



**Edgar Cayce's A.R.E.**  
**Association for Research and Enlightenment, Inc.**

# **An Overview of the Edgar Cayce Material**

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*(adapted from Edgar Cayce's ESP by Kevin J. Todeschi)*

## **EDGAR CAYCE: TWENTIETH CENTURY MYSTIC**

For forty-three years of his adult life, Edgar Cayce demonstrated the uncanny ability to put himself into some kind of self-induced sleep state by lying down on a couch, closing his eyes, and folding his hands over his stomach. This state of relaxation and meditation enabled him to place his mind in contact with all time and space. From this state he could respond to questions as diverse as, "What are the secrets of the universe?" to "How can I remove a wart?" His responses to these questions came to be called "readings" and contain insights so valuable that even to this day individuals have found practical help for everything from maintaining a well-balanced diet and improving human relationships to overcoming life-threatening illnesses and experiencing a closer walk with God.

Though Cayce died nearly half a century ago, the timeliness of the material in the readings is evidenced by approximately one dozen biographies and more than 300 titles that discuss various aspects of this man's life and work. These books contain a corpus of information so valuable that even Edgar Cayce himself might have hesitated to predict their impact on the latter part of the twentieth century. Sixty years ago who could have known that terms such as "meditation," "akashic records," "spiritual growth," "auras," "soul mates," and "holism" would become household words to hundreds of thousands? Further details about his life and work are explored in such classic works as *There Is a River* (1942) by Thomas Sugrue, *The Sleeping Prophet* (1967) by Jess Stearn, and *Many Mansions* (1950) by Gina Cerminara.

The majority of Edgar Cayce's readings deal with health maintenance and the treatment of illness. Even to this day individuals have found physical help from information given as long as 75 years ago! Yet although best known for this material, the sleeping Cayce did not seem to be limited to concerns about the physical body. In fact, in their entirety the readings discuss an astonishing number of 10,000 different subjects. Even this vast array of subject matter, however, can be narrowed down into a much smaller range of topics. When compiled together, the majority contain and deal with the following five categories: (1) Health-Related Information; (2) Philosophy and Reincarnation; (3) Dreams and Dream Interpretation; (4) ESP and Psychic Phenomena; and (5) Spiritual Growth, Meditation, and Prayer.

Throughout his life, Edgar Cayce claimed no special abilities nor did he ever consider himself to be some kind of twentieth-century prophet. The readings never offered a set of beliefs that had to be embraced, but instead focused on the fact that each person should test in his or her own life the principles presented. Though Cayce himself was a Christian and read the Bible from cover to cover every year of his life, his work was one that stressed the importance of comparative study among belief systems all over the world. The underlying principle of the readings is the oneness of all life, tolerance for all people, and a compassion and understanding for every major religion in the world.



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### THE READINGS' APPROACH TO HEALTH-RELATED INFORMATION

The information from the readings on health includes simple suggestions that each of us can do to stay well. The nature of many of these recommendations indicates that Cayce's understanding of health care was really ahead of its time. These basic health principles include such items as: maintaining a well-balanced diet, the need for regular exercise, the role of attitudes and emotions in achieving and maintaining good health, the importance of relaxation and recreation as part of a balanced life style, and the desirability of keeping our physical bodies cleansed – both on the inside and on the outside. Cayce's approach to staying well had its roots in health maintenance and preventive medicine rather than simply the treatment of illnesses as they arose. He was one of the first individuals in the Western Hemisphere to recommend a nutritious diet consisting mainly of vegetables, fish, and fowl, plus sufficient water each day to promote internal cleansing. Cayce recommended these guidelines and others while much of the country had a diet consisting of great quantities of red meat and starches. Yet Cayce's contribution to health and physical well-being was not limited simply to proper diet and regular exercise.

Decades ago, he emphasized the importance that attitudes and emotions play in physical well-being. In support of this idea, only relatively recently has clinical medicine discovered how positive attitudes enhance the healing process. Both Cayce and modern medicine agree that humor and joy play key roles in facilitating wellness. It's also been found that certain kinds of negative attitudes or stresses can lead to illness. For example, Cayce's readings suggest that persistent anger-conscious or unconscious-may play a part in the onset of disease.

Even critics of other segments of Cayce's work agree that the information on health offers important insights into how each of us can stay well. The readings make recommendations for a variety of health concerns-from acne, diet, hemorrhoids, longevity, and warts to arthritis, cancer, epilepsy, mental illness, and psoriasis. Nearly every condition that existed between the turn of the century and 1945 – whether it was childbirth, fractures, or a vitamin deficiency – is represented in the files of the Cayce material. Interestingly enough, modern-day researchers have found that many of the recommended treatments-given decades ago by the sleeping Cayce to specific individuals-seem to be applicable today on a much wider scale. The information on psoriasis and scleroderma are two of the most notable examples. For both of these diseases, the Cayce regimen involves specific dietary changes, particular spinal adjustments, and other natural remedy procedures. In recent years following a similar program has helped hundreds of people with these two ailments.

