

CHAPTER 1

The Sphinx

Giza Plateau, Egypt · October 4, 2008

I have always sent you all the help you ever needed,
before you even knew what to ask for.

—The Sphinx

The alarm jolts us awake. Exhausted, our heads fall back into our pillows. It's 3:30 a.m. in Cairo, Egypt, another early start of a day. This was common fare for a trip with James Ray.

We're staying in a beautiful modern hotel overlooking the Nile. It's partly a waste, considering how little time we have spent in our room since returning to Cairo. A few minutes later, the phone rings with our secondary wakeup call. This is not our earliest morning call. That would have been the first day, when we awoke at 2:00 a.m., packed our bags and placed them outside our door by 2:15 a.m., then arrived in the lobby by 2:30 a.m. That day, we were headed off to the airport for the first of three separate flights around Egypt in a single day.

Today, there were no flights scheduled, just a pre-dawn bus ride to the Giza Plateau. This was the last day of a busy weeklong trip with the World Wealth Society (WWS). If I had any idea what was waiting for me in the dark stillness of that timeless place, I would've been more excited.

It was time to meet the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid.

James often said that you could know about something by learning about it, but to truly know it, you must experience it. Today, we are going to get to know the Sphinx and the Great Pyramid. It is James' M. O. to make the end of an event or trip the "grand finale." This past week in Egypt has truly been a trip of a lifetime for my husband, Richard, and me, so I'm equally apprehensive and excited to see what our day on the Giza plateau will yield. My mild apprehension stems from the fact that each day thus far, a growth opportunity sprung up that forced me to take a hard look at my core beliefs, particularly untrue belief patterns that do not serve me. While ultimately rewarding, this is often a painful experience. What would I learn today—and what would be the "cost" of that lesson?

As our bus moves along the mostly deserted Cairo streets, my trepidation quickly yields to awe as the top of one pyramid becomes visible over the surrounding apartment buildings in the predawn light. There they are! They're real! There would be no disappointment here today. Our bus is the first to pull up to the guarded gate at the base of the plateau. After much "discussion" in Arabic, the guards, brandishing automatic rifles, pull open the gates and step aside to let the two buses pass. A jeep with heavily armed military men falls into line behind us as we drive by the Great Pyramid.

The magnificence of the pyramid exceeds anything I have ever imagined. The entire Giza plateau sits silent and empty, as if frozen in time—the time of millennia past, yet also seemingly

devoid of time. It seems completely out of sync with our understanding of time. Our large buses appear as mere toys next to the huge solid unmovable expanse of history beside us. From the moment we passed through the gates, everyone in the bus fell silent. Any spoken words would only violate the private experience each of us was having. Especially words spoken in English, a language three millennia removed from this sacred giant.

It was just a few minutes before dawn. In just a few hours, the entire area would swarm with tourists, buses, camels, horses and locals hawking anything they can sell. But for now, the entire plateau is ours and ours alone.

We drive slowly on the road past the Great Pyramid, and then proceed further along until we pull to a stop alongside the Sphinx. Its appearance doesn't disappoint. The Sphinx wears a deep rose color in the predawn light, a perfect color for the first activity on our final day in Egypt: a meditation between the paws of the Sphinx at sunrise!

The Sphinx faces east, greeting the rising sun. It is a symbol of eternal rebirth for both the new day and, possibly, the birth of our new selves. With each "spiritual" experience perceived as either "good" or "bad," we change. Each time, an aspect of our old selves "dies" so a new self can come forward. Like the experience of a paradigm shift where we see or feel something we never perceived before, we alter our conscious perception to the point that we can never see the old way again. Whether or not you believe Leonardo da Vinci purposely left a V-shaped space to the right of Jesus in his painting of the "Last Supper" to illustrate the sacred feminine, you cannot avoid seeing it every time you view the image once pointed out. This also goes for the feminine appearance of the first person to his right, which some believe to be Mary Magdalene. Nothing changed in the painting, but your perception of it changes forever. There is no turning back to the way you viewed the painting before.

