

THREE TIMES INTO THE LIGHT — Mark Giordani's Journey (Part Three)

In Issues #2 and #3 of 2002, Mark Giordani took us through the three near-death experiences that accompanied his struggle with the debilitating disease known as Chronic Fatigue Immune Dysfunction Syndrome. He also related another, different, journey into the same Light, one that occurred spontaneously while he was pondering normal life from the perspective he'd absorbed during his near-death experiences.

In this concluding installment, Mr. Giordani describes his several-year quest to integrate those transcendent experiences into his daily life—and vice versa: his response to the frequent impulse to elevate his earthly life back into the glory he'd felt within the Light. All this while, he searched for a way to free himself from the disease that had driven him into near-death in the first place.

After my third near-death experience, with its felt-message of reassurance, of safety and love, I became willing to renew my search for a cure to my confusing illness. Re-immersion into the Light had let me feel again what it was like to have a body without constant pain, and to have a mind without fog.

But outside of the Light, I existed within those familiar pains and mists. So I searched further afield from the doctors who so far had not been able to end my illness, despite their sincere intentions. I gathered information about nutrition, and about treatments that called for using unorthodox agents like ultraviolet light, oxygenation, and chelation. Recalling the time I'd suddenly backed upwards into the Light, simply by asking "What are we humans, anyway?", I wondered again, one evening in the comfort and safety of my girlfriend's living room, "Could I go there again?" This path to the Light hadn't involved dying, merely questioning; it was a different kind of 'letting go' of one's normal view.

The first time it happened it had been a huge surprise. This time it was less of a surprise—I was in the same circumstances, watching a video at my girlfriend's house, feeling happy and safe, and simply curious: **I wanted to see if it could happen again.** So I started comparing the ordinariness of this living room scene, of us watching a video, with the strangeness of two human beings gazing at a lighted box—and pondered silently: "What *are* we humans anyway?"

That started it—suddenly I'm out of my body, behind and a little above both of us, looking at our backs. Then just as

suddenly I'm at the ceiling of the room—I have no control over the movements—and a second later, I'm outside, poised above her house, looking down on it and the street. The zoom/shifts continue quickly, one after another, upward: now I see the whole town, now the region, now all of America, and now—

I start choking emotionally from the hugeness of what I'm taking in—our whole planet.

I'm then further expanded and stretched: not just *seeing* the universe but *knowing* it—its vastness, its completeness; its astounding perfection.

And knowing not only its space, but its *time*—our present, the past, the future—all at once.

It's too much for my normal-me to contain. It feels unbearable.

Then I'm back in my body, collapsing off the couch onto the living room floor, all of my circuits blown, sobbing. The vastness had overwhelmed me. The enormity of the view feels *crushing* in every respect. I ball up, clutching myself instinctively, trying to protect—and re-collect—the "me" that I had known until then.

Fortunately, my girlfriend also curls around me, adding another layer to re-contain my scattered pieces. I'm grateful for her becoming a surrogate skin or shroud, hold-

ing my fragments together, until my own flesh feels strong enough to do that by itself.

It wasn't as though the vision (as I've settled on calling it, to distinguish it from my crossing-into-death experiences) was dark or frightening. It was actually very beautiful; but just so powerful, so swift and so BIG, that I felt unable to contain it.

And it was also very hard on my girlfriend. From her per-



Artist's approximation of the translucent beings Mark Giordani perceived during his NDEs (which he suggests we all are, at our core): "This 'lenticular' being (I call it that from the contact-lens-like appearance of its head) is the most efficient design that God or Spirit could have created to do one thing really well: receive and transmit love."

[Rendering by Mark Stefanowicz]

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spective after all, we're simply one moment cuddling and watching a video together; everything's feeling normal. Then explosively, I throw myself off the couch overcome with tears, cowering in a ball on the floor. But because there had been one such episode before, and she remembered it, eventually she said, gently, "You just had another vision, didn't you?"

