IN SEARCH OF THE AMAZON DOLPHIN:
Guidance, OD and the Universal Energy Field

By
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Abstract

Science has shown that everything in the universe is made up of the same fundamental particles, vibrating at different rates and communicating energetically at all times. Much has been written on the effect of energy on the human body and psyche. Some people have the experience of receiving spiritual, energetic guidance. For Organization Development practitioners the implications for their work are profound. When tuned in to this guidance, they experience improved sensitivities to the individuals, groups and organizations with whom they work. Their outcomes are deeper, more meaningful, and more healing. They are natural systems thinkers, embracing concepts of interconnectedness, ambiguity and complexity.

While the experience of receiving energetic guidance may be familiar, many find it difficult to discuss openly or find language with which to do so. There is a strong stigma attached to topics of spirituality, especially in the work place. This paper and those interviewed use storytelling, metaphor and intentional practice to integrate the cultural polarities of the rational and the intuitive minds. It is in this convergence that OD work may plumb the greater depths of healing, courage, and growth.
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Introduction

"The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift."
Albert Einstein

A successful young Organization Development (OD) consultant travels to the Amazon jungles of Ecuador, in search of something, he knows not what. His experience and training paved the way for his well-paid job in which he helps organizations downsize human capital. He makes money, but he suffers along with his clients. It is not what he expected to do with his unique and precious abilities. In the Amazon, none of this matters. He travels by canoe up a tributary, away from the main waterway of the River Puzo. In the buzzing quiet he sees something flash just below the surface. He hesitates and then tells his guide he has seen something large and pink-fleshed and human. No, says the guide, it must be the rare Amazon dolphin. This dolphin, like the young man, has strayed far from its normal habitat, most likely in search of food. Wait quietly, says the guide. And they do – for about fifteen seconds.

What this young man will take away is beyond the experience of the logical brain, beyond rational thinking or cultural norms. He takes away a gift that changes his life. He takes away a message from the Universe.

I began my research curious about the idea of tapping into an energetic flow, of a universal nature, and how that energy might guide our work as consultants. As OD practitioners, we face the challenges of struggle on all levels of the human system (Eisen, 1996). I sometimes think of it like a maze. When things are not working and I keep trying, I am banging against the wall of a maze. I may be able to get where I want to go
by digging into that wall, banging on it, bloodying my fists, or climbing and fighting my way over. But I will get to the same place I need to go by turning and going where there is no wall and following the open path. It may be a route I didn’t conceive, but I will get where I need to go in the end, if I trust the cues. I wondered how tuning into this energy might help make me more effective in my work, and in what ways other practitioners might use this type of guidance. My guiding question for this research was, “What do Organization Development consultants do with the experience of receiving guidance?” I wondered, is there a way that tuning in and listening to the energy flow can help me navigate the maze of helping others, and help others navigate their own mazes as well?

**Research Design**

I asked six veteran OD professionals who have experiences of receiving spiritual guidance, to tell me their stories about how their work has been informed by those experiences. I spoke with three men and three women. Their range of experience was between 15-50 years as OD consultants. I was fortunate to be able to speak to highly credentialed, in some cases highly visible practitioners. These are esteemed consultants, with respected, often foundational contributions to the field of OD. Several are published authors of influential OD texts. Some work at the highest levels in major health care corporations. Several are sought after independent consultants with teaching careers and well known consulting firms. They all preferred to be kept anonymous which seemed to allow them to speak more openly with me.

I chose subjects who had experience with what I defined as, “The palpable sensation of being given a signal, by the universe.” Once subjects were screened in this
way, I spent about an hour per person asking them to describe their experiences, how the phenomenon effected their personal lives and their work, and what outcomes they noticed with clients.

