“True but not accurate” simply means that these conclusions are true as far as our human minds can comprehend them, but they are not entirely accurate from the viewpoint of the spiritual realm. This book is about answering the most common questions people have about the afterlife—based on that evidence. I’m an investigator who draws conclusions based on an examination of the evidence using logic, reason, and pragmatism. What they often don’t realize, however, is that from the past some of these answers were invented based on outdated and erroneous beliefs (and data) that no longer make any sense. I want people to take a second look at the evidence before them and, likewise, take a second look at what they believe. Rather than continue to pass down the same outdated answers, it’s time that we all start questioning those answers and rethink them for ourselves. Let my answers in this book help you to see the bigger picture, which might include two or three opposing beliefs, so that you can draw your own conclusions.

1 Big Picture Answers that will help improve your comprehension of this book, The meaning (or purpose) of life is to have experiences. Life is about having experiences that our souls are unable to have in the spiritual realm. As souls who exist eternally in the spirit world, which is always free from fear, suffering, and death, we choose a physical life as humans to know the experience of living in a domain where mortality is imminent. When a being knows it can die, it changes everything. It creates fear and alters choices. When death is a potential occurrence, we think, say, and do things differently. We act out of survival. This is what we signed up for as souls when we chose to have a physical life. **If you can accept that life is about experiences rather than about being happy and easygoing all the time, then the answers in this book will digest easier.**

The soul is our whole self, the eternal and spiritual aspect of who we are. Since I’ve seen evidence that we experience many human lives, the soul is what is experiencing all those lifetimes. I like to explain this using the analogy of the ocean and its waves. First, there is the ocean, then from that ocean come the waves. The ocean is the soul, and the waves are the spirits. Each spirit has its own individual characteristics, but each will also have some common characteristics of its soul. It’s not as if they disappear into their souls either. **The truth is that they were never really separate from their souls in the first place,** so saying that we “rejoin” our souls is more metaphorical than literal. I don’t want you to mistakenly think that the spirit and soul are ever separate as they are not. They feel to us as separate—as humans—but even now, we are connected to our souls. When my soul chooses to experience a new life—let’s say, as Julie—it will create a new spirit of itself. The ocean creates a new wave, which is connected both to the ocean and all the other waves that came before it. If you understand that **one soul is made up of many spirits,** then it’s an easy transition to think of God as made up of many souls—all souls, to be specific.
Even though we don’t necessarily feel it as humans, we are eternally connected to God at all times. Even more accurately, we are God; that is, we are God in the same way that your arms and legs are you. When you think of God as creative intelligence, you stop thinking of God as having a fragile ego or as being vengeful, judgmental, or selective in His favorites. In fact, there’s no more His or Her at all. God is love. Moreover, those who claimed to have experienced God’s presence all described God as energy, not an entity. In fact, God to these people was so expansive and infinite that they preferred the terms ‘Source,’ ‘Universe,’ ‘Creative Intelligence,’ ‘Oneness,’ and even ‘Ultimate Love’ over the word ‘God.’

Interviews, lectures, books, and documentaries are unable to get one to a “knowing,” which is why I recommend personal experience so highly if you want to learn about the afterlife. I recognized early on in my investigation of the afterlife that I was being taken down a path through three stages. So skepticism comes from a refusal to believe. Belief comes from vicarious experience. **And knowing comes from personal experience.** What’s wonderful is that the state of knowing is available to anyone. My journey into knowing (regarding certain subjects) is nothing special; that is, it doesn’t make me exceptional or extraordinary.

**2 Questions about Death and Dying.** Dying, when I use the word, only means that our physical body dies, not our consciousness. Picture yourself as a soul in the spirit world (before you are born) getting together with your spirit guides to help preplan your trip to the physical plane (this human life). You and your guides decide that there are particular experiences you want to have, meaning you want to gain certain lessons and insights that can only be obtained by having a human life.

Many souls choose to hang around and enjoy life for a while once they’ve accomplished what they desired to experience in this lifetime. Some souls choose to remain on the physical plane in order to help other souls accomplish what they set out to experience during their lifetimes. One of the most important factors that determine how and when we die is free will. Since our spirit guides and soul self can understand all these infinite factors much better than we can, these factors are all taken into account and factored into the final determination of how and when we die. Our soul might or might not feel any benefit from going through a particular dying experience. While our own personal free will does play a large part in how we die, it is our soul that ultimately decides when to pull our spirit out of our body. For example, a soul might want to experience starving to death or dying from a particular terminal illness. While this might seem absurd from our human point of view, the spiritual view is that life is about experiences, and any specific type of death is an experience that teaches us something that is valuable to our eternal spiritual growth. **Karma is not about balance or punishment; it’s about the soul seeing the experience from both sides**—being the shooter and being shot.

