

ARE WE OUR PAST LIVES?

Soul Patterns in Personalities and Relationships



Marie's Past Lives

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CHAPTER ONE
LEAH OF FOURTH CENTURY PALESTINE
A Single Mother Takes Her Life

Reeling from shock after my first session with D'Ann, I could scarcely believe I had swallowed poison. I had used it to commit suicide nearly 1,800 years ago in the Holy Land as a girl I will call Leah, conceived out of wedlock by parents in their teens. I will refer to them as David and Mariam.

D'Ann is an energy healer who channels past lives through special spirit guides, and she revealed the tragedy. A woman's moaning and a baby's cooing can be heard on the tape of this session.

Because their families disowned them, Leah's parents moved to a larger town to hide their shame and to escape gossip. Unskilled, David labored at a low-paying job. Leah was born in their new home, and her parents were happy to have her. However, Mariam, who had been close to her family, missed them. She often cried and bitterly regretted the pain she had caused. David had not been close to his family.

Mariam's anger over their situation consumed her. She loved Leah, but she blamed her for the separation from her family and took out her frustrations on the girl. Leah tried to soothe her mother. Backrubs and other attention helped, but Mariam remained miserable.

When Leah was six, her mother bore a son I will call Ethan. The marriage continued to deteriorate, but David tolerated it. He tried to accommodate his wife and showed love for his daughter. When he paid attention to Leah, however, Mariam became jealous. She yelled at him and kicked him. A year after Ethan's birth David gave up on his wife. She was an unhealthy influence on the children and seemed incapable of

change. He sent her home to her family, and she never returned. Leah considered the abandonment her fault.

A widowed neighbor, Sarah, lovingly cooked, cleaned, did the laundry, and cared for Leah and Ethan. Thankful for a purpose in her old age, she charged little for her services. On the negative side, Sarah gossiped. At the age of eight Leah learned her mother was pregnant at the time of her marriage. Sarah allowed the child to see her mother's flaws, and this helped Leah understand she was not to blame for her mother's treatment of her. Unfortunately, Leah told her father "Grandma" had revealed the premarital pregnancy. David and Sarah fought, and the children lost their caregiver.

Without a divorce David could not remarry. Household help came and went. When Leah was twelve her father moved a woman into the home. He claimed he had married a woman I have named Rebecca.

Possessive, Rebecca pushed Leah aside when her father hugged her. David was "hers." Within two weeks Leah felt her dad had abandoned her as her mother had years before.

Leah took responsibility for her brother--feeding him, training him, and disciplining him. She felt abused in the daily battle with Rebecca. It was *futile* to compete with dad's new love. Leah tried to stay away from home. She protected Ethan, taking him with her wherever she went. Her friends didn't want him, but Leah brought him anyway.

David thought he was getting his life in order. Rebecca tried to convince him the children were doing well. David doubted her, but he led a challenging life dealing with poverty, child care, and the issue of annulment of his marriage. He avoided fighting with Rebecca.

Leah could talk to her father, but she felt he had betrayed her. Rebecca had stepped between them. Leah learned not to assert herself. If she tried to relate to her dad she would get hurt. The long-term frustration made her feel *worthless*, as if something were inherently wrong with her, and she could never be loved. Rage and depression brewed.

Unmarried, Leah became pregnant at the age of sixteen. This was not surprising because she lacked a religious or moral upbringing, and no one had taught her self-

respect. Leah's innate sense of right and wrong had not been nurtured. So long as her brother was cared for, she did as she wished. Sexual activity began at age thirteen. Men acted as if they loved her, and she desperately needed affection. Leah trusted them; they used her. Her child's father refused to marry her, making Leah feel even more *worthless*.

Her father encouraged this feeling when he refused to support her. Leah thought he did not love her, but he had no more to give. Leaving his hometown to escape gossip about the premarital pregnancy had meant great pain for him. Jealous Rebecca made life difficult when he had to account for everything he spent and for every minute he was away from her.

Leah felt close to her ten-year-old brother, and on a walk she confided in him revealing her pregnancy. He promised to stand by her. They ran away from home, found jobs, and moved into a one-room hovel.

When her daughter was born, Leah cried for twenty-four hours for the girl. She felt like a terrible mother for bringing a child into the world without a father. Leah hated all men except her brother.

Because of Leah's withdrawal, Ethan became frantic--he did not know what to do. The baby needed care, but in her tearful state Leah could not function. Ethan fled to a neighbor I have named Judith. She took all three of them into her home.