In this paper, several terms are used to refer to the experience of getting guidance of some kind from some source. None of the participants felt the need to talk about that source or define it and neither did I. I only heard the word “God” used once. The words ‘intuition’ and “guidance” were both used by participants to describe the phenomenon. I clarified with those using “intuition” that this referred to something that came to them, not their own ideas. So for the purpose of this paper, the words carry the same meaning and are used interchangeably. I found I needed to ask participants directly if this was a spiritual experience for them. They all readily affirmed and in most cases they chose to use the language of spirituality thereafter.

“Energy” is another term that is used in a specific way. As with mystical author and speaker, Caroline Myss, I’ve found that the term energy has become a convenient way to refer to something spiritual, universal and hard to describe. Indeed, for many it is felt on a somatic level. It is not merely a concept, as spirituality is often characterized. So for these subjects, who had physical sensations, energy is, in fact, sometimes a better description of the experience than the more abstracted idea of spirituality. In any case, that is the way the word is used in this paper.

Limitations

The subject of spirituality and flow and guidance are so broad, that I found it necessary to begin the interviews by sharing some of my experiences as a way to set context. This helped clarify what I was interested in and narrow our conversations to the
specific concept I wished to investigate. In this way, however, I may have exposed my bias and tainted the research to some degree. The limitation is that my perspective was shared to some degree. This may have had some unintended influence on the subjects beyond simply helping them understand my questions.

I do have a strong bias about the subject since it is an important part of my life. I have my own profound experiences with guidance, in my personal life and in my work. The phenomena described by the participants are not unfamiliar to me. For this reason, my own enthusiasm and experience may color the way in which I have asked questions, interpreted data, or presented my findings.

Chapter 1: How Does It All Begin?
The Person at the Center of the Energy Field

Fifteen seconds pass. Then, out from the water bursts the dolphin, breaching within arms’ reach, before disappearing again into the murk. One brief moment of connection before it is gone. One man finds the Amazon dolphin looking for nourishment in remote recesses not normally traversed. He makes eye contact with the breaching dolphin and knows that he is getting a message. He feels it and connects it to his own need for nourishment in his work life, connects it to his hunger for meaning. He writes his business plan on a sick bag on the plane ride home and changes the course of his life. He travels up an unknown rivulet and connects to greater meaning and fulfillment. His feeling is that this was what he was meant to understand. He thrives.

This was one story shared with me by Mitch, but three others also described pivotal and powerful experiences that set them on the course to cultivating and using spiritual guidance in their lives. I was told about experiences with vision quests and
guiding angels. One subject, Adam had, “always had this spiritual longing since I was a child and that must have made me open to other ways of knowing.” He spoke with me about being an athlete as a young man and how this “knowing” happens in athletics.

“You're dribbling down the basketball court and you’re moving towards the basket and you just feel what is going to work. Something tells you to go under the basket--and you score. Or in baseball you get a feel for where a pitch is coming.”

Paula worked as a psychologist early in her career, at a mental health institute. She stated that she could “walk onto a floor and sense a fire process,” meaning she could pick up signals when a patient was going to set a fire that day.

Subjects were talking to me about getting guidance. It was real and palpable. It was changing their lives. I wanted to connect this with my interest in energy. What information were these people receiving and how does that work? I looked to physics for answers.

The literature helped me understand the science of energy. Physics tells us that everything is made up of energy and all the energy is the same, as explained by quantum physicist Bedri Cetin (1998). Cetin received his doctorate in physics from the California Institute of Technology. He wrote, “Universal Energy-A systematic and Scientific Investigation” about spiritual energy and quantum physics (Myhre, 2004).

“All there is, is the Universal Energy Field. There is nothing, but the Universal Energy Field. The Universal Energy Field is the fundamental element that constitutes our Universe. All matter, stars, earth, plants, people, etc. are merely intensifications of this field.” (Cetin, p. 2).

According to String Theory (Cetin, 1998) the most basic element in the universe is one dimensional entities not unlike strings, which vibrate and carry energy. Different vibrational rates make up different forms of matter. More solid matter comes from low
frequency (or low energy) vibrations, while Universal Energy is produced by higher vibrations and very high energy.

