

## ESP

I first realized that I had this extraordinary ability to intrude into another's mind after an evening of dallying with a most desirable young woman of very recent acquaintance. An early intimation was that she had accepted my request for a date which was unusual in and of itself, followed up by how well it all went. Usually, I did not accomplish much in this arena of male/female confrontation. In fact, I had never had any success at all. Certainly, I had fantasized about such a soiree often enough.

The evening started auspiciously with a candle lit dinner in a small Italian restaurant: a checkered tablecloth on the table tucked away in a corner of the dining area, providing us with a illusory sense of being alone. The owner chef, a garrulous large man with a huge mustache and a waist to match, as expected, had a thick Italian accent. His wife's girth and solicitude strongly resembled that of her husband. They hovered over us to ensure that we were well taken care of. Predictably, the music was Italian opera, with our waiter singing along to whatever aria was being played. You know! This type of romantic dinner is a favourite of countless authors and movie makers. In any case, the food was delicious, the wine delectable, the service impeccable, the music romantic and the ambiance perfect. In retrospect, everything was exactly as I had envisioned prior to actually entering the restaurant. It was as if they knew what I desired the moment I thought of it. By the time the meal was over, I had become emboldened enough to invite the beautiful young lady to my apartment. What can I say? She accepted with unexpected alacrity.

I do not wish to titillate the reader with a graphic account of the rest of that evening. However, I assert that every erotic fantasy that I imagined that evening was immediately acted out in exactly the manner I conjured them. It was as my companion had become my sexual slave.

Later, much later, I awoke from a blissful sleep and started to reflect on what had just transpired. I know that I am not God's gift to womankind. What had changed? Was this a one time phenomenon due to the rather curious proclivities of that individual female? Then I remembered the somewhat similar responses of those serving us in the restaurant. I decided to see whether I could replicate this delicious experience with another female in a different restaurant. The result was uncannily alike. For the next ten days, ten different women and ten different restaurants were the objects of one the most pleasant experiments ever attempted. Again, the results were strikingly similar. I tried out different fantasies and each was turned into an exact corresponding reality.

Either the world had gone crazy or something had happened to make me so powerful that everyone I met was defenseless against my wishes. If this were true, I literally could become Master of the Universe. Or so I thought. Before deciding upon any further course of action involving my newly found prowess, I felt it necessary to try to discover its source, range and limitations. I hoped that my profession could be of some help. After all, I am an experimental psychologist with a special interest in ESP.

I decided to spend the next two months replicating the experiment over and over again: What was I doing that obliged people to do as I wished? Much to my surprise, I discovered a new ability. I could read another's mind. I ascertained this one night while I was playing poker with some friends. Poker is the one game I enjoy most. I was trying to decide whether one of the other players was bluffing. All of a sudden it was as if I was

him, looking at the world through his senses. Of course I immediately learnt what his cards were and took advantage of this new knowledge. He was not bluffing.

While I was exhilarated by this new discovery, I was still no closer to discovering the basis of my extraordinary faculties. I knew I had them. I knew how to bring them on. But I did not know their fundamental nature, except, I felt that anyone, if they knew how, could also realize this eerie power. (If you, dear reader, are asking why I am not disclosing to you how to produce them, the answer is really quite simple. Since, I am not sure I have the wisdom to use them propitiously, I know that you do not.)

I subsequently decided to review all my research projects that preceded the realization of my new found gifts very carefully. I struck pay dirt. As stated earlier the main emphasis of my endeavors had to do with ESP. I was particularly interested in determining whether there was a bio/physical/chemical basis for it. I had been stimulating different parts of the central nervous system with varying frequencies of electricity to ascertain whether any specific part of it was amenable to producing ESP and what frequency or frequencies were most likely to produce the desired effect. I used myself as the subject of my experiments. Many would view this as an erroneous approach, since it is usually impossible for the object of an experiment to properly evaluate its results.

I had not realized that these dormant powers had been awakened in me by my efforts until my successes with the opposite sex had taken place. It does not say much for me as a scientific observer. Without getting too technical, I learnt that we all had an ability for two way non-vocal communication and that this ability was akin to a tuner in a radio or television set. In other words, each of us had a specific unique frequency to receive and another to transmit thoughts. Also, with a little effort we could easily learn how to tune into another's thoughts and to emit at a frequency that enabled another to receive without necessarily realizing it. If the amplitude of the signal was strong enough, it could rob the receiver of free will.

By a curious coincidence, these discoveries seemed to support an old theory. Simply put, it is that ESP, millenia ago, was the natural means of communication between primitive humans. With the advent of vocal speech, the written word and civilization, it became dormant, mainly because of the loss of privacy that occurred. Also, there appears to be some evidence that certain animals have psychic powers.

