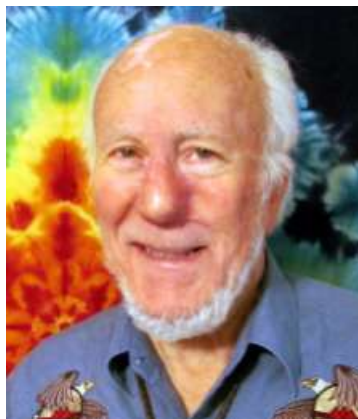




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Celebrating the Life and Afterlife of Bob Van de Castle

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Thank you, Jean, for giving us this platform to share our memories of Bob Van de Castle.

All are welcome to reminisce, pay tribute and honor Bob as you knew and loved him in his physical form – and also to share any experience you have had of or with him since his passing on January 29th, 2014 whether in a dream or waking state.

For those of you who may not have met or known Bob Van de Castle well, you can learn more about him on his [IASD Member Page](#) and by visiting his [Our Dreaming Mind](#) website.

I consider myself blessed to have loved and to have been loved by him for over five years. I believe we made each other happier than either of us had ever been before we met. I am grateful for the knowledge he imparted, the encouragement he gave to me to be the best I can be, and the numerous people I've met through him – many of whom I now count among my dearest friends and dream family. I have grown through knowing and loving him and continue to grow as I deal with and accept his passing. I know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he is doing well on the other side and is continuing to help and encourage others in working with their dreams.

Before I say more, I'd like to share one such "Bob experience" with you, directly from the one who experienced it. The following is from Cherylee Black, a three time near-death experiencer from Canada who never met Bob in waking life. Cherylee has been involved with parapsychological research at a number of universities and research facilities and is an active member of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS). She wrote this, at my request, after a lengthy phone discussion on July 8th.



The Value of Having a "Bob Experience"
by Cherylee Black

I am not someone who is comfortable talking about my dreams. I enjoy a good night's sleep as much as the next person, but a good night can sometimes be a rather elusive objective. While many people look forward to sleeping and some even actively pursue the goal of lucid dreaming, it's not uncommon for me to fall asleep while working in front of my computer, find myself in a lucid dream and think, "Oh crap! I'm asleep."

The reason I have issues with sleep is that I've suffered from nightmares since I was a kid. Of course, when you are a kid, the adults will tell you that it's just a nightmare, so go back to sleep. And when the nightmares become persistent, you will hear the adults whispering how glad they

will be when you finally grow out of it. The trouble is, I never outgrew the nightmares. I don't have just run-of-the-mill bad dreams either. Some of them are lucid. They can even be veridical.

At the age of 21, while spending my summer working as a musician in the Canadian Forces, I had one of my most traumatic dreams. A close friend of mine was being brutally raped. It was realistic and horrifying. I knew that I was asleep. I woke up screaming. I had no idea what to do at that point. I tried to convince myself that it was just a bad dream. The two of us had been out dancing at a club with co-workers that evening. I had left early accompanied by a couple of friends. She stayed to enjoy the music. She assured me that she would walk back to our residence later on with the remaining members of our unit. But she didn't make it home safely.

That was one of a number of nightmares I've had over the years that have turned out to be veridical. Most of the time there is little I can do to remedy the situation, other than try my best to deal with the aftermath. In some cases I've had nightmares about things that happened years before that still haunt those close to me, such as the many traumatic events that took place during my first husband's years of service in the military. I've always been resigned to the fact that the psi-informed nightmares were just something I had to learn to live with.



