through sitting with a spiritual master. This ability to “pass on” the mystical experience is part of what it means to be a mystical teacher and it is part of what it means to “witness”. It is the after effect of multiple phone conversations with God, either on the direct line or in helping others place that collect call. It is the best indicator that such conversations did occur. It is the consequence of following a life dedicated to improving one’s relationship with God. It is a consequence of continually being the spiritual warrior and striving to share that radiance despite the suffering endured. And it is an indicator that the person has been called to be a phone operator for God. When you can enter the room and feel the sacred presence then there can be little doubt that this person is a skilled operator, but you must be prepared to listen and know what it is like to enter the phone booth in order to properly distinguish the sacred presence from other effects. The skilled phone operator has received many years of training in making such distinctions.

They come to know that they are called

There is often a training period before a person assumes the role of phone operator full time. This training period can be referred to as the time of calling, which differs from the moment of spiritual rebirth or the initial “conversion” calling. After the novice phone operator has been reborn, called into service through the conversion calling, then there is the journey of understanding what that life means. God is continually calling on the phone to participate in training and trying to improve communication with the novice operator (who is not yet a full time operator) as part of training for the job. This is why it is termed the time of calling.

A wise Jewish teacher “describes the experience of the mystic as being that of the boy Samuel in the bible. The young lad heard a call, but at first refused to yield to its implications, for it seemed to be at variance with his reason and experience. But the voice called again and again, until he could not deny its reality. So it is with the mystic.”⁷⁷ Gifted healers often say that they did not choose to become healers, that they were chosen, that they often initially refused, faced suffering, and then realized that they had to become their calling.⁷⁸ This is the way of the mystic through the time of calling.

The time of calling is when the novice often struggles against what has been learned in the conversion calling, against the transformations needed to shift into being the phone operator. It is a time of experiencing the darkness, facing the habits that create “phone line static” and struggling with the doubts that prevent us from advancing our spiritual development. It is a time of making choices, some with painful consequences that we learn from as we continue the training. The length of this time of calling (before being fully accepted into the role of phone operator) varies considerably for each person, and has little to do with the material job that needs to be accomplished. In some way, everyone who professes a direct line with God goes through this process.

The concepts of conversion calling and the time of calling are different than simply finding the right employment. AT&T doesn't have jobs for this type of phone operator. There is no job listing for mystic/healer. Yet if you are in the time of calling then support (from the community) is important to your growth and development. But because most of us are in contact with so few skilled phone operators we do not have people with whom we can discuss our experiences in the time of calling. In the tribal cultures of our heritage it was common to experience a time of calling, and there were wise operators whose role it was to discuss the wisdom we had gained regarding our calling. They did not tell us, but rather helped us to discover. One's calling is something that is personally discovered. But once it is found, then there is no changing it. The rest of one's life is connected to this calling. And when you finally let go, and fully embrace the calling, there is a deep sense of serenity and joy.

It is important here to distinguish between one's calling, or being called within the time of calling, and receiving a divine message that is connected to the infinite sacredness. The nature of receiving information from God has often been interpreted as being "called" to do "His will". This interpretation adds confusion to the historical nature of the process surrounding one's being called into being a servant for the Divine. There should be a distinction made between the two processes (being called versus getting a message), as they can be viewed as different from each other yet also interconnected. A calling is related to being called into a way of living, or a path of sacredness. It is a life transformation and may happen once or several times in the phone operators life. The sacred message is the "knowing" that a message has been sent related to the needs of people at the given moment and that an action needs to be taken which is sacred in nature. Messages can happen hundreds of times.

The initial calling or the "conversion" has been defined as a "reorientation of the soul", "a deliberate turning", and "a great change".⁷⁹ The conversion calling is a dominant feature in historical accounts of mystic's lives. It is an event that makes "a new spiritual mode of being and acting."⁸⁰ "In the first stage of the mystic's spiritual development, there is an awakening of the self to the Divine Consciousness, to the direct, immediate presence of God. This event is always abrupt and well marked."⁸¹

The spiritual Sioux leader Black Elk speaks of the initial calling received by Crazy Horse who was his father's cousin:

"Crazy Horse... went into the world where there is nothing but the spirits of all things. That is the real world that is behind this one, and everything we see here is something like a shadow from that world. He was on a horse in that world, and the horse and himself on it and the trees and the grass were made of spirit, and nothing was hard it all seemed to float. His horse was standing still there, and yet it danced around like a horse made of shadow, and that is how he got his name, which doesn't mean that his horse was crazy or wild, but that in his vision it danced around in a queer way. It was this vision that gave him his great power."⁸²

This was the wake up call for the great leader and one that had great meaning not only about his very nature, by which he was named, but also about his life and about his link to the community.

Let me provide an example from my own life. In the early 1970's I was living the life of a student studying geology and thinking about the physical world as my reality. I believed in a God, but it was simply an unexamined sense of some natural force. I was in my early twenties and looking back I now I was aware of very few aspects of the spiritual realm. It was during this time I received my initial calling and there was no mistaking it for something else.

At that time my wife and I moved into our first apartment. It was a basement apartment with almost no windows, dark and in need of repair, but cheap. I was a student and she had just started her first job in the medical field. We had been there a few weeks when in the middle of the night we both woke up to find the corner of our bedroom filled with a bright blue light. I heard nothing spoken. The light was dense enough that you couldn't see the walls behind. My wife, who awoke with me upon the arrival of the vision, witnessed it and later said she "knew" it was meant for me. I could not deny its palatable existence without also denying my own sanity (and my wife's). From that moment on my life was transformed.

