

# Introduction

I was seventeen years old when I discovered that I was born with psychic abilities and the gift of healing, and it took me completely by surprise. Nothing in my mainstream midwestern upbringing, except maybe the voice I heard throughout my childhood, indicated that I or the other members of my family had paranormal abilities.

It all started one night in the fall of 1965 when one of my brothers, who was in the beginning stages of learning to play the drums, went down to the den to practice. My parents, my sister, my other brother, and I had just finished dinner and were still sitting around the table.

My brother played his amateurish best for about five minutes. Then suddenly the clanking noise stopped and beautiful music came from the den. We all looked at Dad, thinking he could somehow explain. But Dad said it must be the Sandy Nelson record he had bought my brother, although we could tell that Dad wasn't convinced, either.

Then the music stopped and my very frightened brother ran up the stairs, hysterically trying to explain what just happened: He was

## *Echoes of the Soul*

sitting at his drum set with his eyes closed practicing a piece, when a white figure floated through the door and over to him. This figure rested his hands on top of my brother's and began to play the beautiful music we just heard. My brother was so frightened that he had difficulty talking, but he managed to say that even though his eyes were closed the whole time, he could easily see the figure. Then the spirit — or whatever it was — let go of his hands and floated across the room and out the door!

We were stunned. We knew nothing about the occult, as it was called back then. We'd never given much thought to ghosts, spirit guides, or guardian angels other than being taught at an early age that we all have an angel that watches over us. Nothing in our Presbyterian training had prepared us for what just occurred. We sat there not knowing what to say, yet we were filled with questions. We knew my brother would never make up such a story, and we'd just heard the music, so what did it all mean? Why was this happening to my brother? Would the white figure appear to the rest of us?

Mom belonged to a prayer group, and a woman in her group had been to a medium. She called the woman, hoping she could shed some light on what had happened, but she gave Mom the medium's phone number instead. Mom called her right away. Without hesitation the medium told Mom she had been expecting her phone call. She explained that the white figure was my brother's spirit guide who was trying to make himself known. She said that when the guide was living on earth he was a drummer, among many other things, and that he was going to be a teacher for my brother. She also told Mom that

## *Introduction*

Mom and her four children were all psychically gifted and that she wanted to see us soon for readings.

This information didn't give any of us much peace of mind. A spirit guide that played the drums? We were all gifted? What did *gifted* mean? I asked Mom to make an appointment so that we could find out what it all meant, and a week later I was sitting in Eve Olson's reading room, about to have another life-changing experience.

Eve Olson was a very sweet woman in her fifties who had moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, from England. She had a diploma on the wall from a college in Indiana, and her degree was in mediumship. I had never thought about where people got their psychic abilities, and I was surprised there was actually a college where people could develop that sort of thing. She started my reading by telling me that I was born with the psychic abilities of clairvoyance — the gift of seeing visions, images, or pictures — and also of clairaudience, the gift of hearing spirits. She also said that I was born with the gift of spiritual healing and that I would write books, be on radio and television, travel, and be known throughout the world. As I became older and learned how to work with my abilities, I would then teach others how to develop their psychic and healing gifts.

I told her that I didn't think I had any of these abilities and that I just wanted to have a normal life with a husband and children. She said that ever since I was a little girl I have been able to sense other people's feelings, and it came so naturally to me that I had become used to it and didn't think it was anything special or unusual. She said the reason why I was having so many health problems was because I was very

## *Echoes of the Soul*

sensitive and didn't know what to do with all the feelings I was always having. My path would be very different from what I had imagined, but this was what my soul wanted for this lifetime. I found this very curious — I had never thought in terms of what my soul wanted.

Eve told Mom that she was also very gifted and that someday she would be a well-known psychic doing readings for people fulltime. She said that my sister, Nikki, wouldn't develop her psychic and healing gifts until she was in her forties, that my brother Michael would be a professional psychic, and that my other brother, whose drumming had started all this inquiry, would choose not to use his abilities. It's been thirty-three years since we first saw Eve — and everything she predicted that night has come true.

Before my session ended, Eve told me to go home and place white hankies on my father's head. She knew he was in bed with a migraine, even though neither Mom nor I had mentioned anything about it. She said to ask God to work through me and to channel healing energy to my father. She said that then I would know what she was talking about.

During our drive home I asked Mom, "Why me? Why do I have these weird gifts? Why can't I have a normal life? What's happening to us? What does all of this mean?"

When we arrived home, I told Dad what the medium had said and asked if I could give this "spiritual healing" a try. He said he was willing, as long as I didn't hurt his head. I neatly laid two hankies on top of his head, placed my hands on top of them, and in a none-too-confident voice asked God to please work through me. Within seconds my hands warmed like heating pads and I could feel energy coming

## *Introduction*

through them. My hands trembled from the energy for a bit, and then after about five minutes they cooled. I slowly took my hands off Dad's head — and he said that his headache was gone!

I didn't sleep at all that night. I lay in bed with an endless stream of questions floating through my head. Should I quit high school and travel around the world healing sick people? Was I responsible for healing all the sick people in the world? Did this mean I was special? Why had God chosen me? Should I join Vista — the domestic Peace Corps? What would my friends say? I wondered if my parents had really named me after a friend of theirs or if they had known there was something different about me and that was why they had given me such an unusual name. How would I become internationally known? How would I overcome my shyness? How do people write books? How would all of this happen? Should I go to church more? Read the Bible more? What about college? I thought back to the male voice I had heard throughout my childhood that would reassure me in times of fear or worry. I wondered if this was why the voice had always told me to go to Sunday school and learn all about Jesus because Jesus was my older brother and had come to earth to show us how to live our lives. As I lay there, I tried to make sense of everything the medium had said. Little did I know it would take years to understand all of it.

Shortly after our first session with Eve, Mom and I began taking psychic development classes from Birdie, a Spiritualist minister in Minneapolis. She was a gifted psychic as well as a tough teacher, which is exactly what I needed. She had the tenacity to stay with me through all my skepticism and endless questions. I wasn't trying to drive her