

Tom Butler
Etheric Studies, (CC)2020
Seeking to Understand the Nature of Reality
ethericstudies.org

Etheric Studies Occasional Update 10

Tom Butler, August 2021

(Also at mailchi.mp/c2a3976a48dc/etheric-studies-occasional-update-10)



Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, Alaska. We managed to go on a short cruise from Seattle to Alaska between covid outbreaks.

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Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies

The [Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies](#) (BICS) ([1](#)) is conducting an essay contest addressing “*What is the best available evidence for the Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death?*” I was accepted as a contestant.

Entries needed to be in by August 1, 2021. The results will be published November 1. My guess is that Mr. Bigelow will want a ceremony, so the winners may be notified earlier. There are cash prizes, which probably

means everyone involved in survival studies will have an entry. Many of them will be able to make a strong case for survival.

Super-Psi Versus Survival

It is important to recognize the difference between survival of conscious as a self-aware, sentient self and only survival of memory. Most parapsychologists seem to prefer Super-Psi, which means they are probably not able to argue in favor of “*Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death.*” It will be interesting to watch.

The Super-Psi Hypothesis holds that the information paranormally accessed by mediums, psychics, remote viewers—all mental nonlocal information acquisition—comes from other people’s memory of the person or from residual energy in the Psi Field (think Akashic Records). The point of Super-Psi is that there are no discarnate personalities to communicate with via mediumship. In Super-Psi, when we die, we cease to exist as a self-aware, sentient personality. All that survives is memory. This is an example of **Physical Dualism**.

The Survival Hypothesis holds that a self-aware, sentient aspect of who we are continues beyond physical death. While some apparently paranormal information access may be explained with Super-Psi, some is better explained as communication with survived personalities. I refer to this version as **Strict Dualism**.

Here is part of the problem of my writing on the subject. Not being trained in the terminology and phrasing of related fields of study, I need to use terms existing on popular culture that best state my point. Often, I need to define how I am using them. For instance, Physicalism and Dualism are the right terms, but Super-Psi is a Dualist model that does not allow for survived, sentient personality – only memory of personality. Survival is also a Dualist model. It embraces most Super-Psi concepts but requires survived, sentient personality and an aspect of reality in which it exists. To distinguish the difference, I say there is Physical Dualism and Strict Dualism. When the BICS readers come to this in my essay, my guess is that they will roll their eyes and move on to the next essay. As I review my interactions with people on the Internet, my sense is that my writing is very “eye rolling.”

As directors of the ATransC, we are realizing concepts in ITC that are not being addressed elsewhere. For instance, ITC practitioner can induce communication that produces an objective (experienced by many) result. In some cases that information cannot be explained with the Super-Psi Hypothesis. It is relatively easy to show with ITC that we cannot shield from the influence of Psi. Since we are all fundamentally psychic, this means that some ITC may be initiated by still physical observer rather than “dead” people. Consideration of the experimenter effect must also include consideration of the idea that a healer expressing healing intention toward a distant sitter may cause ITC-like effects on test equipment intended to measure such effects as changes in local magnetic field or electrical charge ... any test equipment.

The lesson is that, if researchers are not incorporating lessons learned from ITC, they are looking at only part of the story.

Proof

I used Martha Copelan’s Class A EVP “*Doja, no!*” featured at [atransc.org/copeland-evp/ \(2\)](http://atransc.org/copeland-evp/) as the “proof” for survived personality. From the webpage: Martha Copeland’s daughter, Cathy, transitioned as a young woman. Martha had accidentally left Cathy’s dog, Dojo, in the house when she left to go shopping. She had also left her voice activated IC recorder turned on. No one was in the house except for the animals. Dojo tore up a potted plant and made a great mess. You can hear an EVP from Cathy as she scolds the dog saying, “*Doja No.*”

Anyone with good hearing can correctly hear and understand the utterance. The voice is clearly Cathy’s. She is saying something that is appropriate for the circumstance, indicating her sentient and real time awareness of the dog’s action. The utterance is clearly spoken by a known discarnate personality. The person said something that could not have been known at the time by anyone in the physical. Most importantly, no one in the world or from the past could know about the event, meaning that the Super-Psi Hypothesis does not explain the example.