The acknowledgment of rebirth represents just one facet of the Sphinx. In nature, rebirth happens effortlessly at the triumphant rising of the sun every morning. The Sphinx is also thought to be an earth-based keeper of the Akashic Records, the detailed record of everything that has happened in the past and will ever happen in the future.

Such encounters with the deepest aspects of the spiritual life have been daily occurrences all week. Earlier, we followed the ancient path of the initiate. It began with a visit to the feminine (emotional) energies of Philae Island and the Temple of Isis, followed by an acknowledgment of the masculine (logical) energies at Abu Simbel on the Egypt/Sudan border. In these visits, we were reminded of the need for emotion and intellect to work harmoniously within each of us. Our history is dotted with leaders who ranged too far to one side or the other. No one wants to be led by someone who is very smart but without compassion, nor do we want to follow a person who makes decisions purely on emotional grounds without logical thought being applied. This is the same whether we are male or female. We need both to be complete and effective.

During the week, we traveled up the Nile, which in Egyptian cosmology represents a spinal column. We stopped at the temples built on locations thought to represent the energies of the seven chakras in the human body. James gave us an assignment to review and fine-tune our goals and intentions for our lives. We formed and wrote down short, intermediate, and long-term goals, evaluated them for the "negative" consequences that accompany any goal, adjusted where necessary, and recommitted to them. Now we were ready to compare the activities or achievements to which we were going to commit our energies, and strive to attune the plan for our lives to the Akashic records already held by the Sphinx. That was just one possible experience we could have during our meditation between its paws.

As the sun rose in the east, we became aware we are always capable of a rebirth, a fresh start, and the dropping away of some more of our limiting beliefs that have kept us from

attaining our goals. That was then (our old selves), and this is now (who we are at this very moment). The sunrise heralds a new day, a new beginning, as it does every day. It signifies the “Now,” each moment of the new day in which everything and anything is possible if you’re willing to commit to doing what it takes to bring your goals into form. In our plane of existence, this movement progresses from thoughts to feelings, then accelerates into the action that produces results.

But we’re not there yet. We wait for the guards to unlock the gate that blocks the path to the Sphinx. A large fence surrounds it and prevents visitors from getting near the monument. We’re allowed in as members of a trip full of special features and privileges.

After facing east to offer a brief salutation to the rising sun, we move between the Sphinx’s paws to find our places to sit for meditation. James offers a quick discussion that touches upon the reasons why this ground is so hallowed. The granite altar between the Sphinx’s paws was likely used by Moses, and if you believe Jesus spent time in Egypt, he surely sat in silent contemplation where we were now sitting. Next, James pointed out the large granite slab standing against the chest of the Sphinx, drawing our attention to the rectangular squares that many believe represent the Akashic Records. Whether they are stored physically in the Sphinx or in a room below, or delivered via infusion of thought directly from the Sphinx to you, is a matter of speculation and debate. Anyway you look at it, we are sitting on a very special place on our planet and my butt is firmly planted on the ground with my back resting on the inside of the Sphinx’s left paw. As the sun ascends higher over the horizon, directly between the Sphinx’s paws, I feel its heat bathe the left side of my face. As I look up to my right, the rose-colored face of the Sphinx lightens.

James instructs us to close our eyes and then resumes his talk. I truly don’t remember much of what he says; his voice is melting away behind the chant of gratitude I have begun. My legs start to vibrate, and small energy tremors move through my body and exit from the tips of my fingers. I just let it flow; for how long, I have no idea. I’m at peace. I feel gently stroked and rocked in the arms of this mighty statue. Everything was perfect, as it should be.

In an instant, I’m jerked to attention: time to go over the life plan I had developed for myself over the last week. I did not know how much time would be available for me to finish. With nervous excitement, I started to review some of my “easier” goals. Within my mind, I ask if a desired goal will happen in the next six months. If I perceive a “No” answer, then I ask if it will manifest within the next year. If still not, then I would ask about the next two years. Throughout this deeply inner exercise, I “feel” or get the impression of a yes or no answer.