It was transformational because before this initial calling I was "asleep". I did not consciously attend to spiritual matters. I was only interested in getting my physical needs met. I was studying geology and in many ways was a man of the earth. After the initial calling I could not doubt the existence of something more than the tangible, the earthly. I was awakened from my slumber not only to the possibility of an expanded reality, but also to the stirrings in my soul that I had long forgotten. I discovered a new way of seeing life and people. Following this event the inner nature of people became dimly observable to me (the beginnings of discernment). Time and space no longer had the same boundaries (the beginning of prophecy). I also developed an "artists eye" – a different way of viewing the beauty of the world. This was my "rebirth" and to this day I am continually seeking ways to integrate this experience into my life. Mystics often view the conversion calling as part of "an ongoing process of spiritual growth."⁸³ It is not a perfect transformation event, but rather the awakening to a way of life.

Authors studying the reports of conversion, and their interpretations, have frequently connected the phenomena to a history of religious beliefs within a culture supporting such beliefs.⁸⁴ I would say that I came from neither at the time of my conversion. I was studying to be a geologist. I believed in the earth and in what I could touch and see. I did believe in God, but more as some unseen natural force obeying the laws of nature. I often felt I was meant "to accomplish something" and that at times I was "protected" by God, but I did not go to church or read any spiritual material (nor did I sort out the obvious contradictions of this view with my earthly view). I did not come from a spiritual home either. I had no conscious foundation for understanding the appearance of a tangible blue light, occurring in a basement, which was also witnessed by another person. I didn't even have any framework for interpreting the experience. I

could not deny my own senses and I could not deny that there was a witness. This was for me, if you pardon the pun, earth shattering. It is only now (almost 30 years later), while writing this book about the mystic/healer can I place the experience in some interpretive framework.⁸⁵

In comparison to this conversion calling, there have been many times when I have received spiritual messages. One example was when I was going to Boston to attend a conference on spirituality and health. I had paid what was for me at that time a good sum to attend and had planned on staying with my brother. I stayed at my brother's the night before, and woke early to find parking in Boston and then attend the conference. I wasn't there more than an hour when I got the strong feeling that I shouldn't be there. I tried to make sense of that feeling, but could not. I tried to shake it off as related to some discomfort of the day (something I ate, poor sleep, I don't like the city noise) but nothing worked. The feeling kept nagging at me. This feeling became louder and louder throughout the morning. I found it hard to concentrate and the more I tried to deny it the more I found myself annoyed and frustrated with everything around me. I knew that this was not the right way of being for me and by noon I had left the conference.

I went back to my brother's home, got my belongings, gave my apologies and headed back to my country home several hours away. When I arrived home I discovered a flooded basement and my wife battling the water single-handedly in an effort to protect what we belongings we had. It looked like something out of Disney's version of the Sorcerer's Apprentice. This was not a "calling" to live a certain way of life, but rather a message of where I should be at that moment in order to help another. Receiving messages along sacred "phone lines" is much of the focus of this book – but receiving messages is not the same as receiving a calling. Sacred messages can always have some unresolved mystery attached due to poor communication, allegorical content, the "static" that affects message reception and the problems with interpretation and application. This is not true of one's calling. I have received thousands of sacred messages in my life (some of these are described in my earlier publications⁸⁶), but only one conversion calling followed by three other epiphany type callings within my time of calling (one of which has been described herein).

But how do we come to "know" the difference between being called, the time of calling, receiving a sacred message, and our imagination. There is no path to this knowing through science or reason. It is only found through sacred experiences that open the doors to knowing beyond our normal conception. This is one of the roles of the skilled phone operator. Sitting with the phone operator we can discover that knowing is not "limited (a) to sense impressions, (b) to any process of intellection, or (c) to the unfolding of the content of normal consciousness. Such diagrams of experience it [the mystic] says are hopelessly incomplete."⁸⁷

There is always the question of how do we know that we are called. The conversion calling for the mystic/healer always starts with the "rebirth". This is a universal feature across cultures for those who are called to live the life of the

mystic/healer.⁸⁸ There is no mistaking the moment of the rebirth for it is not like any other event in the person's life up to that point (there may be additional moments after). The tribal elders who were experienced with such events would help the new initiate to understand the calling event. Today it is hard to find people who are experienced in these matters.

The conversion calling is composed of three parts: 1) the vision, 2) the "death" and "rebirth" and 3) the integration. These three components of the calling happen in sequence and they can follow years of sacred preparation or they can happen to one who has led a life that appears without sacredness. These should not be viewed as a "developmental sequence" that has any sense of hierarchy. The history behind people who are called to be operators appears as varied as humanity itself and it is the process of discovery that is important.

The "vision" is a part of the calling that we, in our technological culture, have forgotten how to interpret or how to integrate properly into our lives. This is something that used to be a consistent part of healthy human existence. Now it is something that is often looked upon with skepticism and sometimes condemnation. It is difficult to find a skilled phone operator who can help us to integrate our personal vision calling into living. But this is one of the responsibilities of the mystic/healer.

The nature of the vision during the calling is that it is unambiguous, without confusion, and clearly understood as "boundary altering". This is not the same as saying that we will know how to integrate the vision experience into life. The vision is unambiguous in that we know it to be a vision not of our own mental creation. The vision is without confusion because we are not confused about whether it was or was not a vision of personal significance (although we may not fully understand that significance). There is no doubt the vision was a personal calling. The vision is also understood as "boundary altering" in that our perceptions of the world are radically changed following the vision. This is the start, the very first step, of the mystic/healer's journey to becoming.

The "death" and the "rebirth" process is a part of being prepared to accept one's calling. But what dies and what is reborn? This is not an actual physical death (although some people have been "reborn" after a Near Death Experience). Rather it is the death of a way of perceiving the world. It is the death of the purely materialistic view – the view of "if I can touch it then it is real". It is the death of the separate self, death of the idea that the self is a single entity separate from other living beings. It is the death of the idea that we are just "flesh and blood" and that we simply "turn into ashes" upon death. It is the death of the separateness of God. This is what dies what is revealed is the experience of oneness. This is the first step to understanding the between as part of developing better communication with God.