The readings were given between 1901 and 1944 and many were ahead of their time in foreseeing future approaches to health care. In addition to insights into energy medicine, the role of attitudes and emotions, and the effects of prayer and spiritual healing, Cayce often saw advances in the way we treat "dis- ease." For example, in 1927 he stated that, "The day may yet arrive when one may take a drop of blood and diagnose the condition of any physical body," (283-2) and certainly today this is commonplace.

Cayce also saw total health as involving coordination among the physical, mental, and spiritual components of life. Any complete approach to health needed to consider an



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individual's entire being rather than simply the illness. Because of this concept it has been said that the beginnings of present-day holistic health started from the readings of Edgar Cayce.

For a person asking for physical help the reading was given much like the others. Cayce would put himself to sleep on his couch while his secretary, Gladys Davis, sat nearby with her steno pad and prepared to write down everything that was said. The one conducting the reading, usually Cayce's wife, Gertrude, would give him the proper suggestion for obtaining the information that was needed. For physical readings her suggestion to the sleeping Cayce went something like this:

"You will have before you the body of [Gertrude would then say the person's name], who is located at \_\_\_\_\_ [the city and address]. You will go over the body carefully, examine it thoroughly, and tell me the conditions you find at the present time; giving the cause of the existing conditions, also the suggestions for the help and relief for this body. You will speak distinctly at a normal rate of speech. You will answer the questions that may be asked."

Then, while he was sleeping, Cayce would generally respond with, "Yes, we have the body here." If he had ever given a prior reading for the person, he would add, "This we have had before" – even if the individual's last reading had been thirty years earlier! Cayce would pick up right where he had left off, as if no time had passed. He spoke in his own voice and referred to the person as if the individual were in the same room, even though Cayce was usually in Virginia Beach and the patient could be a thousand or more miles away. He would then give a general description of the person's condition, including information about the blood supply, the nervous system, and the organs involved in the difficulty. Finally, he would outline detailed methods to bring about relief and respond to questions as they were asked.

If the person getting the reading was in the room with Edgar Cayce, it was found that he or she only needed to *think* of the question and Cayce could answer it without it even being asked!

Although approximately 9,000 readings deal with the principles of healing and holism, the major components of the readings' approach to wellness can be incorporated into the acronym "CARE": circulation, assimilation, relaxation, and elimination. The importance of each of these components is as follows:

Without proper *circulation*, the body's ability to heal itself is severely impaired. Facilitating the blood circulation-through exercise, massage, and manipulative therapies, such as chiropractic and osteopathic adjustments, bolsters the natural healing process.

*Assimilation* is the second key word. It is the body's ability to digest and distribute food. One aspect of assimilation takes into account an individual's diet-which the readings suggest should consist of 20% acid-producing to 80% alkaline-producing foods, as well as eight glasses of water daily. But assimilation is also influenced by the methods in which our foods are prepared and the ways in which we combine them. For example, although both grain cereals and citrus fruits are to be included in a healthful diet the readings suggest that they are never to be eaten during the same meal because of their effect on the body's digestion.

The third key word is *relaxation*, which includes not only getting enough sleep but also setting time aside for the purpose of recreation. Cayce said to one person:



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"...these [conditions] arose as a result of what might be called occupational disturbances; not enough [time] in the sun, not enough of hard work. Plenty of brain work, but the body is supposed to coordinate the spiritual, mental and physical. He who does not give recreation a place in his life, and the proper tone to each phase-well, he just fools self and will some day ... be paying the price." 3352-1

The final component is *elimination*. Proper eliminations are necessary for the body to rid itself of toxins, cleanse the internal organs, and function normally. Long before people were joking about their regularity, Cayce advised individuals not to let a day pass without having thrown off their waste products. Ways to do this would be with such practices as proper diet exercises (such as walking), sweat baths, colonics, correct breathing, and plenty of water.

These four items – circulation, assimilation, relaxation, and elimination – working together in cooperation can promote healing, wellness, and longevity.

It should be emphasized that Edgar Cayce never provided "magic" formulas or cures. While it is true that miracles of healing can happen, the readings usually recommended an overall regimen of therapies involving the whole system. Cayce was not a psychic healer; he claimed no special power. Instead, he gave psychic counseling for total health, instructing people in what they could do best to bring about their own healing. Following the regimen took a lot of effort. Often, when someone requested medical assistance for a condition, Cayce would respond with, "Why do you want to get well?" In other words, if after health improvement the patient would simply return to the same lifestyle that had led to the sickness in the first place, then the person was simply looking for ways to alleviate symptoms rather than getting to the real heart of his or her illness.