Some of the points I make in the essay include:

- The EVP example is better explained with the Survival Hypothesis than the Super-Psi Hypothesis.
- The “Big Four” proofs of survival are reincarnation, Dear-Death Experiences (NDE), Out of Body Experiences (OBE) and mediumship. With that in mind, my guess is that the majority of essay entries will

probably be based on Super-Psi. For instance, most of the evidence for reincarnation seems to be explainable with psychic access to someone's memory. NDE and OBE evidence also seem to be clearly explained with Super-Psi.

- Mental mediumship is often presented as proof of survival. I am an occasionally effective medium and all of my experience and study indicates that at least some information acquired via mediumship can be explained with Super-Psi. Like the EVP example I used, to be "proof," mediumistically acquired information must not exist prior to the exchange. In surveys of consciousness researchers, mediumship typically ranks last after reincarnation, NDE and OBE.

My guess is that most of the essays will use one of the "Big Four," and will therefore, be explainable with Super-Psi. The question is if the judges are well-enough informed to understand that.

Important Concepts Addresses in My Essay

I am deeply appreciative of the Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies essay contest, first, for accepting my entry, and second, for giving me a reason to better compose my thoughts about survival. I am an ordained Spiritualist teacher and the subject is close to my heart. Having spent considerable time over the years studying survival and related concepts, one of my pet peeves about parapsychology is their general failure to develop a coherent, consensus model for these phenomena. For instance, the typical reference to the Survival Hypothesis is "Oh yes, some people believe in survival" – end of explanation.

I devoted the first part of the essay to an explanation of ITC. It is reasonable to assume the judges are not familiar with it and anything they do know probably came from some of the misinformation we see around the community.

I used the [4Cell EVP Demonstration \(3\)](#) as an example of how EVP might be used. The [EVP Online Listening Trials \(4\)](#) report was useful for establishing the objective nature of EVP. Of course, I covered visual ITC to show how some of the effects seem universal.

Perhaps the biggest benefit to me in writing the essay was realizing that survival is best explained with what I now refer to as "*The Two Mind Solution to the Survival Hypothesis.*" If you stop and think about it, an important implication of saying that we are not our body and that our "true self" continues to exist in a sentient, self-aware form after our body dies, is that our mind is separate from our biological body. At the same time, our body is a self-contained organism that has evolved on this planet.

There is good reason to think that our body is also sentient. An important difference between our etheric self and our biological body is that our body is pretty much controlled by survival instincts. Our etheric self has instincts, but they appear to be more directed toward gaining understanding than for survival or gene dominance.