What does not die is the memory of our existence, our humanness, for it will serve as testimony for others who will follow. What does not die is our human nature for if it would then we would no longer be in touch with humanity. What does not die

is our sensitivity to suffering and our openness to healing. For if it would then we could not offer a path of healing to anyone. ***The initial rebirth is not the death of our humanness but rather the death of our inhumanness.***

The rebirth is one of awakening, of remembering something that was deeply hidden, perhaps forgotten. The rebirth is a call into being and it is often a dramatic call that shakes the very foundation of our perceptions up to that point. This rebirth of awakening is not the same as seeking to know yourself through some technique or mental practice (using skills so as to awaken to your own inner nature). This is a rebirth of awakening that dramatically shifts your perceptions of the world so that it is no longer possible to be who you used to be – and if you chose to hide in the habits of your previous nature then there is a suffering of such tremendous pain that it would seem unbearable. You have been transformed and there is no turning back. A new you (the awakening of a hidden you) has now been born and much of the “old” you can no longer exist without enduring great suffering.

Like a child being born you will now have a life ahead of you full of wonder, growth, and enlightenment. Being reborn does not signify the end of all spiritual events to be experienced, or the end of all suffering, but rather the beginning of a new spiritual life. It is not that your life is now completely different, as if you had moved to a new paradise. You will wake in the morning and the material aspects of your life will be virtually unchanged (same house, same job, same relationships). What follows from a calling experience is a new wisdom that changes how you interact with life and, with time, it is that new way of interacting that transforms even the material nature of existence. What follows is a life of integration, letting go, and the struggle to hear sacred messages and to be open to additional epiphanies, healings and miracles. This is the acceptance of the calling and the rebirth. But such acceptance seldom happens instantly. It happens over an extended period as the phone operator learns to “let go” and allow the flow of his/her calling to merge with every fiber of being. This is the beginning of the heroic journey for the mystic/healer.

The time between the conversion calling and when you “let go” and become the servant to this calling is called the time of calling. The duration of the time of calling, and the description of it, vary across cultures and individuals. What is important to know is that at some level all spiritual teachers face the adjustment process encountered in the time of calling. Black Elk speaks about the consistent features of this time of calling:

“I had not yet done anything the Grandfathers wanted me to do, but they had been helping me. I did not know how to do what they wanted me to do. A terrible time began for me then, and I could not tell anybody, not even my father and mother. I was afraid to see a cloud coming up; and whenever one did, I could hear the thunder beings calling to me: “Behold your Grandfather! Make haste!” I could understand the birds when they sang, and they were always saying: “It is time! It is time!” ... I was afraid of the stillness when everyone was sleeping, there were so many low

voices talking... “In a sacred manner you shall walk! Your nation shall behold you!” ... I wondered if maybe I was crazy.”⁸⁹

This time of calling is a time when you recognize that you are being called into service for your community. You are being called into the sacred life. You most likely will not know why, or what you will be doing exactly, and you will mostly be both afraid and full of doubts. This “cloud of unknowing” is characteristic of the time of calling. If you can understand this then it makes the journey a bit easier. But no matter how much rational understanding we acquire there is still that unsettled feeling that presses on us during the stillness of the night. It is a stirring that calls to us about a journey we must take and we can hear that calling in many “signs” around us. Joseph Rael, an American Indian mystic, stated that it is the sacred way of the Native American people to listen deeply to the signs.⁹⁰ Perhaps it is part of the journey all mystic seekers should be taking and all mystic/healers feel compelled to take.

They have spent many years following their calling along the heroic journey

Once the operator has recognized the time of calling then there is often an additional, more extensive, period of training. This is training that is needed to understand what it means to be in the role of the skilled phone operator (as different from the novice preparing to enter the role of the phone operator). It includes a period of letting go and making that full commitment to the mystic/healer calling.

My initial conversion calling happened in the early 1970’s and the calling to do this “guide book” writing occurred in 1979 (and has evolved through many forms over twenty years). It has been a heroic journey for me to stay true to this calling over decades, in the face of all presenting obstacles and through great sacrifices, and through family misunderstandings. The external obstacles were compounded by internal mountains. As I continued to stay on the sacred path I was often faced with my imperfections in the light of God’s infinite perfection. This was frightening and torturous. There were several very dark moments included in this heroic journey that felt like a “dark death”. Then there were the almost conflicting phenomena of experiencing states of oneness with God, which at times were so overwhelming that my breath seemed removed and it felt like a “bright death”. Through all this I learned how to sit with myself, to sit with others, and to sit with God in that between. It is there that I am able to share, and guide, another through almost any aspect of their sacred journey (provided they are prepared).

I did not initially choose this heroic journey, but at some point came to the point of accepting it. Then I kept choosing it year after year. I choose jobs that would expand my skills for continuing on this journey. I purposefully faced challenges that would place me in a better position to serve others while on this journey. All the while I kept my sight focused on what God has asked me to do. There were many times when opportunities were provided that I thought were catastrophes (like losing my home). But with hindsight I saw them all become part of my calling as the mystic/healer.

There were times I spent in isolation learning about silence and my inner nature. I have spent considerable time observing the human condition and how we, as a culture, address suffering. These years of intense training in the role of the phone operator included hundreds of “collect calls” and “emergency calls”, during which I needed to learn how to sit in the between with peace and grace. I am still learning.