### Recommended Reading:

*The Edgar Cayce Handbook for Health Through Drugless Therapy*, by Harold J. Reilly

*The Edgar Cayce Remedies*, by William A. McGarey

*Foods for Healing*, compiled, edited and arranged by Brett Bolton

*The Hidden Meaning of Illness*, by Bob Trowbridge, MDiv



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### THE READINGS' APPROACH TO PHILOSOPHY AND REINCARNATION

In 1901, at the age of twenty-four, Edgar Cayce gave one of his first readings on himself, diagnosing a health condition. But it wouldn't be until 1923 that the subject of reincarnation would be explored in a reading given to a printer from Ohio. Interestingly enough, the concept was mentioned in a prior reading given as early as 1911, but no one among Cayce's associates was familiar with the idea and the reference wasn't recognized as such for decades. Eventually the subject was examined in extensive detail in nearly 2,000 psychic readings, called "Life Readings," and would become the second major topic examined by the sleeping Cayce.

Just what is reincarnation? It is the belief that each of us goes through a series of lifetimes for the purpose of spiritual growth and soul development. Cayce's approach *does not* include the concept of transmigration, which is a related theory and states that it's possible for human beings to be born again as animals. From the standpoint of the Cayce material, souls only occupy human bodies throughout their various incarnations.

In essence, the Cayce approach to reincarnation provides a philosophical setting to the past focusing on practical ways of dealing with this life: living, growing, and being of service to one another in the present. For him it wasn't nearly so important as to who individuals had once been (or even what they had been doing), as it was paramount that they focus on the present and the opportunities and challenges that faced them in this time, in this place, right now.

From the Cayce readings' perspective the past merely provided a framework of potentials and probabilities. An individual's choices, actions, and free will in the present would determine the actual experience lived this time around. Rather than being a fatalistic approach to life, it is much more one of nearly limitless opportunities.

Cayce, however, was also familiar with the less positive aspects to this philosophy. He contended that some approaches created a misunderstanding of the real purpose behind reincarnation. In fact an approach to reincarnation that did not take into account freedom of choice created what he called "a karmic bugaboo" – a misunderstanding that provided no arena for the real action and interconnectedness that exists among karma, free will, destiny, and grace. In his understanding, individuals were very much active participants in their life's journey and not at all simply sometime-reluctant observers. However, even to this day, the theory of reincarnation is often misinterpreted as a fatalistic journey through experiences and relationships that are ours because of our "karma." In this approach, choices we have made in the past have somehow etched in stone our futures, and life is simply a process of going through the motions. This is definitely not the Cayce approach to karma.

The word *karma* is a Sanskrit term that means "work, deed, or act"; it has also been interpreted to mean "cause and effect." Although the readings definitely agree with this concept, perhaps one of their most intriguing and unique philosophical contributions is the idea that *karma can simply be defined as memory*. It is not really a "debt" that must be paid according to some universal tally sheet nor is it necessarily a set of specific circumstances that must be experienced because of deeds or misdeeds from the past. Karma is simply memory. It is a pool of information that the subconscious mind draws upon and can utilize in the present. It has elements that are positive as well as those which seem negative. For example, an immediate affinity toward an individual is as likely to be "karmic" as is an immediate animosity



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toward someone else. To be sure, this subconscious memory has an effect and influence on how we think, how we react, what we choose, and even how we look! But the component of free will is ever within our grasp.

In Cayce's explanation of reincarnation when an individual dies, the next lifetime does not occur immediately, for the soul is given a chance to take stock of all it has come to know. Then, it has the opportunity to decide for itself what lessons it needs to learn next in order to become a more complete individual. The soul chooses to be born again into the earth, generally among people it has known before. A soul can decide to be born into either a male or a female body in any given lifetime or, as Cayce often called it, an "incarnation." The choices made are such that the soul might best fulfill that specific purpose chosen for a particular lifetime. It selects those surroundings (parents and family, location and time period, etc.) that will best allow for the learning of those lessons it needs for completeness. The goal is to express love fully in all the challenges that the physical life offers. Our experiences, however, are subject to the choices we have made with our own free will.

With our free will, we can turn the challenges life presents to us into stepping-stones toward growth, or we can see them as obstacles and stumbling blocks. Either way, we reap what we have sown. We constantly meet the consequences of previous deeds and attitudes.

One of the interesting aspects about reincarnation is that talents and skills are never lost. Someone who has developed an ability in one life will still have it to draw upon later. For example, many child prodigies with a talent let's say for music, are born with a conscious recollection of this ability that was developed in an earlier life. If a person happens to be an excellent English teacher in this life, she or he may have been a playwright in the last lifetime, a historian before that and perhaps a scribe even earlier. One's abilities are channeled in those directions that will best help that person fulfill the purpose for a particular lifetime.

Another major philosophical contribution the Cayce readings provide is the idea that there really isn't karma "between" people; instead, there is only karma with one's own self. The conceptual challenge, however, is that we seem to most effectively come to terms with our own karmic memory or "meet ourselves" through our interactions with others. It is this interesting dynamic of meeting ourselves through our relationships with other individuals that oftentimes causes us to perceive *them* as the basis of our frustrations and challenges, rather than accepting the responsibility as our own.

Yet in spite of the fact that our karma is essentially *ours*, we are constantly drawn toward certain individuals and groups that will enable us to meet ourselves in probable circumstances and relationships. They, in turn, are drawn toward us in an effort to come to terms with their own karmic memory as well. Interestingly enough, it is how each individual decides to "meet self" – one choice at a time – that will essentially determine the life he or she experiences.