Recently, I've become involved with an organization called Sacred Acoustics, which produces binaural beat recordings. On January 28, 2014, Ross Dunseath, a University of Virginia (UVA) researcher I had been corresponding with, gave my contact information to Karen Newell, one of the founders of Sacred Acoustics, at a meeting of the Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS) at UVA. (It's worth noting that Eben Alexander and Robert Van de Castle were also in attendance that day.) Karen got in touch with me via email afterwards, and I started listening to the test recordings and providing feedback almost immediately. On January 31, 2014 at 10:44 AM, I made what seemed from my perspective to be a rather innocuous entry into the Sacred Acoustics feedback log for a recording called Journey to Unknown JY:

I found that after listening to this recording late last night, I had a very clear, realer-than-real lucid dream. I had the most remarkable dream in which I was communicating with a man named Bob who had just passed away. He wasn't using words to talk, it was more like ideas, feelings and images. We had a lot in common, because I'm [a Near-Death Experiencer] and we've had some similar experiences. It was a remarkable dream. I didn't know Bob when he was alive, but I wish I had.

I might never have discovered who Bob might have been, except that I received an email from Karen asking for more information about the "Bob" I had mentioned in that log. I wrote back with some additional details of the experience. I mentioned that Bob and I had talked about what it was like to die, and that we compared my Near-Death Experiences (NDEs) to his experience so far. Bob said he had wanted to come back, and then explained why he didn't. It wasn't because he was so blissed out on the light and couldn't imagine leaving it, which was why I had wanted to stay dead when I had my last NDE. I thought that would have been enough of a reason, and he admitted that even though the light was pretty awesome, he had considered both futures and this one was better for his family. He couldn't come back and be OK. There would have been more strokes and he wouldn't have been himself anymore. He did feel badly that there wasn't a better option, but he said that things were really for the best even if it didn't always seem that way.

Bob told me that his partner was having difficulty sleeping. He said she would know how to find him that way, but Bob said she would sleep better when things had settled down a bit. He seemed quite confident that she knew he was OK and that he loved her. I guess this wasn't something anyone expected to happen. Bob sort of had a feeling something was going to happen, but not like this. He was doing what he loved and things were great . . . then he was gone. No pain. He said he could probably get more work done now.

I didn't know why I had that dream, since I had never met Bob before and didn't know who he was. It was really comforting though. He seemed like a very nice man. If it weren't for my

history of nightmares, I might not have found that experience quite so significant. Having a lucid dream that was not only pleasant, but also very comforting, is unusual for me. I thought it was kind of Bob to facilitate such a dream on my behalf. The experiences of Bob continued after that. Not just when I was dreaming, but there were also times that I could see him when I was awake.

My original log mentioning Bob arrived in Karen's email the day after she received the notification that Bob Van de Castle had passed away. The experiences I shared with her also garnered the attention of Eben Alexander, a good friend of Bob's who was also shocked to hear about his death shortly after that meeting at DOPS. Although I had never met Bob and was unfamiliar with his work, it turned out that I was in contact with many people who had known him to varying degrees. This circle of mutual friends grew larger and larger as I confided in others about these experiences. I regularly contacted Jim Carpenter, who was another good friend of Bob's, to share each additional "Bob experience." Ross Dunseath, Ed Kelly and Bruce Greyson were also made aware of some of these experiences. Researchers at both the Rhine Research Center (RRC) and DOPS became informed about Bob's presence through my correspondence.



In May 2014, I made a trip to the US in order to visit both the RRC and UVA. On May 12, 2014, in a Faraday Cage at the DOPS lab, Bob made an appearance. I was hooked up to an EEG device and had been participating in PK experiments set up by Ross Dunseath. Ross shut down the experiments almost immediately after Bob had appeared. Ross stopped the experiments primarily because I started looking towards the door of the Faraday cage, "apparently distracted by something." I actually didn't recognise Bob at the time. He looked much older than I was used to seeing him, and I didn't get a very good look at him before the experience was interrupted. I eventually discovered that Bob looked very different as an older gentleman because that was after he had had surgery on his nose. It's no wonder I had difficulty recognising him. It's kind of interesting Bob did show up on the afternoon I visited UVA, since many of the people who were at the last DOPS meeting that Robert Van de Castle attended (January 28th) were also at the DOPS lab that day, including Eben Alexander and Karen Newell.

