
CHAPTER FIVE

CHANNELING

I said earlier that learning to be an instrument is easy because people are natural instruments, always channeling something. It's true, as I have learned through the years from teaching a few people how to do it.

Though I do not teach any particular school of channeling, in working with students I do try to get across two concepts, each one of which has a passive and an active phase. The first concept is that of tuning. We have talked about the mind as a radio receiver picking up intelligent, invisible signals and relaying them using our physical equipment. Using this analogy it should be obvious that tuning is all-important. There is intuitive tuning and there is discriminative tuning. First, one must tune the passive, intuitive mind. This is the mind in relation to itself. Meditation is intended as the chief tool for perfecting this process. In meditation you are relaxing and releasing the self from its conscious boundaries. But you are doing work of active intuition also, generating a receptive, active particular invitatory vibration, turning actively towards the source of the signal which you will receive and declaring yourself ready to receive fresh thoughts into your waiting conscious mind. In no way does a receptive attitude connote anxiety or anticipation. You must be meditative, relaxed and accepting of whatever may come. Too much concern and one can easily channel a high percentage of one's own barely unconscious material, delivering not a majority of cosmic thoughts but a mishmash of your own half-digested perceptions. Without the overconcern, even if you are channeling some aspect of your own being, you will be channeling a much clearer version of this same material.

When you feel that you have gotten a contact, your discriminating mind comes into action both towards yourself and towards the source of the contact. Using passive discrimination, you continue focusing, tuning first with the big knob, then with smaller and smaller verniers making finer and finer adjustments, attempting to lift your consciousness to the very highest vibration you can. Only you know when that moment has come. Only you know what you can hold as a steady state. As you are adjusting, you might try singing, chanting or praying. I use a selection from my store of songs and chants, plus music on tape, for preliminary tuning, and then use prayer for the finer adjustments. My favorite is The Lord's Prayer, since it is without doctrine or dogma, and can be prayed equally by Muslim, Jew, Christian, Buddhist and honest skeptic, as long as the skeptic will accept the

hypothesis that there is a Creator. For the very fine tuning I prefer the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi. I have known several channels who favored the Great Invocation, and there are many other acceptable and beautiful prayers, including the ones that you make up on the spot, the latter being perhaps the best, as they are the expression of your heart at that exact moment.

You are also, once you receive a contact, in need of your actively discriminative faculties in challenging the source that you have contacted. In order to challenge any invisible entity, you must be able to state, in a sincere and unequivocal way, who you are, what you believe in, what you love and for what you would die. This is why the beginning of the process of becoming a channel is figuring out how your nature and mind “tick.” You cannot expect to challenge in the name of Christ if you are of a nature that does not find faith a comfortable emotion. You are not going to be able to challenge in the name of truth if you believe there is no truth, and that man can know nothing. Let us say that you are one who believes—as the majority of new age channels seem to do—in the Christ, not as Jesus the man, but as a consciousness which Jesus attained during his incarnation, but which is also attainable by any being who can keep his mind, soul, heart and strength fixed upon the Creator. You wish, then, to challenge in the name of Christ-*consciousness*. You feel, or you guess, that this is something that you can believe in. In this very complex society we are not used to saying things in a way which implies no relativity. We are used to situational ethics, wrong things being “right” under certain circumstances, and people leaving our religious beliefs pretty much alone in the interest of getting along with each other. It may be difficult for you to say unequivocally that you would die before you would deny the supremacy of the force of Christ-consciousness in your life. It is possible for you to doubt the ideal because of the age in which we live. This is not an age of faith, unless it is faith in empirically derived knowledge. We know that all technology is going to be improved upon, and so even the newest gadgets are looked upon with a mixture of awe and the cynical thought that if we wait just a little longer the technology will improve and the price of the gadgets will go down. It is difficult to put our minds back into the world of unshakable ideals and eternal truths. And yet, if channeling has a real place in expanding our knowledge of the way things are, then it has that because it speaks of unchangeable truths, helping us to perceive them better, more simply and more directly.

So if you have trouble saying “I challenge you in the name of (fill in the blank),” stop and repeat the process recommended in Chapter Three, until you are not only comfortable, but in the position of an advocate of whatever unchangeable truth you have decided is that which is, to you, dearer than life itself. That for which you would die is surely that for which you can live, and the spirit world understands that kind of absolute fidelity. When you wish to become a channel you are wishing to communicate with what has often been called the spirit world. In fact, in libraries using the Dewey/Sears system most channeled material is classified under the heading “Spirit Communications,” including the work that I have done, which is in the area of alleged extraterrestrial channelings.