It is not necessary to live the “monk’s life” of retreat and abstinence in order for self to move toward empty self and empty desire. It is not necessary to hunger after self mortification in order to sense the divine oneness. The experience of the empty self with the challenge of self denial is readily accessible in any environment. One can move freely about the world and still face this challenge. One can live at a retreat and face this challenge. It is not abstinence as an act that helps us to clear away the “static of self” so we can receive God’s communication. Rather, it is knowing the essential nature behind both the desire for abstinence and the desire for the self to be fulfilled. This is part of understanding both empty self and empty desire. It is easy for a forced ascetic life to be a masquerade that never touches upon the true nature behind the purgative life, and never get at a deeper understanding of the *empty self* and *empty desire*. If we can fully embrace the essential nature of both empty self and empty desire, mold it into every fiber of our being, then the choice of abstinence or not abstinence become unavoidably obvious. For some it is easier to discover this purgative process in retreat, but the test of any purification process is encountered in daily life. It is also there where it serves as testimony for others (as most people do not reside in retreats).

A retreat can help guide the mystic seeker along the contemplative (meditative) path of purification. Purification, or the cessation of desire, is a part of the heroic journey. But this is not done as punishment, or self inflicted harm to escape inner turmoil. It is not done in order to rip away the darkness and is it done as part of a quest to acquire a “vision” of the light. Rather it is done as part of preparation for taking the heroic journey toward developing that direct line to God. The more purified we are, the more we understand the empty self and empty desire. The more we understand the empty self and empty desire the easier is the process of purification. Purification is a process that helps the mystic/healer sit in the darkest of suffering and to sit in the brightest of ecstasy. When we are not purified the barriers of our own imbalances are easily seen and felt while attempting to sit in the “between”. These barriers block the phone reception and the “static” can be so loud as to make the conversation unrecognizable but for a few gut sensations. We then try to interpret this garbled message only to find out latter that we were incorrect. The process of purification is about removing the effects of barriers through a shifting from knowing, to doing, to being. But it is a gentle compassionate process that happens only at the level of suffering and insight we are ready to face at that given moment. It cannot happen earlier, quicker, or with more intensity than that. The lives of mystics have always incorporated the process of purification combined with genuine, and penetrating, humility.⁹¹

Florence Nightingale stated that she needed to prepare herself for the presence of God to dwell in her. “This is the whole aim of the Mystical Life, and all Mystical Rules in all times and all countries have been laid down for putting the soul into such a state.”⁹² The process of purification is about learning how to be in a state that is continually prepared for the presence of God. In other words to be every ready to receive that phone call clearly or to clearly place that collect call on behalf of someone else.

The many years of following the calling also involve *being the operator*. There is no substitute for being and being happens only after a transformation, a letting go to let God guide the way, and an accepting of the full responsibility of the calling – whatever the consequences might be. Being is often something that doesn’t happen easily. As stated above there is often a struggle (time of calling) before being is accepted. Accepting being an operator means accepting the responsibility of having a direct line to God. This will be explained further in a later chapter.

Accepting one’s calling to become the operator does not remove one from trials, struggles, temptations, and internal battles. In addition it does not remove one from battles with “the establishment”. These are all part of the heroic journey that is the role of the mystic. The lives of mystics have been consistently full of such battles – even unto the peril of death. The nature of being an operator, having the direct line to God, is that one then acquires information about the soul’s journey, and whether the establishment is meeting the needs of that journey for the people. Where the establishment is not meeting those needs the operator is bound, by definition of the calling, to speak (and to then deal with the consequences of speaking). This is one part of the heroic journey.

The other important part of the heroic journey is that with the ability to see the soul’s journey. Operators are always facing their own soul – and there is no escape! The clearer their vision of helping others, the more skilled they become as operators, the clearer becomes their own soul. This is a process of mutuality overlapping self insight and the other’s healing. This is not as wonderful as it might sound. The emotions from this can become overwhelming and the heroic journey involves walking through this not once, but many times throughout life. It is a natural consequence of this calling.

Many years of training are needed for making the journey from knowing to doing and from doing to being a skilled phone operator. It is necessary for developing the characteristics associated with being a person of deep compassion and divine presence (as opposed to acting like such). Other characteristics may include:

“Actual moral capacity, solidarity with all living beings, deep non violence, humility, spiritual practice, mature self-knowledge, simplicity of life, selfless service and compassionate action, and prophetic voice”⁹³

These quoted characteristics, those mentioned in my earlier writings, and those described herein are not meant to serve as an exhaustive list of all the traits associated with being a skilled operator. Rather it is meant to give readers a brief portrait so that they may be more skilled at avoiding the cartoon phone booth. The key features, ones that should become obvious upon meeting, are that the person radiates a divine presence and this is combined with a deep compassion.

Becoming a being that radiates a divine presence combined with deep compassion almost always involves the process of purification. For all those who travel the road of the mystic/healer (phone operator) suffering as a part of purification is included in the heroic journey. The suffering serves as a message to enlighten us about those things that keep us from a clearer communication with God and with our fellow man. It is suffering that shows us the heroic path of change, if we are willing to travel. There is also suffering that needs to occur as part of demonstrating the heroic sacred path to others. The path of the mystic is not some glorified Hollywood image of a grey haired person sitting in a sacred place while people come and bow longing to hear great wisdom. Rather it is, and always has been, a life that includes a journey of purification, sacrifice, and heroic battles.

It is a heroic journey not because we battle against the outside enemy, but because we battle against the inner enemy – the one inside our very being and the one inside our community. It is a journey that must be done if one is to recognize, challenge, and overcome the obstacles (static) preventing clearer communication with God. It is a journey that takes a lifetime of commitment. This is why not many people stay true to this journey for the time needed to become a skilled phone operator, why many people stay mystic seekers. The next chapter contains further descriptions of the heroic journey, in particular the path of the spiritual warrior, as it relates to establishing a direct line of sacred communication.