The moment your spirit leaves your body, there’s no more pain, no more fear, and no more suffering in relation to your body. You have separated from your physical essence, and all the pain and suffering is instantly gone. It’s helpful to make a distinction between the word ‘dying’ and the word ‘death.’ Dying (a physical event) can be painful. Death (a spiritual event) is not. Most people who have experienced these near-death experiences admit that they felt so absolutely wonderful while out of their body that they did not want to return to it. That’s how blissful it feels to leave our bodies and exist in spiritual form. Once again, while dying can be scary for most people due to fear of the unknown, death itself is not scary. Those who have died and returned to tell us about it say that they felt nothing but love, warmth, and inner peace during their near-death experience. One near-death experiencer described it to me as a soft
velvety darkness where light radiated wherever she focused her attention. NDE researcher P. M. H. Atwater says that the tunnel experience is actually quite rare. So people who have had NDEs cannot tell us exactly what the spirit world is like for our deceased loved ones in spirit because near-death experiencers are sent back to their human bodies before they get very far.

People in spirit who have communicated through mediums and people who have communicated with spirits during their deathbed visions have described the light of the spiritual dimension as being 100 times brighter than the sun, yet it never hurts their eyes (no sunglasses necessary). We don't have physical bodies in the spirit world. We are beings of light. That is our true nature, which is why we do not carry any of our human suffering into the afterlife. You will definitely remember everything. With our transition from the physical to the spiritual comes clarity—clarity regarding our personality traits and characteristics, our choices and actions, and even how we affected other people and the world. Plus the life review process especially helps us to know who we were in our human life with a depth of insight we just don't have as human beings.

There's actually no distinction between our consciousness and our spirit. When we die and leave our bodies, we are only consciousness—the same consciousness we had while in our physical bodies, although with much greater awareness because the brain no longer filters our clarity. Deathbed visions are when loved ones in spirit visit a dying person days or hours before their death in order to welcome them back to the spirit world. It happens telepathically (by thought)—from spirit to human and human to spirit—so no words need to be spoken out loud. To visitors who are in the room when this takes place, it can seem like their dying loved one is hallucinating. Shared-deathbed vision can be quite beautiful and comforting. Our loved ones don't need our assistance when crossing over to the other side. So be gentle with yourself over the coming months and years following your loved one's death.

Since we have all lived hundreds or thousands of lives before this one, there are truckloads of people in spirit available to greet us when we return to the afterlife. Although we might not know them from this lifetime, that doesn’t mean we won’t recognize them when we return. These people in spirit were once our mothers, fathers, children, spouses, siblings, and friends in other lifetimes. The souls of all our loved ones are back home in the spiritual realm. So if a baby passes before her parents, she will be greeted by the souls of her parents upon her return home.

You will certainly be able to communicate with the living while in spirit, although the messages are subtler than the direct communication we know as humans. Aroma is a common method of communication for people in spirit. In a medium reading, people in spirit can say exactly what they want to say to the living. Sure, it’s not a perfectly clear communication as we are used to having, but at least the communication is in words, pictures, and feelings. The communication comes in sounds that the medium can hear (known as clairaudience), pictures that they can see in their mind’s eye (clairvoyance), and feelings that they can feel in their body (clairsentience). Sometimes the communication simply comes to them as a knowing (claircognizance).

3 Afterlife and Spirit World, The spirit world is actually our home base. The physical life we live here on earth is where we visit temporarily, but we always return home to the spirit world. The afterlife is a spiritual existence that actually comes before human life (as well as after it) and that death is a state of being alive in spirit.
We communicate by thought. To travel somewhere, we merely need to think of the place or the person we want to visit, and like magic, we are there. Consequently, as beings of light, we have no need for food, shelter, clothing, or sleep. But we get to create whatever reality we wish, if we have any desire for it. It’s basically like having a welcome-home party. Then you’ll process the life that you just lived with the assistance of advanced spiritual beings. This is called a life review, and this is where you’ll take away the lessons and growth that you gained from your physical life. While all this is happening, you’ll also catch up on what’s happening with your surviving loved ones back on the physical plane. You’ll be fully aware of all that’s going on with them.

As odd as it might seem, many people in spirit have communicated this idea that schools exist in the afterlife. We also have the equivalent of jobs in the spirit world, although we don’t work for money as we don’t need money in spirit. Some people in spirit help the newly crossed over, while others help with specific circumstances, such as sudden deaths, suicides, mass murders, or child deaths. They are more like callings that provide us with fulfillment, understanding, and spiritual growth. We might choose to serve as someone’s spirit guide. We might act as a counselor, helping people in spirit process their last life. We might even coordinate coincidences for people on the physical plane to help guide them toward the experiences they preplanned for their life.