Whatever the nature of spirits you wish to contact or have contacted, they have in common the characteristic of being without self-doubt. I have yet to hear or read a spirit communication from any source in which the spirits were agonizing over who they were or what they believed. It is just that kind of authority for which you are looking in a good contact. It is that kind of authority you need to have as you tune in order that you may challenge the source of your contact when you get it, to ensure that the point of view that you will be channeling matches your greatest and highest desire.

The end result of all of your tuning is crystallized in the moment at which you do receive a contact. In the world of un-things opinions and thoughts are everything. There is no objective referent to pave the way to respectability. In the world of metaphysical thoughts and ideas, the strength with which you embrace your point of view is alone effective. When you have tuned correctly, so that each prayer and thought with which you tune is a meaningful and substantial statement of your belief system, then your challenging should be very easy, because you will have attracted an entity which is capable of communicating about that which you embrace.

Presumably an advocate of the same committed, biased interest as you will be easily able to answer your challenge, whether it be in the name of Christ, Christ-consciousness, Truth, the White Light or whatever else you feel is for you the essence of what you believe.

I believe that these last few thoughts are among the most essential that I have to offer. The tuning and challenging process is at the heart of responsible channeling.

I have experienced, not once but many times, spontaneous channeling from new group members who have only come to their first meeting, but are very sensitive to the contacts of those who wish to channel through us. There are

people who are such naturally proficient channels that the concept of teaching them is basically laughable, except insofar as one may tidy up a rough diamond by appropriate faceting and polishing. Never have I met a person who could honestly say that channeling would be impossible, after having tried to learn for a significant period of time, two weeks intensively, or once a week for two months, say. There are many who discover that they are very uncomfortable with channeling. I have taught two disc jockeys, for instance, how to channel. One was a happy-go-lucky man, rather irresponsible, although charming and gentle as a lamb. He channeled immediately and with great facility, although I could never teach him any discipline and his channelings became repetitive enough that soon he lost interest in the whole process. He became bored with the new game, because he was not doing enough tuning to move out of his own perceptions into the carefully tuned openness necessary for impersonally transmitted information of interest to him. The other student, although in precisely the same job—morning man on a highly competitive rock and roll station—took his work in a different light. Both men were paid good salaries to be unpredictable and outrageous. However, the second student left none of his outrageousness to chance, doing hours of research and a good deal of pre-production before each show, tying it into the morning's headlines and the latest happenings of the town. Faced with the responsibility of channeling, the sober-minded DJ found himself unwilling to abandon his powers of discrimination long enough to allow another's voice to put concepts in his mind.

But the ease of that process is such that anyone who can let go of his powers of discrimination even a little bit can learn to channel. This isn't to say that everyone is going to be an equally excellent channel. Just about everyone can be taught to play chopsticks. However, the practice sessions are many and the hours are unforgiving betwixt that first rush of chopsticks happiness and a recital at Carnegie Hall. It is not easy to do concertizing or channeling well. The one who ends up doing fairly well is often the one who numbers perseverance and persistence as character traits along with sensitivity and an interest in metaphysics. Sheer practice is a tremendous teacher and the twentieth year of channeling is as informative as the first. The mental and emotional effort required to be an instrument does not slack off with time, but, if anything, becomes greater as experience accumulates. The reason for this is repetition.

Almost anything is fun the first time. I do not have to be interested, particularly, in a given subject in order thoroughly to enjoy listening to

someone speak about it. I have a healthy curiosity and like learning about almost anything. However, the idea of doing something the hundredth or thousandth time that I was marginally interested in at the outset is crushing! And even though I enjoy being an instrument, there is a certain amount of energy involved in opening one's physical and perceptual doors, freeing up the necessary time, and readying one's self to be host for yet another weekly meditation meeting—our group has been meeting since 1962, and I have been holding weekly meetings since 1974. My dedication needs to be greater now than it needed to be years ago. It is hard for me to imagine someone so very sociable by nature that, after twenty years, the mechanical aspects of holding a meditation will be the same.

It might be helpful to note that not everyone can channel right away. However, the way the creation is made seems to encourage persistence, since, when you begin to want something, that active wanting generates a kind of magnetic field which keeps bringing that which you want closer to you. What happens to many people is that although they are not progressing rapidly in learning to channel, subjectively interesting things will begin to happen that suggest that something is taking place which is noteworthy. These subjectively interesting things will not constitute proof to any other person except for yourself. There will be some sort of private language between the interesting events and the way your mind is working which will ring a bell for you, letting you know that you are in the process of coming close to what it is you seek.