This experience forced me to accept that my body was still too weak a 'vessel' to be experimenting like that, and gave me an added reason to get healthier. My quest for vitality led me to a doctor in Maryland whose practice turned out to include "energy work," something I'd never heard about before. As he patiently swirled his hands above my body, and posed simple, gentle questions, I found myself crying—convulsive, drenching tears. It was so strange: where did all this emotion come from? He explained that our physical bodies are able to "lock away" painful memories and traumas deep inside. Through his compassionate eyes, I saw his faith that I could really, some day, recover.

I also returned to the surgical team in Nevada, to see if my jawbone still harbored an infection that might be continually challenging—and thereby weakening—my immune system. All through these explorations I remained puzzled: "Why would—call it God, the Universe, whatever—have sent me in my NDEs to that place of incredible beauty and brilliance, and then just put me back into this deep, dark, desolate pit of weakness and mental fog?" For a year and a half after my third NDE I kept asking, "Where is that light?" I remembered the lenticular beings and thought: *they* are a living form of that light. Then one morning, while washing up at my bathroom sink, I saw myself in the mirror and heard the thought, "You're one of those beings, too!"

"No," I replied, "I can't be. I don't feel like one of those beings."

I took my gaze away from the mir-

ror, looked down at my hands, and asked, "Maybe this body is just a costume? Maybe it's covering a lenticular being inside? Could it really be that I and everyone else are truly light beings—souls of pure, unconditional love?" I connected again with my time in the "way-station": I again saw the beings shimmering; refracting that intense, loving light.

And I thought to myself: "Now wait a minute. If the light of those beings is love, and I am one of those beings—then I must be love too!" Yet when I looked down at my hands again, my thought was, "But where is that light?" I can't see it, or feel it; instead, inside I feel so dark, hollow, and filthy. Then I vaguely recalled the tiny "seed" of light I'd condensed to, near the end of each NDE, after I'd passed through the Light and had burned down from head and foot. And I wondered, could that little light-seed have enough force and will to grow?

I urgently felt I *had* to find that light amidst all the darkness in my life. It made no sense to me that life could only be about darkness.

Deciding that, changed my life. I became determined that all the stuff that wasn't light, in my body and in my life, had to leave. Being still physically sick, I thought my first step had to be to clear out everything impure from my body. So I undertook a long fast, taking in nothing but distilled water, and committed myself to this process, until I'd know, for sure, that all of the darkness and sickness was gone. By the 23rd day, I felt so marvelously alive: inside energized, and outside, my once-pale skin was glowing. But conditions changed quickly, and by the 28th day I felt very weak, and began to fear that it might be possible to go "too far" with this process. I became uncertain: Should I try to stay on the fast for just one more week, following an intuition that doing so might finally liberate me from whatever toxins might be contributing to my illness? Or would I

be courting danger by doing so, and wind up depleting myself to such a low-point that I'd put myself into a worse state than when I'd started the fast? I grew panicky, decided to take the benefits of the 32 days, and ended the fast then and there. (Years later I learned that fasting only on water can increase, rather than decrease,

the concentration in the body's tissues of heavy metal toxins like mercury, because water alone can't remove them sufficiently; food-fiber is needed to carry them out of the body.)

It was too late—the next 12 months became a downhill slide. My energy stayed weak; most of the foods I ate gave me bad reactions, so there was less and less I could eat; my outlook grew correspondingly dimmer; my perseverance frayed, I found it harder and harder to maintain the computer-supply business I'd created, and eventually, with a dismal feeling of failure, I decided to close it.

Convinced that my life could offer practically nothing of long-term value to anyone, I broke up with my girlfriend of three years, wanting her to have a chance at a happier life, rounded out with a husband and a family, and devastated that I couldn't be that man. Unemployed, emaciated, and depressed, the process of releasing her gutted me.

At that point, though I had very little normal energy left, under the surface fury was building. It first burst out one night when I found I couldn't sleep because of the stench of mold floating into my bedroom from the bathroom shower stall. A person in normal health probably wouldn't have noticed the smell—or at least might not have been awakened by it. But with Chronic Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (routinely called "chronic fatigue syndrome" or CFIDS), the body's immune system is hyper-sensitive—to chemicals, to microbes, to foods; in short, to molecules of many types. So I got out of bed at 2:00 AM, intending simply to shut the bathroom

How do I get to feel as free of pain here, back on Earth and in this body, as I felt up there in the Light?