More and more afterlife experts agree that the only hell that exists is within our own physical mind. It’s not a place, realm, or dimension; it’s a state of human mental anguish. Fear is hell. Guilt is hell. Regret is hell. Shame is hell. And these are emotions that we can feel in the afterlife too, but only in response to our lives here on the earth plane. If we’ve learned anything from near-death experiences, it is that we can create our own reality in the spiritual dimension. All she needed to do was change her thought, and it changed her environment. Consequently, my investigation has led me to conclude that people who experienced hellish near-death experiences did so because they believed in hell and that they would go there when they died. In fact, there are people whose near-death experience began as if they were in hell until they realized that they could change their environment by changing their thoughts. If you believe in hell and expect that you’re going there, it’s likely that you might experience what you expect, at least briefly. This doesn’t mean that hell exists. What it means is that we can be, do, and have anything we can imagine in the spirit world. Once we’re in spirit, we know exactly how badly we’ve hurt people, and we can feel what we did to them from their perspective. That’s a heavy burden to carry, but it’s how we learn compassion as spiritual beings. Even though we might not learn it while we’re alive as humans, we can’t escape it once we’ve crossed over to the other side. Luckily, as mentioned, there are people in spirit who have made it their job to help the recently deceased deal with these sorts of negative emotions. So even if you choose to call this experience of emotional transformation hell, it’s temporary and beneficial—all part of our spiritual growth. No one is punished in the spirit world. At best, we’re tougher on ourselves than anyone in spirit will ever be on us.

The life review process gives us omniscient observation to know what the people we’ve affected were thinking and feeling when we interacted with them. There are no spiritual beings sitting in judgment during our life review. Because we are beings of love, we are hard enough on ourselves when we are reminded how we hurt another, whether physically or emotionally. However, there are people in spirit who have taken on the job of helping us. What happens to people in the afterlife if their religious beliefs are wrong? On the surface, nothing happens except that you might be surprised when you get there that your beliefs about the spirit world
were so mistaken. But it will require very little to overcome your erroneous beliefs, just a little more than a quick shake of your ethereal head. You will arrive in the hereafter pleased that they were wrong. Once we cross over and feel the immense love, peace, and joy of the spiritual world, even atheists are happy to discover the error of their beliefs. What I can tell you is that every religion that promotes love over all else has got that part right, which includes peace, forgiveness, and compassion. And those that promote fear, judgment, separation, or hate have veered off course.

But suffice it to say that our loved ones know everything we are doing. All they have to do is think of us to instantly download all our most recent happenings, more like movies on demand. People in spirit are not limited by distance or time, so your loved ones are fully able to be with you in the United States and your sibling in England at the exact same moment. Spirits often say in readings of spirit communication that they are closer to us in spirit than they could ever be in the physical world. All this means is that spirits know more about our lives, our thoughts, and our feelings than is humanly possible, mostly because humans don't read minds and feel emotions telepathically as effectively as spirits. I also know they won’t miss anything that happens in my life after they’ve passed. So live your life knowing that your loved ones in spirit don’t miss any of your accomplishments, be that a wedding, birth, graduation, anniversary, birthday, award, honor, or any other event you might celebrate during your life. All your deceased loved ones will greet you when you die, especially those you love and trust the most. So there is no one who you want to see who won’t be there. Plus they already know who you don’t want at your party because they know you better than you can imagine—they’ve been reading your thoughts your entire life. Your spirit guides (those spirits who guided you throughout your life) will also be there to greet you. Although you might not realize it now, you and your guides have a very special relationship. Before you left the spirit world to be born, you personally chose your guides, trusting them to take the utmost care of you from the spiritual realm. So your spirit guides are like dear friends who you literally trust with your life. Our transition back home to the spirit world is designed to make us feel safe and joyful.