These karmic groups oftentimes reestablish themselves in terms of family relationships, work and cultural ties, and even associations on a national level. Cayce stated that we never meet anyone by chance, nor do we ever have an emotional connection ("positive" or "negative") with another individual for the very first time. Relationships are an ongoing learning and experiential process.

Within this framework of lessons that need to be learned as the soul strives to meet itself is the central idea that the soul is constantly experiencing the consequences of its



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previous choices. This concept is expressed in Biblical terminology as, “What you sow, you must reap” and is generally labeled “like attracts like” by students of reincarnation.

Essentially what this means is that we get to experience for ourselves the effects our previous choices have had upon other individuals. Rather than our lives being predestined or fatalistic in nature, we continue to be in control of them (and our perceptions) *through how we choose to respond* to life's situations that we've drawn to us. Ultimately all experiences are for our own good and growth, and all experiences are of our own creation.

In practical terms, we may not always be able to understand why a certain situation was drawn to us, and in fact the “why” may not be of primary importance. What is important is how we choose to respond. For example, two people might face very similar circumstances – let's say, the loss of a job-yet each person might deal with the situation in a very different manner. One might spend a great deal of time and energy becoming bitter and angry over what happened, and the other might see it as a wonderful opportunity to “start all over” and do something which has always been a desire. Although the situation is the same, each person's response is quite different. The way a person responds to a situation determines the next experience to be called into action.

Reincarnation is a concept that encompasses not only Eastern thought but also all of the major religions of the world. It's a concept that can allow us to have more compassion, one for another. It's a way we can begin to look at all facets of life purposefully. However, it doesn't really matter if another individual believes or doubts the theory of rebirth. For some it can be a helpful concept; for others, confusing. The reason for believing in reincarnation is not so that we can dwell upon the past or brag about the possibility of having been someone famous in the past. The wisest student of reincarnation knows that we have all had incarnations in lowly *and* lofty circumstances. Instead, the purpose is summed up in one of the Cayce readings:

“In the studies, then, know *where* ye are going ... to find that ye only lived, died and were buried under the cherry tree in Grandmother's garden does not make thee one whit better neighbor, citizen, mother or father! But to know that ye spoke unkindly and suffered for it and in the present may correct it by being righteous – that is worthwhile!” 5753-2

### Recommended Reading:

*Many Mansions*, by Gina Cerminara

The “Philosophy” chapter of *There Is a River*, by Thomas Sugrue

*Edgar Cayce on the Akashic Records*, by Kevin J. Todeschi

*Edgar Cayce's Story of the Soul*, by W.H. Church

*Edgar Cayce on Soul Mates*, by Kevin J. Todeschi



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### THE READINGS' APPROACH TO DREAMS AND DREAM INTERPRETATION

Although it is true that many of us do not make a conscious effort to remember our dreams, *everyone dreams*. During the early part of this century, while psychologists such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung were demonstrating the clinical importance of dreams, Edgar Cayce was providing average individuals with guidelines for working with – what has become – one of the most practical approaches to dreams. Hundreds of Cayce's readings deal with the subject of dreams and dream interpretation. Perhaps the most important insights gained from the wealth of this material is the fact that each of us is aware of much more-about ourselves, our physical bodies, our surroundings, even our life styles-at subconscious levels than we realize when we're awake.

In the dream state we open our minds to many different levels of our own unconscious. Not only are all of our previous conscious experiences stored there, but it is also the storehouse of resources that rarely come to conscious awareness. The subconscious has remarkable talents for finding solutions to problems. It houses all of our wishes, hopes, and memories of past experiences, and can also assist us with self-examination, providing practical guidance for any question. It even makes it possible for us to have psychic experiences.

Dreams can diagnose the causes of our physical ailments, point out the thoughts and emotions that we've tried to overlook, and often make suggestions for improving our relationships with others. While dreaming, we can gain awareness about our entire being: physically, mentally, and spiritually.

It was Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and contemporary of Edgar Cayce's, who found convincing evidence for a deep level to the unconscious mind. This profound depth, Jung felt came from genuine spiritual reality that hadn't been acknowledged by Freud. Jung called this level the "collective unconscious." Here all minds could communicate through the use of universal symbols – images that seem to have a common meaning among people all over the world. For example, a symbol such as a lion or a great cat has a universal or archetypal meaning of power and vitality. Birds frequently symbolize various kinds of love or concern; water is often suggestive of the Spirit itself. An old man or a grandfatherly figure can symbolize our own "Higher Self" or our internal wisdom. Myths or fairy tales often have similarities among cultures, and these similarities are shown through their universal symbols and themes. Sometimes our own dreams may contain these kinds of symbols.

Of course, not all the symbols and images in our dreams represent the universal or archetypal. Many, if not most are best interpreted by discovering the personal associations one has with that person or object. The dream symbol of a gun, for example, would likely mean one thing to a hunter and something quite different to a victim of a crime.