Judith nursed Leah, who slept around the clock. They became close friends, although Judith was a generation older than Leah. The neighbor worried about suicide, and for good reason. Leah considered killing herself to relieve everyone of the burden she had brought them, but she restrained herself for Ethan who worked two jobs to support the family.

Judith helped them in any way she could, such as caring for the baby and making Leah laugh. The young woman needed to vent the rage against her child's father who never saw them. Her efforts to involve him had proven *futile*, and it broke her heart. It was so unfair to the sweet two-year-old. With Judith's attention she thrived. Leah felt proud of her but *unworthy* to be her mother.

When Ethan found a full-time job, Leah assumed he and the child would survive without her. The nineteen-year-old could escape her misery. Leah told no one of her plan to poison herself, and she succeeded.

Leah's Heritage in Palestine

Historical background enables us to understand Leah's circumstances. She lived in the Holy Land around A.D. 325 during Roman occupation. In the fourth century the Roman Empire weakened, and in 395 it was split into the East and West Empires. Germanic tribes destroyed the western division, but the eastern part became the Byzantine Empire. Judea, or Palestine, was part of this empire, which survived until A.D. 1453. (1)

Christians were persecuted at this time because many Romans blamed them for difficult times. The followers of Christ had supposedly offended the Roman gods by practicing a new religion. In 303 Diocletian forbid Christians from worshiping, but in 313 Constantine I, Emperor of the western provinces, and Licinius, Emperor of the eastern provinces, gave them freedom of worship. Constantine defeated his co-emperor in 324 and in 330 moved his capital to Byzantium, which he rebuilt and named Constantinople. He was the empire's first Christian ruler. (2)

Leah lived in the Eastern Roman Empire in this time of change. At the start of the fourth century Palestine had a diverse ethnic and religious makeup. Pagans accounted for the majority in Judea, in the large towns, and in other parts of the Holy Land. Most Jews lived in Galilee, in marginal areas of the Judean hills, and in Tiberias. Samaritans made up a large portion of the population.

In Leah's time Christianity gained adherents. With Constantine I, Palestine became the Holy Land. In 326 he destroyed a Pagan temple and built a church on top of the Nativity grotto in Bethlehem. (3) Many other churches were built at holy places during the fourth century.

According to D'Ann, Leah had no moral training, so I believe she embraced neither Judaism nor Christianity. The young woman was likely a pagan, but there is no evidence from the energy healing.

Leah saw the decline of paganism during her lifetime. In Gaza, around A.D. 400, the last Pagan temple closed. (4) However, the Romans allowed Jews and Samaritans to exercise their customs and to keep some sacred places. The changes must have led to uncertainty among pagans and others. This may help explain Leah's behavior.

Poverty enveloped the lives of Leah and her family. They lived in a town and had to buy their food, and I imagine their diets consisted mainly of bread, figs, raisins, and vegetables such as cucumbers. The family likely went hungry after meager harvests. Their diet may have included insects, such as locusts, for protein.

Leah likely wore a tunic made of coarse linen or wool and leather sandals. Perhaps a veil completed her attire.

Leah and Me

D'Ann informed me all of Leah's feelings at death went with her to be resolved in future lifetimes. My soul brought them into the current life. As D'Ann spoke, the guides worked under the examination table of the peaceful, fragrant room where I lay beneath a soft blanket. She considered their position unusual because they normally work above the client. Their goal is to remove debris brought into the present from past lives for the client's physical, emotional, and spiritual benefit.

Emotions are energy which must be processed in a healthy, constructive way, or they will "create havoc," in D'Ann's words. In each lifetime souls choose to work on specific issues which may be selected to balance traits such as excessive pride, arrogance, or lack of concern for the unfortunate in previous lives. Souls might work their way out of a karmic situation like mine by walking a spiritual path. This can be accomplished through grace, forgiveness, and love.

Leah's main issues were *futility and worthlessness*. D'Ann recognized these as extreme challenges, and she sympathized with me. I must work through the irrational feelings about who I am. My head knows I am not worthless, but the feeling lingers. At the time of the healing I was trying to find a publisher for *Shadows on My Mind*. (5) D'Ann told me publication had eluded me because I lacked permission from myself. If I succeeded, I could no longer consider myself unworthy. The healer said I need to develop energetic permission to be successful, happy, and to feel good about myself.

Before incarnating we choose circumstances to heal our souls in order to work on karma and balance energy. Our lives will be shaped by the parents we pick because they not only provide our heredity but also place us in the environment where we mature.

They and other family members mold us. Parents and children are found in soul groups which spend numerous incarnations together.

