

## **Supplement I - The Cayce Life Readings and Finding Your Purpose**

It was the summer of 1929, the twilight of the Roaring Twenties in America. Although few suspected it, an extraordinary economic calamity loomed just a few months ahead: the Great Depression.

But that summer was still full of hope and promise for any energetic, bright young person. In mid-August a man of thirty-two ventured from his home in Massachusetts to Virginia Beach, Virginia. He traveled to meet a remarkable person with a reputation for helping people with their most perplexing problems. The man had heard about Edgar Cayce from a friend and had learned how Cayce could put himself into a sleep-like trance state in which great wisdom flowed. The man took the long journey hoping to get answers from Cayce for some tough questions about what to do with his life.

As a man of thirty-two, he was at an age where most of his friends were already settled into a career and a traditional lifestyle. His companions from college years were married; many of them now had children too. They all seemed fairly happy - or at least established in a steady routine.

But this man was different. Maybe he was restless. Or maybe he was unwilling to get fixed in a way of life that fulfilled everyone else's expectations but didn't satisfy his. He was employed as a teacher of accounting, but he sensed that there were other, greater purposes for his life.

He had written ahead to Cayce requesting a psychic reading and had been given an appointment for August 12. The friend who recommended Cayce had suggested he try to be present for the reading. Most people didn't go to such trouble and were satisfied to receive a typed transcript of the entranced Cayce's words. But this man made the trip.

He arrived at the Cayce home located just a few hundred yards from the Atlantic Ocean. He was greeted by Edgar and his wife, Gertrude, and Cayce's secretary, Gladys, who lived there as part of the family. After a short time to get acquainted, they all went back into Edgar Cayce's study, where his psychic readings were given. Two striking features of the room caught his eye. The first was a large bulletin board covered with photographs, faces of people Cayce loved and had helped through his readings. The second was a couch where Cayce would recline and put himself into the altered state of consciousness required for a psychic reading.

That afternoon disappointed the man. Cayce was unable to give a reading for him. Later he was told this did not happen often, but there were occasions when Cayce was not able to reach the state from which his information came. They would try again. The next day would not be convenient, but the reading was rescheduled for August 14.

Now the man had two extra days to consider Edgar Cayce, and what had happened so far. The more he thought, the more his initial disappointment turned to gratefulness and respect. He felt relief to see firsthand that Edgar Cayce was not perfect. Clearly he was not dealing with a god, but an ordinary man who did extraordinary things. And like any ordinary man, there were some days when he wasn't up to his full potential. Furthermore, this experience helped the man see the integrity of Cayce. Rather than "fake" a reading, he had been humble enough to admit failure and ask for another chance.

They tried again on the afternoon of the 14th, and this time Cayce was successful. A so-called "life reading" was given, a type of psychic discourse that was still relatively novel for Cayce. In fact, for the first twenty-two years of his psychic work - from 1901 to 1923—the only kind of reading he knew he could give was for health problems. These physical readings were the source of his notoriety, and in the summer of 1929 there was a small but thriving hospital in Virginia Beach that treated patients on the basis of their health readings. The medical staff carefully followed the clairvoyant diagnoses and holistic treatment regimens prescribed in the readings.

However, the life reading given for this man did not concern his physical health. Instead it offered him wise spiritual counseling about his purpose in life. Like an insightful, loving parent, Cayce's psychic source helped him to recognize some of his most important talents and strengths: an aptitude for mathematical calculations, strong desires to study and learn, and a deep interest in people. On the other hand, certain weaknesses were described: a tendency to rarely show affection and a certain way of acting that other people often mistook for fatalism.

The reading also described several past lifetimes in which some of these talents and weaknesses had been developed. Reincarnation may have been a foreign notion to the man, but it was presented in the reading without apology. He was told of a lifetime during the Crusades and of another in the time of Jesus.

And then, perhaps the most interesting and useful, he was given suggestions about occupations in which he was likely to achieve success: architecture, aeronautics, and astronomy. Two nontraditional career possibilities were also offered: numerology and astrology.