The next day I was in Durham, and I saw Bob as I was getting ready to head over to the RRC that morning. He asked me to say “Hi” to Jim Carpenter. Bob also showed up about an hour later at the RRC. I was grateful for his help in the bioenergy lab where he talked me through one of the experiments and helped me do well on the tests. Bob seemed to have a genuine fondness for so many people involved with the RRC. I couldn’t keep track of all the people I was supposed to say “Hi” to. And even after I returned home from the trip, Bob still wanted to communicate with people at the RRC.

On June 8, 2014, shortly after midnight, I found myself in the midst of a lucid nightmare after falling asleep at home in front of my computer. I tried frantically to wake myself up, but was having very little luck in doing so. My main concern was that I might wake up screaming and upset everyone within earshot. Then Bob showed up. He somehow talked me through and then out of the nightmare. Then he asked me to wake up and send a message to Larry Burk, a doctor who I had met on the trip to the RRC. I wasn't keen on doing that, but I did owe Bob the favor for helping me. I was also worried that I'd forget about sending the message by the time I woke up, but Bob said he would give me a reminder. I woke up, and I could still see Bob. He wasn't able to talk to me at that point, but he was still very reassuring somehow. I knew it was more than just a dream, so I sent Dr Burk a message on Facebook to tell him that “Yes,” Bob had been hanging around with him the past few days. After sending the message, I wrote a note in my experience logbook, went to bed, and proceeded to forget about the whole thing. It was a few days later when I got a response to the Facebook message. Apparently, during the time when Bob had shown up to give me that message, Larry had been attending the IASD Conference, where he had dedicated his talk on dreams that warn of breast cancer to Bob Van de Castle.

As it turned out, Bob had been a well-regarded psychologist in his lifetime and he seemingly continued to fulfill that function through my dreams. I found his presence to be extremely reassuring. I could sometimes see Bob when I was awake and even if he didn't say anything, just the sight of him made me feel more secure. Like the feeling of holding onto an adult's hand when you are a scared little kid.

In subsequent dreams, Bob helped me to address the issue of nightmares. In the early hours of June 14, 2014, I saw Bob in my dreams at a time when I had been fearful of sleeping. He told me that I wasn't going to have a nightmare on that occasion. He said we were just going to dispense with that issue right off the start so we could have a discussion. He was right. I didn't have any bad dreams that night. I'm not sure how he knew that I wouldn't. We talked about nightmares and discussed "possible coping strategies" (Bob's words, not mine). He said if I was stuck in one, I could just ask for help getting out of it and he'd be willing to do that for me until I developed the appropriate skill set to get out of them on my own.



Bob had a tendency to ask tough questions. He asked me if it was my responsibility to stop all the bad things from happening in the world, or at least all the bad things that I could see coming. I had always assumed it was, but the way Bob asked that question, I became much less sure of my answer. It seemed like a trick question. He told me to think about it for a while and we'd get back to it later. That was where that dream ended.

I hate to admit it, but while the Bob I was experiencing in my dreams was a very good therapist, I was not always so well-behaved or cooperative in regards to his efforts. In fact, I could be downright miserable at times, accusing him of being a figment of my imagination when it suited me, particularly when he brought up difficult issues or asked questions that hit a nerve. Bob's response was that it was fine with him if I felt the need to reject the experience of seeing ghosts as crazy, just so long as that was how I really felt and particularly if I felt the experiences were unhealthy or harmful in any way. But he said he was concerned that I might be rejecting the experience as a way to avoid answering the questions he had asked me to consider. He made me promise to think about that for a while. That was on June 15, 2014.

In a dream the following night, Bob asked if I had come to any decisions in regards to what we had been talking about the night before, and I told him that I needed more time to think about it. He said I could have all the time I needed to think about those things. He suggested that in the meantime, we could address the issue of nightmares and what to do about them. Then he asked

me a bunch of questions about how I might know a nightmare was happening or about to happen. We talked about how I might be able to prevent them or at least tone them down if I could figure out if there were some indications that they were likely to occur.