There is really no such thing as a "bad" dream because all dreams have the potential of helping the dreamer. Dreams of disastrous events may simply be advice to us to change our diets or our attitudes, or they may be emotional releases from the various situations in our lives. They can become invaluable tools in instruction and guidance if we would only begin to work with them.

For example, one person who dreamed of a headless man in uniform was told in his Cayce reading that instead of losing his head over his duties by following the letter of the law and getting too caught up in his job, there was a greater lesson to be learned by following the



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spirit. A person who dreamed of a wild man running through the streets, shouting, and causing a great deal of trouble was told that the dream was advice for him to control his temper. One lady dreamed that a friend of hers was speaking to her. She noticed that the woman had beautiful false teeth of different shapes-but every other tooth had the appearance of pure gold. She was told that the gold teeth represented the spiritual truths of which she herself was often speaking, but they were false because she hadn't applied in her own life what she had been preaching. Another woman dreamed that her mother – who had died – was alive and happy. Cayce assured her that she was not trying to fool herself, that her mother was indeed alive and happy: "...for there is no death, only the transition from the physical to the spiritual plane." (136-33)

In trying to arrive at a dream interpretation, one possibility to consider is that the dream is largely literal. For example, seeing our self eat a salad in a dream may indicate the need for change in our diets to incorporate more salads. We may dream of someone we have not heard from in a very long while, and then meet that person a short time later. In other cases, the action may be more symbolic of what is happening in waking life. Dreaming about different rooms that we haven't yet explored could be pointing to the unopened doors of our own personality. A car often symbolizes our physical body and the need to make a change or correct a physical condition.

On the other hand, dreams of birth and death are often more symbolic, as they point to new beginnings and perhaps the end of doing things the old way. In other words a dream "death" is often the death of a part of our personality. For example, a woman who dreams of attending the funeral of her minister's wife may be allowing the spiritual aspects of her own life to be overlooked or "laid to rest." A Dream of being pregnant or taking care of a small child who really doesn't exist in the waking state isn't necessarily a prediction. The dream could merely be pointing out a new condition that will be coming our way or a new idea to which we will soon give birth.

When dreams give guidance or seem to pass judgments, it is usually in response to values and ideals we have previously set for ourselves. Most dreams can be seen as a kind of comparison (Cayce used the word "correlation"). While we sleep, a comparison is made between recent actions and the inner values we hold. For example, one woman was advised for health reasons to avoid eating chocolate, and yet she continued to eat it anyway. She had a dream in which she was crossing the border into Mexico illegally for the purpose of buying chocolate. Obviously, she would be the best one to determine that her dream was simply pointing out she was doing something she had been told not to do, at one level she knew it was "illegal."

Scientific studies have shown that each of us dreams, but not all of us remember. If we'd like to try working with our dreams, we need to begin keeping a note pad by the bedside so that we can jot down whatever we remember immediately after waking up – even if it's only a feeling. If we get enough sleep, if we expect to start remembering our dreams, and if we make an effort to record whatever is on our minds when we first wake up, we should be able to start remembering our dreams in a relatively short period of time. As we look at what's going on in our lives, and then look at a particular dream, we'll begin to have an idea of what individual symbols may mean to us-especially if the symbol repeats itself in later dreams. The symbol won't necessarily mean the same to us as to someone else because dreams are as individual as dreamers.



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There is a simple five-step approach to working with dreams that even the novice can begin using immediately. Those steps are as follows:

1. Write down your dreams *each day*.
2. Begin by realizing that the *feeling* you had about the dream is at least as important as trying to come up with one interpretation; besides, because of the multiple levels of our own beings, dreams generally have more than one meaning.
3. Remember that-for the most part – every character in the dream represents a part of your self. Watch the actions, feelings, expressions, and conversations of these characters in your dreams and measure them against the activities in your waking life.
4. Watch for reoccurring symbols, characters, and emotions in your dreams, and begin a personal “dream dictionary” of these symbols and what their importance is to you.
5. When working with dreams, remember, first of all, that your dreams can be extremely helpful even if you don't recognize immediately what they mean; and, secondly, remember to *practice, practice, practice!*

Essentially the purpose of dreams is to make us more consciously aware of what we are going through in our lives based on our thoughts, feelings, and actions. They can show us the desires that are motivating us and help us sense the needs of our bodies. They can provide insights for living life more creatively and assist us in making important decisions based on what we already know at a conscious level. For example, dreams may give us guidance on helping to heal a relationship, but only if we've already tried to do the best we can with that person. When we set our sights and make the decisions that are called for, then they will aid us by bringing life into clearer focus. Working with our dreams can be like speaking with a trusted friend who knows everything about us and is just there for us to discuss what's going on in our lives. Most of the time, the friend will just listen, but in the listening we can begin to find answers within our own self. The answers have been there all the time; we just never knew how to look for them.