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door. But when I realized that the stinky mold would still be a problem the next morning, I impulsively grabbed a hammer from the basement and furiously pried the moldy vinyl-surround panels from the shower stall, to gut it permanently. As each piece broke off and I smashed the recalcitrant panels, I noticed, “God, this feels so good!”

A few days later, a mouse died in one of the house’s heating ducts; as it decayed the smell became intolerable. Because the same heating system had already set off the carbon monoxide alarm, I decided I’d remove the hot air ducts entirely and have a closed radiator system installed in its place. So, passionately, I hammered to shreds all the aluminum duct-work.

Seeing how good it felt to ‘express’ in this physical way, I hung up an old boxing bag and began to pound away regularly. I was mad at God: “I haven’t protested very much all this time; now I protest!” I was angry that there was almost no food my body could absorb—which was making me furiously hungry. I was angry for having lost my business. But more than anything, I was angry for having had to give up my girlfriend. And as I took all this out against the punching bag, yelling and cursing and bloodying my knuckles, one day the voice coming out of me scared me: it was nearly *murderous*. I recalled the session I’d had with the Maryland energy doctor, when long-forgotten childhood pains had burst to the surface with shocking energy, and now said to myself, “There may be a lot buried inside that I still don’t know about.”

So I gave myself permission—even though it was scary—to try to unearth the hidden sources of my rage. Besides punching it out, I tried walking it off, but that didn’t seem to be

enough. Then when a drinking-glass accidentally fell to the kitchen floor one day and shattered, I felt so *freed up* inside that I broke another in celebration, and rushed to the store to buy more. As if being given encouragement by fate, the glasses that day were on a drastic clearance sale, so I snatched up 320 of them and a pair of safety goggles.

Thereafter I’d frequently go down into my basement and smash glasses against the wall, as images of the times I’d felt hurt, overpowered or frustrated as a child or teenager came to mind. Yet even as I “evened the score” with these old tormentors, I knew that I didn’t have the desire to hurt anyone. I just didn’t want to keep those old hurts *inside* any longer. I couldn’t *feel more Light* while I held on to those old hurts; and I was determined to keep taking the lenticular beings as my “blueprint” for how I could feel, and could be, here on Earth.

I got some encouragement that it was working: I began to feel more freedom and strength inside. The depression and despair began to lift. And my physical health began to improve too.

That led me to an “Aha!”: I started seeing how deeply my emotional state and my biology are intertwined. Earlier in my illness I’d discovered how my weakened body and my choices about various foods could influence my emotions. Now I was seeing the influence flowing in the other direction: my freed-up emotions seemed to be lifting my physical health. And because I’m somewhat scientific, in the sense that every time I see a pattern in myself I like to see if it is a more generalizable, human phenomenon, I asked, “Who else would know this? Has this been confirmed by others?” So I went to the internet and searched for the words “biology of emotions”. Immediately I came across research papers that corroborated what I was experiencing—that the release of old hurts and rage can

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lead to improvements in one's physiology and to a reduction of disease symptoms and depression. I wasn't alone in this after all; I wept with relief. Everything that I had experienced on my own—even to visualizing the specific persons that had unintentionally hurt me in my early life, while I shattered glasses in the basement or pounded the pillow in my bedroom—was there in those articles.

So when the glasses ran out and the pillow wasn't enough, I'd go into the woods near my home and smash old branches against fallen logs. I'd visit the rocky beach nearby and hurl stones against each other until they'd split apart. I'd stomp the beach's empty clamshells until they crushed underfoot. And each time I took those experiences to the limit, holding nothing back, I'd wind up exhausted and in tears. I'd find my way home, collapse on my bed, and fall into a deep sleep. Hours later, when I'd wake up, I'd notice myself freer, lighter, more accepting, and more open. It felt true to be reminding myself, "I *am* love."

And I discovered that the hurt from each individual memory wasn't endless: each painful situation eventually "petered out". As the months went by, the process felt like checking off a list of old hurts, unburdening myself of them, one by one.