In planning the current life my mother and father agreed to mental and emotional impairments which would create a dysfunctional home. These impediments served important functions. They would not only help balance my parents' own energy, but the hardship and pain would strengthen my six siblings and me and encourage us to feel compassion for others. I recognized this years after the HVT® healing sessions.

The tragic tale of Leah's life shook me to the core. I gasped when D'Ann revealed Leah had become pregnant out of wedlock at the age of sixteen. Leah's despair after her daughter was born made me weep. Sadness overcame me, and I shook inside as D'Ann revealed Leah had killed herself.

Leah's life struck a painful chord because my childhood mirrored hers although my family was not as impoverished as Leah's. I was not surprised my initial session with D'Ann involved a suicide. The HVT® spirit guides choose the life of lowest vibration to heal first. I had been unconsciously working to clear the karma from the Holy Land throughout my current life. From Leah I had brought *futility, worthlessness, and related issues* to clear. I felt a blow when D'Ann revealed the father who had failed to support Leah in her time of need had become my father in the current life. The mother who had abandoned me became my sister Terri and my dad's live-in girlfriend my mother. The session confirmed my brother in the Holy Land is now my son Colin. (At times I have thought of him as my little brother.)

My Family History

As my father had done in the Holy Land, Dad only nurtured me as a young child. During the healing session and afterward, old memories flooded in, childhood traumas surfaced, and I felt weak and ridden with anxiety. I needed to focus on good times.

My parents had been married for five years at the time of my birth, and they welcomed me. Mom and Dad bought a small house in their southeastern Michigan community. About a year later they moved it to Grandma and Grandpa Pace's nearby farm since Grandpa needed help working it.

Daddy taught me to write my name and to count before I entered kindergarten. He nicknamed me “Annie,” after his mother Anna. I became his companion on errands such as trips to farm supply stores. I remember traveling to the mill where the operator ground corn into cattle meal. When my father bought calves from other farmers to raise in our dairy, I went with him. Sometimes we stopped at a bar at the end of the day. Daddy had a beer while I enjoyed a bottle of orange pop.

Daddy and I rarely took trips after I entered school, and I missed them. On mill days I didn’t want to go to afternoon kindergarten. One day I ran from the classroom when I heard Daddy’s truck passing on the street. After that he took a different route to the mill.

By the time I reached my eighth birthday, my brother Loren was three and old enough to accompany Dad. To my sorrow our companionship ended. From then on I received mostly negative attention from my father notably sarcasm and punishment for misbehavior. I felt crushed and avoided him whenever possible.

Afraid I would hurt myself, and unable to withstand his yelling, I never drove the tractor for him as a child. The work was risky for pre-teens, but Dad needed the help. Because I could not offer it, I felt *worthless* to him and our family.

I recently learned my father likely agreed before this life to emotionally abuse and neglect me to make me feel *worthless*. I needed to sink to this state because Leah had felt *worthless* before she took her life. Then I could begin healing.

Dad’s frustration made abuse more likely. He was barely able to stay in the dairy business in the early 1960’s when his herd was struck with Brucellosis, a bacterial disease which can be transmitted to humans. Over half the cows had to be destroyed, and our income fell drastically.

Later that decade Dad felt forced to stop selling milk. At that time few family farms remained in our area. The local dairy had gone out of business, and Dad would have needed to purchase an expensive bulk tank to hold milk at the farm. He stored milk in large cans, but no dairy would accept them after the one nearby had closed. Truck drivers from other dairies pumped milk from farmers’ tanks into their trucks for transport. As a small farmer Dad could not afford a bulk tank, so he sold the cows and went to work as a guard at the salt plant four miles away.

Dad worked enough hours to qualify as a workaholic. The cows needed to be milked twice every day. He rarely took time for fun and never played ball, cards, or board games with us. I can recall only two out-of-town trips with him in my entire childhood. Once he took the family to the Detroit Zoo. On the way a car nearly hit us when Dad drove in the wrong direction on a one-way street. The other time we crossed the Blue Water Bridge for a picnic in Canada. We did enjoy other picnics with Farm Bureau families or in our woods where we gathered blackberries.

After he knew he could no longer make a living farming, Dad went to bed early, and relatives voiced their concern. He seemed to feel better when he became a guard in the nearby town. Dad still kept a cow for milk, cattle for beef, and chickens for eggs and roasting. He cultivated corn and oats to feed the animals, and his wheat crop paid our annual property taxes. My parents continued to tend a large garden. Dad's depression was not as severe as it might have been had he been forced to give up farming entirely.