However, the most important thing given to the young man that summer afternoon by Cayce's life reading was a clear statement of his soul's purpose. For just a moment, seeing beyond the specifics of certain job possibilities, the

reading described what this man, this soul, was truly *gifted* to do in life. It called him to remember his authentic vocation: to help and guide others to see the spiritual meaning in numbers. The reading described how mathematics and numbers are one way in which universal laws and spiritual truths can be expressed. It invited the man to a lifelong adventure to benefit himself and others by fully making use of this innate gift. It might be done through a career using the mathematical and geometric precision required of an architect or aeronautical engineer. Or, the life mission of this soul might be lived through a job in astronomy where the mathematical orderliness of the universe is discovered. The reading also prompted him to fulfill part of his purpose in life through an activity like numerology or astrology. He was even encouraged to become the astrologer for Edgar Cayce's own organization.

For thirty minutes this man sat in Edgar Cayce's study and listened to an amazing description of his life and its highest purposes. In just half an hour his life was changed.

He visited the Cayce Hospital and spent some time alone with Edgar Cayce before leaving Virginia Beach and returning home to Massachusetts. This unusual man with the mysterious psychic powers was not at all aloof to the people he offered to help. What a contrast: after tapping the depths of universal wisdom and soul memory, he took the young man out fishing! Two weeks later, Cayce received this letter of appreciation:

*"Please send me half a dozen or so of each of the booklets published by your Association, so that I may use them among my friends with whom I have talked regarding your work. I look back with genuine pleasure on my trip to Virginia Beach and know that the friendships that resulted will always be with me.*

*"I am working out a plan of study, in fact have already started the study of astronomy and astrology, as suggested in my life reading. I am tremendously interested in the work that the Association is doing and know that its unselfish motive and ideals will bear fruit.*

*"Does my fishing record still stand? If anyone catches a larger fish I'll know it is one of those I lost off my hook.*

*"I send my best wishes to you and your family and ask that you remember me to them and to my friends at the Hospital."*

The story of this man is only one of hundreds. Between 1923 and 1944, Cayce gave more than nineteen hundred life readings. Why was this type of reading so popular? Was it mere curiosity? Did people simply like to hear about themselves? Was it the fascination of reincarnation? No doubt all of these factors played a role.

But there is a deeper reason why the life readings were so important and so frequently requested. Something in all of us is hungry for a sense of meaning.

As human beings we require some purpose for being. For thousands of years that innate impulse has generated the great philosophies of life and the religions of the world. People have tried to define the purpose of life on a cosmic scale and to answer the most fundamental riddles of human existence - questions like: How did we get here? Why does there seem to be injustice in the world? Do we survive physical death? Cayce's life readings offered answers to universal questions like these, but they did something more. They spoke to the individual about his or her own life. The life readings showed men and women how profound meaning and purpose can be discovered in the midst of mundane affairs. Cayce went so far as to suggest that it is within the ordinary aspects of life that something extraordinary can happen. In other words, making life great does not necessarily mean, "doing great things" in the eyes of mainstream society. For example, something remarkable stands out about those few individuals who received praise in their life readings from Cayce's psychic source - praise that stated they were on track with their real purposes in life. Most often they were plain, common people who were quietly fulfilling their potential for service and creativity.

What sort of person came to Edgar Cayce asking for help in finding the purpose of life? Were they all similar to the thirty-two year-old man who visited Virginia Beach in 1929? In fact, they came from all walks of life, but they probably had in common one or more of these three characteristics:

**1. Pain.** This hurt is not the sort that stimulated a request for a physical health reading. Instead it is a woundedness that comes from deep within the soul - pain that comes from being unfulfilled and from knowing that things are not quite right. It is a fact of human nature that we usually don't change unless we are hurting. Pain prods us toward growth. To see and understand this does not glorify pain or wish it upon ourselves. But it reminds us of the significance of this kind of hurting. It is not something to be ignored or covered up. Rather, it is a longing for deeper meaning to our lives.

**2. Dissatisfaction.** Even when many things in life are going well, it is still possible to feel discontent. But this is not the petty, spoiled displeasure that always wants more of what the world has to offer. That sort of complaining attitude isn't likely to start someone on the search for a spiritual purpose. Instead, it is possible to experience a paradox: to feel grateful for all the good in one's life, but at the same time to feel dissatisfied, knowing that there must be something more. That "something more" is not a better paying job, or greater prestige at work, or more influence in the community. The "something more" is a new sense of meaning.