After moving quickly through the goals in which I was less personally vested, I tentatively move to my two “big goals.” For most of my adult life, I’ve struggled with a weight that has hovered somewhere in the 350 lbs. range. I say “somewhere,” because I stopped weighing myself a long time before. Why subject myself to the heartbreak every morning of having a scale confirm what I already knew? I was a failure. How can I be successful at anything if I am constantly failing at such a basic discipline as keeping my weight in line? Anything that would appear as success in my life did not seem real to me; how could it be real? I lived in fear “they,” the people around me, would figure out I was an incompetent individual.

Did that make sense, given the many successes I had already created in my life? No, but this fat-equals-failure dynamic constantly accompanied me like an unwelcome shadow. I would lose weight and then put it all back on—and then some. In my life, I have lost more than 100 lbs. three different times, only to gain it all back. I just didn’t want to think about the possibility of going through the physical, mental and emotional rollercoaster for a fourth time. The only thing

worse than being severely overweight is to make the Herculean effort to lose so much, then have the effort be for naught when the weight returned.

That being said, as I sit at the base of the Sphinx, my current weight is severely impacting my health and limiting my abilities to undertake the activities I desire. I am blessed with a husband who loves me independent of my weight, but he became rightfully alarmed at the results of recent blood tests and physicals. Richard is Mr. Fit, a two-time marathon runner and disciplined exerciser. Even though he loves me unconditionally, he could not understand why I failed to keep the weight off. My excess weight made it difficult for us to share the activities we loved to do together, like hiking and snorkeling. He told me often he feared losing me, his best friend, to a heart attack or stroke.

So once again I went to battle and worked hard to understand why I used the excess weight for protection. I lost a lot of weight, which I could tell by the bagginess of my clothing, and was starting to feel hopeful that this lifetime enemy could be beaten back one more time. When I stepped on the scale, the number 308 stared up at me. What should have felt like a proud, successful moment instead sank my heart and brought tears to my eyes. Even if I lost another hundred pounds, I would still be obese. I had such a long way to go. Even with all the personal work, the spiritual journey over the last few years, and gaining a strong understanding of how I used food for protection from a dangerous world, did I have the audacity to think I could finally succeed?

I tried to quiet my racing mind of these negative thoughts. I ask, "Will I lose enough weight in this coming year so that my health will improve?"

The answer races to me, a clear "Yes!" Stunned, I ask again. Did I misunderstand the answer? Or had I not asked the question clearly? I asked the question from different angles three more times; on each occasion, the answer is the same—"Yes." I didn't know whether to be terrified or exhilarated! Deep, profound relief poured from my heart. Tears rolled down my cheeks. All I could think of was, "Please let this be true, please!"

I received a clear thought from somewhere in the universe, not from within me: "Trust the process and good results will come about over the next year."

That left one main goal to confirm. I worked to quiet my mind again. Since our honeymoon trip almost 27 years ago, Richard and I felt the peaceful spiritual energy of the Hawaiian Islands. We instinctively know we belong there. In 1994, we made the bold move of buying a one-bedroom condo overlooking the channel between Maui and the island of Molokai. It became our sanctuary. To be able to afford it, we've rented it as a vacation home except for a two or three week period each year when we spend truly heavenly time there. Knowing we have "our place" on the island makes it more tolerable to leave and return to the mainland. It has always been our dream and intention to retire there. We know it will happen, but the big question remains, when? I wanted to find out from the Sphinx.

After several deep, calming and focusing breaths, I ask, "Will we move permanently to Maui before the end of this year?" Quickly, the answer comes back, "No." No big deal; I did not expect to be able to move so quickly anyway. Next I ask, "Will we move permanently to Maui next year?" Again, the answer is "No." It seems the answer forms way too quickly, more like a "no way, not even close" response.

A feeling of fear and dread develops in my solar plexus. OK, now this is getting serious. I started to ask the question again; this time prepared to ask about the following year. I cannot even release the question before I am interrupted with the thought that there is more I must do first on the mainland. When I inquire as to the nature of what I'm supposed to do, many images flash quickly through my mind. I see people who I need to help through our real estate business.

