



EXPLORING PAST
LIFE CONNECTIONS

A Book Excerpt from
No Passport Required
By Matthew Joyce

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Have you ever wondered how your past lives may be impacting this lifetime?

Many times in life we can pinpoint exactly when an issue or problem began. Other times the origin may elude us, but we still perceive a pattern repeated in the decisions, events and circumstances of our lives. More often than not, self-reflection and inner work is sufficient to alter those patterns and make positive changes. But once in a while, those issues and patterns seem to be ones that we've brought with us into this life. Getting at those issues requires something more.

This chapter excerpt comes from a nonfiction book that I'm writing about my spiritual explorations in realms beyond physical reality. It describes a past life visitation that I conducted several years ago to explore some resistance that I'd been experiencing regarding sharing the stories of my spiritual adventures and starting teaching. The excerpt picks up in mid-story and thus assumes that the reader is already familiar with material presented earlier.

Since you are coming in the middle, you should know that I had previously discovered a pattern of fear and resistance to being a spiritual teacher not only in my current life, but in a number of other lifetimes as well. I'd moved past this resistance in many of the cases that I'd discovered, but not all of them. So I set out to discover the common threads between the various incarnations in an effort to change the pattern as it was being expressed in this lifetime. The very fact that you are reading this is evidence that my efforts to overcome my fears have been in some measure successful.

I hope you enjoy what you read and I welcome your comments and feedback.

Many Blessings,

Matthew

Matthew Joyce

Boulder, Colorado, USA

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Exploring Past Life Connections

I began to recall events, people and feelings from that lifetime as I recall events from my childhood in this lifetime. They were vague snippets at first but they were enough for me to go on. So I set about revisiting that life and exploring the issues I'd experienced in it.

To do this I settled into my favorite meditation chair and relaxed my mind. Then I sent my awareness to a mental state in which time doesn't exist. And using that state as a springboard, I then projected my awareness into my lifetime in China during the 1500's.

Entering that lifetime was like walking into a waking dream. I found myself standing on a gravel-strewn dirt path amidst a small garden of flowers and vegetables. Ahead of me a grey-haired Chinese man sat in the warmth of the sun on a wooden step in front of a small house made of stones and earth. Despite his years, he appeared straight-backed and lean with a taut body that looked like a gnarled and weather-worn tree that refused to bend with age.

Though his eyes were closed and he didn't see me, I recognized him immediately. He was me. I knew it as surely as I know what my reflection looks like in the mirror.

With this recognition a portion of my awareness burst forth from within him. Suddenly I was no longer only looking at him. I was also aware of actually being him from within his body. In other words, like in a dream, I adopted more than one point of view at the same time. I became both the observer and the participant. (But to keep the storytelling clear, I'm going to refer to my perspective as the Chinese man from the third person point of view, even though I actually experienced myself as being in both bodies.)

He was feeling drowsy in the late afternoon sun. He'd been drinking tea and watching the bees pollinate the vegetable flowers. His mind was now relaxed and wandering.

I stepped forward and scuffed my feet on the gravel to announce my presence. He looked up and offered me a half-smile. As he'd had lots of visions in his lifetime, he wasn't startled or surprised to see me.

I stood in the sun and felt it warming my back while the bees buzzed and flitted about the flowers beside my ankles. Now that I was here I wondered what to say. As I adjusted to the oddity of speaking to myself in a different form, my mind raced for a way to establish some rapport. I thought briefly about using the technique I'd used when

I'd first entered my lifetime as Bernhard, but I decided against it. Instead I decided to simply introduce myself and talk about what we had in common.

"I hope I haven't disturbed you," I began.

"Not at all," he said, barely moving his lips to speak the words.

"I'm Matthew. A future life of yours. I was wondering if we might talk for a while."

He smiled at this, clearly appreciating the opportunity. He had done many astral explorations in his lifetime and had interacted with previous incarnations before, but he'd never considered exploring future lifetimes, let alone expected one to literally show up on his doorstep.

"I am Chen Li. It is an honor to meet you." He bowed his head toward me, but didn't stand.

"It's an honor to meet you as well," I said, taking a few steps toward him in order to have a more personal conversation. "You'll be pleased to know that I am once again happily married to your wife and that your child is once again our daughter."

His eyes grew wide and he leaned toward me to close the distance even further. "Are they well?" he asked.

"Oh yes. We've been together for 19 years and we're as much in love now as we were when we first met."