**3. Restlessness with being comfortable.** This characteristic may sound strange. After all, isn't comfort the thing we all look for? Isn't comfort the very ideal we strive for in a stressful world? Perhaps not, because after a while mere comfort becomes boring. Something in the human spirit eventually comes forth,

ready for adventure and the next challenge. Something in all of us wants to wrestle with tensions. That means grappling and struggling, not with the all-too-familiar hassles of daily living, but instead with this creative tension which resides in the soul: who we are now compared to who we have the potential to be.

Most likely the people who sought life readings from Cayce exhibited one or more of those characteristics. And it is likely that anyone who picks up this book also exhibits those characteristics. Therefore we might ask ourselves: "What inner quality is revealed by someone searching for the deepest purposes of life?" The answer probably is pain within the soul, dissatisfaction with the traditional values of the world, or restlessness with the familiar, comfortable situation.

If you experience one or more of these characteristics, how can Edgar Cayce help you? He has been dead for many decades, so you cannot get a life reading from him today. Other psychics offer life readings, but are they accurate and reliable? Whether or not you choose to experiment with a modern-day psychic, the Cayce readings can play a key role in your search for your purpose of life. Even though the Cayce life readings contain information given to other people, they can be of great assistance to you. How is that possible?

An analogy can be drawn with the physical health readings Cayce gave. For example, forty different people received psychic information from him about their psoriasis. All of them lived in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. How could someone with psoriasis, living fifty years or more later, derive any help from those readings? Surprisingly, many have. A careful study shows some of the information was quite individual and no doubt relevant only to the person given the reading. However, when these readings are compared, we see recurrent themes. Cayce described distinct patterns concerning the origins of psoriasis and recommended similar treatments. In recent years, people have worked with these repeated themes. Many have obtained relief from this skin condition.

The same principle can be used with the life readings. Regular patterns can be found in the way Cayce counseled people to find their highest purpose in life. Consistency is found in this material in both its theory concerning the meaning of life and the techniques given for finding one's own specific purpose. Even though a seeker today cannot get a personalized Cayce life reading, it is still possible to work with the Cayce approach. And just as there are many reports of success from people who apply recurrent patterns in the health readings, so too are there many reports from people who have found their own purpose in life from following the Cayce life readings.

This course describes how to use a strategy found again and again in those life readings. It draws upon the best insights and methods from information Cayce gave to hundreds of people much like you. This course

presents those insights and methods along with other spiritual teachings, and shows you how to find your own purpose and fulfill your destiny in life. By applying these ideas you will have a practical program for bringing greater meaning into your life. It is an adventure in self-discovery and a journey to become the person you were born to be. If you will follow the steps described in this book, you will create for yourself something every bit as valuable as a personalized Cayce life reading!

## **HINDRANCES TO FINDING YOUR PURPOSE**

This exciting journey to fulfillment is not without obstacles and difficulties. If you know what these points of resistance are likely to be, then you are better equipped to deal with them when they arise.

What are some of those impediments? Many are related to the values and methods of our society. For all the talk of personal freedom and individuality, we do not live in a culture that truly honors the uniqueness of each soul. The problem begins early in life. Childhood education is based largely on "norms" or baseline averages to which the child is pushed to conform.

Whether you remember it or not, chances are much of your unique way of learning and creating was covered up early in life and replaced by the way teachers wanted for you. Not that it was done with any evil intention, but a barrier was possibly created within you anyway. No doubt you learned considerable amounts of useful information in school. The point here is not that school is wrong. But for many of us - and likely, most of us - a certain portion of our own, individual flair for living was stifled by our childhood education.

Like all barriers and obstacles, any misdirected methods of childhood education can be overcome. It is always possible to reclaim the ingredients of your soul that are needed in order to fulfill your purpose in life. Some of us just have to work a little harder than others to recover what has been lost or forgotten.

A second hurdle we face by living in modern society is mechanization. Admittedly we all benefit from modern technology, which gives us things that we would find it hard to live without. And successfully living our spiritual purpose hardly requires returning to the life-style of the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, subtle and detrimental effects within the human soul are produced by the process of mechanization. What happens with each new breakthrough yielding yet another laborsaving machine? Quite easily we can lose touch with our human capacity to get things done. Weakened even more is a healthy and indispensable aspect of the soul: the human will.

The will is that elusive and uniquely human gift that allows us to be creative. Furthermore, it empowers us to get things done in life - to go beyond

just dreaming about projects and high purposes. It is the will that permits us to express what we are called to do.