I envision us taking an ownership and operating role in our real estate office. I perceive I am responsible for sharing a message; and, most shockingly, I learn I am supposed to write a book!

A book? No way! I really mean NO WAY! Richard is in his 70's; it's time for us to slow down, not assume more responsibilities. As for the idea of me writing a book? Ridiculous! I am NOT a writer. My favorite subjects in school were always science, math and history. My early work and degree came as a Medical Laboratory Technician. I ran electron microscopes, worked for Union Carbide as a Microbiologist, and served IBM as a Chemical Engineer. I also earned a BS degree in Computer Science in the school of Mathematics. I have been blessed with a quick and intelligent mind, but not when it comes to English and writing. Truth be told, I found both subjects to be painful. I always thought of myself as a "creative" speller, the person for whom spell check was invented. I'm just not a liberal arts kind of a person. I know that 95% of people say they want to write a book, but count me among the 5% who happily lived her life with absolutely no interest. This was not my plan for how I wanted my life to go in the next few years at all, not even a little bit. No, no, no!

Help me out here, Sphinx!

James' voice returns to my consciousness. He's wrapping up the meditation by talking about gratitude for the messages and experiences we have received. He reminds us to remain in silence for a while after the meditation to allow the messages to sink in, to be absorbed and assimilated by our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies, in our hearts and souls. People start to hug each other, bliss-filled tears running down their faces.

However, I am majorly pissed off. The ageless lion boy and I are not done. Not by a long shot!

James has begun hugging people; many still sit, kneel or stand in the area between the paws. Richard looks over at me. I nod, but I don't remember much more than that. Instinctively, without any thought or plan of what I am going to do, I work my way around the mass of people and approach the plate of granite against the chest of the Sphinx. The armed guards who followed us in their jeep and opened the gate to let us approach the Sphinx continue to keep a watchful eye on us. What I do not know is what I can get away with as far as approaching the granite slab, or if I can actually touch it once I arrive.

I stepped on the platform in front of the Sphinx, my forehead just a few inches away and my hands held up at shoulder level, also inches from the slab. I become aware of someone stepping up to join me; when I turn my head slightly to the left, I see Whitney, a member of our group. Turning back to the stone, I listen for a moment to hear if any of the guards are ordering me down. I hear nothing but the shuffling of the group members behind me.

Whitney, myself, and several other people in the group are "sensitive" to energy. We can sometimes sense its flow in places and objects and can direct that flow inward if we choose. It's easier for me to actually touch the object but it is not necessary, depending on the strength of the flow. Everyone can sense energy to some extent. You know the feeling you get when you step into a room where there has just been an argument? Or when two people are having a fight and you don't know about it but you can feel that something is wrong? You're feeling the negative energy generated. To feel the "good vibe," positive energy, you just need to walk outdoors in nature, or stand near a group of supportive, loving people. The energy that surrounds us constantly affects us.

I was upset from what I'd just "learned" in my meditation. I hoped by picking up on the energy coming from the Sphinx, I can settle down quickly to get back into communication with whatever is passing these messages to me.

Standing very close to the granite slab, I closed my eyes and said my usual request when I do not know what to ask for—and leave it to the higher power to tell me what I must know. I really need the guidance now, because I am having trouble settling down.

“Talk to me,” I say. “Tell me what I need to know most right now.”

The next thing I know, I’m pulled toward the slab with my forehead, bridge of my nose, and hands firmly pressed against it. It feels cool in the already high heat of the desert morning. For a split second, I wonder if the guards are going to let me get away with actually touching it and then . . . I’m gone, focused completely on my “conversation.” Nothing else matters. The group could have boarded the buses and left me there; I wouldn’t know. It’s just the lion boy and me, and I’m not giving up on him seeing it from my perspective without a fight.

You may be asking yourself to whom is this woman speaking? I am not picky when it comes to the originating sources of important messages. Call it my guardian angel, my spirit guide, a member of the council of elders, a friend or relative who has passed or a higher power. It all comes from God, and I have grown to learn that it really does not matter who the messenger is.

