**Joyce Hawkes: A Healer**

Biophysicist Joyce Whiteley Hawkes was doing cell research for the National Marine Fisheries Service and teaching in the Department of Zoology at the University of Washington when she had her first extraordinary experience.

“As a scientist,” she writes, “I was dedicated to the pursuit of truth though scientific means. Religion and God were not part of my beliefs. Imagine my surprise one day when a decorative leaded-glass window fell off a mantel onto my head, initiating a classic near-death experience. I had never heard about the near-death experience, let alone been someone to whom out of-the-ordinary or unexplainable things happened. I remember the oak-framed leaded-glass falling toward me and the crushing moment of impact.

“Suddenly reality shifted, and I was no longer confined to my crumpled body collapsed on the floor. Instead, I was speeding down a long, dark tunnel, drawn to an incredible light in the distance. Without conscious control over the situation, a force outside myself stopped me at the entrance to the light. There, my mother and grandmother, long departed from this earth, greeted me. Overwhelmed with love and recognition, and amazed at their health and happiness, I was drawn past them over a threshold and into a whole other world.

“No people or beings appeared,” she recalls. “Rolling hills, the greenest grass, and colorful flowers glowed with light, seemingly from within each blade and petal. Colors appeared almost alive in their vividness. Utter clarity of image and hue surrounded me in all directions. Immersed in light and tranquility, I soaked up these dazzling images and feelings, content to dwell forever in that place. Then the experience changed.

“I was shifted instantaneously to standing in front of a Great Light. The overwhelming love and peace I had felt before this moment was only a minuscule taste of what emanated from the Light. The form was somewhat taller than a person, with the shape of a person but without distinct features. Everything and nothing seemed to exist simultaneously in this luminosity. I felt utterly blissful, alert, and full of love and joy. If this was God who greeted me, there was no judgment issued. I was totally loved, surrounded by peace and safety, and healed of everything that had ever caused disease or discomfort. The ecstasy of the moment suspended and transcended all time and space.

Hawkes was transformed by her extraordinary experience. “At first, my scientist’s brain discounted the experience as a hallucination, merely the consequence of a sound crack on the head and loss of consciousness. But I soon discovered, it was the beginning of another form of consciousness that would prove to be more valuable than any career, status, or fringe benefits.”

She "joined a class given by a local healer. The meditations in class helped me establish a deep meditative practice at home, which led to visionary encounters with angels, animals, and other galaxies.” In a cave on Mt Shasta where candles flickered around a statute of the Pieta, she heard a woman’s voice say, “You are called to heal.”

“It felt like the near-death experience all over again. Love, peace, and awe surged through me. How could I contain this emotion, this energy, this blessing? My life changed forever in those few moments. The loving authority in the voice left no room for doubt or delayed action. When I returned to Seattle and work the next day, I began my resignation process to leave the laboratory.

“The world of healing did not come naturally. I could not ‘think’ my way to solutions as I had with science. I meditated regularly, sought divine guidance, and received it every step of the way, usually no sooner than the instant it was needed. My path evolved daily in the healing room and took quantum leaps during time spent with indigenous healers in Southeast Asia. Now, after twenty years of learning how to reach deeply into the cells of the body with healing energy, I am eager to share the wonder of weaving together the spirit world and physical healing.

**Listen for your calling and respond. Make possible the life that seems impossible by embracing with compassion a wider living-world.**

Joyce Whiteley Hawkes tells her story in *Cell-Level Healing: The Bridge from Soul to Cell* (Atria and Beyond Words, 2011).