The more compassionate, and more loving we are, the higher our vibration. This is one of the benefits of experiencing a physical life as a human being. Our growth as humans speeds up our vibration, which benefits us as spiritual beings. People who have had life-between-lives regressions say we can only go to levels that match our vibrational frequency or lower. So people in spirit that you know who are vibrating at a higher frequency must come down to your level because you can’t go to theirs. Think of this more as a law of physics than a rule. We gravitate toward one another because we’re vibrating at a similar frequency, which usually coincides with the fact that we have a lot in common. And every life and every relationship is sacred and meaningful. So this will be true for you and your spouse. It is a relationship that will stay with you both forever in memory. And memory in spirit has a much deeper meaning than memory to us as humans. There are no hidden secrets between spirits since we can read one another’s minds. Therefore, there is no need for best-friend pacts or marriage contracts. Relationships are completely organic and authentic. My wife, Melissa, is more spiritually advanced than me, which means that she vibrates at a higher frequency. She is my greatest teacher in this life by example alone, and I am a better human being due to her insightful advice and words of wisdom. In the spiritual realm, we grow by going to school. We grow by teaching others. We grow by guiding spirits having a human life. We grow by assisting people who are crossing back over into the spirit world after having a human life. The opportunities for growth in the spiritual dimension are endless. Apparently, a human life is a lot like boot camp, where we learn and grow a lot in a short amount of time.
4 Spirits, Angels and Ghosts, We are spirits by nature, so our spiritual essence is eternal, while our physical human bodies are temporary. When our spirit leaves our body, our bodies cease to survive, but our consciousness continues. As a result of my own afterlife investigation, I too consider the words ‘spirit’ and ‘ghost’ to have the same meaning. From my practical viewpoint, our soul is our eternal spiritual essence that always remains in the spirit world.

It is what some people call our higher self because it guides us from the spiritual realm holding the wisdom of possibly thousands of lives. Our spirit, on the other hand, is that part of our soul that inhabits our human body in order to experience a physical life. Once it’s contained within the human body, it temporarily forgets all the wisdom of the soul in order to experience a physical life with a fresh, clean slate. The soul, however, with its immeasurable wisdom, is forever connected to the spirit. Since our free will gives us the final say regarding our choices in life, our spirit’s subconscious connection to our soul is thus trumped by our ego, which is where the greatest human challenge ultimately lies. The ego wants to believe it is separate when, in fact, we are always connected to the soul and the Universe. Think of your spirit as that part of your soul that you know as you, the individual that is living with your personality, your name, and your memories from this lifetime. And your soul, then, is every personality, every name, and every memory of every lifetime you have ever lived. So the you that you know as you is only a portion of your soul, but it is still at one with it, just as your soul is only a portion of the ultimate oneness of the Universe, yet your soul is still at one with it. Yes, each soul is able to have multiple spirits (of itself), so a soul can have multiple life experiences—even simultaneously.

And when I say life experiences, I mean all sorts of living experiences in many various life forms, including life forms on other planets, in other galaxies, and even within other dimensions of which we are not aware. Yes, pets (and all animals) have souls (and spirits) just like people, and they too go to the afterlife.

A spirit guide is the spirit of a soul who has chosen to assist the spirit of another soul during the latter’s human life. I also believe that we are guided by our soul in addition to our spirit guides, which is why we often refer to our soul as our higher self. It is possible that you have a deceased loved one who has become your spirit guide in one way or another, but it’s unlikely that they are one of your main guides. The human and spirit guide relationship is a sacred, special, and vitally important role that is usually given to a highly advanced spirit (after all, this is no job for an amateur). And since most highly advanced spirits no longer reincarnate, it is unlikely that they are one of your deceased loved ones. Since our spirit guides can read our minds, we are always communicating with them because we’re always thinking. If you want to request something from them, tell them what you want, although follow that statement with “this or something better.” Here are the most common ways that our spirit guides send us messages and influence us to go in the right direction. Intuition. Second, our spirit guides communicate to us and guide us through coincidence. Some call this divine coincidence or synchronicity. Third, our spirit guides communicate with us and guide us through messengers. The fourth most common method spirit guides use to communicate with us and guide us is through events—things that happen to us or around us. An ascended master is a spiritually advanced being who has completed the process of ascension and is filled with such wisdom and awareness that they no longer need to incarnate. As a result of their spiritual enlightenment, they now place themselves in the service of spirits who are having human experiences.

We can choose to look like whatever we want as spirits. However, when spirits show themselves to a medium who is giving a reading to their loved ones, most people in spirit will show themselves in a way that their family will best identify them. This is also true if a loved one
by Bob Olson

in spirit visits you in a dream. Interestingly enough, while there are many characteristics of our personality that are solely associated with our physical bodies and human egos, there are just as many that carry over from one lifetime to another and into the spirit world. You might call this our soul’s signature personality. The life we are each living now, including our personalities and every memory we’ll ever have, becomes part of our soul’s makeup.

One of the first things people notice is how incredibly liberating it feels to be outside of the physical body. If you remember, as a child, being trapped inside a heavy Halloween costume and mask for a day, you get the gist of what it feels like for a spirit to be in a physical body. Next, the feeling of weightlessness is frequently mentioned as one of the first things we notice and enjoy. The ability to float around unencumbered, controlling where we want to go with our mind, is apparently extraordinary. We are light. There are no limits. Simply think of your grandmother in spirit, and you’re with her. Think of your husband on earth, and you’re with him. Think of a Hawaiian beach, and you’re sitting on it. Think of the planet Mars, and you’re exploring it. We have no limits as spiritual beings. We have no worries, no stress, and no fears as spiritual beings. The sense of inner peace is awesome. We are no longer a slave to our regrets of the past or our fears about the future. Present-moment awareness is built into the spiritual experience. We feel more deeply connected to it, and to one another. Because we feel loved, safe, and connected, and we are living so peacefully in the present moment of the afterlife, we feel nothing but joy. In fact, we are drunk with joy. We work. We learn. We grow. And we deal with the errors of our most recent life.