According to Talbot (1991) subatomic phenomena cannot be classified as waves or particles. They are “always somehow both. These *somethings* are called quanta, and physicists believe they are the basic stuff from which the entire universe is composed” (p. 34).

In answering the question, “what is energy?” Cetin writes,

“Energy is defined as the internal or inherent power possessed by a system that enables the system to sustain itself and/or to move. Energy can be transferred or released from one system to another, in which case it may cause physical changes (or force) in the system receiving (or absorbing) the energy.” (Cetin p. 9)

So the literature review found that we are all made up of the same energy vibrating at different rates, and that energy exchanged between systems (bodies or otherwise) changes those systems. At the level of physics, there is a type of communication that happens. At the spiritual level, it might be called guidance. I asked my subjects to explain how this works.

Chapter 2: Tuning In to the Guidance
Beyond the Ego There Is Uncertainty Then Faith

All subjects spoke of needing to discern what was truly a message of guidance from what was his or her own material. As Amy said, she must determine “What of this do I need to pay attention to and what is my own stuff?” Mitch said, “The challenge is to distinguish what is a resonant or a tuned-in experience from a projection.” For all of
them, there was clearly a process of “sorting” as Paula explained, “the question is how
you do you sort and what do you pay attention to?”

It emerged that the basic element that needed to be sorted through was that of ego.
Some spoke to this directly. Brenda said, “When we're so in our ego, we're not tapped
into that bigger energy.”

In my research, subjects were talking about an experience that was energetic,
intuitive, universal, and seemed to have a spiritual connotation. I turned again to the
literature to try and understand how these terms connect.

Caroline Myss (1996) connects energy to the spirit and uses the terms
interchangeably. In her work as a medical intuitive, she finds that the energy we receive
can be used to create and manifest health, or make us ill. “What drains your spirit drains
your body, what fuels your spirit fuels your body.” Allowing full use of the energy
available to us, keeping the flow of energy in the body unblocked, facilitates good health.
Myss does not, however, speak to whether there is a wider, systemic, health benefit to
being in a good flow of energy.

I noticed that much of the research about spirituality, energy and energy work,
focuses solely on the internal energy and spirit of the body, hesitating to discuss any
relation to exterior energetic sources. I think this may be a shyness to discuss issues
related to the idea of “God.” For many, there is a negative connotation to the word. For
some there may be a dangerous link between the ideas of cosmic design and a surrender
of human responsibility. Much damage has been done when humans have abdicated
responsibility for their actions and deferred responsibility to this intangible force.
Myss (1996) describes making a conscious choice to use the word *Energy* to describe something spiritual that she experiences as a medical intuitive, and upon which her studies are based. “Energy is a neutral word that evokes no religious associations or deeply held fears about one’s relationship to God.” (p.63) Myss eventually does incorporate spiritual language into her work, but only as far as it relates to the spirit or energy within the body. Although she explains energy as coming from outside the body, (through the seventh chakra, “Our Spiritual Connector” p. 264,) she does not directly relate this to a form of communication or guidance.

The subjects of this study, on the other hand, did experience the receiving of energetic information as guidance. In fact, subjects spoke of the ways they learned to tune in to their guidance more readily. Elements included developing a personal practice of some kind including: learning to quiet the mind and listen, meditation, daily ritual, and journaling. David said his practice is simply, “paying attention to how I’m feeling and the kind of things I’m thinking about.” Adam explained, “It takes nurturing to develop just like anything. It takes a slow development, starting simple and getting more available in more complex situations.”

Now that he’s gotten good at tuning in, Adam said he can just “be quiet for a minute and ask for direction and then I get it.” Mitch described it as an interactive experience. “It is a two way flow; if you are completely tuned in to what the world is telling you, then you can go in a lot of different directions but there is something of your internal constitution, who you are that's the thing the world is interacting with…” He seemed to me to be describing a sort of alchemy where something new is created when that Universal Energy Field collides with human energetic intentions. However, there is
no way to know in advance what this collision of forces will produce. The outcome may be a product of faith. As Amy said, “There's a faith I have that when I'm ready something will present itself.” Something will emerge but what it is, we cannot know.