His sadness ran much deeper than agony over the loss of the livelihood he loved. From childhood on Dad had suffered from depression. His family called him "Gump," meaning grump. He never smiled in pictures taken during his childhood and youth.

Some considered Dad a gentleman farmer. Although he had only an eighth-grade education, he spent most of his leisure time reading, and some nights he attended classes in agriculture. Every year the vice president of the nearby town's largest company invited him to a Chamber of Commerce luncheon at a historic inn. Wearing the blue suit which matched his eyes, Dad looked handsome, and I felt proud.

He was proud of me too, but I seldom heard about it from him. Mom told me how happy I made him when second grade teachers selected me as an angel for the school's Christmas play. When I did well in high school science, he called me Madam Curie.

Dad tried to make me into a lady. I liked the pretty patent leather shoes I wore to school with my dresses. My parents taught me to avoid rough games, where I could skin a knee or soil my clothes. Nor was I allowed to linger in the barn. Dad ordered me to the house where I could help Mom with her chores.

Leah reared her brother Ethan, and I cared for my sisters and brothers, dressing them, feeding them, and changing their diapers. Born just before my fifth birthday, Loren was my special baby. I loved to dress him and give him rides in the baby buggy.

Mom would allow me, and later my sisters, to help with child care and dishes, but she protected us by refusing to let us operate the wringer washing machine, and she supervised us at the stove into our teen years.

She would not let her daughters clean house either. Therein lay the major conflict in the family. Mom refused to part with old clothing, worn out furnishings, magazines, and newspapers. Consequently, clothing, not all of it awaiting ironing, lay in piles near the ironing board that stood permanently in the dining room. Stacks of papers and magazines were placed in the living room, dining room, and in our parents' bedroom. I knew of no one else's home as untidy as ours.

The disarray frustrated Dad, but he could do nothing to persuade Mom to clear it. As my sisters and I grew older, we attempted to help Mom organize, but she picked fights with us or redirected our energy. After several years I learned arguing with Mom was *futile*, as it had been for Leah with Rebecca, and I became resigned to her poor housekeeping. My second oldest sister, Betty, persisted longer, but she finally grew tired of Mom's distracting her with tasks like baking cakes. Terri, the youngest girl, cooked to free our mother for cleaning, but Mom only cut out advice columns, pattern offers, recipes, and poetry from newspapers while Terri worked. After Mom's passing we found dresser drawers full of clippings. Her underwear hung in the closet.

We girls all suffered because of our messy home. My oldest sister Sandy, Betty, and I all had friends, but we discouraged them from visiting us. Betty never spoke to one girl after she made a surprise visit and saw our disorganized house. The clutter affected Terri most. Ashamed, she decided not to make friends.

Years after Mom's death at the age of seventy-nine, my sisters began to understand the extent of her mental illness. When they cleaned Mom's house, Betty and Sandy found bags of old shoelaces, toothpaste caps, and garters from Mom's old girdles. Her brother Kent told Sandy and me he had never seen anyone who kept house like Mom. As an insurance agent Uncle Kent had entered many homes over the years.

Mom was obsessed with the idea she would not have enough food, clothing, or household goods for her family in part because of her experiences during the Great Depression. She had escaped hunger by living on a farm, but her jobs as a young adult could not support her. Mom had trouble purchasing the clothing she needed on her department store earnings of six dollars per week. Years later she kept nearly all our childhood clothing, even when it was too small for anyone to wear. I imagine magazines, which she hoarded in her later years, meant luxury during the Great Depression.

As she had done as Rebecca in the Holy Land, Mom controlled Dad. I see his occasional drunkenness as an attempt to escape his unhappy life. This brought more conflict with Mom. As a preschooler, I witnessed scenes like this:

Mama's shouting awakened me in the middle of the night. I heard Daddy vomit in the bathroom.

"You damn fool," she yelled. "Drinking again. I'm gonna leave. I don't have to stay around here."

Afraid to move, I would lie still in my bed for several minutes. They were at it again. What if she left this time? What would happen to Sandy and me? Would Daddy hire a colored wench to take care of us as Mama had threatened?"

Long after Mom cleaned it up, I could smell the sickly odor of vomit as Sandy's and my bedroom nestled next to the small house's only bathroom. The tension from our parents' fighting kept me awake as I relived the conflict between my parents and the subconscious agony of my mother's abandonment in the Holy Land.

After our brother Loren's birth, Dad settled down. He quit smoking cigarettes and rarely came home drunk. Although I had frequent runny noses, and Mom was allergic to cigarette smoke, Dad had continued his habit. As an infant Loren developed asthma, and to the relief of the entire family, Dad traded cigarettes for cigars and a pipe.