We communicate through our thoughts. There is no need for talking. There is no miscommunication, no misinterpretation of our words, and no misunderstandings. **Communication is pure. And since other people in spirit can read our thoughts, there is only honesty, truth, and authenticity.** People in spirit cannot tell a lie. Being that there is no distance in the spirit world, two spirits can communicate regardless of what they are doing or where they are. The only difference the levels make is that we must wait until we have increased our spiritual awareness and wisdom, and therefore our vibrational frequency, before we can travel to higher levels on our own. This is just one of the many motivations for ongoing spiritual growth in the spirit world. But communication between levels is never really an issue. There is really no hierarchy or social structure that makes one soul better than another soul just because she is of a higher vibrational level. As mentioned earlier in this book, talk with your loved ones in spirit whenever you think of them. In many cases, the thought of them will likely pop into your mind if they’ve dropped by to see you. Our loved ones in spirit live in the present moment, so they certainly don’t want us to live in the past. I wish more people realized that their opportunity to work things out with people doesn’t end with someone’s passing.

**5 The Wants and Needs of Spirits.** They do not gain or benefit in any way by your mourning, and they are not flattered by it. So do not prolong your suffering simply because you think your loved one in spirit prefers it. Jealousy is a trait of the human ego, not spirit. It feeds off imaginary thoughts of separation, competition, and fear. Therefore, jealousy cannot and does not exist in the afterlife because there is no separation, competition, or fear in the light.

What we mistakenly believe here as human beings is that love is in limited supply. So no, they do not seek justice, and they do not care if their crime is solved unless it will somehow benefit the people they love on the earth plane. From a spirit-world perspective, the only purpose in having crimes solved is to reduce the suffering of those still living. Many times, a crime is left unsolved because it serves the best interest of the people living. What I mean by this is that it
fulfills those people’s pre-birth plans to have this experience. Why? Because not knowing if your son took his own life or was murdered, for example, is a very challenging human experience. Yet this alone is an experience that a soul might choose to know, so the mystery might go unsolved forever, or the mystery might eventually be solved—depending upon the soul’s desires.

Vengeance is a human concept that does not exist in the afterlife. It’s of a lower energy, much like jealousy, hatred, and fear. Such negative thoughts are impossible for spirits living in the light of the Universe. Thus, no person in spirit would ever desire it.

Once people leave their bodies and return home to the spirit world, they have no attachment to their bodies. Whether you bury their body or cremate it is of no significance. What’s important to your loved one in spirit is that you do what gives you the most peace and comfort. Of course, it is their spirit who wants to be remembered, not their soul. Their soul is detached, but their spirit is still that personality we remember, only much more enlightened. And because they are beings of light and love, they are not equipped to hold the lower energies of anger, blame, and contempt. They forgive us because it is not in their nature to not forgive.

6 Spirit Communication, Being on the physical plane, we vibrate at a lower, denser frequency, which results in our inability to see or hear spirits (until we learn how to access and develop our psychic and mediumistic abilities). We must raise our vibration (usually through meditation). Most teachers of spirit communication will tell you that hearing spirits is easier than seeing them.

Keep in mind that most guidance is going to come from your spirit guides or Universal Intelligence, not your deceased loved ones. You bet your loved ones can visit you in your dreams. This is called a dream visitation. While sleeping, our minds are in the unconscious (subconscious) state, which is our connection to the spiritual realm. It is in this middle space between the physical realm and the spiritual realm that those in spirit can meet with us. The last thing I’ll say about after-death communications is that the signals we get from our loved ones in spirit are always positive and meant to be joyful. It is actually quite common that children who interact with so-called imaginary friends are, in fact, playing with people in spirit. And these spirits can be anyone from a deceased relative (Grandpa, for instance) to the child’s spirit guide or the neighbors’ boy who passed and was visiting his parents next door.

