

THE PAST LIFE PARADOX
EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND THERAPEUTIC CHALLENGES ARISING FROM
PAST LIFE REGRESSION CASES

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SUMMARY

From the 1960/'70s onwards, as psychology began to open up to transpersonal realms, an increasing number of cases emerged, in which people regained memories from apparent past lives. From the currently mainstream materialist paradigm, the claim is nonsensical: how can the brain remember things which happened before it came into being? However, from a new, consciousness-based point of view, the situation is profoundly different: consciousness is no longer seen as a mere epiphenomenon of the brain, but as fundamental in the universe, something which existed before matter. This new paradigm – which has prominent supporters, including Nobel-prize laureate scientists – allows us to study consciousness-related events, such as near-death or out-of-body experiences, multidimensional events and past life memories, in a useful way. Paradigms, however, do not change overnight. At the present moment, we are in the middle of a *paradigm war* (Thomas Kuhn), thus it still constitutes an enormous intellectual and social challenge to take up research into past lives. Yet, such research is indicated for at least two reasons: 1) there are considerable therapeutic benefits arising from past life regressions, 2) the suggestive evidence in cases of children remembering past lives is strong.

Therapeutic past life regressions offer a powerful tool for personal development. On a psychological level, phobias, undiagnosable symptoms and possibly various identity disorders (such as body integrity identity disorder) can respond positively to past life therapy. On a personal development level, past life memories may help clients to see patterns of evolution which form their own existential program in the present life and for the future.

All of these possibilities, however, are strongly level-dependent. On a lower evolutionary level of consciousness, past life sessions may only trigger ego-inflation and serve the *Atman project* (Ken Wilber): an attempt to find substitutes for the Absolute out of fear of death. For people at a higher evolutionary stage, however, experiences with past life memories can lead to overcoming the ego, see life from a transpersonal perspective, ultimately from the viewpoint of *all-there-is*.

THE SPEAKER

VIKTÓRIA G DUDA, PH.D. is a spiritual anthropologist, hypnotherapist, and author. Following a series of spiritually awakening experiences, she gave up a fledgling legal career and dedicated her life to the study of consciousness, both on a practical level and as a researcher.

She is a member of the British Society for Clinical Hypnosis.

RESEARCH

If you are interested in Viktória's current research project about past life regressions and would be interested to participate, please visit her website and click on the RESEARCH MENU POINT:

www.viktoriaduda.com