



An Interview with Pamela Rae Heath, M.D., Psy.D.

by Michael E. Tymn

As she sees herself, Dr. Pamela Rae Heath is a bridge between psychics and parapsychologists. "I try to help parapsychologist understand how to design better studies, which control situations without making their research participants feel like objects instead of people," she explains. "And I try to help psychics understand their own gifts better, and how to control their abilities."

Co-author of "Suicide: What Really Happens in the Afterlife?" with Jon Klimo, Ph.D., Heath, who lives in the San Francisco Bay Area, is a semi-retired anesthesiologist who is more focused these days on parapsychology and the paranormal than medicine.

After obtaining a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1976, Heath received an M.D. from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston in 1980. She then practiced medicine at different locations, including Abilene, Orlando, and Miami. After experiencing psychic abilities of her own during the early 1990s, she returned to graduate school and received a Psy.D. from Rosebridge Graduate School of Integrative Psychology (now the American School of Professional Psychology, Argosy University, San Francisco Bay Area Campus) in 1999.

Her dissertation was a phenomenological study of the experience of performing psychokinesis. She has since published "The PK Zone: A Cross-Cultural Review of Psychokinesis," and other articles on this subject in parapsychology journals. She is a certified Master Hypnotherapist and a member of several paranormal research organizations.

I recently put some questions by e-mail to Dr. Heath:

Would you mind explaining the nature of those spontaneous psychic experiences you had during the early 1990s?

"Looking back on it, I realize I started meditating (without knowing what I was doing) and having visions in third grade. But I didn't think of myself

as psychic until many years later. I was a doctor in my 30s when several things started happening at the same time. I began knowing what kind of cases I was going to do as emergencies on call that night. I freaked people out by answering (in specific terms) their questions before they had been said out loud. And I began to wake up just before the telephone rang on call, never waking up when it didn't ring except for one time when I later learned they'd been dialing my number when the patient had died in the ER. It got where I couldn't deny any more that something odd was happening. So, I went to a psychic who had a reputation for being the real deal. He told me I was psychic. It really freaked me out. It was a month before I could even say the word psychic. After that, I started to experiment to see what I could do."



Dr. Pamela Rae Heath

Generally, what was your attitude about such psychic experiences and paranormal phenomena before you had those experiences?

"I was a big science fiction fan from third grade on. So, before I had my psychic experiences as an adult, I believed that psychic abilities were possible, but it never occurred to me that I might have them."

What prompted you to collaborate with Dr. Klimo on a book about suicide?

"I met Dr. Klimo in graduate school. He often spoke about an experience that he had of gathering information for a woman who was interested in committing suicide. The thought was that if she knew what she was getting into, that she wouldn't do it. I felt that it was the kind of information that could save lives, and told him he should write a book about it. I kept saying it, but had not kept his original pages and didn't want to start over from scratch. I finally realized that it wasn't going to get written unless I did it. But I had gotten the idea from Jon, and have great respect for him as the world's expert of channeling, so I dragged him in on the project with me."

What are your conclusions relative to suicide? Can
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suicide ever be justified?

"I think that there can be many causes of suicide – it can be an accident, a desperate cry for help, feeling like you don't belong or have no other options to name just a few. The spirit realm sees taking the life of a healthy body as selfish and shortsighted. In the case of assisted suicide, they do not see it as murder, but still encourage people to think it through and make sure those around them are comfortable with this choice before proceeding. They tell us that, hard as it may be to accept, there are sometimes purposes served by suffering. However, relatively few assisted suicides that were channeled had regrets."

Has your experience as an anesthesiologist given you any insight into the nature of consciousness?

"I actually probably have gotten more insight into levels of consciousness from my hypnosis training than I ever did as an anesthesiologist. None of my patients ever came back to tell me of out-of-body experiences during the time they were under."

Do you have any particular focus or project in the area of psychic phenomena going on at this time?

"My areas of expertise are mind-matter interaction (formerly known as psychokinesis) and experiential research. I've also done quite a few ghost investigations over the years with Loyd Auerbach and the Office of Paranormal Investigations. I just finished rewriting and updating *The PK Zone*, and even gave it a new title: *Mind-Matter Interaction: The Stories, Research, and Theory*. I'm also finishing up a new manuscript, which will again be with Jon Klimo, which will be about the stages in the afterlife. It is looking like it will be available from North Atlantic Books in Spring 2010. The book might have been finished earlier, but I got sidetracked by the death of both of my parents earlier this year. I made sure both of them moved on to the Light, but it made the subject too painful to work on for several months."

How do your peers in the medical community react to your interest in psychic phenomena?

"I've actually been surprised at how well many of my medical colleagues have accepted my other work as a psychic and a parapsychologist. Several asked for tarot reads, and were really interested in ghost investigations. Of course, it helps a lot that I'm in California! This wouldn't go over as well in many other parts of the country. However, a lot of being accepted has to do with the terminology you use. Doctors are very body-oriented, so if you talk about "gut instinct" they tend to accept it, where

they wouldn't accept things like "intuition" or "psychic."

Do you see the medical community as being any more open or accepting relative to psychic phenomena now than when you were in medical school or an intern?

"It's been a very long time since I was a medical student in Texas, so things have changed in a lot more ways than simply more openness to alternative healing! However, I would say that how well psychic phenomena are accepted by the medical community really depends on where you live. In California or Oregon, I suspect you'd see a lot of openness. If you're in the South, you can probably safely talk about the prayer healing studies. In the Midwest and much of the East Coast, I'd doubt you'd see much acceptance. But I could be wrong."