Testimony is given

Bert Ghezzi in his study of mystics asked the question “Why are the mystics lives marked by so many miracles? Why do they experience so many visions, healings, and other supernatural events?”⁹⁴ The reason is that their lives are meant to be a living testimony to us of what is possible, of the direction toward which we can move, not only as individuals but also as a people, a society. “God gave us mystics to show us that ordinary people can live extraordinary lives.”⁹⁵

“One of the characteristics of the mystical experience is that it enters deeply into life.”⁹⁶

Testimony is focused on the observable life of the mystic/healer (including the person’s writings) when entering the full time role of phone operator. Testimony should not be ascribed to pontifical writings alone (including this book). It is the

presence of the mystic/healer in relationship with others, and God, that gives testimony to how we all should aspire to live. It is not the existence of a secluded, isolated, person writing to us about their “faith in God” that is the testimony by itself. No one who was ever called a mystic, whose life was held as a beacon for others, remained a recluse.

Giving testimony to God (as defined within the culture of the mystic/healer) is a visible characteristic of the operator. In some instances it may seem extreme. And sometimes it is not received well. I have often spoken the phrase “I am in partnership with God who works through me”. I have also told people that God has spoken directly to me. Nothing that I do can be separated from that. But in saying these things I have been accused by “religious” people of having dangerous delusions and of being an agent of Satan or a sorcerer. People in the psychological profession have accused me of “abusing power” and of having “grandiose ideations with a hero worship complex”. They have frankly stated their fears that I wanted to be the next “Christ”. Some of my deepest and closest friends were at one time part of these accusations. People in the secular healing profession (the academic and professional world) told me that there is no place for talk about sacred healing. Many times it seemed to me that presenting testimony was not only setting myself up for ridicule, misunderstanding, alienation, but in some instances abuse.

Standing up against all these misunderstandings and negative reactions to a part of my life that I cannot deny continues to be daunting, but for me I have no other choice. The other choice is to say that I am “crazy” and that all the mystical events that have happened in my life, and all the healing works, are figments of my imagination and have nothing to do with God. Either God is present and working in my life or I am delusional. As a clinician I have worked with people who were labeled “crazy” and “delusional”. I don’t think that I fit the characteristics of those thought/behavior patterns. I choose to believe that God is here and that I have a tangible relationship with God. I believe that my life is a testimony to that presence and not a testimony to delusion. It is what and who I am, what I am still becoming, and what I am still trying to understand. It is what I offer to the reader of this book.

I believe that I came into this world a compassionate being. My mother used to call me “Ferdinand the Bull”, referring to the fabled bovine character who was supposed to be “macho” but would rather smell flowers. When I was young I often communed with nature, wrote poetry, and marveled at the beauty of the world. This behavior was not deemed very “manly”. I would like to say that I remained a compassionate person, but I was also surrounded by very poor examples of compassionate relationships. It was an abusive environment that left me with habits that have at times been a curse I needed to wash away, while at other times part of a healing journey that I shared with others. I am very much the “wounded healer”. It has been my relationship with God that showed me the direction to heal with a conversion experience, epiphanies, and healing experiences with others. From then on it was my personal responsibility, my choice, to follow a quest of learning and becoming. It is a quest that I have shared with my wife and my two children. It has been a quest that has

not been well understood, or respected, by all my friends, relatives and peers. In this sense it has been a heroic journey. It is not a journey the average mystic seeker will wish to endure. At times I have not wanted to endure.

In the life of the skilled phone operator I am always facing myself in the mirror of God's perfection while also facing the onslaughts that must come from those who do not yet understand how to sit in the phone booth. They do not yet understand the transformative qualities associated with having made that collect call.

“Thank God for mystics, who see reality more completely than the rest of us do... Their experience testifies to the marvelous, but invisible spiritual world that surrounds us. Their example and testimony offer a cure for our blindness and insanity.”⁹⁷

Are we willing to listen to their testimony and to incorporate what we can into our lives? Are we willing to make that collect call? Are we truly committed to being the mystic seeker?

Being the mystic seeker is being the person who places the collect call. There are less demands on you than if you wanted to maintain a direct line to God. It is the operator's responsibility to assist you in placing that call and to help you integrate the experience into your life. The characteristics of the skilled operator are: speaking of knowing the “oneness” of God; demonstrating a deep holistic empathy; a history of mystical experiences; exhibiting a profound sense of spirituality; knowing they are called and many years following their calling while giving testimony. These characteristics can be used by the mystic seeker to help find the right operator, one who is likely to succeed in placing your collect call.

This list of characteristics does not mean that the phone operator is not human. My research suggests the contrary – the mystic/healer does show human frailties and that this is very important to do. The journey to knowing God is available to everyone and everyone is facing both a life of human frailties and the way of the mystic seeker. The operator is simply an example of one who has made a little more progress. They are an example for us, a guide, but they are also human. Very few mystic/healers remove all anger (never displaying it anywhere), remove all past issues and cultural biases, and remove all patterns of behavior that might be perceived by the mystic seeker as interfering with the phone call. The choice of sitting with an operator should not be based upon reported human frailties (except if within the time of serving as a phone operator the person did consciously harm another) but rather on the characteristics that are suggestive of being a skilled operator. Learn to know what it will sound like when sitting with a skilled operator – avoid the frauds!

Knowing what it Should Sound Like When You Contact Your Operator

You should have some idea of what it will call will sound like when you contact a skilled phone operator. You don't not want to talk with an automated version of an operator who will give you a menu to select from and ask you to "press the number" in order for you to continue your call. There are many such mechanical operators who know the "book" or "technical" aspects of being an operator, but who may not be able to direct your collect call to God. There are very brilliant minds who know the "word" and have dedicated a life to study and the generation of ideas but who have not been in the role the mystic/healer. Just because someone can speak the talk doesn't mean they can walk the walk. Find an operator who has demonstrated the skills of being the operator (or who is training under someone who has).

You also do not want to get an operator who has a different agenda. For example, you do not want to be talking with an operator who is acting like a "telemarketer" trying to get you to commit to some program, ideology, or establishment prior to helping you with the collect call. You don't want someone who is just selling you a "feel good" experience or a "quiet meditative mind". You want someone who can place the collect call for you. The only requirement for successfully placing the collect call is that you sit in the phone booth with the phone operator.