7 Readings with Psychic Mediums, The primary purpose of psychics, in my opinion, is to confirm to us what our own intuitions are telling us in order that we learn to trust our inner wisdom. The primary purpose of mediums, in my opinion, is to provide evidence that our deceased loved ones are in spirit and are at peace in the afterlife. Most people tend to be better at one or the other, but that’s the difference between psychics and mediums. If you want information that comes from energy (guidance, direction, predictions), go to a psychic. If you’re seeking spirit communication, go to a medium. It’s that simple. Channelers (sometimes referred to as channels) are basically mediums with a specialty. They focus on communicating with spirit guides, ascended masters, and angels. Intuitives, empaths, and sensitives are basically all the same, which is that they are people with a highly developed psychic ability. Such as an empath feels what other people are feeling. Divination readers use tools to give psychic readings and tell your future. The most common divination tool in the United States is the tarot deck. Other tools include tea leaves, runes, I Ching coins, crystals, crystal balls, scrying mirrors, pendulums, spirit boards or talking boards (Ouija board), and dowsing rods.
A legitimate medium is one who has a genuine ability to communicate with spirits. People sometimes refer to this ability as a gift. I’ve come to realize that we all have some degree of this ability that can be improved with training and experience. However, some people tend to be more naturally gifted than others, just like some people are more naturally gifted at singing, painting, or athletics. You should never give money to any psychic or medium who promises to remove a curse or spell for a fee. There is never any curse or spell, and this is the most common scam in this field. A spirit artist is a medium who draws portraits of the spirits they see. Mediums cannot summon whatever spirit they choose, so they have no control over who shows up for a reading. But 95 percent of the time, at least, the loved one with whom you hope to communicate will come through. Not that we have any choice, but we have to trust that spirit knows what’s most imperative. Sometimes you just need to trust in your own ability to recognize the signs that are all around you. Some people call this faith. After all, a spirit knows no other state of being than happy, healthy, and at peace. I don’t believe you have to wait for a reading for your departed loved one’s sake, but you might want to wait for a reading for your sake. You want to be sure that you are emotionally stable enough to be discerning with the messages that you get. The purpose of evidential mediumship is to help you overcome any skepticism you might have about spirit communication. The purpose of readings with mediums is to communicate with our deceased loved ones, which helps comfort and heal our grief. When I get a prediction from a loved one in spirit during a reading with a medium, I don’t give it a lot of weight. Instead, I consider it while matching it with what my own intuition is telling me. I’m much more likely to trust my own intuition and the signs I get from the Universe, such as divine messengers or divine coincidences. Some of the more common messages from people in spirit during a reading with a psychic medium are as follows:

1. “I’m okay.”
2. “My suffering ended the second I died.”
3. “I am closer to you now than I ever was before.”
4. “I’m watching over you.”
5. “I was greeted by loved ones who passed before me when I returned home to the spirit world.”
6. “I am living in peace, joy, and love in the spirit world.”
7. “I love you.”

First, we are “skeptics.” Then we become “believers.” And in the end, if we have witnessed enough evidence to overcome a lifetime of limiting beliefs and learned skepticism, we become “knowers”—we know that spirit communication is real and that we survive death.

8 Suicide and Murder, The spirit extends beyond its whole self (the soul) to experience a human life—a single human life. Once that life is over, the spirit does not reincarnate to experience other lifetimes. Instead, the soul creates a new spirit of itself for each individual lifetime that it experiences. Therefore, technically, our soul reincarnates, but our spirit does not. Yet because the spirit and the soul are one, the spirit feels as if it too is experiencing another life, just as each wave knows what the other waves are experiencing due to their oneness and connection with the ocean. And this is why there is so much confusion around the difference between spirit and soul—because they are distinct, but they are the same. Thus, when a person’s body dies, its spirit leaves the physical body to travel back into the spirit world and rejoin its soul. Yet the spirit’s remerging with the soul does not eliminate the spirit; rather, the spirit always remains in the spirit world as one personality (among many) of its soul. So I am an
Olson, but I am also Bob. The Olsons (comparing this to my soul) are experiencing many lives: one as me, one as my father, one as my mother, one as my sister, and so on. But I (comparing this to my spirit) am always Bob. Even when Bob returns home to the Olsons, Bob does not disappear. The same is true when your spirit returns to your soul. Your spirit is part of something greater than itself (your soul), but its individuality always remains.

To the soul, the act of suicide is one of many experiences in a human’s lifetime. The soul doesn’t judge it, regret it, or approve of it. The soul can only accept it from a place of love. It becomes one more experience from which the soul will learn and grow because the soul learns from both sad and tragic experiences as much as happy and triumphant experiences. The spirit, on the other hand, characterizes a more human perspective to its physical lifetime, so the spirit views the act of taking its life with a level of self-reproach. In this way, the spirit will identify with a level of sorrow and remorse around its final human act. So spirits carry this weight of their suicide immediately following their passing, but only for a purpose. Since the act of suicide has many consequences, the spirit wants to know the experience from every angle. This is how they most evolve from the experience. If there were nothing to gain, the spirit would have the same objective acceptance of suicide as the soul. But the spirit-world experience is a continuation of the physical experience. Keep in mind that a spirit’s reasons for self-reproach are not a requirement and only exist for the spirit to extract the greatest benefits from this previous human lifetime, which include everything that a spirit can learn from the act of suicide. And when the spirit grows from an experience, so does the soul. Over the course of our many human lives, the probability is that each one of us has been a murderer, a rapist, and a thief as well as a humanitarian, a guardian, and a philanthropist. And it’s quite possible, if not probable, that you took your own life during one of your many lifetimes. That means your soul, your higher self, was all of those things in other lifetimes, yet you are still who you are today—even in this lifetime.