In fact, for some, as with Adam, developing the ability to recognize when there is confusion or ambiguity is part of the method. In order to develop this tolerance, subjects explained they needed to learn to trust. The words “trust” “belief” and “faith” were used repeatedly to describe their attitudes towards their guiding energies. Their initial, pivotal experiences, once having opened the door to this awareness, led subjects to explore and cultivate their abilities. As they got more familiar with the experience, their trust seemed to grow.

Adam explained, “It includes listening carefully, observing, but goes beyond that to trusting that there really is a knowing, that there is an answer. As you do it, the belief and trust grows.” David said, “I've learned those feelings are quite reliable in that they usually turn out well.” Brenda said, “Over the last several years, it is about trusting it. I have not always trusted it, as I'm very analytical.” She explained, she can ask a question and get an answer, “It is just about trusting that answer.”

Chapter 3: How Messages Are Received
From Concrete Messages to Interconnected, Universal Experience

Subjects reported that once tuned in, they were able to get very concrete messages of guidance. The messages were either heard as a voice or felt in the body, or were described as a “knowing” that would emerge. When asked if these messages or knowing were their own ideas, or were given to them, all responded that they were not their own but came to them, or through them. Adam talked about getting guidance in the form of a
clear “voice.” He stated, “it's not me at all, it resides in me but it’s tapping into the universal knowing.”

For Amy, “Insight doesn’t come from within, but from something out there.” Paula said, “All of a sudden something came up like "oh, of course." It's not that you're picking it up, the thing is recognizing it.” She described, “the capacity to let something emerge…” David said, “I was writing... and the words came to me with great ease and from somewhere…not from my conscious mind as far as I could tell.”

When asked to explain what it felt like to get a message, five subjects described receiving guidance as a physical experience. Adam stated, “There is something that precedes that and isn’t just the voice, but some sort of somatic sense…There is a way in which I use my body like a tuning fork, in tune with a certain vibration.” Two others used the term “tune in” as well.

Mitch told a story about walking into a coffee house and seeing a group of businesswomen in conversation. Although their tones and words were mild, he stated that, “Radiating from one of these women was this rage…I could just feel it hitting my back,” as he passed.

For many of the subjects there was little distinction between the experience of interacting with the energy of individuals near them, groups, or these messages of guidance. For instance, Amy describes the sensation of guidance in relation to groups, “I've come to believe there is a wisdom in a group. I become a channeler, a container to hold them so they can find that. It doesn't come from me, it comes from them, through them.” For her the group functioned as a conduit of information. Adam described himself as the conduit, able to hear a distinct voice directly within himself. Mitch
experienced other individuals being the conduit of communicative energy as with the
enraged woman in the café.

So there is the energetic connection between individuals, between consultant and
group, between the consultant and the universe, a connection that is felt or heard
internally. All subjects described these interchangeably, as though the same phenomena
were at work. This made me think of the Human System Redesign (HSR) model (Eisen,
1996).

Eisen’s HSR model is based on the idea of organizations as “nested structures of
human systems interacting with other systems” (p.3). This includes the individual, the
group, the organization, and the environment, with eight levels total. The key to this
perspective is the “complex interdependence among these levels. One cannot work on
one without effecting and being effected by others” (p.3). Eisen notes that these parts are
not usually thought of in this interdependent way.

Similarly, Myhre (2004) discusses holography as a metaphor for the
interconnectedness of the universe, exploring the theories of Michael Talbot’s The
Holographic Universe (1991). She writes,

“What is so fascinating about this model is that no matter which part or
even fragment of the hologram you look at, you can always see the whole
picture. Every piece of the whole contains all the information about the
whole.” (p. 14)

Talbot (1991) explains that if you cut a holographic picture of an apple in half,
you do not get the two halves of an apple, but whole pictures of the apple on both pieces
of film. Myhre (2004) goes on to connect these ideas to the nature of energy in the body.