We should look carefully at what happens to our will forces in an age of mechanization - of televisions that diminish the need for our own creative imagination, of hi-fi systems that trivialize the need to make music for ourselves, and of pocket calculators that allow us to forget how to multiply and divide numbers.

Of course neither Cayce nor the other sources for this book say that we should abandon the usefulness of machines. Be assured that you can work with the practical steps outlined in this book without feeling obligated to give away your TV, sell off your stereo, or throw away your calculator. But also, be aware of just how important it is to have a healthy will that has not slipped into laziness because of laborsaving machines. In order to be successful in living your highest purpose, you will need to be creative, imaginative, and active in the world. Make sure that the products of a mechanized age are your servants and not the other-way around!

Closely related to the problem of mechanization is a third impediment to finding and living your purpose in life. Not everyone faces this hindrance, but many people are in jobs that are highly specialized and filled with mind-numbing routine. Machines don't object to repetitive tasks; that's what they are best at. But people aren't meant to be mechanical. Something in us all wants to be creative and not stuck in a rut. This holds true for every part of living, but it is especially encountered as a problem in our occupations.

If you find yourself in a job that is routinized and boring, this book may or may not lead you to leave that job for another occupation. For practical reasons it could be necessary to stay in that job for a while. But there is one thing you can be especially careful about: try to avoid letting the sense of automatic, habitual living from your workplace spill over into the other parts of your life. Keep a fresh, creative spontaneity alive in your relationships, your home life, and your free time alone.

There is a fourth likely obstacle in the journey to becoming the person you were born to be. It is one of the hallmarks of the modern age. Almost everyone is plagued with a feeling of constant busyness. Is your life cluttered with far too much to do? Do you frequently feel the strain of too many demands? It may come in the form of friends for whom you never seem to have time. Or, a boss who wants results far quicker than they can be accomplished with quality. Or, you may feel this constant busyness as little tugs at your conscience, reminding you that too many things are being left unfinished: a disorganized closet or garage, a Sunday newspaper left unread, a letter that remains unanswered for weeks.

What is the solution? Something in you may say the answer couldn't depend on further commitments. Your lists are already long enough, and they hardly have room for other purposes in life." This sense of busyness can easily keep you from looking for a deeper meaning to your existence. You may feel too pressed for time and too fatigued from it all.

And yet the only way out of this common bottleneck is to set new priorities. Only by getting a new vision of the meaning of your life can you free yourself from the tyranny of your lists and never-ending obligations. The sole method for freeing up your time and creative energy is to put your whole life in a new perspective—to see things with a different set of criteria.

What are you likely to find when you start on this kind of adventure? What insights are bound to come when you start discovering your unique purpose in life? Much of what clutters and fills up your day has little or nothing to do with your real purpose in life. What a revelation!

### **HOPEFUL SIGNS**

A close look at all these likely obstacles could be discouraging. Imposing forces from modern society make it hard to find and live your highest purpose in life. Finding and living what you were born to do is certainly not an easy task in today's world. Fortunately some hopeful signs are emerging. Within our society definite influences are beginning to play a supportive role.

One is a growing attitude that work can be joyful. Just as we look forward to the weekend - "thank goodness it's Friday" - we can also feel good about getting back to work on Monday. Several recent books show how it's possible to develop this point of view. They have similar titles: *The Joy of Working*, *Take This Job and Love It*, *Do What You Love and the Money Will Follow*, and *Working with Passion*.

These books maintain it is within our power to experience success and fulfillment in what we do for a living. A change of attitudes may be required, but each of us can look forward to a real sense of joy in our work life. The place to begin is probably the attitude we hold toward ourselves. We need to recognize and claim the things that we are good at. We must see that we really are talented people, ready to be creative and useful in the world. With enhanced self-esteem, we can make the decisions necessary to direct ourselves toward joy-filled careers.

A second hopeful sign is a change in the roles played by women. Professional opportunities are becoming more available to women. Some medical school classes are now approximately half female. Many of the top-notch law schools are graduating classes made up of at least one-third women. Changes can even be observed in what has been one of the most limited professional areas for women: commercial aviation. Travelers have begun

to see women as pilots for the major airlines. Certainly there is room for even more constructive change. But in spite of discrimination that still exists in some occupations, we cannot help but be impressed with the differences between today's world and the period between 1923 and 1944 when Cayce was giving life readings.

