

**On the back cover you make a statement that we can all be enlightened. Are you able to elaborate on this? What does it mean to be enlightened?**

Being enlightened means that we let go of fear, hate, anger, and other negative thoughts and trust that there is more to life than what meets the eye. It also means being able to fully understanding that the meaning of life is “to love, to learn, and to teach”. I believe we all have the ability to be enlightened, but it is not something you can make happen overnight. Many people believe that enlightenment comes from church or religion, Spirit lives in your heart not your church. I have nothing against church or religion but enlightenment is personal and is not something that can be given. We, as human beings, are complex creatures and we have been given the gift of free will. Free will means we can choose what we want from life and that we control our own destiny. We also have Spirit, and our Spirit can give us guidance and understanding of what life can be, and help us understand the meaning of why we are here. Because we have free will, we have the ability to override the influence of Spirit, if we override Spirit we then lose the influence that Spirit can have in our lives.

Based on my experiences, I believe that most living things have a Spirit of some kind that resides within them and that evil is not an entity but more an absence of Spirit or an ignorance of Spirit. I also believe that a Spirit can be tormented when it fails to learn the lessons that it must learn to maintain balance. To be enlightened means that we have open, active contact with our Spirit and all the Spirit energy of the Universe. Spirit deliberately enters our bodies to learn and to teach. Spirit learns as much from us as we do from Spirit. Spirit must educate itself in an effort to evolve in its relationship with the Universe. The Universe is a dynamic living entity, an energy, and we are an integral part of that living entity and its energy. We must seek balance in life as Spirit seeks balance with the Universe.

To be enlightened means that we can grasp the concept of being one with all living things in the Universe, and that love, learning and teaching will bring peace and fulfillment. Spirit is as much who we are, and what we are, as is our human body. We are Spirit. We don't have to go find it we merely need to allow Spirit to emerge and be a balanced, integral part of our life. Human beings are entering a period of evolution in which they can begin to be enlightened, but because we have free will it is a choice that has to be made. If we continue to be filled with avarice and hate we will miss the opportunity to choose to be enlightened. When we fail to integrate Spirit in our lives we become tormented because Spirit becomes tormented when it cannot fulfill its goal to learn and teach.

To become enlightened we can practice letting go of fear, letting go of hate, letting go of anger and begin embracing love and caring for all living things. When we can stop looking for what's wrong in life and start looking at what is right in life, we can then begin our journey to enlightenment. Finding Spirit and integrating it into life is a process of awareness. The more aware we become of all things around us and within us, the more we become aware of our Spirit. The more aware we become of Spirit the easier it becomes to access and be guided by Spirit. There are many levels of enlightenment and the more we allow Spirit to be an integral part of life

the more enlightened we become.

I would like to tell you that being enlightened will make us perfect, but that is not the case. We must live in this world as human beings and we must be aware of all the pitfalls and problems that we will face as members of the human race. Every life has its challenges, once we can accept that difficult times are a normal part of life then we can allow Spirit to guide us through some of the rough spots, then we will find that we can be fulfilled even on the darkest of days.

### **And how do football fans around the world relate to this?**

I don't think I have ever heard anyone talk about near-death experience on a sports show. When my wife gave me a glass eye (I lost my eye in the Vietnam War) with a Seattle Seahawks logo in it I had no idea that it would garner worldwide attention. There was a media frenzy when word got out that I had an artificial eye with a Seattle Seahawks logo and I received attention from football fans all over the world. When it became known that I had the one and only Seahawk Eye, the producers of Monday Night Football came to me and asked to do a feature story about the eye. In the course of telling about the eye to the news media I also told how I lost my eye and about the near-death experience that accompanied the event (please refer to my book for more details).

Some of the football fans thought I was crazy, some thought it weird, but most were open to the idea and were interested in knowing a little more about this thing called a near-death experience. I think they were surprised that a person who had been through the kind of experiences I had been through would be an avid sports fan. Taking the near-death experience out of the realm of the paranormal and bringing it to the realm of the normal made it more acceptable. People were more open to listening about my NDE because it was part of a reality to which they could relate. When most people meet me they are often surprised that I am a normal person, not a kook or crackpot, just an average guy living an average middleclass life. My credibility lies in the normalcy of my life and the fact that I share my knowledge of Spirit without expectation. I think many football fans have had NDEs or similar experiences and have been afraid to talk about them for fear of being ridiculed or thought of as abnormal. When football fans hear me talk about NDEs in a normal setting and in a normal way it gives them the courage to share their own experiences. When we begin to understand that many of the things we call *paranormal* are actually very *normal* experiences, we take one step closer to enlightenment.

### **Since asking and receiving is so simple, do you feel that it is simplicity that may deter people from integrating Spirit into their beingness? Perhaps they cannot accept that it is this simple?**

It is true that asking and receiving is simple, but to be able to ask you must be aware of what it is you are asking for and how to ask for it. To be able to receive you must have trust, awareness, an openness to the energy of the Universe, and above all you must have patience. When you ask for

something from Spirit or from the Universe you have to be clear about what it is you are asking for and ask for it in as concise a manner as possible. To receive what you have asked for you need to trust that your request will be granted, you have to be open to communications from Spirit and you must have the awareness to know when the opportunity to fulfill your request is being presented, and it is important to have patience because your requests may take time to fulfill. Nothing is going to fall from the sky and land in your lap, but if you are very aware of the energy that Spirit brings you will know when your request is being fulfilled.

I once read several books about the power of positive thinking and it struck me that something was missing in each of these books. The missing piece was *positive action*. All the positive thinking in the world will get you nowhere unless you are willing to take positive action.

When we ask for something from Spirit or the Universe we then need to take positive action by creating a representation of our request. It could be as simple as speaking our request out loud every day or by writing our request every day or building a model or posting a picture that represents our request or we could assign a color or sound that reminds us of our request. When we begin taking positive action we begin to have a clearer vision of our request and we can then modify our request as we see more precisely what it is we are asking for. We create an energy around our request by keeping it in mind daily. When our request has an energy of its own we will have a conscious awareness of what opportunities are being presented to us so that we can take the necessary action to fulfill our request.

I believe that as we become more enlightened and as we develop a balance between mind and Spirit, asking and receiving become simpler tasks. We can do and have anything we set our minds to and when we set our Spirit to those tasks as well, those tasks are completed with greater clarity and in a more efficient manner.

Thank you for listening,

Bill Vandebush

Author of "If Morning Never Comes: A Soldiers Near-Death Experience on the Battlefield"