“On the level of a human body, when an imbalance exists in one part of
the organism, there is also an imbalance holographically imprinted upon
the entire organism. When utilizing energy healing techniques, the
vibrational frequency of the parts of the organism out of balance is altered. When the frequency in one part has been balanced, immediately the frequency of the rest of the organism is also altered.” (Myhre 2004, p 16)

Myhre relates the metaphor to the internal working of the body’s energy. I relate it outward to the workings of energy between the body and other bodies, other entities such as groups and organizations, or the universe. For the subjects I interviewed, it did not matter which snippet of film was examined, they were energetically experiencing the same apple. A new concept began to emerge for me, one not unlike the HSR model, but that described this kind of energy connection experienced at all levels of the universe, from the subatomic to the infinite, one that possesses a capacity for communication.

Chapter 4: The Heart as a Systems Thinker
Becoming Aware of Connections

Five subjects talked about the role of the heart in the phenomenon of getting guidance. All explained that there is work to do there and some interplay between the heart and the head that must be managed or cultivated. David said, “When I'm guided in this way my heart opens and I have the sense of the other's heart opening as well and a deeper sense of resonance.” Brenda said, “It is about really staying in that heart space and to let the spirit speak to me and yet be connected in the world.” She explained, “the feeling is, keeping my heart open, and keeping that space between the heart and the spirit really connected.”

The idea of connection was also pervasive. Subjects seemed to create connection between their inner states, the messages they received physically or the voices they listened to, and the people, world and even their destinies. David stated, “We are connected and we communicate in a number of ways not measurable by science, that we
tend to be downplay, or we remain unaware.” Yet the science may be catching up. Margaret Wheatley draws “deliberate connections between science and organizational life,” (Wheatley 2006, p xii) in her book, Leadership and the New Science. She examines quantum physics, self-organizing systems and chaos theory. She states, “Quantum physics challenges our thinking about observation and perception, participation and relationships, and the influences and connections that work across large and complex systems.” (p. xiii)

Subjects’ ability to make connections around them and connect to their guidance deeply affected their work and their values. Mitch spoke of resonance with what is personally meaningful for him, stating that when he resonated most with an energetic message was when it touched his core values. “If there is something that is happening that connects with core values like social justice or environmental protection or embodying love in the world, I feel those things more strongly.”

And Amy led it back to her OD work, saying, “I think of connection in relation to other people - our work is very people-intensive. The work we do has, at its heart, the idea that we're all connected, all interdependent…” This struck me as a very systems-oriented way of perceiving the work.

With this type of approach, one that comes from values, connects to humanity and the universe, resonates and communicates on these levels, I couldn’t wait to hear how subjects used this in their work.

Chapter 5: Using Guidance in Organization Development
The Path of Healing, Intentionality and Knowing a Good Fit
There was an essential quality of healing to the work subjects described. They talked about using guidance in facilitation, work with groups, coaching, training, and designing workshops. They described opening stuck places, enabling forgiveness and truth telling, getting clients to deeper understandings, deeper and better coaching, creating safety, and easing emotional pain.

Modern physicists are connecting energy theory with health, as they become clear that the Universe is in fact inter-connected, vibrational, and energy based (Cetin, 1998; Talbot, 1991; Myss, 1996). With much study at the micro levels of human energy anatomy in the body (Myss, 1996) and the super micro levels of subatomic theory such as string theory (Cetin, 1998), little research has been done thus far on what I see as the macro level, connecting human energy to the energy flow at the universal level, and what that communication may offer.

Richard Gerber (2001) is a physician who received his medical degree from Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit, Michigan. He practices internal medicine and has researched the field of alternative methods of healing and diagnosis for 25 years (Myhre, 2004).