"Ours was an acquired love," he admitted. "But we grew to care for one another deeply. And I knew our union would endure beyond this lifetime." He paused and his brow wrinkled. "And my daughter?"

"She's a strong and vibrant girl who enjoys life. She especially loves music and animals, and she's quite psychic."

"Ah, that is good," he said, relaxing again. "But if they are well, then what brings you here?"

"As you can probably tell by me standing here, I'm a spiritual explorer like you. I'm also a teacher, but I'm having some problems when it comes to explaining spiritual things to others," I said. "I've got a hunch you've had that issue too."

He nodded knowingly but didn't say anything. So I went on. "I worry how other people will respond to my words. I know I can't control their reactions. But I get caught up in worrying about them anyway. I worry if they'll believe me or call me crazy or lash out at me since my ideas are different from theirs."

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Again he nodded slowly. "I know of what you speak. But for me it has not been a fear of disbelief or even anger. For me it has been indifference. There was so much I wanted to share, but those I told it to would not listen. They are looking for more in their lives and yet they reject assistance when it is offered."

"Yes. That's it," I said, appreciating the different perspective on the problem.

But his delight at seeing me had turned to depression. My appearance in his garden reminded him of his failure to share his experiences as widely as he had hoped. It was a gut wrenching agony for him. But like the gnawing pangs of hunger, after a while he had grown accustomed to the ache as he did to the cold each winter. It was simply there and not much could be done about it. The choices were made. The lifetime had been lived. Through loss and bitterness and pain his regrets had been gradually transmuted into resignation. At this point in his life he looked to simple pleasures like tea and sun and bees to fill his day. It was far from the culmination of his dreams, but it was the reality of his world.

I knew something needed to be done to help both of us. Chen Li's resignation had left our collective soul with an energy imbalance waiting to be corrected. I knew we needed to go back into his life and explore the root of the problem.

"Maybe we can both find some healing," I said. "Can we go back to the point in your life where the pain started?"

"If you lead the way."

"Actually, you'll need to lead since it's your memories. You think of the time and I'll follow you back to it."

He nodded and closed his eyes. Then he started a rhythmic breathing pattern that he used to alter his consciousness. I stood patiently in the garden beside him for a minute or two and then a new scene burst into my awareness.

He was sitting in a tea house with stone benches and wooden tables. About the room hung a thin haze of smoke that drifted slowly from a fire in the corner and eventually wafted out an open doorway. Around the table with him sat half a dozen men in their early 30's. These were his closest friends in the world, but the tension between them was untenable.

I stood to one side, unnoticed or unseen as he looked from face to face around the table. I watched as he turned toward the window to avoid their gaze, and I knew he was searching for the courage to say the fateful words he'd been dreading for days.

Chen Li's resignation left our collective soul with an energy imbalance waiting to be corrected. We needed to go back into his life and explore the root of the problem.

He swallowed hard and took a breath. Then he turned back to them and in halting words said, "I must break the circle. I must quit the brotherhood."

Stunned silence was the only reply from his friends.

He fidgeted awkwardly knowing it would take a moment for the import of his words to reach them. How could it not? His decision would shatter a world they had known since they were boys. A brotherhood formed when a traveling holy man had taught this close-knit band of friends the secrets to altering their consciousness through breathing, meditation, sleep deprivation, celibacy, and prayer. It was a fellowship founded on exploring and sharing the great spiritual mysteries of the Light with anyone who would listen.

It was truly an amazing gift from their revered teacher. But with that gift had come enormous responsibility. For upon his departure he bound them together with a sacred oath. "Keep these practices as you've learned them. Keep this brotherhood as you've formed it. As long as you stay true to these you shall know and spread the truth."

So they had followed his charge with a reverent orthodoxy, adhering unflinchingly to their practices and speaking in towns and on farms and on the roadways, sharing their spiritual experiences and seeking converts to their way of spiritual practice. But with few people willing to listen and fewer converts still, they grew demoralized. And now after more than 20 years the circle was failing. Their vows to keep the circle were the only thing keeping them together. Everyone knew it but no one dared to say anything, let alone do something about it.

Everyone's spirits were low, but none had taken things harder than Chen Li. In fact, he felt so disconsolate that he contemplated suicide. It was the only way to honorably break his vows to his teacher and to his band of friends. If he killed himself the circle would be broken and the others would be free. He'd spoken aloud of his desire to go into the Light so his friends knew his mental state. So did his father. But only his father found a way to save his life.