Also I began to understand—and to feel—how generating *new* anger was just as harmful as holding in the old. I became a lot more conscious of when I might inadvertently be poised to cause hurt to another person. I decided that this destructive energy "buck" had to stop with me. I concluded that hurting others would increase the darkness within me as much as holding on to old hurts.

Feeling my increased energy and improved health, I wanted to get back into the world, to have some fun. One night I went to a dance club and experienced a huge surprise. As I was dancing with my eyes closed, letting my head bob back and forth in time with the music, I passed under a ceiling spotlight. When its bright beam shone directly onto my forehead, my memory *and sensations* suddenly returned me to my NDEs. Again I was in that tunnel, being transfixed by the Light. In sync with the music, I let the spotlight's beam impact me over and over again, and re-experienced myself being *Zzzoom-Zzzoomed* up the spiral tunnel. I'd re-established *the connection*, and felt again the ecstasy of my NDEs—without having to die.

Naturally I'd lost all awareness of the dance room and the other people in it; but evidently they were watching me. For as soon as the music changed and I stopped dancing, I opened my eyes, and the beautiful woman who'd earlier been refusing other men's offers to dance came over and asked *me* to dance with her. Clearly something had been unleashed in me, something primordial.

Within several months, a special new girlfriend entered my life (not the woman at the club). One evening, as we were sit-

ting in my living room, I became curious to see if I could enter the Light again, by rising upward and backward as I'd done a few times before at my previous girlfriend's house. But remembering how crushing had been the return from those hyper-expansive journeys, this time I decided to see if I could control its speed. Also, I wasn't feeling very well, so my focus was fading a little on its own, and I thought, "Gee, maybe I can fade a little further, and come back a little, and watch the focus shift, without getting totally blown apart." So I allowed myself to blur the distinction between my soul and my body, and I "drifted" a little bit sideways, instead of going backwards and upwards. To my relief, I found that I was able to hold myself there, partly outside my body and partly still inside. It was reassuring to discover that there need be no out-of-control extruding of me, up through the ceiling and into outer space. I decided to let this experiment

end: satisfied that it was, perhaps, a sign that there were ways I could find to manage my movement between the two worlds, the blissful Light and the seemingly more problematic Earth.

Having begun to enjoy a social life again, I now began wondering how much energy my body could give me for a work life. I still had too much reactivity to electrical and magnetic fields to re-enter the world of computers. Nor would those sensitivities allow me to use my old salesperson skills on the phone all day or in high-pressure traveling. Just as importantly, my motivations had changed—any work life that didn't allow me to share some aspect of the Light with my customers and colleagues felt impossibly empty, and intolerable. The prospect of doing anything less than that felt like letting the Light down. The more I cleared out space in myself for the Light, the more strongly I felt, "Love is what I'm here to do."

But how?

And in what form? There aren't any "Help Wanted" ads in the paper for that.



Trying to make a life that stays connected to both worlds—the world of one's free, eternal nature, as felt while in the Light, versus the world of daily reality here, in a particular culture with accepted norms and expectations—is a difficult challenge. The awareness one carries around after a near-death experience is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, I (and many other NDErs I've met) feel a nearly constant internal pressure to contribute something very big to the world. At the same time, we find ourselves in a limited body, with mundane responsibilities to accomplish like cleaning the bathroom and paying the bills. I've heard that many NDErs come back with very little materialistic motivation if they had one before experiencing the Light. I myself was a business school graduate, running two successful businesses, before my NDEs and illness. But now,

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seeking financial security isn't enough. Instead, more of me aims simply to be love, to be as present and consistently real as I know how. In this state, it's more difficult to find an aggressive drive to 'beat out the competition', and to pursue money for things like a bigger house or a more expensive car.

Is it possible to live up to the grandiosity of the experiences I've had, while not falling into patterns that are self-destructive? In some ways, it's like having manic-depression, and mania can get a lot of things done. But actually, when I was in the fullness of the Light, there was not mania, nor was there depression. What existed was an incredibly calm, level-headed, extremely balanced, fully aware, loving, clear soul. One feels a kind of omnipotence—not because you have the power of lightning bolts, but because you have the power of *presence*, the power of *full* alertness. It's a distinctively *pure* focus, unlike any clarity I'd ever known before. I felt it was possible to accomplish anything, because I had this extraordinary vision of mind to levy at every circumstance.