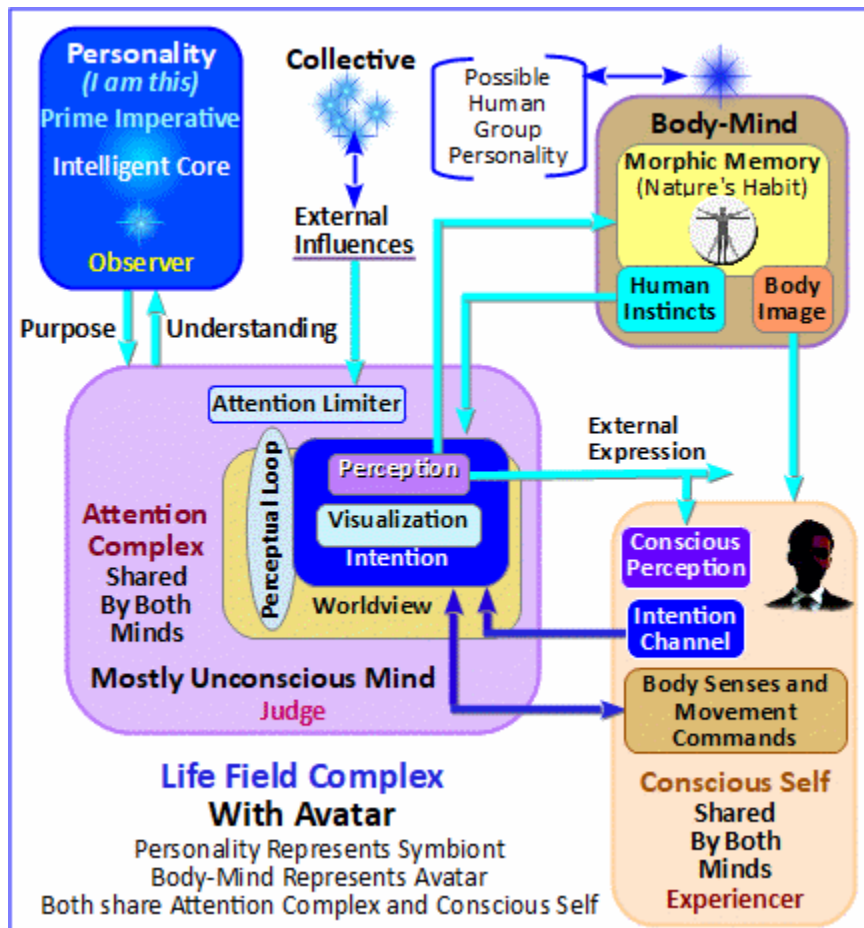
I define a person is *a relatively long-lived etheric personality (symbiont) entangled with a human in an avatar relationship.* Much of a person's behavior is best explained by the influence of our human's instincts. Some of it is explained by the influence of our etheric self. Therein is the explanation for the difference between the meaningful-pleasurable choices and instinctual-discerning intellect dichotomy.

I am pretty excited by the two-mind approach. I have been saying the same thing for years but writing the BICS essay has helped me find a better way to make the point. The following diagram is essentially the same as I used in my book, [Your Immortal Self. \(5\)](#) Note the Body-Mind represents the avatar's mind and the Personality represents the symbiont's mind.

The essays may provide a wonderful opportunity to learn what researchers are thinking. BICS has promised to publish the winners and interesting runners up on the Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies website (bigelowinstitute.org/). With that in mind, this contest could further the public's understanding of survival more than any of the professional journals have in the past. The essays are supposed to be easy to read, so most of the statistical handwaving and \$10 words should be absent.

I have a good sense of the nature of survival. But I must be realistic that I do not hold a Ph.D. and I am not well-trained in the terms, models and theories of the academic community. While I think I have submitted a strong argument for survival, my lack of credentials will be a handicap. Bigelow has indicated the desire to further

research via the contest award. That will mean a Ph.D. associated with a research organization. He will probably be attracted to a celebrity Ph.D. who can carry his flag. The benefit to me is that the contest gave me a good reason to better compile my thoughts.



Rules of Evidence

I have been drafting an essay to address how I think the average person experiences evidence of the paranormal, and therefore, things practitioners should consider when sharing examples. My objective is to encourage practitioners—paranormalist who work with collecting examples of ITC—to think about how witnesses of their examples will react.

Of course, the essay will include recommendations, but mostly, I think it is important for us to see ourselves the way the general public sees us. My assumptions for this essay are that:

1. Practitioners want to experience actual reality. That is, people do not want to be fooled into thinking normal is paranormal.
2. People are protective of their phenomena. That is, the need to believe something is paranormal, whether it is or not, often overrides acceptance of more authoritative guidance. (See [Becoming Lucid](#), especially hyperlucidity (6))
3. People acting as observers assume practitioners know what they are talking about. In a practical sense any one practitioner is seen as representing all practitioners. If one looks silly, they all look silly in the eyes of the general public. Practitioners unavoidably speak under cover of authority which is not always actual.

4. It is best to reject examples that have reasonable, nonparanormal explanations. For instance, a tree's reflection on a window might look like a face, but it might also look like the reflection of a tree. Always error on the side of the mundane.
5. An experienced practitioner, who is also well informed about the nature of paranormal phenomena, is able to more correctly experience examples. That is, they can make out a possible face in an ITC example that might be too vague for less experienced observer and are less likely to mistake normal as paranormal. That is why we encourage people to use a classification system such as the **Class A** for easily experienced, **Class B** for an example that may need help experiencing and **Class C** for marginal examples that probably should not be shared with the public.
6. It harms the paranormalist community when observers do not provide candid feedback. Too often, I see observers offer "wow" kinds of feedback for examples that are so vague that they could be anything. It is a kindness to provide candid feedback. How else will the practitioner learn?