In dreams on June 17th and 18th 2014, Bob asked me a number of difficult questions that I didn't like very much. But I slept really well, and my dreams were much brighter than usual, more like they used to be when I was a young child. Sometimes I felt sad during our dream conversations, but at least I wasn't having nightmares. In a later dream that didn't include Bob, I felt inconsolably sad. I knew I was asleep, but I couldn't stop crying. I've never been able to cry like that when I'm awake. I came to the conclusion that it was better to be sad than frightened, so I decided it didn't count as a nightmare. Anyway, I felt a lot better when I woke up the next morning. It was a release, not an additional trauma to be addressed.

At 1:00 AM on July 4, 2014, while listening to a Sacred Acoustics binaural beat recording, I saw Bob again. He didn't say anything, but he didn't really have to. When I slept that night I had a wonderfully vivid dream about being a bear who turned into a multitude of butterflies. As a bear I had been very reluctant to become the butterflies, but after it had occurred I was very happy about it. And at the end of the dream, I found that when I wanted to, I could pull myself together into the shape of a bear again. So I was different, but still me.



Throughout the duration of the “Bob experiences”, I had been encouraged to contact Bobbie Ann Pimm, Bob’s partner, by a number of people who I had shared these accounts with. I had no intention of doing so. It was too frightening a prospect. The closest I had come to her was friending her on Facebook. That was as close as I was willing to get. I didn't want to cause her any grief and I was also afraid of having my experiences rejected. But the encouragement to contact her continued. What changed my mind was Bobbie herself. The day after my vividly beautiful dream about metamorphosis, she posted a picture of butterflies in her garden on

Facebook. I saw that picture and then looked up to see Bob. I grudgingly had to admit that it might have been a sign as to how to proceed.

I was very fortunate that Bobbie Ann was gracious enough to talk to me on July 8, 2014. She helped explain some of my experiences of Bob and was very accepting of whatever I shared with her. That being said, I was quite worried about Bobbie Ann after our long conversation. I had forwarded to her a number of emails in which I had shared my experiences of Bob with others. I knew that she had a lot to process. On the morning of July 9, 2014, I woke up after having had another dream about Bob. He told me that Bobbie Ann would be fine and suggested that she would also find it easier to talk with him directly now.

Bob's presence over the past few months has been a very positive experience. The nightmares are certainly much less of an issue for me now. Personally, I never know what to make of such things. I don't know if my Bob is Robert Van de Castle, but whoever or whatever he is, he is a very kind individual and I'm grateful to have met him.



I'd like to make a few comments on what Cherylee shares and explain some of the relationships she mentions. My first contact with Cherylee was via a Facebook message on July 7th introducing herself at the urging of Larry Burk. (I've since thanked Larry for doing so.) Bob and I first met Larry in 2012 by email via mutual friends at the Rhine Research Center and then met him at the Parapsychological Association Convention later that year. Larry is the author of *Let Magic Happen: Adventures in Healing with a Holistic Radiologist*. Among other holistic approaches, Larry relies on dreams to diagnose and heal physical ailments, including cancer. We then introduced Larry to the IASD.

On July 8th, Cherylee and I spoke on the phone for almost an hour and half as she told me about herself, some of her life experiences and her "Bob" experiences. It was a fascinating conversation which ended with her agreeing to forward the various emails she mentioned where

she described her Bob encounters with others. She mentions here that she was worried about overwhelming me with all those emails, which they did, but in a good way.

This in particular really “hit” me: *“he had considered both futures and this one was better for his family. He couldn't come back and be OK. There would have been more strokes and he wouldn't have been himself anymore. He did feel badly that there wasn't a better option, but he said that things were really for the best even if it didn't always seem that way.”* Bob always said he wouldn't want to come back if he was going to be a burden on his family.