This time though the “voice” is unique. It is compassionate and patient, but firm. It feels like I’m not getting away with anything, no matter how hard I whine and complain. The images return; one by one, I try to argue them away with debates of reason. Why in the world would we invest a hefty amount of money into a real estate office when we are heading into a very tough time in the real estate business? Large companies and offices were folding, yet I was shown that we were going to not just invest, but also be the managing partner. That made no sense at all. As for the book? That was just plain lame; I didn’t have the time. Why can’t we move to Maui and work from there? Why do we have to do these things first before we leave California?

The guiding presence meets each of my arguments with either the sense of utter silence, compassionately waiting for me to wear myself out, or by giving a reasonable answer. All were equally annoying responses. At one point, I realize I am whining to God, and chuckle at the absurdity of threatening not to cooperate in my attempt to negotiate with the Almighty. But like a small child being told they can’t have something, I’m pitching a fit that ranges from arguing facts to sobbing that this was not fair.

Eventually, I see the bottom line, the root of these images and directives: I had agreed to do all of these things in this lifetime before I got here, before I was born, and that they were just helping me stick to my plan. They also knew me very well, and I have to begrudgingly admit they are right. God being “right”—now there’s a wild thought! If I went to Maui now, I would confine myself to my home and garden and never work on any of these other projects. They were doing me a favor by holding me to my plan.

Crap! I am plainly not going to win this argument. “OK,” I reluctantly say. Not the way you say “OK” when everything is perfectly agreeable, but the resigned OK of realizing all further resistance is futile. Through one last sob, with pangs of perceived unfairness still echoing in my head, I demand, “If you expect me to get all of these things done, then you better at least send me some help!”

What comes back is the message meant for anyone who is facing a challenge in their lives: “I have always sent you all the help you ever needed before you even knew what to ask for.”

With that, I knew I was out of arguments. Whatever I felt about the whole task now becomes a moot point. It is really going to be more than OK. It is going to be perfect.

The next message I received was the sensation of being told to go, turn around, and get on with my life. As suddenly as I had been pulled into the slab, I am now gently propelled away. I noticed for the first time others on both sides of me, taking turns standing with their heads and hands against the slab.

Turning around and stepping down, I search the group of 60+ people for Richard. We are supposed to be in silence for a while after the meditation, so I quietly scan the group for his face. I find him and walk next to him. Not being able to tell him what I just experienced is torture, but I followed the rules. I did not want him to miss out on the chance to stand at the slab as I did and see if he experiences something similar. I kept gesturing at him to walk up to the slab.

He wasn't moving. I made a final, desperate attempt. I whispered to him to place his head against the slab. "I already have," he whispered back. Not thinking I've heard him correctly, I asked him to repeat what he just said. How is that possible? I wonder. I surely would have known if he had been up there with me, unless he was there for just a second.

I asked him again if he had stayed there for a while. "Yes."

Later that morning, I'm still confused. How could he have been up on the platform with the Sphinx? I asked him how long he thought I was up there, thinking it had to be four, maybe five minutes. He replied, "You were up there with your head against the slab for a good 25-30 minutes!" How did I manage to stand still for so long?

Losing track of time is a sign of being in an altered state, a state of consciousness different from your "normal". When you sleep every night, you are in an altered state of consciousness. Engrossed in a book without noticing hours have slipped by; when you are doing something fun "time flies." When you are working on something that impassions and inspires you—in-spirit—time seems to move at a more rapid pace.

When Richard told me my "couple of minutes" of seeking answers from the Sphinx was really close to half an hour, I took that as confirmation of a spiritual experience.

It was still very early in the morning. The day had already been incredible. It was mind-boggling to know our grand finale experience was yet to come that afternoon: three hours alone inside the Great Pyramid! We were free to explore all three levels inside the pyramid, two of which were usually off-limits to the general public. Each of us would receive our own personal meditation time while lying inside the red granite sarcophagus in the King's Chamber. I was already pretty wiped out from the events of the morning, certain I would be processing my experience for days and weeks to come. What more could possibly be waiting for me in the Great Pyramid, the grand finale of this amazing trip?