Here are some of the "Rules of Evidence" I think we need to be mindful of:

Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP)

- Identify how an example was collected. Indicate if a simple audio recorder is used for transform EVP or something like radio-sweep is used for opportunistic EVP.
- Utterances of only one syllable or less can be interpreted to have many meanings. As a general practice, single-syllable sounds should be discarded. Exceptions might be if the utterance confirms something previously known. For instance, it is probably reasonable to consider an EVP of "**Tom**" in close time association with me asking "*What is my name.*" On the other hand, a possible EVP of "Tom" is much less acceptable as an answer to "*What is your name*" unless there is collaborating information. Too often in radio-sweep, a distorted "on," for instance, might be reported as "Tom." As you can see, such sounds are largely indeterminant and should not be reported as paranormal.
- Do not use live voice for EVP. Our mind is hardwired to give meaning to human speech. Small fragments of human speech can be construed to have unintended meaning. Using foreign language as background sound for EVP has been shown to be fraught with false positives.
- Always use an uncoached witness panel to help determine if the example is objective enough for sharing.
- For long recordings that might contain EVP, it is best to share a shorter segment containing just the possible EVP and maybe a bit of practitioner voice for context. Otherwise, it is difficult for observers to know what they are listening for.
- Sharing EVP via video files (as with YouTube), rather than audio files makes it very difficult for the serious observer to properly listen to the example. For instance, I prefer to load an audio file into an audio management program where I can observe the waveform and listen to specific parts of the example many times. I typically do not bother with examples shared in video files.
- It is misleading to clip time from the recording to make a possible EVP seem directly related to a question or event.
- It is a good practice to explain if an example has been "enhanced." For instance, it is important for the serious observer to know if time has been taken out or a lot of noise reduction has been used.

Visual Instrumental TransCommunication (ITC)

- Three dots in a triangle do not make a paranormal face. The Class A, B and C system has not been widely used for visual ITC. However, there is a need to demonstrate a measure of informed certainty the example is paranormal. For instance,

Class A – Features that are clearly visible include many points of agreement including contours and positioning.

Class B – Clear presence of a paranormal feature. May require some guidance for an observer to make the feature out.

Class C – Vaguely visible. May be only a few dots and a little contour. It is a good practice to not share Class C examples.

- Understand photographic latency. Cameras are typically used in the “Auto” mode. This means that, in dim light, the flash will be activated for each picture. It is common for the picture-taking cycle to be longer than flash duration. The result is a brightly illuminated scene for a moment followed by a low-light exposure in a “double-exposure.” Also, the camera is typically moved a fraction during the exposure. The result is sometimes a ghostly shape or smear next to the subject. Too often, practitioners call that naturally occurring smear or paranormal shadow figure when it is not.

In both visual and audio ITC, any mundane noise is apt to be transformed into a paranormal feature. A naturally occurring double exposure can have paranormal faces in it. That is why faces are often reported in orbs caused by dust. In the same sense, radio-sweep noise may contain unrelated transform EVP. There is no reason to think the resulting ITC feature represents the local ghost. We are not sure where they come from or how. Because of non-locality, we also have no reason to think they are “local.”