Tension still filled our home, and our parents' arguments continued. Mom was sensitive to criticism especially from Dad's sisters. When she felt they insulted her, she took it out on us. On one occasion Mom complained to Dad his sister Gwen had hurt her. When he showed little empathy, Mom turned her anger inward. She grabbed a butcher knife from the stove drawer. "I'm gonna slash my throat in Freeman's barn," she screamed.

Dad restrained her as she ran out the back door. “Annie, call the police!” He yelled.

I picked up the receiver, but when the operator answered, Dad told me to put down the phone. Mom had returned to the house, sobbing.

What if Daddy hadn’t been around? I sat and stared at the wall for what seemed like a long time. Tears did not come. Had the scene brought back Leah’s despair in Palestine? I felt the pain abandonment created for loved ones like the two-year-old daughter Leah had left.

The Impact of Mental Disorders

Early in life I guessed something was wrong with my mother. Grandma Pace, who lived next door, kept a neat house even though she gave herself insulin shots every day, and her legs were always swollen. Although she rarely laughed, Dad’s mom seemed contented most of the time. Grandma passed on when I was seven, and I was devastated because of the loss of love and stability she had provided.

After I became a psychologist, I realized my mother suffered from Attention Deficit Disorder (AD/HD), depression, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). In a later chapter Mom’s past-life issues will be discussed, including impulsivity. She illustrated this when she grabbed the kitchen knife and threatened suicide. Impulsivity is a major characteristic of AD/HD.

AD/HD involves a brain dysfunction which affects many aspects of the sufferer’s life--at school, at work, and in relationships with family and friends. Some individuals have the hyperactive component, and others do not. Diagnosis ideally comes before the child reaches seven years of age. The non-hyperactive, but inattentive, child may stare out the window of her classroom when she finds herself unable to concentrate on her work. A hyperactive child may get out of his chair and move around the classroom disturbing the other children.

Behavior indicative of AD/HD includes fidgeting with hands or feet, difficulty remaining seated or squirming while seated, easy distraction, trouble awaiting one’s turn, blurting out answers to questions, difficulty in following instructions, and shifting from one uncompleted activity to another. (6) All of this affects school performance, and some

of these behaviors impair the child outside of school. Trouble playing quietly, excessive talking, interrupting others, and failure to listen strains relationships. Children with AD/HD often have problems making and keeping friends. Their family life suffers as well.

The symptoms of AD/HD are evident before age seven, and many struggle with it throughout their lives. Hyperactivity frequently decreases in adolescence, but the hallmark of the disorder, difficulty sustaining attention for some activities, persists. Teens affected by AD/HD often remain impulsive. According to Dr. Russell Barkley, (7) an expert on the disorder, children affected by it know the rules but lack the self control to follow them. This is also true for teens and adults with the disorder.

Psychiatrists Edward Hallowell and John Ratey suggest AD/HD is a basic problem with inhibition. People with it become angry more quickly than others because they do not control their impulses as well. “They lack the little pause between impulse and action that allows most people to be able to stop and think.” (8)

Anger in those with AD/HD has biological roots, and it builds up with the years because of life’s overload of frustration. Failures and misunderstandings exact a heavy toll on an afflicted person’s self-esteem. This leads to more anger.

My mother was a very angry person. Like Rebecca, she was possessive. Mom discouraged her children’s friendships; she became angry when she thought Sandy and I were becoming too close to our cousins.

Rarely did a day go by when she failed to lash out at someone, or vilify a person in her absence. Mom complained about Aunt Gwen’s backbiting, but our mother often criticized others. Terri said she learned to gossip “at Mom’s knee.”

Some time ago Terri found how harmful it can be. Around 10:00 on an April night my sister called, desperation in her voice. She hadn’t been able to sleep since she learned a letter defaming her had been circulating at the hospital where she worked. A wealthy patient had complained about her care. She cited poor treatment from a nurse named Terri accusing her of displaying arrogance and incompetence. The woman had confused another nurse named Terri with my sister. Worst of all, the nursing supervisor of another group had photocopied the patient’s letter and sent it around the hospital.

Terri received cold treatment from other workers and felt her reputation had been shattered. She considered suing the hospital.

After the matter was rectified, Terri received apologies, but damage to one's reputation can be slow to heal. My sister learned a lot from the experience. When she traveled north the following July, I saw a different woman. Anger had been replaced with understanding. Terri knew the evil of gossip. The situation mirrored her life as unhappy Mariam, who endured disapproval for conceiving Leah before marriage. This time Terri worked through the anger repaying the karmic debt to herself.