### Recommended Reading:

*Dreams-Your Magic Mirror*, by Elsie Sechrist

*How to Interpret Your Dreams*, by Mark Thurston

*Awakening the Real You: Awareness through Dreams and Intuition*, by Nancy C. Pohle and Ellen L. Selover

*A regular dictionary* to get possible insights into symbols that you don't immediately understand upon awakening



Download the free lite version of the Edgar Cayce's Dream Dictionary App by Kevin J. Todeschi at [EdgarCayce.org/apps](http://EdgarCayce.org/apps) .



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### THE READINGS' APPROACH TO ESP AND PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

The story of Edgar Cayce's life is filled with examples of what this extra sense of communication is like. His ability to give readings in the sleep state could be labeled ESP because he somehow *knew* information that he had never studied, and he could *see* people and places and events without using his physical sight. While asleep, he could answer questions on any topic or he could give descriptions of the patient and his or her surroundings, even though Cayce was in Virginia Beach and the patient might be in New York. Because there are so many different types of extra-sensory communication, researchers have broken down the term ESP into further categories to help explain what is taking place.

Basically, ESP (extrasensory perception) refers to the ability to receive or send information in ways not normally associated with the five senses. In simplest terms, it is really a method of communicating with one another without using sight, sound, taste, smell, or touch. According to the Cayce readings, it is a method that each of us can use and develop.

One of these categories is called *telepathy*, which is also known as mind-to-mind communication. This is the ability to obtain information psychically by reading the mind of another person. For example, while Cayce was in Kentucky, he gave a reading for a man in New York (740-1). He saw the man smoking a cigar, heard him whistling a particular song, saw him meet with another man about a piece of property, and then he looked over three letters. Finally, the sleeping Cayce heard the man telephone another gentleman and knew the gentleman's name. All of these events were later verified. Cayce was able to see with this extra sense everything his client in New York had experienced firsthand with his normal senses. In our own lives, when we all of a sudden start thinking about someone we have not heard from in a long time and a short while later the phone rings and that person is on the line, this is one example of telepathy.

Another category of ESP is *clairvoyance*, which is the ability to obtain information that no one else has. For example, suppose you shuffled a deck of cards and placed them face down, then went through the deck and tried to name each card (or at least to tell its color). If your percentage of correct guesses went beyond what would be expected by random chance, it would be an example of clairvoyance. You would not need to be 100% accurate to demonstrate clairvoyance, just statistically (and consistently) greater than random chance. On the other hand, if you tried the same experiment only this time you had a friend look at each card and concentrate on it before you guessed, this would be an example of telepathy.

Looking at one instance from the Cayce readings (2826-1), we find the case of a patient who was in Ohio while Cayce was in Virginia Beach. During the reading, Cayce correctly gave the patient's body temperature. Now, if the attending doctor in Ohio had known the patient's temperature before Cayce's reading was given, then this would be an example of telepathy, since Cayce could be reading the doctor's mind. But if the doctor hadn't known the temperature until after Cayce's psychic reading, it would be an example of clairvoyance.

A third category of ESP is *precognition*, which is the ability to see events before they happen. Many of us have had the experience called *deja vu*. An example of this: You might be having a conversation with a friend and, all at once, be absolutely positive that you've had the exact conversation before. You may even know what your friend is going to say next. The Cayce readings suggest that one explanation for this phenomenon is that our dreams often



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foreshadow future events. Such precognitive dreams may be forgotten and only dimly felt at those times as *deja vu* experiences. There are countless examples of precognition in the files of the Cayce material. In many readings for children, Cayce foresaw what they would be like as adults, even going so far as to describe hidden talents and occupational decisions. There are also other examples of this precognitive ability. When completing a reading for one woman in New York, Cayce suddenly started giving a reading for a woman in Missouri, although no one had solicited it. Her request for help, dated the day after he had volunteered the information (5700-6), did not arrive until after his response had already been mailed. Cayce also predicted the stock market crash (900-425) more than six months before it occurred and foresaw the outbreak of World War II. He also knew that he would die before his two sons returned home from overseas.

Although some individuals have called Cayce a “prophet” he himself made no such claims. In fact in one reading he described himself as a “lowly, weak, unworthy channel” (254-76). He rarely made any predictions about worldwide events, mostly because these kinds of predictions are subject to countless outside influences. For example, when psychics try to “predict” the future, all they can actually do is foretell a possible future based on current happenings. If events continue to occur along the same course – if people’s attitudes, life styles, and world conditions remain the same – then psychics can “see” what the result will be. However, the readings make it quite clear that each of us has the gift of free will. If enough people use their free will and change what they are currently doing, this in turn will have dramatic effects on the future.

In the Bible, Jonah went to the evil city of Nineveh to tell the people about the destruction that was about to come upon them. However, the people of the city repented of their evil ways. With their free will they changed their lives and, as a result their city was saved. The ability of precognition, then, is subject to many more influences than either telepathy or clairvoyance.