- Understand the difference between obscured features and transformed (transfigured) features. A common practice is to place partially obscuring material between the camera and the person. Resulting pictures typically shows that person, but with facial features seemingly morphed into something else. Such induced ambiguity may produce the occasional paranormal feature out of the resulting optical noise, but I have seen no convincing evidence that such obscuring produces phenomena. Instead, it is misleading and may be deceptive.
- Be clear about what is in reflected examples such as from windows or someone’s eyeglasses. I have seen examples of ITC from the *light reflected from moving water technique* that that have too-good-to-be-true face features that look a lot like the practitioner’s reflection. A similar problem comes with the “light reflected from eyeglasses” technique. Without assurances of what I am seeing in the examples, my first instinct is distrust and avoidance. *Help observers understand what they are observing.*
- Do not use mirrored examples in any form. It is simple as that! Our mind will form a face around any three dots in symmetry. Mirroring a photograph automatically produces alien-like shapes. After much consideration, I have concluded that mirrored examples are just noise interjected by uninformed, would be practitioners.
- I define hyperlucidity as “A short-term change in behavior marked by the tendency to find phenomena everywhere despite considerable testimony to the contrary by peers.” The majority of examples posted in the Facebook groups I monitor seem more likely evidence of hyperlucidity than anything paranormal. If your private witness panel does not confirm what you think you see, the example should be discarded.

I should explain that I have given up commenting about examples in most cases. It is emotionally taxing for me to tell a possibly grieving person an example is probably not paranormal. It is also awkward to be the only one commenting in an instructive way. (See the [Cooperative Community Essay \(7\)](#))

- Always explain your example. Why are you posting it? If not what, at least offer a clear indication of where people should look. Asking “*What do you see*” is a lot like playing the game of “Stump the chump.” I am pretty good with ITC, and more often than not, I decide the person posting is doing more harm to the community than good. Certainly, it is good to ask people to help you make out a feature. This is not science, so tell people what you think they will see. We help each other in that way.

There is more to understand about sharing examples. The point I want to make is that things paranormal are relatively rare. Not every ambiguous photograph image has ITC features. What I am really talking about is the need for self-education and candid witnesses. “Wow” or “I see it” in response to a “What do you see” post might

be kind in the moment, but in the long run, such lack of critical discussion hurts all of us ... especially the practitioner. How are we to learn if we have no informed feedback?

Science Literacy and Science Denialism Versus Discerning Intellect

We are having record forest fires here in Northern California and Nevada. Right now, living in Reno, I cannot see more than a mile because of the smoke. The combination of drought, record high temperatures and more people in the woods pretty much assure that lives and property will be more often threatened by climate-related changes. The smoke harms all of us. It is no longer rational to live in the woods. Our lives are changing day-to-day.

You know the story. Society has largely ignored the looming danger, at least partially because of science denialism, but also to serve self-interest. We see this in the way we treat “others” and in Covid-19 Denialism. The science is clear and impartial. Yes, some people may find a way to capitalize on the situation, but that does not mean we can rationally ignore the science.

Telling the difference between science and capitalism is what is intended by “science literacy.” The US Government’s [National Science Foundation \(8\)](#) is deeply concerned about the public’s ability to rationally understand and apply science. Conspiracy theorists are a good example of those who have not learned to manage their human’s instincts.

As I have written before, without conscious intervention, we are first human animals and only after developing a degree of discerning intellect are we spiritual beings. If we are spiritual beings having a human experience, until we develop a little discerning intellect, we are doing so as observers and not as cooperating participants.

The “so what” of Spiritualism and spiritual seeking is expressed in the way seekers are taught to relate to their world. It is arguable that a person cannot be spiritual and also be ignorant of the world. In [organized Spiritualism, \(9\)](#) seekers are expected to learn to recognize the operation of Natural Law in their daily living. The objective is to learn to live in accordance with their understanding. I have learned to refer to that “*living in accordance with understanding about the organizing principles of reality*” as Discerning Intelligence.

Discerning intelligence means recognizing that we are all one in spirit; that our actions have consequences for which we alone are responsible; that truth is not determined by who is speaking but by what the person is saying. We are responsible for discerning the difference between self-serving rhetoric and positive guidance—both from others and from ourselves.

Quantum Mysticism

Arguing that consciousness is a quantum effect of the brain is becoming more popular. While it is a “sounds right” approach to explaining paranormal phenomena, it is not a proven explanation. Based on my study, the quantum entanglement comparison for consciousness is an attempt to explain something that looks a lot like a Dualist characteristic of life with a strictly Physicalist point of view.

I recently watched a video in which a geologist glowingly explained that, because of quantum entanglement, we are all connected as one. I agree that is true but for a different reason. That is where my obsession with the [Implicit Cosmology \(10\)](#) comes in. At least it is an effort to offer objective proof.