You can only start the collect call process with God from YOUR understanding. You cannot start the conversation using someone else's understanding. The operator must be able to facilitate the conversation by knowing, and accepting, your understanding as the starting point for placing the collect call. You must be willing to share that understanding in order for the call to start. These are important characteristics of the phone booth.

The meeting with the phone operator should be directed at the healing relationship. The more you know about the healing relationship⁹⁸ the more likely you are to be successful in entering the phone booth and engaging in a successful conversation with the operator. This knowledge will also help you determine the difference between skilled operators and frauds. Frauds will never put the collect call through (although they may pretend to do so) but are more likely to create "magic" and the "feel good". The collect call has information beyond the magic, beyond the feel goods. This sacred wisdom should be in line with the between and be compatible with your understanding and life situation.

Once you know what it should sound like during the collect call, and you have made some preparations, than you are ready to have a conversation with an operator of your choosing. Knowing what the conversation should sound like may help you to avoid the frauds that pray on peoples' weakness and give little in return other than a "quick fix". It is important to know this so that you can distinguish between the mystic seeker who pretends and the true operator who will help you place your collect call.

Understanding the Conversation with your Operator

Once you have an idea of what the conversation should sound like you are ready to try to understand the collect call experience. This is a very important part of the collect call process. No completed call should occur without processing its content and its application to daily life.

It may seem like a simple and obvious conversation. You contact the operator and ask to place a collect call to God. The operator asks, “Who is making this request?” Following the answer you provide, the operator then places the collect call. A moment passes while the operator waits to hear if the “charges will be accepted” and then the operator responds with telling you whether the call went through or it didn’t. That is the end of the conversation. This entire conversation can happen without words, but most people need verbal structure to help interpret the event. It can happen quickly, within minutes, particularly if both mystic seeker and phone operator are prepared. It is a simple process that can have deep and moving effects.

But within this simple conversation is a complex dialog that happens at a deep spiritual level within the healing relationship. The answer you give to the operator of “Who is making the request?” must be answered as openly and honestly as is possible at that moment. It is what is presented to God upon requesting the collect call. A skilled operator will understand this and help you with the process, but it can be a process that is difficult. Can we answer the question for ourselves, “Are we prepared are to enter a conversation with God and face that mystical experience?”

“Most of us will never experience mystical phenomena (without an operator). No rapture, ecstasies, or other preternatural events will overtake us. I don’t know about you, but I am grateful for that because mystical consolations come at a great personal cost” (comment added).⁹⁹

The cost of the phone call is minimized if you make the collect call because God agrees to “accept the charges”. It cost much more to establish a direct line (this is discussed later). Understanding the conversation with the operator means that you understand your presenting nature when you ask to make the collect call – your intent, your desires, your heart, your soul. Can you lay this open and bare in front of God as part of understanding the conversation you must have with the phone operator? This is the path of sacred trust, of deep empathy, and of letting go.¹⁰⁰ Understanding this is part of the conversation with the operator. It is also part of understanding what it means to sit with the mystic/healer. A first step in this understanding can be accomplished by understanding the material in this book. This includes understanding the healing relationship (the phone booth), the between, and the sacred space of oneness, which can, and should, become a part of the mystic seekers life.

Let's assume that you have entered the phone booth and started the conversation with the phone operator. This means that you and the phone operator are ready to place the collect call. The next event is the placing of the call.

Placing the call means that you are asking to receive a message from God and to have it witnessed by the operator. Understanding the conversation with the operator means that you understand that this agreement exists – the operator is there as a witness. This is important to understand because the operator will be able to validate (reaffirm, support) that the call went through and that you received a message. Part of the conversation you will have with the operator will be to help you clarify the nature of this experience and to establish a witness relationship with you. Hopefully you will find a skilled mystic/healer with whom you can benefit from not only from the operator's phone booth skills but also from their witness relationship skills.

Making the Effort to Find YOUR Operator

Now that you have some idea of what you are looking for in an operator, and what is likely to transpire, you need to put the effort into finding YOUR operator. The emphasis here is on **your**. There are many different people presenting themselves as phone operators, some speaking different languages and some with different cultural orientations. You want to find an operator that speaks your language and understands your culture. In addition you want to be able to sit in the phone booth with your operator while also feeling safe and understood. Most of all you do not want to spend wasted time with a fraud.

There are many operators all over the world. Finding one that fits your request to make the collect call will take some effort. But it will be an effort yielding success and a completed collect call. The search for your phone operator is an important part of getting prepared.

There are people who are “helpers” who are not mystic/healers, not phone operators. These people often have careers in the helping professions. Sometimes our journey to find a phone operator takes us through meetings with these helpers. It is part of getting prepared. Helpers are people who pass on to us some information that is useful in our journey toward well being and sacredness. Helpers are people who are skilled at using the support relationship and discovering the problems of the habitual relationship (see my earlier publications¹⁰¹). The tasks of the helpers are just as important as the tasks associated with the phone operator. Not everyone is ready to sit in the phone booth and place collect calls for other people. Not all mystic seekers are prepared to hear the conversation. Some need to sit in a support relationship, learn how to use that to promote well being, and then move on to sitting in the phone booth. You may have a helper in your life right now – one who is supportive of your personal growth and well being but who does not fit the characteristics of the skilled phone operator as outlined above. If so you are blessed.

Seeking a mystic/healer does not mean that we should forsake all other relationships in our lives. It may mean that we will seek to improve those relationships after having made contact with the phone operator. This is something expressed by people who have experienced dramatic healing.¹⁰² It may mean that you will ask more from your current support relationships and perhaps understand how to give more to those support relationship. The moments spent sitting with the mystic/healer while will always have an effect on how relationships are perceived. It is important to take the time needed to process this important effect in a compassionate and healthy way.