What do all these signs of change in the job market mean? Undeniably it is a step toward greater flexibility for many of the women of our society. There are more and more choices for finding and living our purposes in life. The options aren't confined to merely the home and child rearing. And at the same time, new possibilities are opening up for men. Although for centuries sex discrimination in the workplace has punished mainly women, the new flexibility of our times can have a positive impact for men as well. For example, it has become much more acceptable for men to find purpose and fulfillment in childcare.

This second hopeful sign suggests that we are becoming more and more aware of a fact of life the Cayce readings saw as fundamental: each of us is a soul that is essentially without gender. In other words, each of us has taken on either a male or female body, and that body has strong influences on our life experiences. But something can have a greater impact, for men and women. A far stronger influence is the talented, creative nature that lives in each one of us - something that is ready to accomplish a great purpose.

This leads us to consider a third hopeful sign of the times: today's increased flexibility of life-style, which goes beyond just the workplace. A generation ago - and certainly during the years Cayce was giving advice to people in life readings - strong stereotypes held sway. Certain life-styles were acceptable and others clearly were not. In the modern world we are much freer to strike out in unconventional directions. Of course not everyone's purpose in life is to be an innovator or a rebel. However, the flexibility that is accessible can be valuable in many ways. We are at liberty to experiment with many different religious traditions. It is easier to make a drastic career change than it was decades ago. It is simpler to move to a new geographic location.

All three of these hopeful signs are basic trends in our modern Western society: joyful work, the breakdown of gender barriers, and life-style flexibility. Some people experience these three trends more directly than others. Plenty of work remains to be done for greater improvements. Our society needs to do an even better job of providing equal opportunities for everyone to fulfill their authentic purposes in life. But we can take heart if we look back. The Cayce readings were optimistic and hopeful in their counsel to individuals living fifty and sixty years ago. Even then, in spite of bigger obstacles than we may face today, they were consistently encouraging. The readings always promised people that it was within their reach to accomplish their true calling in life.

## HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This course is like a manual that accompanies a do-it-yourself project. The reading material and CD lessons will give you the background information you need to move towards identifying your purpose in life. But unlike a do-it-yourself project, the end result is not something predetermined. There are no detailed pictures of the finished product because everyone's will look a little bit different. Some features are likely to be the same for us all, but the real fun in living is to find the unique way that your own life can unfold.

This course is designed for the same kind of person who came to Edgar Cayce asking for a life reading: a seeker of truth; someone curious about the meaning of life, but also ready to act on new insights once that curiosity is satisfied; a person ready to make life into an adventure, to take some risks and to make some changes.

In addition, it is for people who feel like something is missing. As mentioned earlier, this feeling may take the form of pain, dissatisfaction, or restlessness. But mixed with one or more of those three characteristics is a feeling of hope and an intuitive knowledge that life is basically full of great meaning and purpose.

You are probably this kind of person. You wouldn't be exploring this subject unless you felt a need to get a clearer picture of your purpose in life. You are apt to be inquisitive and open-minded, ready to look at things in a new way. And you are likely to believe that you have talents and abilities that haven't yet been channeled into their full productivity.

This course is set out for you as a venture in self-discovery. It offers practical steps that will lead to greater joy and give deeper meaning to all that you do.

The most basic purpose and promise of this course is that you can make a difference in the world. As you go through each of the lessons and complete that worksheets step-by-step, you will come to know yourself in a new way. You will awaken to who you really are. You will begin "to remember" what it is you are here in the earth to do. But the exact method by which you will contribute to the world around you is likely to alter from time to time. Even though you have a distinct calling or mission, the manner in which it is expressed may modify. You will be growing and developing, and certainly the world will be changing.

Don't think of this course as something you read and apply just once. The exercises and experiences presented here are designed to be repeated, perhaps once a year. Each time you go through them, you are likely to get important new insights.

Just as people were radically changed by an Edgar Cayce life reading, using the ideas in this study guide will transform your thoughts, feelings, and ways of acting. It takes courage to embark on that kind of adventure, but it's exciting. Also, the time and energy you invest can provide the greatest of rewards: living your soul purpose - finding fulfillment from doing what you were born to do.

*Let each individual know that it came into life with a purpose from God. Let each individual know that it is as a harp upon which the breath of God would play. While all may not be as prophets or as preachers, neither may all stand in the halls of learning as directors of men, now that you each have your part to do. (281-60)*