I refer to reality as a nested hierarchy of fractal-like life fields. The top life field functions as the Source for all of the life fields in the hierarchy. In effect, the lesser life fields are aspect of the top fractal. In that regard, they are all “in” the top life field’s field of influence. That field of influence is the reality field for you and me. It seems pretty clear that the greater reality—what I refer to as the etheric—is a conceptual space in which movement is accomplished by changing thought rather than changing place.

In effect, reality seems to be a singularity. The evidence for this is in the nonlocal nature of the way we experience paranormal phenomena. Parapsychologists have named the influence of thought as *Psi* and the aspect of reality that propagates that influence the *Psi Field*. They model the Psi Field as nonlocal, meaning psychic

access to information does not seem to be a factor of physical distance or time. The information is, in effect, always here.

So, we have an objective effect that can be compared in physical terms of quantum entanglement. But that does not mean it is correctly described that way. An interesting discussion about the supposed link between quantum mechanics and consciousness is in "[The Strange Link Between Human Mind and Quantum Physics.](#)" (11) My guess is that the link is an example of the Fallacy of Equal Similar.

Two Minds

As I mentioned earlier, one of the ideas that came out of my writing the BICS essay was the usefulness of describing our spiritual nature as two minds sharing the same lifetime. As it turned out, academia.edu has a new online publication intended to include "peer-reviewed" articles. The articles are supposed to be 800-to-1500 words and of an academic nature.

Ignoring the fact that I am not an academic in the sense Academia.edu intends, I submitted an essay. As I write this Update, the article is still in review. Since it is so far out on the fringe, I expect the reviewers will not recommend it, so the article may not be accepted. The reason I try and will publish it on the website is that it affords yet another way for me to tell more people in different words that they are not their human.

You can read the article at academia.edu/letters/submission or at [Two-Mind Solution to the Survival Hypothesis.](#) (12)

ATransC Idea Exchange

I am sad to report that we have finally closed the ATransC Idea Exchange discussion board. It is still there at <http://coop.ethericstudies.org/> as a read-only board, but there has been little activity on it to warrant continuing.

I continue to be available for questions and comments by way of the Contact Tool at the bottom of every Ethericstudies.org and ATransC.org page.

Thank You

Thank you for taking time to read this Update. The occasional Update List gives me a reason to organize my thoughts as I compose a report. In that practical sense, you help me as I seek to help you.

Sarah Estep founded the American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena in 1982 to "*Provide objective evidence that we survive death in an individual conscious state.*" That mission became Lisa and mine in 2000 when we assumed leadership of what has become the Association TransCommunication. Based on our understanding about the nature of reality, and our nature as immortal self, we think every member of humankind will benefit by accepting Sarah's objective as their own.

A spiritual seeker is one who recognizes the need to examine the implications of beliefs with the intention of living in accordance with understanding about the actual nature of reality. Seeking is a personal way, but our individual understanding serves the collective, and from our collective comes the possibility for even greater understanding.

Thank you for allowing me to share my understanding.

Tom Butler

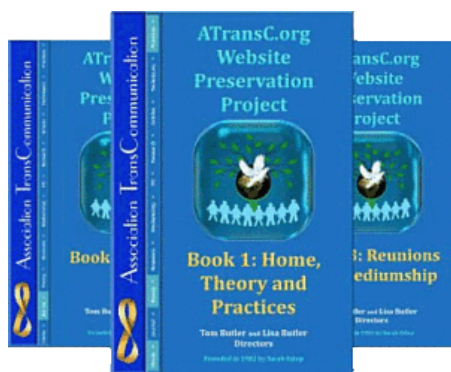
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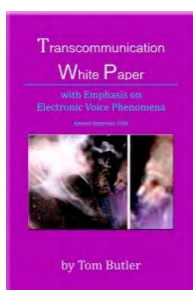
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ATransC.org Website Preservation Project

These books are a set containing the Association TransCommunication website pages. The set has been compiled to preserve website contents to help assure that future paranormalists will have access to the material. The website includes study and research reports, examples of ITC, techniques for collecting ITC, Best Practices and personal stories about ITC-related reunions. ATransC.org will continue to be available to the public, but will be discontinued when the Directors are no longer able to maintain the pages.

