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GROWING OVER LIFETIMES

[BACK TO HOME](#)

Having accidentally encountered [past lives](#) and [reincarnation](#), Dr Brian Weiss took time to accept what came to pass. He went on to research many such mystical and religious ideas, turning him into a doctor who has got enlightened. An interview with the author of bestselling books such as *Many Lives, Many Masters*, excerpted from *Voices of Truth (Full Circle)*

Treating patients by guiding them through recollections of their previous lives is just about the last thing Dr Brian Weiss thought he would be doing.

A prominent South Florida psychiatrist, before the age of 35 he was the first Chief of Psychiatry at Mount Sinai Medical Center, and a professor at the University of Miami's medical school. He was publishing papers and becoming a nationally recognised expert on psychopharmacology and considered himself the kind of guy who rarely gave much thought to anything mystical, philosophical or spiritual.

One patient changed all that. Weiss calls her Catherine in his first best-selling book, *Many Lives, Many Masters* (1988), eight years after he began treating the young woman.

He had been using routine [psychotherapy](#) to treat her and after 18 months with little improvement, Weiss finally put it very simply to her one day while she was under [hypnosis](#): "Go back to the time from which your symptoms arise." She did.

Back to the year 1863 BC when she was a 25-year-old named Aronda. Since treating Catherine, he has researched reincarnation, Eastern religions, mysticism, quantum physics, intuition and everything in between. He exudes an air of wise counsel, but does not come across as some kind of guru.

Much to his surprise, Weiss's work has been taken seriously by many in the medical community.

Shortly after his first book was published, the former president of the Dade County Psychological Association said: "Those of us who do hypnosis are not all that shocked by Dr Weiss's book. Many have had patients who have gone back to something-I'm not prepared to say it was a previous life. I think we are very interested and very afraid to talk about it..."

Weiss says his work on past life therapy has helped not only his patients and readers, it has also helped him. It has led him to explore a great body of knowledge, and to look inward as well. The following has been excerpted from Nina Diamond's *Voices of Truth-Conversations with Scientists, Thinkers and Healers*.

Are we just vessels that hold the soul?

Dr Brian Weiss: Yes, exactly. We are vessels, and we contain this eternal and immortal, much more knowledgeable part of ourselves. Now, probably as you get more mystical you find out that these souls, as well as the bodies, are connected to everyone else's, because really everything is of the same substance.



Why do people find reincarnation a difficult concept to accept?

People fear the unfamiliar. If only they would keep an open mind. Not just scientists, but everybody. Just observe it, watch it. [Meditation](#) can teach people to do that. If they can let go of their [fears](#).

Philosophers and mystics once incorporated reincarnation into their explanations of life, and Plato wrote about soulmates.

Yes, Plato wrote about reincarnation. So, the Greeks believed in this too. And so did ancient civilizations.

Reincarnation is in all religions. Where did this knowledge come from?

It comes from so far back that we don't even know where it comes from. We only lost it recently. I think we lost it for political reasons.

In [Judaism](#), belief in reincarnation or *gilgul* is not just ancient, but existed until early in the 1800s, and it was only with the migration out of Eastern Europe to the West, and the Age of Enlightenment and science, and the need to be accepted, that the belief went underground.

But not in the Chassidic (Ultra-Orthodox) populations. They still believe in reincarnation. In [Christianity](#) it went underground much earlier, in the 6th century at the Second Council of Constantinople where reincarnation was officially declared a heresy.

Christianity was becoming a state religion, and the Romans felt that without the whip of Judgement Day people wouldn't behave, they wouldn't follow.

They would think: "Well, I'll do it next time around." And so reincarnation was consciously made a heresy. But this was at the Council, centuries after Jesus.

How is the time period between lifetimes determined?

People who die violently, or children who die, often come back faster. And people who live longer lives, and die more peacefully, there can be a much longer time between lives, a hundred years or more.

How many past lives do people generally have?

That varies, but the numbers that come up most (in my work) is about 100. Not the thousands and thousands that the [Buddhists](#) talk about.

Is there a finite number of souls?

To me it doesn't matter because ultimately we're all connected.

Are new souls being created?

I'm not sure, but my inclination is to say no. We're probably all ageless and have been (around from the beginning).

Are families more spiritually connected from life to life than strangers are?

Yes, and I do think that people come in groups for the working out of debts and responsibilities, the concept of [karma](#). These are the people that we're learning and growing with. I even put love at first sight, or hostility at first sight into that category, a recognition of souls.

I know the old saying: blood is thicker than water. Well, I mention in *Through Time into Healing* that spirit seems thicker than blood.

So people can be male in one lifetime and female in another, and vice versa?

Yes, there seems to be frequent switching. You may have a preference, but you've tried out the other to see what it's like. This is also true of races and religions.