What are some of the misconceptions out there concerning psychics?

"One is that some people are psychic while others aren't. Everyone is psychic, even skeptics. They may use their abilities to block other people from succeeding at psychic tasks or to overly fail psychic tests by scoring worse than is possible through random chance, but this is a normal ability that everyone has. Another misconception is that psychic abilities always start in childhood. Untrue. Psychic talent often starts in a person's 30s and can continue to grow in power at least until his or her 50s. However, the most important thing I try to get across to folks is that psychic abilities are need based. What you can or cannot do depends on what is important to your unconscious mind. So, if you can do one thing and not another, it doesn't tell you anything about your own limits. All it tells you is what's important to your unconscious mind. Should what's important to you unconscious mind change, then so can your abilities."

Have you had any experience with séances?

"About a month or so after I got told that I wasn't going crazy, that I really was psychic, I started taking anomalous healing classes from the Reverend Mary Smiley at Casadaga, Florida, one a few Spiritualist camps in the United States. Mary charged me only \$4 a lesson, as she really wasn't in it for the money. However, as one of her students, I got invited to some of the private séances they held for their own entertainment. I was the only non-professional medium there, and never got charged a cent. Generally about 6-8 of us would meet, all bringing covered dishes so we could eat when we finished."

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I had a great time! The most dramatic experiences I had were of chasing a heavy wood table from the center of the room all the way to the edge of it and back again (all hands on top of it, with everyone in short sleeves for a Florida summer). It took six of us to carry that wood table into the living room, and I knew from the circumstances that it hadn't been faked! That table was really booking, too! It was moving fast. The other dramatic thing I remember was watching the profile of the person next to me literally change shape when she channeled. I think back on those experiences as one of the highlights of my life. I love physical phenomena!"

It often seems to me that parapsychology is going backward, sort of reinventing the wheel discovered by psychic researchers a hundred years ago and turning out a square wheel. Moreover, they have moved away from survival research and into more mundane fields of ESP. It is as if they are trying to rebuild the spokes on the wheel and ruining the wheel itself. How do you see this?

"As a full member of the Parapsychological Association, I know a lot of the folks working in the field today, at least in the US and Europe. You have to understand that from the time parapsychology was first formed as a scientific form of endeavor, survival research has been one of the cornerstones of the field (the other two are ESP and Mind-Matter Interaction research). I would say most of those in the field are cautious believers, though they disagree about what form in which survival takes place. Most would agree that energy can neither be created nor destroyed. If the soul represents a form of energy (which is suspected but unproven), then it would make sense that some kind of survival of that energy would occur. Where you get into arguments, is whether there is any survival of personality or sense of individuality. Some people think the soul re-merges with a kind of collective consciousness. Perhaps the strongest evidence, and one that has swayed many parapsychologists to become believers in survival, is that of Ian Stevenson's reincarnation research. It's very persuasive stuff. Add to that instrumental transcommunication research, Gary Schwartz's work testing mediums, forensic past life regression, near-death experiences, and you start to see a consistent pattern suggestive of not just survival of the soul, but some kind of survival of personality."

But hasn't parapsychology reached a point of diminishing returns? What is the point of doing further work in telepathy when the ganzfeld experiments

are about as good as one could hope for?

"I think there is ALWAYS reason to gather evidence of ANY phenomenon – whether ESP or otherwise. When I'm gathering information, I don't worry about what that information is going to say. I want the evidence to reveal its own truth to me. I let it tell me what's going on, rather than worry about proving a point. That's actually what makes me a good experiential researcher. I never worry about proof. Proof simply doesn't matter to me. I want to see what is. And that's also my philosophy for writing books. I start by gathering as much data as possible, and then let it show me the natural pattern that falls into place. I think of it as being like putting together an extremely complex jigsaw puzzle, where I don't know the frame shape or what the final image will be. There's a lot of uncertainty. But there's also the excitement of knowing that if I can discover enough pieces, I'll be able to see how they fit together, and a pattern will emerge. To be honest, that's why I enjoy writing so much. I figure things out as I organize the material for a book and see how it all falls into place."

Since you are working on a book about the stages of the afterlife, I assume that you believe that consciousness survives physical death.

"You have to understand that I was psychic before I trained as a parapsychologist. I'd seen physical phenomena, spontaneously remembered past lives, and talked to spirits. Although I don't advertise my talent, I have mediumship abilities. So, I have never doubted that there is (at least temporarily) some survival of personality."

What are the stages of the afterlife as you see them?

"Let me add my caveats. I'm still fine tuning my understanding of things, and it needs to be recognized that the stages to the afterlife vary in length from one soul to the next and can sometimes occur out of order or even simultaneously. However, the main elements appear to be: 1) recognizing they are dead; 2) separating from the body; 3) being greeted by spirit helpers; 4) moving through levels; 5) reunion; 6) rest and recovery; 7) life-review and self-judgment; 8) spiritual work; and 9) reincarnation. There also appear to be an optional stage in there of visits to the living (which can include going to your own funeral). The upcoming book will also talk about afterlife adjustment problems and how these souls can be helped both by others in spirit and those in the physical plane."

Visit Dr. Heath's web site at <http://www.pamelaheath.com/>