Anger came from the Holy Land into this life for resolution. Terri has used it well, to advocate for patients and her children. Unfortunately, she has turned some of it against herself.

In part because of our age difference, Terri and I are not as close to each other as either of us is to our sister Sandy. By the time Terri, our parents' sixth living child, was born I was a twelve-year-old burnout. I had cared for three other siblings, and I needed a break. Sandy and our brother Loren nurtured Terri. Both Mom and Dad adored the pretty blonde, but they were too busy to give her the attention she needed.

Terri and I now enjoy a closer relationship, in part because of common interests. Metaphysical experiences have opened up a world beyond for us. When I spoke of our lives in the Holy Land, Terri apologized for her behavior as Mariam.

Terri and I enjoy photographing people and scenery. I only take snapshots, but Terri and her husband have a darkroom. After Mom's death they made copies of old pictures. We distributed them among grateful family members.

In her current life Terri has shown spiritual progress by her ability to separate from her birth family. She moved from Michigan in her 20s, and she has created a full life for herself. Perhaps because she left her birth family in the Holy Land as a teen, Mariam failed to make a successful break. She blamed her daughter Leah for her unhappiness leading to much grief for both her husband and her daughter.

Mariam was only slightly older when she gave birth to Leah than I was when Mom gave birth to Terri. Neither Mariam nor I were able to nurture the little girls. Mariam was bitter because she could not spend time with her birth family. Still a child myself, and tired of caring for siblings, I paid little attention to Terri.

Abandonment was the issue, after violent death the most common trauma connected with past lives. Mariam, now Terri, abandoned Leah, now me. The problem was less severe in the current life. As her eldest sister I was not expected to satisfy Terri's emotional needs. Mom told Sandy about Terri's impending birth before she revealed it to me because she expected a negative reaction. Mom was right. Her joking with Dad about their sixth child sickened me. In their poverty they were bringing yet another baby into our crowded home, and I was tired of helping raise infants.

But my feelings ran deeper than this. At a soul level I realized Mariam was returning as my sister, and I wondered how she would treat me. Could I forgive her? Because Terri is neither my mother nor my child I do not believe we planned to heal my soul scar from the Holy Land desertion. Terri became my sister to balance only a portion of the negative karma her soul incurred when Mariam left Leah. Since Terri and I love each other and get along well, we have succeeded.

Dad showered a lot of affection upon Terri from her birth despite the fact, as Mariam, she had left him (David) in the Holy Land. The karma from that life might have been balanced in other lives.

Terri and Colin do not know each other well; Terri left Michigan shortly after Colin was born. They seem to like one another. Maybe the karma from Mariam abandoning him (Ethan) in the Holy Land was also taken care of in previous lives. Dad's father-son relationship with Colin in the Holy Land was not addressed in the current life. Dad made his transition before Colin's birth.

Mom brought in much negativity to resolve with her family. She expressed her anger by shouting at her children and demeaning other relatives. The stress of raising seven children overwhelmed her--she seemed less able to cope than other women in similar circumstances. Mom's disorders impaired her significantly. Hyperactive, she ran about the house from one activity to the next. If anyone questioned her, or stepped into her path, Mom would yell. Other women did not scream or cry as much as she.

Mom was also a perfectionist, a common quality in those with AD/HD. No one's work could please her. I recall much humiliation in the kitchen over failure to mash potatoes correctly. I could do little to satisfy her, and I learned *futility* from my mother.

Mom's anger over small mistakes, blaming others, and her general oversensitivity, indicate depression. (9) More obvious behaviors were frequent crying and threats of suicide. A pessimist, Mom believed no one cared about her. When she died we would only miss her for the work she did.

A depressive personality is not full blown at birth. Character develops around biology. A person may have a biological tendency toward depression, seeing the negative rather than the positive, and the trials of life reinforce it.

Mom, like many who lived through the Great Depression of the 1930's, harbored deep-seated fears. Her biology combined with this period in history to warp her personality, leading to a compulsion to save. Mom's Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder was not severe, but a mild impairment can compromise us. (10)

People often have aspects of more than one malady. Probably no one's brain is "normal" in that every part and system operates as well as every other part and system, and all functions are optimal. My mother had AD/HD in addition to depression and Obsessive-Compulsive disorder (OCD). One third of those with AD/HD have features of OCD. (11) Mom's obsession may have overridden the distractibility of AD/HD. Some with both disorders become workaholics.