Our existence in the spirit world is not all gloom and regret for our choices and actions here as humans. There is always an aspect of love, joy, peace, and safety for every person in spirit. But feeling how their actions affected others on the physical plane is a big part of the life review experience. While it is absolutely true that taking another person’s life is never acceptable from a human perspective—and there will always be consequences felt by the spirit of the person who takes a life—these consequences have everything to do with the murderer’s spirit judging and punishing himself and nothing to do with him being judged or punished by some higher spiritual being. Because humans have free will, spirits enter a physical body, and therefore a human life, only with the potential to be a murderer. I use the word ‘potential’ because our human free will makes most pre-birth plans a probability rather than a certainty. And it is our free will that makes human life so intriguing to our souls because it ultimately determines what side of every potential we’ll choose. Free will is the one freedom humans have that makes life so unpredictable. The spirit undergoes an emotional life review by feeling the consequences of its actions (the murder) as well as feeling the ripple effect from all the other humans affected. This includes the range of emotions felt by people who grieved the victim’s passing, people who witnessed the murder, people who became fearful just by learning about the murder, people who were inspired to copy the crime as well as that copycat’s murder victims, and others. Few of us know how many people we affect with our actions, positively or negatively, but we find out during the life review. Whatever suffering a spirit endures by knowing how its act of murder affected others is not so much a punishment than it is a furtherance of the learning and evolvement from that lifetime. While it might be a difficult process to endure, it is how our spirit fully benefits from its human lifetime. And this is as true for murder as it is for suicide or any
human action that we might consider wrong, immoral, or bad. From this experience, the soul learns about hate, love, fear, bravery, grief, loss, forgiveness, vengeance, compassion, and so much more.

Not to picture that our souls are uncaring, heartless beings, our souls know nothing but love. They are the embodiment of compassion. The reason our souls choose to have these experiences is because it’s necessary to experience all sides of it in order to fully know it. In cases of a death by accident, the experience is a human one only, meaning the driver will only struggle with that event while in physical form. But once in spiritual form, his torment of responsibility will end because the driver’s spirit will understand that it was not his fault. Some soldiers kill because they were ordered to kill, others kill out of fear of being killed, and still others kill innocent people (women and children, for instance) because they are overwhelmed and stressed and are thinking irrationally from the pressures and difficulties of war. Each reason for killing will hold a different energy and have a different sense of accountability and, therefore, will be a different experience for that spirit. Killing in war is a human experience like no other.

9 Past Lives and Reincarnation, Source creates souls, and souls create spirits, and it is spirits that inhabit physical bodies when experiencing human lifetimes. In fact, the soul creates a new spirit to experience every new lifetime. Because NDEs teach us that there is no time (or distance) in the spiritual realm, this means there is no past or future in the spirit world—everything is happening at the same time. Consequently, there really are no past lives, only “other” lives. Just keep in mind that this is “true but not accurate” from a spiritual-realm perspective. The phrase ‘other lives’ is more accurate than ‘past lives.’

A past-life regression is a technique of hypnosis used to recall memories of previous lifetimes. It’s completely safe, you are always in control (you can open your eyes and stop the regression at any time), and you are fully aware of what’s going on around you during the regression. With a past-life regression, you can actually feel the body of the personality you were in the past life as well as that person’s emotions. You can see the land around you. You can smell the dirt, grass, or farmland. You can taste the food. And you know what that person was thinking. You aren’t smelling with your nose or tasting with your tongue, however; all of these senses are taking place in your mind—just like any other memory. The information begins popping into my mind like something I had forgotten but now remember. We really have little control over what lifetime we’ll visit during a past-life regression. The best we can do is set an intention, and sometimes our intention is fulfilled, but only if that’s in our best interest. We tend to go to the lifetime that is most significant for what we need to learn at the moment we get the regression.