The relationship with the phone operator can be confusing because often you do not have any relationship history upon which to understand this “new” relationship of unbounded compassion. Care should be taken not to “fall in love”, or perceive a romantic relationship, with the operator. This concept of falling in love, or thinking and acting with romantic intentions, can be applied broadly to any spiritual relationship you have with another being. Sharing a deep and unbounded compassion is part of the relationship that promotes well being. If you have found an operator who nurtures your dependence on him/her then you are in danger of not moving forward in your own development. The path is one of mutuality without addiction – of experiencing the sacred healing relationship. If you are dependent on the relationship then be very attentive to these feelings. It usually takes some time for the mystic seeker to understand the sacred qualities of the healing relationship.

Sharing the Sacred Healing Relationship

The nature of the healing relationship experienced while sitting with the mystic/healer is not like any other relationship most people experience in their daily lives. This is discussed in my earlier publications.¹⁰³ It is important when you are requesting to place the collect call that you attempt to hold the relationship as sacred and not view it in the same way you have viewed the relationships of your past (unless your past is full of sacred relationships). The relationship formed with the phone operator is intimate, compassionate, penetrating, powerful, stimulating and easily misunderstood. This relationship misunderstanding should not be allowed to interfere with your preparation for making the collect call. It must be because YOUR true nature is the identity that is passed along with the collect call request. When the operator says, “This is a collect call from David, will you accept the charges?” the true nature of “David” must accompany that request.

Can we understand the intimate nature of the sacred healing relationship without having our views confounded by our relationship history? This is a country that is proud of its pioneer heritage and its fierce individualism but we may not know that much about intimate relationships, and we probably know even less about the intimate

nature of the sacred healing relationship. There is considerable “proof” of this absence of relationship knowledge throughout our society.

“An intimate romantic love, however, is like taking graduate work toward a Ph.D. in the ways of love (sharing the sacred healing relationship) and many of us are hardly out of elementary school. When we’re not in relationship, the ego makes it seem as though all the pain would go away if we were.”¹⁰⁴

It is easy to hunger for the serenity, peace, and healing experienced while sitting with the mystic/healer. It is easy to want to be nurtured and cared for as if this would make all the pain disappear forever. It is easy to become addicted to the good feelings, or the mystical magic. These views of the relationship occur because we have not learned to develop a more sacred view. The mystic/healer has acquired the Ph.D. in knowing this sacred view and is willing to share it with you. Be patient while sitting in the phone booth.

It is important to know that there are many ways you can view the relationship experience with the operator. If the view is not sacred then it will interfere with your collect call to God. It will interfere with your understanding of any information received during the collect call process. It will also impede any processing of that information, any attempt to use that information wisely, within your life. Learning about a proper view of the sacred healing relationship is critical to your success in communicating with God through the operator (or alone).

“It is not up to us what we will learn, but only whether we will learn through joy or pain. We will learn to love one another (to share the sacred healing relationship), but whether we learn it painfully or peacefully is entirely up to us.”¹⁰⁵

Can you allow the experience with the operator to transform your view of relationships so that you can better communicate with God? Or will you exist in pain until you are forced to make a change?

One of the most important aspects of the mystic’s life is the need to share what has been learned. This sharing happens as testimony, as oratory, as writing and as relationship. Sharing can occur in many different ways and is quite contextual, i.e., it is sharing that is designed to meet the peoples needs within the context of their lives. But the best opportunity to “pass on” the experiences of knowing the transformational character of the sacred healing relationship is to share this relationship with another. Whether you are a mystic seeker or an operator you have the opportunity to share what you know about the journey with others who ask. This process of “passing it on”, making more phone connections, is discussed in more detail in a later chapter.

Chapter Two Summary and Conclusions

The two most important aspects of making the collect call to God are 1) proper use of the phone booth and 2) proper communication with the right phone operator. Proper use of the phone booth, the sacred healing relationship, has been discussed elsewhere.¹⁰⁶ This chapter offered the reader some guidelines on how to know who is a skilled operator and also what it should sound like when you communicate with this skilled operator. The following topics were addressed:

- Learn the general characteristics of skilled phone operators to help you distinguish them from frauds. These characteristics are:

They speak of knowing the “oneness” of God.

They demonstrate a deep holistic empathy that promotes healing.

“Mystical” experiences have been a part of their lives.

They exhibit a profound sense of spirituality.

They come to know they are called.

They have spent many years following their calling.

Testimony is given.

- Know what it should sound like when you contact your phone operator.
- Understand the nature of the conversation you will have with the phone operator and that this conversation is likely to address your progress to empty self, empty desire, compassion and, oneness with the divine.
- Make the effort to find YOUR phone operator – the right match for you.
- Practice sharing the collect call experience with others.

There have always been mystic/healers in our culture. They have served as spiritual guides, as phone operators, helping us to communicate with God. They have helped us to place that collect call. The key points of this chapter are 1) skilled operators have unique and identifiable characteristics that should not be confused with other more fraudulent presentations, and 2) it is possible to prepare yourself for the encounter with the operator so that the communication is more successful.

End Notes and References Cited

To locate the reference go to the reference list and look up the authors name and the year of publication.