How do you explain souls that occupy bodies that are biologically damaged?

If this is all to learn-and this is what my patients keep telling me-to grow, to become more and more Godlike, then whatever experience you have is a learning experience. Sometimes, though, it's a teaching experience as well, so you may come back into this for others, maybe as an act of charity.

How do pre-determination and free will co-exist?

Someone told me this once: Life is like being on a bus. It has a certain pre-determined route. But the person you sit next to, how you act, what you say, that's all the free will part.

Why don't we automatically, consciously remember our past lives?

For one, more and more people are remembering. Through therapeutic techniques such as hypnosis, but also through [dreams](#), spontaneously, through meditation, déjà vu. When they're in a place they have never been before and they know their way around.

This may be an evolutionary shift. I don't know why we don't all remember. The Greeks had a myth that when you were born again you drank from the River of Lethe, so you would forget your previous lives.

So you think some of us are born with certain [values](#) and ideals?

Yes, that's the whole purpose. That it gets ingrained at a deeper level. At the level of the [heart](#) and the soul-where the real learning takes place so that you're not dependent just on what your parents teach you.

If one's parents were bigots, and the child is able to overcome that, this is a degree of independence that transcends what we're taught.

This is your soul saying: "You know it's not right to be a bigot, despite what your parents, what the church or temple is telling you. You know better. Follow your heart." And when you're doing that, you've really learnt it. This is the soul memory.

When we're 'out there', will we be with all the people we knew here?

I think so, and even with those who are still here. The vision is better coming from the other direction. They're aware of more because they are not limited by a body and the brain. But we are.

What's the state of reincarnation research today?

There are physicians doing this. Raymond Moody, the psychiatrist who coined the phrase [Near Death Experience](#), is now writing about his research with past life therapy. Then there's the Association of Past Life Research and Therapy (APRT). They publish a journal. It's a mixed group, so it's hard to characterize them as representative of the scientific community.

How can reincarnation be validated? Do you look for supporting information?

It's difficult to prove reincarnation scientifically because of what we consider scientific. As a psychiatrist I'm interested in my patients' clinical improvement, in their welfare, so I look at two levels: of therapy and helping people, and then the other level, that of validating, or proving. Both are vital.

But I function more these days at the therapeutic level. There's no question in my mind, or in the minds of all of these physicians and psychotherapists who are writing to me, that this has a therapeutic effect. It's quick, it's vivid, it's relatively inexpensive, and people get better.

Physicists are now researching how one subatomic particle/wave in one location senses instantaneously what's happening to another one. Is it similar to psychic phenomena?

Yes, and physicists have proof that these particles exist, that they travel at the speed of light, and time is relative, and can stop. It's just that we have difficulty in letting go (of our old concepts).

If I told you that you're really, physically, a mass of electrons, protons and neutrons and energy, and wave/particle phenomena, you would say, "but I'm solid", and I would say, "yes, but that's not really true, because at a deeper level you're energy".

Scientists talk about things being connected at a sub-atomic level-what we would consider ESP-between these subatomic particles. Since we and everything in the universe are made up of these, does this explain how people can have '[paranormal](#)' abilities?

Yes, that summarises the millennia of mystical knowledge, and solves the [problems](#) of the universe! It's true. We need to develop the skills. How to do this, how to be aware. Mystics have always been saying that there is no time, it just appears that way to us.

And when you start talking about other states, there is no space, there is no time. It's all happening now. This is our conception of God and of nature beyond the three-dimensional. That's the fascinating correlation that physics is starting to prove.

In mystical Christianity, Buddhism, [Hinduism](#), this is all part of the esoteric tradition: There is not time, no space, we're all connected.

Do you believe that physicists will find that science, mysticism, spirituality, religion and parapsychology are connected through quantum physics?

Physicists are the mystics of the 21st century. They've begun to study consciousness, time moving backwards, all of these phenomena that were called occult or esoteric. I believe they'll be found to have their roots in nature, in science.

As we begin to use more of our brains through meditation and other ways, we're going to find that these things do have their basis in science, in nature. To discover the truth you have to throw out your old assumptions and old knowledge.

You wrote in Many Lives... that the most important lesson you learned with past life therapy is that there is no [death](#). How has this changed your life, and how can this change everybody's life?

When you stop fearing death you start to live more. What I value now that I perhaps didn't value as much before are love, relationships, family-not just in the genetic sense, but in the larger sense. And what I value less now are material things. You can't take it with you. That's a cliché, but it's true.

How do our past life experiences and [relationships](#) affect our present life?

They affect us in every way. Many of your most meaningful relationships are not new. That's how you connect. Past lives also affect us in symptoms, both emotional and physical. Certain fears and anxieties carry over. Physical symptoms, where one may have been wounded or hurt in a previous life frequently come up. It affects us psychologically, emotionally, even in obesity.