There have been many examples of this in my own experience, but perhaps the most enjoyable account was that of a young man, Len, who was learning to channel in 1980. He came in complaining of the bitter cold winter weather, explaining that his ex-wife had borrowed his good down coat and not yet given it back. We sat down and began our work. He was taking intensive lessons, learning to channel. During the course of the session I channeled some information for him which seemed highly meaningful to him, having to do with the transformation of caterpillar into butterfly. He explained to me after the session that butterflies had always had a special significance to him. As I nodded my understanding, I saw, crawling towards his foot, a large light-brown woolly worm. It was a couple of months late for seeing these little harbingers of Jack Frost, and so I was surprised to see it at all, much less twenty feet into the house, crawling industriously towards one of the couches in our thirty-four-foot living room. The student sighted along the caterpillar, which had struck both of us with its continuation of

the butterfly theme, and saw his winter coat, in a little roll bundled up by the door.

Of course none of this can be proven. One or the other of us could have introduced a butterfly into the channeling, followed it with a nice caterpillar appearance, and by the same token either one of us could have received the coat at some earlier time and merely placed it there for the other to see. That none of these things occurred is only of subjective interest, and that not even to me, but only to the student.

When this sort of coincidence begins happening for you, even if you have not yet learned to channel, you will be cheered on your way, I trust, by the synchronicities of ceaseless spiritual coincidence. You will find that the more you let go in general, attempting to give up your life in impersonal service to all, feeling that there is a greater love than you can generate within yourself, and opening yourself to that love, the more you will find coincidences clustering in your life. When enough of these coincidences have occurred, you will have sufficient courage to let go. When you let go is up to you. If you take a long time to let go you are not a bad channel. If you open up right away you are not necessarily a good channel. If letting go is something you do very easily, then you probably need to work harder on tuning and challenging than you do on getting the contact. If you are having trouble getting your contact, stick with it. It just takes you longer to learn than other people. It took me two months, working every day, before I was able to deliver my first channeled message. It went as follows: "I am Hatonn. Greetings in the love and light of the Infinite Creator. I am having difficulty with this instrument." If I can channel, just about anyone can!

There are things which need to be put in place if you wish to learn to channel. Your biggest need is for a teacher. The teacher may not be that much better than you. What a teacher is, mostly, is more experienced. Those who have been working with the blending of energies between people or between spirits have battle scars after a while; their instincts are much improved from when they began; and perhaps a sense of humor has even been established where before there might have been an overly serious attitude.

The most important requirement for a teacher, in my opinion, is that the teacher be there. NEVER WORK ON CHANNELING BY YOURSELF. Try to make your mistakes in the company of fellow meditators, at least one of which is an experienced channel who feels responsible to you. It's a crowded universe, and the new channel may well not have tuning or the

challenging of spirits well learned. You do not really want to tangle with a difficult contact by yourself at first. Things can happen and have happened in the past which caused the hapless channel considerable grief. Consider the public humiliation, for instance, of any woman who announces that she has been told that she will bear the incarnation of Jesus Christ only to be noticeably un-pregnant six months later, or the rueful grin of one who makes a terrifying prediction of certain doom for a certain day, changes his circumstances to a great extent in order to prepare for this dread date and then sees it come and go without incident. These examples only offer embarrassment, which is bad enough—not nearly as bad as another possibility: being repeatedly troubled by a negative entity who, having discovered you, has no desire to stay away.

Often, teachers of meditation and channeling will have groups built up around themselves. If you do not have the luxury of a group, start talking to your friends, if you are a person with a good many like-minded cohorts. If you are a man or woman who has up until recently led a very conventional life, with interests in the usual consumer items such as food, fashions and amusements, but now are taking a great departure from convention and opening up the inner life, you may not have much luck with your friends. In that case it is often fruitful to put a notice about forming a meditation group in the nearest library, health food store, Unitarian or New Age church, or even in the newspaper. Once you have found or formed a group it is ever easier from that point on to add teachers as needed.

Everything that has been covered is part of what you need—I could say review the book again, up until this point, to make sure you have all that you need to channel. However, under the best of circumstances, with a minimum of three in a group, with an experienced channel who is motivated to teach you, with the best of intentions, you still need the peace which only meditation can bring and which only discipline can make stick in your life.

Forgive me for shying away from describing to you one of my actual training sessions. I do not want to make it easy for you to use this book in order to learn to channel by yourself. I worked as a librarian for years and love everything that record-keeping and retrieval implies about the human capacity for learning and creating new things. But it still seems to be the case that some things really shouldn't be available—the plans for a do-it-yourself atom bomb, and the instructions for precipitating spirit contact are two pieces of information I would just as soon not have readily available. If I taught you in these pages how to channel—and I could—I would, by my

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own code of honor/duty, be responsible for being available to each and every reader as a teacher thereafter. Since that is not possible, I prefer to teach only those who correspond with our group and come to a decision to embark with us on this experience of adventure and service in person.