His father knew that Chen Li's sense of duty to his family was even greater than his duty to his friends. Thus it was the means for saving his life. To do this, his father arranged his marriage to a friend's daughter. Only when the marriage contract was sealed did he tell Chen Li of his obligation to marry.

The news came as an abrupt shock. If he didn't honor the marriage contract he would dishonor his father and his family. But to do so would force him to break his vows to his friends and teacher—without the easy escape of death.

Suicide was no longer the easy way out. He pondered the decision for days, meditating and praying and seeking guidance. In the end, he

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knew he must place his family honor above all else, including his sacred bond of spiritual brotherhood. And this is what he'd come to explain to his closest friends.

Still his friends sat in stunned silence. They looked at him and then at one another. To deny that their circle was breaking was folly. Everyone had known that for some time. But now it was before them. The truth laid bare by the one amongst them who was once the most fervent of all.

"I must honor my family and marry her," Chen Li whispered into the stillness.

Still they said nothing.

In his anguish he could not read their faces, but that did not stop his heart from aching as he looked upon his friends. Watching him, I felt my own gut twisting as he waited while they came to terms with his decision and its implications.

The ache was almost unbearable. He was abandoning them and their sacred mission. The shame cut to the core of his being. Unable to hold back his tears any longer, he rose from the table, nodded his head in a small deferential bow, and strode from the tea house. Reactions and repercussions would wait for later. He needed to be alone.

I felt every minute of this experience as if I had lived it in the present moment. The emotional torment was agonizing. To get anything done I needed to pull back to an emotionally safe distance. So with a flash of light we returned to the sun-filled garden.

As before, Chen Li sat on the step and I stood in front of him on the path. For a long moment neither of us said anything. For him, the torment of reliving the moment was painfully fresh. I stood silently because I couldn't think of anything meaningful to say. To say "how painful for you" or something similarly obvious would have been as crass as saying "bummer" to a double amputee. There was nothing to say and yet something had to be done.

So I started the soul retrieval process. "Why don't we leave this place?" I suggested. "Come with me to a place beyond pain and separateness. Join me and let's return to the Source from which we both spring."

He smiled the same half-smile that he'd given me when I first arrived. Then he stood without a word. He might have been turning to go inside, but I knew better. His eyes told me he felt delighted to leave his pain behind. So I held out my hand toward his.

When his fingers grasped mine the touch was electric—almost literally. Bolts of energy raced between us as we stood there in his garden.

So I started the soul retrieval process. "Why don't we leave this place?" I suggested. "Come with me to a place beyond pain and separateness. Join me and let's return to the Source from which we both spring."

"Are you ready?" I asked.

He gazed briefly about the garden, taking in the scene one last time before returning his eyes to mine. "I am ready," he said.

I used the charged energy to raise the frequency of my being. Brilliant white light radiated from within me. The energy passed into him as well and soon the details of our bodies were lost in a blur of light. Around us as the garden faded from sight.

For a minute or so we glowed like a single orb of white light in a vast and black void. Then above us, a light far brighter than our own appeared. "We're almost home," I said as we rose toward our Higher Self.

"I know."

Since I knew we'd soon be engulfed in the light and that our separateness would dissolve into unity, I took the opportunity for one last word. "I promise you we'll resolve those issues in my lifetime."

"And I'll lend you my wisdom and support in doing so."

Those exchanges made, we dissolved into the Light and all sense of separateness between us disappeared. Later when I emerged from that Light, I understood the source of pain and fear that had been holding me back. I also felt his strength within me as I began to move forward with my life.

* * *

A FAVOR RETURNED

Sometime later I took the opportunity to have a follow up conversation with Chen Li. Below is his some of his advice to me.

"Your love of astral travel and things spiritual has spanned many lifetimes, but in mine we mastered the skills to be able to do so at will. Mine was the first lifetime in which it was possible to consciously return to Source in waking life, rather than needing to do so during sleep. I learned many techniques for modifying my consciousness which you are drawing upon in this lifetime, even though you think that you learned them at the Monroe Institute or on your own. I have been supplying that wisdom to you because our life paths are so similar.

"In my lifetime I learned much about spiritual discipline, something that you do not really appreciate from your loose practices and there-are-no-limits-to-what-you-can-do beliefs in this lifetime. To you my practices appear to have been unnecessary restraints and limitations. To me they were a means of staying on the true path. They gave me comfort in familiar practice and ritual. I always found meaning in

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them. For you the benefits might be similar to recognizing the value of eating healthy and exercising regularly. That requires discipline and consistency but it yields great rewards for doing so. Is such a practice, a straightjacket? I think not.