The fourth major category of ESP shown in the Cayce readings is *retrocognition*, which is the ability to see past events. For example, in the life readings (those readings which dealt with the soul) Cayce would often state significant happenings in a person’s life while going back over the years until the date of the person’s birth. In one reading he said, “1935-’32-disturbing periods-’31-’36-’26-not any too peaceful!” etc. (1650-1) In another life reading (1462-1) Cayce was given the incorrect date and location of birth for a young girl. In going back over the years he responded with, “We don’t find it here.” (He had been incorrectly told that the child was born on January 24, 1919, in Cleveland, Ohio.) Then, after a short pause, he finally said, “Yes, we have the record here (looks like it’s the wrong place and date).” It was later discovered that the girl had been born on the 23rd of January (a day earlier) in New York City and not in Cleveland.

More than eleven years before the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, Cayce’s readings described a sect of Judaism about which scholars knew little. This group was the Essenes. Cayce gave a great deal of information about their work and their life in the community. For example, he claimed that in the Essene society men and women worked and lived together. At the time of the reading, scholars believed that the Essenes were a monastic society composed exclusively of men. However, in 1951, more than six years after Cayce’s death, archaeologists made further excavations at Qumran near the site where the Dead Sea



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Scrolls were found. They discovered evidence that both men and women lived together in the Essene society.

These are just a few of the many examples of ESP in the Cayce readings. Cayce claimed that everyone was psychic to some degree because psychic activity was a natural ability of the soul. In fact, this idea perhaps best defines the readings' approach to psychic ability. Because "psychic is of the soul," the Cayce information suggests that it is relatively easy to induce personal psychic experiences. However, the phenomenon that manifests itself through psychic channels can oftentimes get us off the track. The readings suggest that instead of seeking psychic experiences for the sake of having them, we should seek only those within the context of spiritual growth, of learning about ourselves, or of being of service to others.

People often have the tendency to make psychic experiences seem unusual, out of the ordinary, special, somehow set apart or perhaps even frightening. However in the Cayce approach, psychic information is as natural as intuition or a "hunch." In addition, just because something is "psychic" does not mean it's 100% accurate. We may wish to work with psychic information to the same degree that we would listen to the advice of a trusted friend: It can be utilized as an additional tool for gathering insights and for making decisions – it shouldn't necessarily be given any more credence than information from any of our other friends (or senses); however, it shouldn't be given any less either. In time, individuals may work with their own intuition in such a way that it becomes as natural as using any of their other senses: taste, smell, touch, hearing, or sight.

### **Recommended Reading:**

*Awakening Your Psychic Powers*, by Henry Reed

*Edgar Cayce on ESP*, by Doris Agee

*Understand and Develop Your ESP*, by Mark Thurston

*Edgar Cayce's ESP*, by Kevin J. Todeschi

*The Outer Limits of Edgar Cayce's Power*, by Edgar Evans Cayce and Hugh Lynn Cayce



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### THE READINGS' APPROACH TO SPIRITUAL GROWTH, MEDITATION, AND PRAYER

One of the major subjects in the readings has to do with spiritual growth, meditation, and prayer. For this reason, over a period of eleven years (1931 - 1942) Edgar Cayce gave a series of 130 readings to a group of individuals (Study Group # 1) who were working with spiritual laws. Interestingly enough, some members of the group had originally been interested in obtaining information on how to become more psychic. Cayce responded that the goal was rather to become more spiritual, and, as individuals worked more consistently with spiritual principles, they would naturally become more psychic.

This set of readings on spiritual growth has served as a guide for many others from every religious background, enabling them to become more aware of themselves through cooperation, prayer, faith, meditation, and love. Thousands of individuals have studied this material compiled by the first Study Group. These interdenominational discussion groups examine these readings on soul growth in individual homes all over the world. (If you are interested in visiting a group near you, please contact A.R.E.'s Search for God Department.)

From Cayce's perspective, we are essentially spiritual beings who – at the moment – happen to be in the earth. We are not simply physical bodies with souls but are instead souls who happen to be in physical bodies as a means of gathering experience. [It is interesting to note that in the Bible a spiritual being was created (Genesis 1) before a physical being (Genesis 2).] Since part of our purpose in the earth is to come to know our true relationship with God, perhaps more than anything else meditation is a key to understanding that relationship.

Edgar Cayce began recommending meditation as early as 1921, long before many even knew what it was. Most of us began to hear about meditation during the 1960s and '70s. At first, we might have thought it was something unusual or even bizarre, or else we might have thought it was something practiced only by Eastern religions. However, a great deal of clinical research has proven that meditation can-at the very least-positively affect our health and well-being. By practicing this method of becoming silent, individuals can reduce their anxiety levels and learn to become more relaxed. Many physicians now recommend meditation as an effective way for their patients to lower their blood pressure.

In simplest terms, meditation is the practice of quieting our physical bodies and our minds, and focusing our attention inward instead of upon the outside world. It promotes coordination at three levels: physically, we begin to relax; mentally, our busied thoughts become quiet and, spiritually, we become re-energized and are able to deal more lovingly and effectively with the people and events around us. As we take the time each day to put away from our thoughts the countless cares with which we're bombarded, we can begin to reestablish an awareness of our own spiritual nature. In one respect prayer is talking to God, but meditation is listening to that portion of our being which is in constant communion with the Divine.