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- ¹ Hoisington, 2002.
- ² Collins, 1989, p. 200.
- ³ Borchert, 1994; Underhill, 1999; Fairweather, 1968.
- ⁴ For example: Bucke, 1961, Krishna, 1993.
- ⁵ Dunne, 1969, p. 48.
- ⁶ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁷ Roberts, 1985, p.6.
- ⁸ Flinders, 1993, p. 55.
- ⁹ Hoisington, 2002.
- ¹⁰ Lesser, 1999, p. 328.
- ¹¹ Flinders, 1993.
- ¹² Flinders, 1993, p. 139.
- ¹³ King, 2001, p. 15.
- ¹⁴ Borysenko, 1997, p. xv.
- ¹⁵ Cornell, 2001, p. 25.
- ¹⁶ King, 2001, Roberts, 1985.
- ¹⁷ Cornell, 2001; Kamenetz, 1997.
- ¹⁸ Arberry, 1950, p. 55.
- ¹⁹ Roberts, 1985.
- ²⁰ Nicholson, 1914, p. 59.
- ²¹ May, 1982a, p. 28.
- ²² Ibid, p. 35.
- ²³ Hoisington, 2002.
- ²⁴ Ghezzi, 2002, p. 30.
- ²⁵ Hoisington, 2002.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ This term is described in detail in my book “The Healing Relationship”.
- ²⁸ Trungpa, 1973, p. 98-99.
- ²⁹ Flinders, 1993, p. 149.
- ³⁰ Hoisington, 2002.
- ³¹ Teasdale, 1999.
- ³² Sometimes people do not experience this radiance because of a number of problems in the relationship. You can choose to work on these problems with the mystic/healer (as part of the problem may be due to him/her and with you) or find another.
- ³³ Teasdale, 1999, p. 165.
- ³⁴ Hoisington, 2002.
- ³⁵ King, 2001, p. 5.
- ³⁶ Ibid
- ³⁷ James, 1902.
- ³⁸ Flinders, 1993.
- ³⁹ Redfield, 1998.
- ⁴⁰ Ullman & Reichenberg – Ullman, 2001, p. xv-xvi.
- ⁴¹ Ibid, p. xvii – xviii.
- ⁴² Chopra, 2000, p.12.
- ⁴³ Stace, 1960.
- ⁴⁴ James, 1902 (cited in Stace, 1960).
- ⁴⁵ Bucke, 1961 (cited in Stace, 1960).
- ⁴⁶ Suzuki, 1956 (cited in Stace, 1960).
- ⁴⁷ Jilek, 1982.
- ⁴⁸ Jilek, 1982, also this author’s research on the healing relationship..
- ⁴⁹ Underhill, 1999, p. x.
- ⁵⁰ Eliade, 1965, p. 76.
- ⁵¹ Eigen, 1998, p. 112.

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- ⁵² Multiple definition of the term transcendence are given in Maslow, 1971.
- ⁵³ Tart, 1982. Caution should be taken when seeking the “feeling” instead of the relationship.
- ⁵⁴ James, 1902.
- ⁵⁵ Dossey, 1993, p. xviii.
- ⁵⁶ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Stanley, 1985, using the Bible as reference, says that God speaks to us in the following ways: through dreams, through the spoken and written word, through the prophets (and I suggest mystics also), through angels, through circumstances (events), through the Holy Spirit, and through sacred compassionate relationships. Visions and healings need to be added to this list.
- ⁵⁹ Maddocks, 2001.
- ⁶⁰ King, 2001.
- ⁶¹ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁶² Borchert, 1994, p. 6.
- ⁶³ Ibid, p. 11.
- ⁶⁴ Flinders, 1993.
- ⁶⁵ Maddocks, 2001.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 68. See also Krishna, 1993 and Smith, 2001.
- ⁶⁷ Eliade, 1965.
- ⁶⁸ This conclusion is stated by Roberts, 1985.
- ⁶⁹ Trungpa, 1984, p. 89.
- ⁷⁰ Neihardt, 1972, p. 2.
- ⁷¹ Borchert, 1994, p. 12.
- ⁷² Smith, 2001, p. 19.
- ⁷³ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁷⁴ Rossetti, 2003, p. 134.
- ⁷⁵ Roberts, 1985, p. 124.
- ⁷⁶ Roberts, 1985, p. 124
- ⁷⁷ Weiner, 1969, p. 50.
- ⁷⁸ This is described in “The Healing Relationship”, Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁷⁹ Nock, 1960. p. 7
- ⁸⁰ Mali, 1996, p. 48.
- ⁸¹ Dossey, 2000, p. 33.
- ⁸² Neihardt, 1972, p. 85.
- ⁸³ Mali, 1996, p. xvii.
- ⁸⁴ Mali, 1996, also Katz, 1978,1983. Robert Forman (1990) in the preface to a book on mysticism and philosophy argues against the “view that mysticism is primarily caused by the mystic’s expectations and beliefs” saying that this view “misrepresents and systematically misconstrues mysticism as we understand it. Furthermore, it is a profoundly ill-established thesis, argued more by rhetoric than philosophy. For an strong example of rhetoric argument that demonstrates little understanding of the mythical tradition see Culpit, 1998.
- ⁸⁵ I believe this same argument applies to the lakeside epiphany except probably less stringently. One could argue that I had some preconceived ideas about communication with God and that these ideas shaped the experience of hearing a voice speaking (a Judeo-Christian type of image). But the glowing lake, the glowing trees, the fish at my feet, and the radical transformation in my character were not part of anything I consciously would have imagined.
- ⁸⁶ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁸⁷ Underhill, 1999, p. 24.
- ⁸⁸ Hoisington, 2002.
- ⁸⁹ Neihardt, 1972, p. 159-160.
- ⁹⁰ Rael, 2003.
- ⁹¹ Ghezzi, 2002.
- ⁹² Dossey, 2000, p. 325.
- ⁹³ Teasdale, 1999, p. 105-106. See also the Ten Descriptors in the Appendix and those associated with healers as described in my other writings..

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- ⁹⁴ Ghezzi, 2002, p. xv.
⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 3.
⁹⁶ Borchert, 1994, p. 43.
⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 57.
⁹⁸ Hoisington, 2002
⁹⁹ Ghezzi, 2002, p.30
¹⁰⁰ See “The Healing Relationship” for a more detailed description (Hoisington, 2002).
¹⁰¹ Ibid
¹⁰² Ibid
¹⁰³ Ibid
¹⁰⁴ Williamson, 1993, p.122, parenthetical comments added.
¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 82, parenthetical comments added.
¹⁰⁶ Hoisington, 2002.