[Exclusively on Amazon](#)



Transcommunication White Paper with Emphasis on Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP)

The *Transcommunication White Paper* is intended to document what is currently known by the ATransC directors about transcommunication. It includes background information about theory, concepts and techniques that are important for the understanding of phenomena related to EVP-ITC, psychic and mediumistic phenomena.

Please note that there is a version of this paper, including a free downloadable PDF, at atransc.org.

I refer people to the *Transcommunication White Paper* five or six times a week. When I do so, I always wish I had the opportunity to explain the importance of personal development.

The three most important points I would make about personal development are concerned with how we think, the effect of how we think on what we experience and how to apply that knowledge toward becoming more self-aware. See [the web page](#).

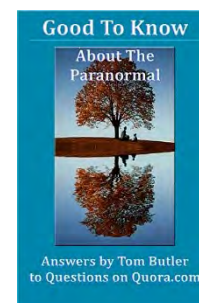
This little book includes all of that. [The book is exclusively available on Amazon](#)

Good to Know About the Paranormal

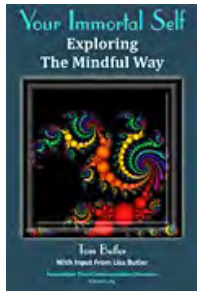
Many of you know that I have spent a lot of time answering questions about things paranormal on Quora.com. The first was the 2017 question: "How accurate is EVP recordings?"

I have been answering the questions because most of the other answers are simply wrong, anti-paranormal or misleading. Our community is still developing a culture that supports free discovery and meaningful sharing of ideas. It has been my vision that my answers might somehow aid in developing that culture.

As it turns out, I have answered quite a lot of Quora.com questions. I have compiled 240 of my answers into this book. See [the web page](#). The book is exclusively available on [Amazon](#)



Your Immortal Self, exploring the mindful way



More time became available for me to write after we changed the ATransC away from a member-supported organization. I am a theoretician by nature and speaking as a mystic, I see a world of patterns in the play of concepts, rather than as a “nuts and bolts” world.

It has been natural for me to see ITC as a pattern of interacting concepts. Again, as a mystic, it is as if the pattern is a self-organizing model in my mind’s eye that shows me how one phenomenon relates/compares to another.

In my mind, the most important aspect of these phenomena is the way we are part of the dance ... not as humans, but as immortal personalities. It has been through ITC, especially EVP, that I have come to see our actual nature as a conduit for the formation of the speech and images of ITC in our physical devices.

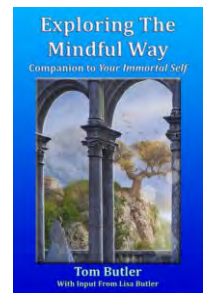
Your Immortal Self represents an effort to explain our relationship with these phenomena, the nature of our actual self and how we might learn to be better ITC practitioners by being more successful seekers. The book begins with a comprehensive effort to define the Survival Hypothesis and establish verifiable proof.

For a small fee, the PDF version of this book is available on the [Lulu website](#). I like PDF for this book because it has so many internal links. It is easier to study using a PDF file. See [the web page](#). [On Amazon](#)

Exploring the Mindful Way

I have been told that *Your Immortal Self* is a difficult read. While I understand some of the concepts can be obscure, I wrote this in *Your Immortal Self*:

Not trying to understand this material because it is too complicated is unacceptable. There is an old Zen Buddhist saying: “Before enlightenment chop wood – carry water, after enlightenment chop wood – carry water.” One must do the work to understand. One must do the work to continue learning. Study the material and do not expect to understand all of it with one reading. Contemplate your worldview. Ask questions. Argue!



I write today to find ways to illustrate the principles described in *Your Immortal Self*, as they apply to particular situations. In doing so, I hoped to make the principles more approachable and help pave the way to spiritual maturity for my readers. *Exploring the Mindful Way* is a compilation of 21 such essays. See [the web page](#). [On Amazon](#)