"Still I admit to you that the practices we learned and followed were peculiar and austere, as you put it, in the minds of those we tried to share them with. They were quite interested in our tales of spiritual adventure but they did not respect the discipline with which we gained the abilities to have them.

"To use a modern analogy it was like appreciating a fine concert pianist and even aspiring to play like one, but never sitting down to touch the keys of a piano, let alone considering taking lessons. We were seen as entertainers and storytellers with strange new stories unlike those of the folk storytellers of the day. People welcome variety since it adds interest. But in the end, they no more believed us than they believed the old folk stories. This is what eventually began to depress me. I wanted so much to change the world.

"I saw the suffering caused by the perception that we are separate from Source. I knew that it was not true and wanted desperately to help others to find their connection with Source. You hold a similar life mission today. However, you have the advantage of my perspective. From me, and from the wisdom of your own life experiences to date, you have a few guiding thoughts to help you in your mission this time. First you recognize that you are not responsible for how people react to your message. Second you recognize that since people are responsible for their own choices and not you that you cannot change their choices and therefore you cannot 'save the world.'

"The most you can do is to live and speak your truth and be an example that other may choose to follow. But you must do so because you are motivated to live your own truth joyously and purposefully and not because of how you think you will be perceived by others. It is the same 'sin' to alter your thinking and behavior to set a positive example for others as it is to alter your behavior so that others will think better of you. Both are acts of giving away your own power. Don't do it. Just live your life as authentically as you can. Live for fun and joy and trust your skills to navigate life's events. As you do that, others may be attracted to your lifestyle and may choose to listen to you. Or they may not. Once you detach yourself from their reactions you detach yourself from a desire for their energy. Thus free, you can devote even more attention to drawing power from your own Source within.

"My pain was caused by being afraid to change myself and my circumstances to match my new truth. So my advice is to pay attention to what feels good and do more of that in your life. To close yourself off to change and growth also cuts you off from your truth."

"I gathered some wisdom in that lifetime. I see now that I did not fail in my mission with my brothers. I lived my truth. That was my mission, not proselytizing to others. When my truth changed I needed to change with it. I became disheartened with our work. That was true for me. Therefore to remain true to myself I needed to change my life.

"My pain was caused by being afraid to change myself and my circumstances to match my new truth. My father in his wisdom saw this and pushed me to make a decision that would honor my higher truth. I lived with the pain of that decision for the remainder of that lifetime, but I also lived my truth. I married and fell in love and had a child and shared my love of spirit with them. That was my truth.

"So my advice to you is to do the same. Honor yourself by paying attention to what feels good and doing more of that in your life. But also work to establish discipline in your practices because sometimes it is only through disciplined effort that you can come to enjoy the rewards that make you feel good. It is a self-reinforcing cycle, but it is not a closed loop. To close yourself off to change and growth also cuts you off from your truth.

"Know that I am here to offer advice and guidance in every moment."

Additional Resources

If you've read through some of our free articles or purchased a product from us in the past, you may want to know about other resources to help you.

Here's a quick guide to the modular sequence we've developed to help you maximize your skills in the shortest time possible:

1. Awaken your sense of awareness within the present moment.
2. Focus that awareness on the things you choose so you can feel more relaxed, be more productive, and enjoy each moment to its fullest potential.
3. Direct your awareness toward creating the life you desire.
4. Shift your awareness beyond your five senses to access guidance, retrieve information, and interact in realms beyond physical reality.
5. Expand your sense of awareness beyond the limited confines of individuality to encompass your Higher Self.

Awakened Awareness



The first workshop in the Transformation Series, **Unwrapping the Present: The Secret to Making the Most of Every Moment**, helps you to awaken your internal observer so you can pay **Attention** to the sensations, thoughts, and feelings you're experiencing in any given moment. This foundational I Am awareness is the primary source of peace and well-being in life, and it serves as the springboard for all that follows.

Focused Awareness



The second module focuses on **Meditation**. It covers the basics of sit-down meditation, but more importantly you'll learn how to focus your I Am awareness on the fundamental skills of relaxation, concentration, and visualization, all of which can be applied with open eyes and in daily life situations, making them essential tools in the creation of your life experience.

Directed Awareness



The **Creation** workshop examines “The Secret” to manifestation and teaches you to apply the inside-out principle that opens the I Am Toolbox you use to create every experience in your life. You learn to direct your I Am awareness to identify, evaluate, and revise your thought patterns, belief systems, reaction responses, habits, and personality traits that create the outer experiences of your life. With those building blocks in place, you learn when, why, and how you can turn over certain aspects of the creation process to your Higher Self.