“Gerber postulates that the field of energy healing is based upon the Einsteinian paradigm which views matter as an expression of energy, constantly evolving. He names this field of healing Vibrational medicine.” (p. 9)

Catherine Ann Chapman, in her dissertation for The Graduate School of The Union Institute (1999), presents her study and development of a “Spiritual-Energetic Psychotherapy” which uses energy studies and Spiritual frameworks to alleviate psychological distress. She notes, “Since all matter is energy, events, thoughts and feelings affect the physical body by causing changes in the energy field” (p. 15).
These same events, thoughts and feelings affect the other energetic clusters to which we belong, such as the group, the organization, the culture, the universe. In this way, tuning in to the signals provided by the universal energy field may be the ultimate sensitivity for an OD practitioner.

Amy said, “When I'm facilitating some process...There’ve been times I knew we were working on a whole other plane. It was really a spiritual experience because it involved pain, experiences, truth telling. It broke open places they were stuck, and enabled them to ask for forgiveness from each other which was very powerful.”

Brenda talked about increasing her effectiveness. “It takes a lot of courage to be a really good coach, to do OD. Part of my work is to say the stuff nobody else will, and I've got to be pretty centered for that. When I take that on from a more spiritual place, I’m always just more effective.”

Mitch told a story in which he had a conflict with a large, corporate client about a process choice that had ethical ramifications. He said, “I found myself getting very calm and very relaxed” describing the physical sensation of knowing his next step. “The choice could have been to go into facilitator mode, which is what I'm sort of there to do, but that didn't feel right. I needed to be something else. I needed to be a warrior, not a neutral stander-by.” In the end, he did not lose the client, but won their respect and was able to do good work without compromising his ethics.

The theme of setting clear intentions rose again and again. Several subjects spoke of this being an important tool. Mitch said he does not offer clients certainties and is open with clients about this perspective, realizing full well it might not be well received by all. However, he said, “If we're operating from that place of emergence and from being
transparent and authentic…I can't tell you what is going to happen as a result of doing this work together, we're going to go in with an intention...but no blue-prints here.”

All subjects stated that they could walk into an organization and know right away if it would be a good fit for them. Brenda said, “I pretty much know when I walk in the door whether it is going to work or not.”

A third emergent theme was around the quality of outcomes subjects experienced in their work. The OD consultants I interviewed described improved results and positive outcomes when they “listened” to their guidance. For Mitch, when he stood up to his client, “The board supported my decision and I got six emails saying they'd never seen that kind of leadership under pressure…”

Brenda said, “There's a way they get it, that they can make shifts they want to make; when I'm more on my game it allows me to be more present to be on theirs…my clients have better outcomes.”

Adam stated, “You get to where the client wants to go, you get to a healing place, you get to an opening--from a constriction.”

Like Myss and Chapman, whose work is around using energy work to clear stuck places to facilitate healing, these OD practitioners used their energy guidance in their work with groups and individuals and found the same kinds of healing results. With such a powerful and exciting OD tool to use, I was struck at how inaccessible this conversation can be.
Chapter 6: Language and Culture
Tentative Steps Into a Societal Taboo

This isn’t easy material to discuss. All subjects hedged at first, asking me to give them examples or clarify what I wanted to hear. None were able to volunteer a spiritual connection to their experience. They only admitted it after I asked. None connected any of their experiences to a sense of “God.” Some challenged my use of language, preferring to use the term “intuition” saying it would be easier. One person told me he thought I was brave to even write about the topic, which could be a career ender. Another admitted that she keeps this part of her life basically secret and is only just beginning to consider integrating it openly into her work life. I was fascinated by the general sense of taboo that surrounded this discussion for a set of individuals for whom this is so clearly a central and core part of their beings. It is no wonder that finding the language to use to talk about this phenomenon was so challenging for me, and for them.