Followed by, *“Bob told me that his partner was having difficulty sleeping. He said she would know how to find him that way, but Bob said she would sleep better when things had settled down a bit. He seemed quite confident that she knew he was OK and that he loved her. I was definitely having trouble sleeping and was disappointed that Bob hadn't visited me in a dream yet. I knew it was because I wasn't sleeping well – and I did know that he was OK and that he loved me, even if I didn't have “proof” of it myself.*

“I guess this wasn't something anyone expected to happen. Bob sort of had a feeling something was going to happen, but not like this. He was doing what he loved and things were great . . . then he was gone. No pain. He said he could probably get more work done now.” This describes exactly how he passed. He was on a real high that evening of the 28th. He was feeling great that afternoon and went to the DOPS meeting without me, which he normally wouldn't do. That evening, we just finished going over the results of the psi testing that we did with the Guna children in Panama earlier in the month. The results were pretty astounding and he was really excited. We were talking about accepting the Guna chief's offer of returning to Panama in February to attend and talk at their Independence Day celebration. He got up from the table, walked into his office and within minutes he had a massive stroke in the brain stem. Quick, no pain and without warning, other than Bob's own premonitions that he wasn't going to go to another Dream Ball – and his dream in December telling him that he wouldn't be returning to Panama. I also recall mentioning to someone soon afterward that I thought that Bob would probably be able to get more work done now.

Bob and I met Karen Newell at a DOPS meeting over a year before he passed and several times since. We met Eben Alexander in 2011, before his book, *Proof of Heaven* was published. Eben asked Bob to critique the first draft of his book and Bob and Eben had many long talks together. Eben especially would have known Bob well enough to recognize him from Cherylee's description.

Bob was affiliated with the Rhine Research Center (RRC) since he worked with J.B. Rhine in the 60's and he knows lots of people there, including Jim Carpenter and Larry Burk. It would have been a long list of people that he would want to say hello to, not surprising that Cherylee felt she lost track of all of them. The RRC investigates and researches all manner of psi experiences including psychic mediums.

Bob's connection to UVA's Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS) is long standing as well. He attended Tuesday afternoon meetings there with Bruce Greyson, Ross Dunseath and Ed Kelly for many, many years. The main focus of DOPS is on finding proof of survival after death. It would only be natural for Bob to return there. It's such a shame that Ross disconnected Cherylee just as Bob appeared to her.

And then there is Bob sending a message via Cherylee to Larry Burk while he was at the IASD conference confirming that Bob was indeed there. (When Cherylee first told me this she asked if Larry had told me of the message and I told her, "I don't think so." After thinking more on it, I do recall Larry telling me of the message while at the Dream Ball and I didn't think much of it because I already *knew* that Bob was there. I believe my response to Larry was, "I *know* Bob is here.") Several people said they saw him and others felt his presence.

I find it amazing that Bob was able to find someone that he never met in waking life that had so many connections to people that they both knew – but then, of course, I really shouldn't be amazed; synchronicities were always an important guide for Bob. For me, it shows how much we really are connected to each other – in ways that we are not even aware of.

To this day, July 27th, Bob still has not come to me in a dream that I remember. I have “felt” his presence a few times at home. My strongest connection with him came on the plane ride from SFO to Chicago after the conference. The seat next to me was vacant and I could feel him sitting next to me and resting his hand on mine, just as we did on many plane rides before. If the passenger in the aisle seat had looked over, he would have seen me crying – but they were tears full of love and joy for I know that he was there with me and that he is happy.

I want to thank Cherylee for overcoming her initial reluctance to reach out to me. There is not a doubt in my mind that “her” Bob is “our” Bob and this confirmation that he is continuing to do what he loved to do is very comforting to me.

I think she describes him to a “T” here: “. . . *just the sight of him made me feel more secure. Like the feeling of holding onto an adult's hand when you are a scared little kid.*” This is exactly how I felt upon seeing him for the first time after driving 400+ miles from New Jersey to meet him . . . and there were many times after that, too – I just always felt “safe” when I was near him. She also hits the nail on the head when she says, “*Bob had a tendency to ask tough questions.*” Yes he did, but they were always the right questions at the right time and I know I was always better for having them asked . . . and answering.



Please share your memories of Bob and any experiences and dreams you have had of him since he passed on the afternoon of January 29, 2014. I will cherish each of them.