Shifted Awareness



The **Exploration** module teaches you to use your I Am awareness to become aware of things beyond your physical senses through a skill called *bilocation*—becoming aware of more than one state of being at the same time. You’ll learn how to send your I Am awareness beyond your physical body, enabling you to access the still, small voice of inner guidance, make psychic observations, dip into past lives, and explore the afterlife.

Expanded Awareness



The **Realization** workshop helps you advance from shifted awareness to expanded awareness. In this module you learn about the two ways to achieve enlightenment—reduction and expansion. The reduction process enables you to merge your I Am awareness and your experience into One. The expansion process enables you to expand your awareness to encompass all that is—which is Unity. I can lead you to both points, but only you can make the final leap into the realization of your Higher Self.

Personal Mentoring



If you don’t feel comfortable sharing your personal experiences in a group or you want to accelerate specific areas of your growth, then consider personal mentoring. This process is an opportunity to work with me privately to help you with your unique interests and challenges as you strive to recognize your essential and inherent completeness, allowing you to stop the relentless seeking and celebrate *what you already are* in every moment.

About the Author

What would you do if you woke up and found yourself floating in midair with your nose pressed against the ceiling?

When it happened to me I thought I was dreaming. I reached out and felt the rough wood ceiling. It felt solid and cool to the touch. So I pushed off it like an astronaut floating inside a space capsule. I drifted backwards a foot or two and simply hovered there.

Then I rolled over in midair and looked around. Light filtered in from a street light outside the window. In its wan glow I could see my night stand with my lamp, notebook, and clock radio. The clock read 2:09.

Up to this point I might have accepted my circumstances as a very vivid dream, but what came next wiped that idea from my mind.

Upon my bed lay a body. My body. Eyes closed. Bare arms resting on top of my down quilt.

I knew immediately that this was no dream.

A Spiraling Journey

That initial spontaneous out of body experience changed my outlook on life. By the time the experience ended a few minutes later I knew there was far more to my existence than I'd previously considered. This new perspective started me on a 20-year spiritual journey of self-discovery that has spiraled back upon itself.

When the journey began I was fully immersed in my life, experiencing my day-to-day existence as a dream without waking. At 2:09 that night I awoke in more ways than one. I grew curious about who I am and why I'm here. I began seeking answers to these questions through direct experience and from teachers who'd traveled the path ahead of me.

I never found a single teacher or a particular path that spoke to me. Instead I treated my journey like an all-you-can eat buffet. I tasted small samples of many things, and heaped my plate with those I liked best. Over time I studied world religions, history, philosophy, and science, skimming the surface of topics like particle physics and delving deep into the practical applications of meditation, prayer, and astral travel.

In time I learned to send my awareness to realms far beyond this physical reality, finally attaining the ability to walk in other realities that are as real and fully-immersive as this one. In those realms I interact with spirit guides, angels, nonphysical friends, and spirits of the "deceased," from whom I've had the privilege of learning as much as I have from my living teachers.

Eventually I came to realize the distinction between teacher and student was not what I thought it was. This sense of commonality propelled my awareness into direct unity with all-things. There are many names for this ecstatic union with the divine, and yet words cannot describe that immersion in light and love.

Despite the all-encompassing nature of that ineffable experience, even this was not the end of my journey. After I learned to access that state of being at will, I had yet another realization—that there is



no need for seeking at all. I realized that divine awareness simply is, and our consciousness is its expression.

Even more importantly, I realized there is no better way to express yourself than to joyously immerse yourself in the processes of life—just as I'd done so long ago.

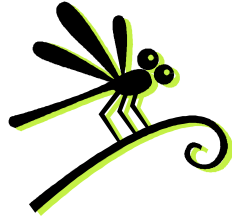
Thus my journey has come full circle. And having done so, it's my desire to help you to recognize that you too can be fully immersed in the joyous creation of daily life, while simultaneously enjoying an awareness of your unity with all that is.

I Want to Hear from You

While my spiritual explorations take me far and wide, my favorite stomping grounds are in the Rocky Mountains, just outside my door in Boulder, Colorado, where I live with my wife and two daughters.

At Higher Self Guides we believe Your Success Is Our Destination™. So if you have any questions, comments or suggestions please let me know. I'd love to hear from you.

Email: matthew@higherselfguides.com



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