Mom survived with little sleep. When she was not awake nights caring for infants, she sewed, canned fruits or vegetables, or candled and weighed eggs for market. She could focus upon these activities, and this seemed to quiet her. Otherwise, she used anger toward others to slow down her noisy brain. Her nearly constant activity with tasks would qualify her as a workaholic.

Those with OCD are unable to filter out internal stimuli, such as a hand washing compulsion, but those with AD/HD are unable to filter the stimuli of their environment. Sights, smells, sounds and touch can overwhelm them, and they fail to concentrate on important activities. A boy with AD/HD may be distracted from his math problems by a chirping bird outside, a fan's breeze on his skin, or an insect crawling on the floor.

I believe I inherited AD/HD from my mother. As a child I had trouble concentrating on my work at school. From the third grade on I brought home stacks of books. When Mom helped me, I focused much better than I did in the classroom with the distraction of the sight and sound of other children. Seat work bored me, and I often did

better on tests than on daily assignments. I did not need the repetition other students required to learn.

Lack of social skills, common in AD/HD, alienated me from the other children. In the classroom I wiggled in my chair and blurted out the answers to questions before teachers had completed them. I had trouble waiting in lines, especially the lunch line, and in communicating with other children. Afraid of rejection, I rarely approached my classmates. I generally played with only one other girl.

Social failure led to a lack of self-esteem and contributed to depression, a soul pattern for me. Leah's lack of self-respect resulted in her "loose" sexual behavior.

She redirected her anger with the father of her child, who refused to marry her, toward herself and became depressed. Also lacking self-esteem, my mother punished herself when her sister-in-law insulted her. Dad saved Mom from physical harm, but she threatened suicide many times during my childhood. Leah went through with it leaving her depression for resolution in future lifetimes.

Maintaining self-esteem proves difficult for people with AD/HD. In addition to failure at school and at work, they fit poorly into society in other ways. Behaviors like intruding on others, bossiness, and failure to follow instructions alienate both children and adults from their peers. This hurts the often sensitive person with AD/HD; lack of self-esteem profoundly affects his life. It contributes to a feeling of *worthlessness*.

In this lifetime I chose to work on *worthlessness*. The failure of Leah to value herself caused what psychotherapist Roger Woolger (12) calls samskaras, permanent scars which pass from life to life. The same failure may be repeated from one life to another.

I believe some soul patterns, such as low self-esteem, can be considered scars, and I call them soul scars. In an effort to heal they appear in successive lifetimes. Rebecca, my mother in the current life, probably suffered from a poor self image. Would a woman who felt good about herself move in with a married man and his children? Rebecca showed insecurity by her jealousy with respect to David, which led to Leah and Ethan spending most of their time away from home.

My mother and I were also together in a life during the French Revolution. This will be explored in another chapter. Conceiving me out-of-wedlock again, she probably

suffered from poor self-esteem in the French life as well. Because she lacked the courage to acknowledge me as her daughter, she and her titled husband treated me as a poor relative in their luxurious home.

Mom tried to heal our relationship in the current life, but with her disorders this proved a daunting task. As the eldest daughter I was Mom's favorite. Unlike my sisters, I received dresses Mom made late at night. I especially appreciate the last one, my college graduation dress. The white sheath, which I wore with my Phi Kappa Phi honor society pendant, still hangs in my closet. I have grown two sizes since college, and I will probably never wear it again, but I treasure it.

Mom encouraged us in school, a valuable gift. Throughout my elementary years Mom helped me with the school work I could not complete in the classroom. After eighth grade my concentration improved, as often happens in adolescents with AD/HD. In high school I earned good grades like my siblings. Both parents expected us to attend college, and all but Renee, afflicted with a severe mental illness, have at least bachelor's degrees.

Mom's many skills helped her compensate for her disabilities, and they enriched our lives. In her old age she spent much of her time crocheting lovely afghans. As a young woman she had displayed talent in fine needlework. When I was a child Mom crocheted doilies and Lover's Knot around handkerchiefs, which she gave as birthday and Christmas gifts. Women loved the intricate lace. Mom also embroidered dresser scarves and pillow cases and crocheted around the edges. The colors in her flowers harmonized beautifully. Sometimes I think Mom's extraordinary embroidery and crocheting belong in a museum.

On my bedroom wall hangs Mom's only painting, a bouquet of blue, gold, and white flowers. Terri took Mom to a class in oil painting, and Mom produced a professional-looking picture on her first try. This astounded the instructor.

Talents like this come from past lives. Perhaps Mom was an artist long ago. I wonder if she refined her crocheting in France, during our 18th century life. Noble women from the middle ages on often spent their leisure time on needlework.