I remember thinking that if I ever came back to this planet with that feeling of omnipresent love, there'd be nothing that I couldn't do. Feeling so far ahead of where I was—and yet now, having lost so many years to CFIDS and feeling so far behind, I've occasionally wanted to forget that I've ever been to the Light. Eager to "catch up" with my generation, I'm sometimes drawn to the fantasy of immersing myself so fully into some business project that I could forget all that I've experienced. But I also know that to do so, I'd have to let much of who I am now die. For example, I'd have to go into a place of pretending that other people's hurts don't exist.

Because since my NDEs, I've noticed that I suffer at times from a hyper-acute state of empathy, feeling the pains of others as closely, and as internally, as I feel my own. Often I see *too much*, and feel *too deeply* what I see. Looking into another person's eyes connects me to them with an intimacy and a familiarity I can't explain. It's painful to see their "inner, perfect, lenticular light-being"—and to know that, because of their life circumstances, it may be hard for them to see that perfection in themselves. (It's also hard for me to see my own beauty that clearly.)

Of course, as just one individual, I'm inadequate to resolve all the causes of human pain and suffering. So I'm left with wondering: "How am I to manage this sensitivity?" Blindly trying to ignore it feels like a self-amputation. I do, within my power, try to respond to people's needs with compassion. And I'm able to feel happiness at sensing their joys to the same depth. But it all remains a difficult challenge.

Maybe NDErs and others have been "imprinted" by their experiences of awakening. Perhaps we've been embossed with the expectation of perfect possibilities and life outcomes. Having an NDE can, in a way, be like a "curse"; because the enormous potentials that we feel so drawn to, may not be possible

on this plane, at least not yet.

As I search to fashion a career that can fit into this balancing act, I've begun accepting invitations from churches and schools to speak about my experiences. These have become deeply satisfying occasions, for me and the attendees to share together our central concerns about life, purpose, values, and about the possibility of life after death. Often people attend who are still in pain from the loss of a loved one. I always feel it my deep responsibility to *not* mislead them into thinking that I know what death is completely or unequivocally. After all, neither I nor anyone else that I've met, has ever traveled beyond 'the point of no return'—that is, into permanent death—and then has been able to come back in their body to talk about it. I try to remind people that what I've seen may only be *glimpses* of what happens when you are no longer here. I myself still hold considerable curiosity about what will happen when we journey "all the way". Nonetheless, I do feel certain that there is absolutely nothing to fear about that journey; I can no longer believe that we even die at all.

In my talks I do speak with passion about the wonderful essence of the human soul, made apparent when the body has been stilled by a short-term, death-like event, allowing the soul to go on its own journey. The ecstatic beauty and unconditional love that I experienced to be our essence as humans, is the message that I share with my audiences. Not fully recognizing our grandest selves is perhaps all that prevents us from living this idea as reality every day. But I also keep looking into the mirror: offering this message to others helps remind me too.

I don't try to persuade people to believe that the NDE is real. I leave their beliefs up to them; I just share my story. But as my presentations close, there is one belief that I can't rightfully keep all to myself:

"You *are* Love," I remind them.

Smiling.

Mark Giordani welcomes your feedback and comments by email at mark@inspiredaudio.com. An informal audio recording of him speaking briefly about his near-death experiences can be heard at www.InspiredAudio.com. Finally, Mr. Giordani would like to thank Paul Bernstein, Vital Signs' editor, for his compassionate and inexhaustible patience and creativity during the co-creation of this three-article series.



To read more first-person accounts of near-death experiences, please visit the IANDS website, particularly www.iands.org/narratives.html. You can get each new narrative emailed to you, automatically as soon as it is published, by clicking on the blue words in the phrase displayed at the top of that webpage: "[Follow this link](#) for instructions on subscribing to receive new narratives by email...", and then carry out its instructions.

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