Yes, we do have pre-birth agreements with other souls before we are born into this life. And it is our souls that make those choices and agreements. But our souls are not alone in these decisions. Our spirit guides and elders assist us. When we think of the endless possible experiences that exist, we can appreciate the immense forethought and responsibility that goes into pre-birth planning. In the case of abortion, human free will trumps the soul’s plan, this situation has some slightly different complexities. The soul intending to experience life through that baby is, therefore, completely accepting of the mother’s choice to end the pregnancy. The abortion experience will teach the mother’s soul about this unique physical experience, including the mother’s experiences around loss, choices, beliefs, and other people’s judgments, to name just a few of the questions and concerns that might occupy her mind. This experience taught me that the souls of babies are not permanently decided until the child is born. In this example, the soul of the athletic boy and the soul of the intellectual boy decided to...
change the order of their births during the pregnancy. I think it’s more of a bunch of close friends who make up what’s called our soul group. And these are the souls with whom we share many lifetimes, although in varying relationships. So what if you experienced a traumatic past life? If you kept a reasonable detachment during the experience, you simply take home the big-picture lesson or lessons learned from that lifetime.

10 Near Death Experiences, This is not to say that our loved ones in spirit do not have love and compassion for us; they most certainly do, and their love has an intensity that is far beyond our human comprehension. But what we learn from near-death experiences in this way is that those in spirit do not worry about us. They know we are all going to be just fine. While 10 - 15 percent of adults who have had near-death experiences have suggested they experienced some version of what might be interpreted as hell, the evidence of near-death experiences indicates two important factors: (1) that the details of what we experience in the NDE are interpreted by our own points of reference (what we believe as human beings) and (2) that the initial experiences we have of the afterlife during the NDE are in direct relation to our expectations of it. So if you remember that we can be, do, and have anything we want in spirit, then you understand how easily we might create a hell-like experience when we cross over to the other side during the NDE, especially if that’s what we are expecting. Our beliefs alone might make it so. Still, the hell these people experience is not what most people think of as hell (a place of eternal damnation). Instead, it is a hell-like environment of their own creation, which they can change at any moment simply by changing their thoughts (although most people who have this experience don’t know they can do this).

What’s most interesting about children’s near-death experiences is that children have fewer expectations and less established beliefs around the afterlife, so their reports about their NDEs are not tainted by these expectations and beliefs. These children just tell us what they saw or experienced rather than their interpretation of what they thought those things were or meant.

We can only guess who makes the decision that a near-death experiencer must return to his or her physical body and life. Perhaps it’s Source or the person’s soul or maybe even the person’s spirit guides. It could be all three who make this choice. Who knows how many were given the choice and decided to remain in the spirit world? We can’t possibly know that statistic. But for those who did make this choice to return to their life, it was usually due to some purpose, especially considering that most people want to stay in the spirit world. Most near-death experiencers—even those whose lives were not dramatically changed by their experience—consider their NDE to be one of the most enlightening, loving, profound, and memorable experiences of their lifetime. Most say that they no longer fear death since the event, which is much more life altering than it might seem. Most near-death experiencers feel a sense of purpose here, even if they don’t know exactly what that purpose is.

I can honestly say that my experiences researching this field have made me a better human being. I’m more loving and more compassionate, and I feel a greater sense of inner peace and purpose than I ever did when I never gave the afterlife a second thought. And I attribute this transformation to the knowing I gained about life and death from my research. What I learned about life during my investigation of the afterlife was less intellectual and more experiential. Rather than memorize information, I instead became aware of an internal wisdom that I never before knew existed. And before I knew it, I discovered that my work inadvertently had taught me how to live a fuller life with greater love, joy, and inner peace regardless of whatever drama or chaos might be happening around me. I’m not sure at what point it
happened, but when I came to know that the purpose of life is to have experiences—which can include negative experiences—and I shifted my paradigm of God from entity to energy, I stopped looking at my challenges in life as signs that I was unlucky or was being ignored or punished by God for some reason. Now I saw myself as a spiritual being on a human adventure where everything has purpose, even when bad things happen, because every moment is an experience. Because of my fascination with death and what follows it, I now understand why Source and our souls allow such tragic events to happen. And I also understand the spiritual depth of these people who keep smiling in spite of their suffering. And they remind us through their freewill choices that we can be joyful and loving in the face of challenges too. I don’t know how I would respond to every tragic possibility in life, but I know that my investigation of the afterlife has given me a greater chance for making the best of what happens rather than falling into victimhood. Even in my daily life, I live with less fear and greater inner peace when faced with challenges. My understanding of why bad things are allowed to happen to innocent people—children included—helps me to focus my compassion on their suffering rather than get paralyzed by blame, fear, and judgment. Don’t take my word for any of this. Don’t take anyone’s word for it. Become your own afterlife investigator, gather your own evidence, and then draw your own conclusions. If this book inspires you to do that alone, my efforts in writing it have been successful. You have my very best wishes for an adventurous journey! With heartfelt love,
Bob Olson