At the end of my mother's life a rewarding relationship blossomed. On weekends I cleaned around the clutter in Mom's house, prepared her meals, and watched movies

with her. Because stories of her experiences held my interest, I recorded some family history.

Those with OCD know their obsessions are wrong. The summer before her cancer returned, Mom, at age seventy-eight, tried her best to clean one room, her home's only bath. She organized cosmetics, toiletries, and cleaning supplies. Her poor housekeeping embarrassed her, but Mom told me this was all she could manage. Thus she made peace with herself, and I forgave her. I accepted the *futility* we both faced and grew spiritually.

In the last years of Mom's life we made much progress in working through our negative karma from past lives, and I do not think she and I will need another lifetime together. We may choose to have relationships in future incarnations, however.

Mom spared us the anguish of a lengthy death, her last gift to her family. At the age of seventy-five, she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. After a mastectomy and chemotherapy, Mom remained cancer-free for three years. Then, in the winter of 1996, an ophthalmologist found the disease in her retinas. Cancer in her eyes illustrates synchronicity because it prevented Mom from seeing her clutter. This might be seen as a blessing.

Spring radiation treatments stopped the cancer in Mom's eyes saving her from blindness, but by summer it had spread to other parts of her body. My brave mother accepted the disease as part of her heritage; both her parents had succumbed to cancer.

In June Mom nearly died on the second evening of a hospital stay. Sandy, Loren, and his wife stood watch at her bedside as I whispered in her ear giving her permission to go. (She thought I was an angel.) With medication Mom lived for several more days. Waiting for Terri and her husband to come from the south, she had postponed death.

At home Mom lasted only five days. She made her transition after Terri arrived. Early in her nursing career my sister had worked on the oncology floor of a major hospital. Terri could only get a few days off work, and she was to leave on July 4th. Mom passed on the night before Independence Day.

Colin, Nat and I were in our psychologist's office when Mom died. In and out of consciousness, she had likely heard me as I discussed my apprehension about caring for

her when Terri left. I do not cope well with illness, and at the time Nat's mother was living with us as she recuperated from a stroke.

My mom had psychic ability and greater control of her body than most of us. With concentration she could endure pain and on occasion prevent herself from vomiting. I believe she chose to pass on while Terri attended her to spare me. Her unselfish act cancelled any remaining karma between us.

Until recently I needed to resolve karma with my father. Like my mother, Dad was depressed, and like her he yelled at us. Dad was especially harsh with me.

Reading *Your Soul's Plan: Discovering the Real Meaning of the Life You Planned Before You Were Born* reminded me Dad and I had predetermined our relationship before we entered the current life. Robert Schwartz's book features examples of pre-birth conversations between those planning to incarnate. Schwartz reveals Jon, who would become a homosexual, asked his father to shame him to strengthen his will and face his destiny. (13)

Jon's future father expressed sorrow for the pain he would cause his son, and I believe my dad agreed to emotionally abuse and neglect me but felt remorse for the hurt I would experience. After his death I heard the words "I'm sorry" over and over in my mind. *Your Soul's Plan* reminded me of his apologies, and I forgave a father with his own issues among them a struggle with depression.

In her *Sacred Contracts*, Carolyn Myss (14) writes all depression arises out of feelings of disempowerment. Working on the farm, Dad enjoyed the closeness with nature and his independence. His worst struggle with depression came before he had to quit the job he loved.

Like psychotherapist Roger Woolger, (15) my father was born depressed. Woolger does not consider his childhood experiences the origin of his depressive temperament. He reawakened with the pessimism and despair he had died with in a past life. All of my family from the Holy Land are (were) depressed: my parents, my sister Terri, and my son Colin. I am also affected. We brought in sadness from these lives, and we have all struggled with it in this time.

It appears Mom and I accomplished the most karmic balancing in the current life. My intuition tells me Dad and I had planned to resolve more karma than we did. I hope my forgiving him will cancel the debt.

It took dysfunctional parents, as well as my own mental disorders of AD/HD and depression, to bring out Leah's issues of *futility and worthlessness* and begin to heal them. In addition, many souls choose difficult circumstances to develop empathy for others and advance spiritually. I thank my parents for teaching me compassion.

Learning to manage my AD/HD symptoms has elevated my self-esteem. Calendars, daily planning, and notes to myself provide structure and help regulate my life. I concentrate better when I drink cola and work in a quiet room. Success in many areas of my life, such as writing, has helped me to overcome *futility and worthlessness*.

In Chapter Two, I explore a life in A.D. 10th century Greece. I was born into a wealthy family enabling me to pursue spirituality for a time.

Buy the book now at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).