Have you had patients who, while reliving a past life under hypnosis, had detailed/technical knowledge about something they know nothing about in this life?

Yes, that happens a lot. One of Dr Jarmon's cases is one of the best. A woman was seeing him for hypnotherapy for weight loss. He didn't believe in past lives. This was his first case (of past lives), and it happened spontaneously.

A Jewish woman in her 30s, she started to develop a new symptom while she was visiting him. Her periods had stopped and she developed lower abdominal tenderness, and she was becoming more anxious.

He was alarmed and thought she might have an ectopic pregnancy (in a fallopian tube), which can be dangerous because it can burst. So he referred her to a gynaecologist. She tested negative.

But she continued to see Dr Jarmon, and they were working on her anxiety, and he said: "Go back to the time from which your symptoms first arose."

His patient went back to the Middle Ages. She was five months pregnant with an ectopic pregnancy. In that life she was Catholic, and she was with a priest who wouldn't allow abortion or surgery, and so she died.

And just before she died she repeated the Catholic act of contrition to the priest, word for word. Dr Jarmon is Catholic and recognized it. It's what Catholics say to atone for their sins.

The Jewish woman had never heard of contrition. This happens all the time, but again, it's hard to prove because you can say they probably read this in school, picked up a book or learned this while they were overseas.

If we can go back to past lives, can we go forward to future ones?

There are people who are doing this work, such as Chet Snow, the president of the APRT Society. I haven't found it, and probably the reason is I'm not looking for it.

Many look at God as a force outside the universe that regulates everything.

Instead of within. I say: "Why limit God?" Perhaps [God](#) can listen to all of our prayers, all at the same time and pay infinite attention to it, because God isn't a human being.

So, you're saying that if there are an infinite number of possibilities, then nothing is impossible, and therefore, God can be everywhere.

Yes, and we can all be part of God, and yet be separate, in our own perspective. But we are all connected.

So, if we're all connected to everything, then by definition aren't we connected to God, too, since God, or a higher being, created all of this?

Yes. Now you're approaching my very simplistic way of viewing everything. That God-love-is an energy that is in everything. Intelligence, wisdom, love, compassion and more-that's all we're made of.

Tell us about your past lives.

The first time I remembered was during an acupressure massage for an old neck injury that was flaring up. At that point, *Many Lives...* had been written, but wasn't published yet.

And I wasn't telling a soul. I was afraid for my reputation and career. So I mentioned nothing to the therapist. I would go into this very relaxed, almost meditative state, and during the third or fourth one-hour session I saw this image.

It was me, taller, thin, wearing a multi-coloured robe, standing in a large geometric shaped building. I knew I was a priest of some sort, very powerful, with the ear of the royal family. I had some psychic abilities in that life, too.

And I was misusing it to gain more power, sex, greed, things like that. It was a very good life! Very easy, but wasted. The word ziggurat kept ringing in my head. I had no conscious memory of ever coming across that word.

It doesn't prove that I didn't, in college or something, but I didn't remember it. I didn't say anything to the therapist, went home and looked up ziggurat. It's a word for architectural structures, temples of the Babylonian era, like the hanging gardens of Babylon.

I had another experience years later. I had this dream of being imprisoned in a European dungeon, my arm chained to the wall. I was being tortured for teaching about my religious beliefs, which included reincarnation. And I died there.

I became aware, as I died, of a message: "When you had the chance to teach it, you did not." I knew that was referring back to that episode with the ziggurat. "When you didn't have the chance, you did."

And I knew that meant that I should have taught about love. I didn't have to teach about reincarnation and get killed for it. I went too far. The implication was: "Now you can have

both. You have the chance, and you can teach about it." It's as if those two were the important past lives.

Who are The Masters?

This is what Catherine described as the source of the information coming to her. She would hear them, and then tell me. But she had no [memory](#) of it when she woke up.

When she was in-between remembering past lives she would go into this state. She said this was coming from the master spirits, The Masters. And out came knowledge that was very unlike her. Even the phonetics, grammar and style were different.

And she wasn't an actress, a multiple personality or schizophrenic. I've had other patients tell me things-it's coming from a more pure source that's not contaminated by our brains. I've had much contact with The Masters, but they're not identifying themselves by that name anymore.

What do you think of other alternative physical and mental therapies?

I do feel that there may be validity to many of these approaches and we need to study these. That's why I was heartened to see that the National Institutes of Health created a division that deals with alternative and holistic approaches. The government is funding and supporting this. There's a tremendous amount to gain, both in healing and direct physical and mental health.

Extracted with permission from *Voices of Truth*, by Nina L. Diamond, Full Circle.

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[Life Positive, December 2002](#)