I am reminded of a story told by an old engineer friend. During WW2, he was stationed on the coast of East Africa, building bridges and roads. A shortage of manual labour led to recruiting natives from the interior. Now and then, a native would inform the officer in charge that he had to return to his village for a specific personal reason. On one such occasion, it occurred to the officer to ask the native how he knew that he was needed at home. Because of security, all communication between the coast and the interior had been prohibited including jungle drums. The native simply replied, "I know." It was as if he could not believe that the white man with all his powers could not comprehend that he always knew when he was needed by his family or tribe. For the next few months, every time a native wanted to return home, the reason was checked and without exception turned out to be true. My friend could never explain this phenomenon.

While I was quite exhilarated by my discoveries, I was also very apprehensive about them. First, I knew that I was not, as yet, sagacious enough to use them wisely. Then I made, perhaps, my only judicious decision in this whole story. Initially, I would employ

these powers solely to provide me with enough funds to live in a non-ostentatious but comfortable manner. I would not attempt to invade another's mind to influence it in any way. This would give me time and means to study the writings and sayings of a broad sample of the most intelligent of us, alive or dead. Perhaps I could learn enough from them to employ my new-found skills both for my benefit and the benefit of all.

It turns out that I had completely neglected one factor, one that made all my efforts towards wisdom somewhat superfluous. I became aware of it in the following dramatic fashion.

I awoke one morning to a loud knocking at the door of my apartment. It was the police. After reading me my rights, they arrested me for the murder of someone I had never met in a place I had never been, for reasons that made no sense to me. It seems that they had amassed a substantial amount of evidence, both physical and testimonial. Despite my pleas of innocence and a capable defence lawyer, I was found guilty and sentenced to death. All my legal appeals were rejected and I found myself on death row.

What shocked me as much as the fact that I had been found guilty of a crime I had never committed was that during all this most difficult period I was not able to summon my powers to assist me in beating the charges. It was as if someone or something were blocking or thwarting my efforts. My mind felt as if it was saturated with jumbled clouds.

Yet I believed that I was owed an explanation and that somehow it would appear. There had to be a reason for all that had transpired. Those responsible would not let me go to my death without revealing it. This turned out to be correct. With about six hours to go before my execution, my mental faculties cleared and a disembodied voice spoke to me.

"You arrogantly assumed that you were the only person alive with those powers. Not so! In fact, a selected number of us have them. As soon as we became aware that you had joined our group, we monitored your progress to determine whether you merited them. You think you discovered them by the dint of your efforts. The truth is that you discovered them accidentally. Normally, we would have had you eliminated immediately, but you evinced a certain amount of sagacity by not over-using the powers and by your rather futile attempts to utilize the wisdom of those far wiser than you. After a great deal of deliberation, we decided that you just did not fit. Of course, it is we who are responsible for your present predicament.

However, because of the apparent unfairness of your current situation we have decided to give you a chance for a last minute reprieve. All you have to do, in the time remaining to you, is to solve the riddle of the powers. If you do, we will accept you among us."

I quickly realized that the only way I might solve the riddle of the powers is to use them, particularly on those that had placed me in this quandary. I tried tuning into as wide a range of frequencies as possible. All I was able to procure was a jumble of disjointed musings from all over the place with one exception. Descartes's famous maxim, "Cogito Ergo Sum, (I Think Therefore I Am)" was constantly being reiterated. Since this was the only clue available and with time becoming a critical factor, I decided to concentrate on it.

First, I attempted to trace its source. I was unsuccessful. Then, I concentrated on the maxim itself: how could it be relevant to ESP? When I had first learnt it during my

university days, I had taken it as an early attempt to describe the mind/body bifurcation suggesting that the proof of human existence lies in humanity's ability to think.

What if this interpretation was totally fallacious? What if it was the proof of the existence of thought and nothing else? Once I started on this train of thought I couldn't stop. If this was true, then all reality and therefore, existence was nothing more than a manifestation of thoughts, ideas or concepts.

Again the disembodied voice intervened during my reflections.

"You have hit upon the truth. Now you must realize that, like everything else, you are solely a thought, an idea or a concept. Under the most entropic of conditions reality consists of nothing more than a jumble of disjointed thoughts wandering aimlessly through the void. Occasionally and what appears by accident, a concentration of thoughts takes place and by some mysterious joining, new and more complex thoughts occur, resulting in the apparent creation of a new universe and in isolated cases a world with sentient beings. This is how you and all other humans came to exist. We, who talk to you, also consist of a series a complex thoughts that provide us with an awareness of ourselves. Since you have done far better than we thought you would, we invite you to join us in our quest for the origin of these thoughts, if there is one. You will be free from all bodily constraints, yet be able to enjoy all the sensations you now experience."

I did not hesitate. I am now part of another existence.

Postcript:

Dr. Smith had just finished examining the body of prisoner Jones, found dead in his death row cell. Dr. Smith wore a puzzled expression on his face because the prisoner had somehow cheated the executioner. He went to the Warden's office to report his findings.

"I cannot find any apparent reason for Jones's death. Further, I just finished reading his diary, which is quite extraordinary. He must have been one of the most delusional persons ever to have lived. Or was he?"

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