By following a few simple steps, anyone can meditate. Even a beginner can experience the calming effects of a few moments of purposeful silence.

If you would like to try to meditate, the first step is to get into a comfortable position. It's probably best to sit in a chair, keeping your spine straight your feet flat on the floor, and your eyes closed. Find a comfortable place for your hands, either put them in your lap or at your sides. Slowly take a few deep breaths and begin to relax. Breathe the air deep into your



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lungs, hold it for a moment and then slowly breathe it out. With your mind, search your body for any obvious tension areas or tight muscles. You can try to relieve the tension by deep breathing, imagining the area as relaxed or gently massaging any tight spots with your fingertips. When you have finished getting comfortable and relaxed, then you are ready to move on to the next step.

The second step is to begin to focus your mind on one, single, peaceful, calming thought. Instead of thinking about what went on at work today or what has to be done with the remainder of your day, try focusing on a thought such as "I am relaxed" or "I will be still and feel at peace." You can also use a Biblical verse or a phrase with a spiritual focus, such as "God is Love." These thoughts are also called affirmations. The first way to work with them is to try to clear your mind of everything else.

The first "stage" of actual meditation involves thinking about the message of your affirmation. In the last example cited above, you would think about the words *God is Love*. After a few moments of *thinking* the words, you should be able to move onto the second stage of meditation, which is *feeling* the meaning behind those words. For example, you can say the words "God is Love"; however, the feeling of those words can be much more meaningful than the actual words themselves.

The third step is to hold the feeling in silent attention, *without* needing the words of the affirmation. Gently bring your focus back to the words of the affirmation every time your mind begins to wander; that is to say, first begin thinking of the words of the affirmation, then try to concentrate on the *feeling* behind them. Don't let yourself become discouraged when you find yourself thinking more about distractions than focusing upon the affirmation. It will take time to teach your self to be able to think about only one thought. Spend from three minutes to fifteen minutes trying to hold the affirmation silently. The longer meditation periods are for when you have built up some experience.

The fourth step is to send out good thoughts or prayers to other people when you feel your meditation time is coming to an end. If you have been focusing on peace, then try to send a sense of that peace to someone about whom you're concerned. As you begin to practice meditation daily, it will become easier. You might also notice that the sense of peace inside you during meditation will begin to carry over into the different parts of your day.

Cayce's approach to meditation differs from that of some schools of thought that contend that because the mind gets in the way of the meditator, it should be blanked out. The readings suggest that mind is a constructive force, allowing for the closest attunement possible if used in the right way.

Through the regular practice of meditation we can begin to heal ourselves in body, mind, and soul. As we focus on a positive affirmation, we may find that our negative habit patterns begin to change to be more in keeping with a positive direction. It is while practicing the silence of meditation, by relaxing our physical bodies and quieting our conscious minds, that we can set aside our daily concerns for a moment and attempt to attune ourselves to the spiritual side of our nature.

From the standpoint of the Edgar Cayce readings, the most important relationship each of us has is that relationship with God. One of the most beneficial ways we can come to know that relationship is through the regular practice of meditation. For this reason, the readings suggest that meditation is something that every single soul should learn to do.



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### Recommended Reading:

*A Search for God*, Books I and II, compiled by the original study group  
*Soul Development: Edgar Cayce's Approach for a New World*, by Kevin J. Todeschi  
*Edgar Cayce and Christian Faith*, by Lynn Elwell Sparrow  
*Your Life: Why It Is the Way It Is and What You Can Do About It*, by Bruce McArthur  
*Twelve Lessons in Personal Spirituality*, by Kevin J. Todeschi  
*Meditation and the Mind of Man*, by Herbert Bruce Puryear and Mark Thurston  
*Healing through Meditation and Prayer*, by Meredith Ann Puryear  
*Meditation: Gateway to the Light*, by Elsie Sechrist  
*Meditation Made Easy* (home study cassette course available from A.R.E.)



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### THE EDGAR CAYCE LEGACY

What is most exciting about these readings is their internal consistency. When the more than 14,000 readings are taken as a whole, there is a wealth of material on medicine, history, life after death, dreams, psychic ability, attitudes and emotions, child-rearing, diet and relationships-providing helpful insights into nearly any topic imaginable. In the forty-three years that the readings were given, Cayce never heard a word he said in this sleep state, nor did he remember anything when he awoke. To understand the nature of his own work, he spent many long hours poring over the information in the readings that had been written down by his secretary. His story is really that of a humble man who went on to become one of the most helpful psychics the world has ever known. The information in the readings, available to us today, is his gift to the world.

Recommended Reading about Cayce's life:

*There Is a River*, by Thomas Sugrue

*Edgar Cayce-The Sleeping Prophet*, by Jess Steam

*Edgar Cayce-My Life as a Seer*, edited and compiled by A. Robert Smith

As an overview of the various subjects mentioned in the readings: *The Edgar Cayce Primer*, by Herbert B. Puryear

A.R.E. Members have access to all 14,306 readings in an online searchable database.

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