In part, this may be cultural. Mitch explained, “What it means to become an adult in this culture is to become walled off to the signals that are around us-- in the name of protecting whatever it is, a business, a life, a marriage. So we get walled off from certain senses that may be informing us and advising us. They are advisors in fact. But we shut them out and numb them. Its not until something gets pulled out and we move into crisis, and we have to ask the world ‘what next?’ And the way to do that is to un-numb, unwall-off.” Brenda and David both pointed to upbringings that discouraged sensitivity of this kind. Brenda said, “Historically, they (my parents) felt I was way too sensitive, so I was encouraged not to trust it. So I’ve embodied that questioning myself because of my upbringing.”
Mitch also talked about the cultural pressures of the market. “The idea of using intuition, of tuning in, of going with the flow, of emergence, are all things that most organization leaders find to be distasteful, in my mind. And that is one of the challenges.” Subjects spoke of using this talent they had cultivated in mostly covert ways. They do not necessarily discuss it with their clients or with their colleagues. At the same time, two are published authors with seminal books on working in this way. While these two were more frank and direct about their way of working, it was only after screening me to a degree that they opened up. It seemed they needed first to establish, as did the others, that it was safe to talk with me about this topic. Some never really were able to fully open up and talk about the spiritual aspect of this kind of experience, or go beyond the superficial in their descriptions. As I observed before, none spoke about the biggest taboo: God.

With such heavy taboo about spirituality, energy and guidance, it might be rather isolating to have this kind of experience. Who does one turn to as a thought partner, what reference does one use? Where is the sharing of information to occur when a subject is laden with such heavy stigma? Subjects spoke of floundering at times, even in the light of clear guidance. I asked if they ever ignored guidance or dismissed it for some reason. Several answers were around money. Mitch talked about the few times he has “fired” a client, explaining, “My first intuition was not to take this client on. I should have listened to that. And I took the work on cause I got greedy or ‘cause of my ego, or I thought I could really help and change this person...”

David acknowledged that with age and experience, and having reached a certain financial security, this pressure has eased. He spoke of being better now at listening to those “nudges” as he calls them. “I think it has to do with not being so concerned with
earning a living or making money, because most of the stuff I do is not compensated and is not undertaken for that purpose.”

I was observing a culture clash of some kind. These were people who used guidance actively in their lives, in their work, and yet were guarded in talking about it and sometimes conflicted in using it professionally. On the one hand there is healing and spirituality, on the other is a results and financially driven society. What might happen to a society that honors the gift of the intuitive mind, as well as the rational mind? And how can this cultural shift occur? I think that those with a gift must come forth and bring their gifts into the light. I trust that beginning the discussion and finding the language and applicability may be steps towards creating that shift.

**Conclusion**

It may be part of the human condition to be searching for answers. Certainly, innate human curiosity and the need for understanding begins at the dawn of a human life. Guidance, however it may be defined, may come in many forms: Perhaps as a dolphin. Sometimes she breaches in front of us, other times she remains an elusive flash of white just below the surface of the water. If we are watching for her, however, we may see her and be lucky enough to catch the meaning and move ourselves accordingly, fulfillingly forward. Often there is just a staring into the murk and waiting. The young OD consultant saw the flash below the water and his guide suggested they get quite still and wait. Waiting. Stillness. Asking instead of knowing. And they were rewarded.

From my research, I can conclude that there are real and concrete benefits to OD work that result from the ability to successfully access energetic guidance. Subjects told
story after story about getting deeper, more meaningful results from their work with groups and individuals when they were “tuned in.” I found those I spoke with were particularly comfortable with the ideas of complexity, ambiguity, and interconnectedness, all of which lend themselves well to the core OD skill of “systems thinking.” While subjects did not talk about systems thinking, they demonstrated it over and over. It seemed to come naturally, issuing from their particular way of experiencing the world and life. I think that for OD practitioners, systems thinking must be a very beneficial by-product of cultivating access to guidance and using it in their work. And again there was a kind of alchemy when bringing two energies together in which something new is formed from those two converging forces. In that convergence we may access greater understanding, healing, courage, and growth.

Such is the gift of the dolphin.
References


