



Life is Hard and then You Live

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It was such a strange thing for a little boy to describe, but hearing strange things from little kids was an every day occurrence for Dr. Steve Davison. Still, sometimes what they said was a little unnerving and that was the case with what little Joshua Peters had related.

Steve Davison had known as far back as he could remember that he wanted to be a doctor and wanted to help people. He never even questioned it, and neither did his family. For some reason everyone always just accepted that little Steve would one day be Doctor Davison. Steve also knew that he wasn't going to be the kind of doctor that cut people and stuck needles into them. In fact the sight of blood always made him lightheaded and dizzy. Of course this prompted Steve's brother and sister to dub him "Dizzy Doctor Davison." Sometimes they just referred to him as Triple-D for short.

When Steve was in high school he became fascinated by how the mind works. He would read incessantly about all kinds of mental disorders, but what interested him most were the workings of the minds of children. It always seemed to Steve that a child's mind should be in good working order, not having had the time to be all cluttered up with a lot of bad experiences that tend to make the rest of us act and think strangely at times. Of course there were injury related issues, and diseases, but in general it always seemed that a normal healthy child should have a normal healthy mind. Yet it fascinated him to learn that sometimes the minds of children revealed a strange and fascinating look at the universe.

When he entered college Steve set himself on a course that would lead him into psychology with a particular interest in matters relating to children. So it was that Steve Davison ended up pursuing a PhD. in psychology and really did end up being a doctor who didn't have to cut people or stick needles into them. Triple-D had found his place in life.

In his practice Steve had focused more and more on the phobias of young children, particularly those that seemed to have no rational cause. Time and time again he would be faced with two, three and four year old children that had extreme phobias that seemingly had come from nowhere. There would be extreme fears of loud noises, heights, fire, water, cars, airplanes, and the like. Stranger still, many of these same children also had extreme affection for something unique. The affection could be for a particular piece of music, a picture of some

tourist attraction, a book, or something else that you wouldn't think would be of interest to a young child.

Generally the fears would fade over a period of months or years and could often be helped by a variety of therapies. However, in the most extreme cases Steve would have to refer families to a Psychiatrist who could prescribe medications that seemed to help until the phobia waned. This often left Steve troubled because he always felt that these children who showed no signs of disease or injury should not have to take medication for their minds to be free of the phobias. Then one day he got a glimpse of another way to handle the problem.

Joey Simms was just the normally active three year old. He was constantly on the run and into everything, but that's not why his parents had come to Steve's office. They brought Joey to Steve because of his extreme fear of large bodies of water. The house he and his parents lived in had a pool in the back yard. Until about six months earlier this had not been a problem. Then one day Joey became very upset at even the sight of the pool. He would cry, scream, wail, and literally beg his parents, Jean and John, to make the pool go away. It had become such a problem that they had to keep the drapes closed for all the back windows and they could not even use the back door. Even with those concessions Joey didn't want to be in any of the back rooms of the house. Jean and John were at a total loss, and had brought Joey to Steve for help.

In one of their therapy sessions Steve asked, "Joey, could you do me a favor and lay back there on the couch and close your eyes?"

"Why?"

"We're going to talk a bit while you have your eyes closed."

"Why?"

"Because I want you very relaxed while we talk and that's the best way, OK partner?"

"OK."

Joey swung around and started to put his feet up on the couch and then looked at his mom. "It's OK, Joey, you can go ahead and put your feet up and get real comfortable," Steve assured him. Joey complied and settled in. "Now go ahead and close your eyes and get real comfortable."

"OK. You feeling nice and relaxed?" Joey nodded. "Good. OK, Joey, I want you to picture yourself in your house and tell me what you see."

"Ummmmm, I see my fire truck."

"Good. Where is it?"

"It's in the front room."

"Do you like driving your fire truck?"

"Yeah, it's neat."

"Good. How about we take your fire truck for a little ride around the house?"

"OK."

Knowing the layout of the Simms house, Steve suggested, "Let's take it for a ride into the family room."

"I don't want to."

"It'll be OK. We're right here. I just want you to tell me what you see when we get into the family room."

Joey hesitated then responded, "OK. We're in the family room now, and I see the TV and the big couch, and some books."

"Good. Now how about we take the fire truck out in the back yard?"

"Nooooo!"

“It’ll be OK. Nothing can hurt you here. You’re just on the couch here in my office. I just want you to tell me what you see when we take the fire truck out in your back yard, OK?”

There was a long hesitation and a deep sigh from Joey. “OK, I’m taking the fire truck outside.” Joey noticeably stiffened and his lips tightened. “It’s bad,” he said.

“What’s bad Joey? What do you see?”

“The boat’s leaking.”

“What boat is leaking, Joey?”

“We went fishing. Me and my kids. It’s our fishing boat.”

Steve looked at Jean and John who were equally at a loss as to what Joey was talking about. “Where are you fishing?”

“We’re at the lake. We always go to the lake to go fishing. We are way off shore. I can’t see the land. The boat is leaking. I’m trying to start the motor, but it won’t go. The kids are scared. I’m scared.”

“It’s OK. You’re not going to be hurt. Just tell me what you see and take your time.”

“The water is getting higher. We didn’t take the life jackets. I forgot them. It’s my fault. The motor won’t start. The kids are crying.” Tears began to flow down Joey’s cheeks as he was sobbing silently.

“Take your time. Just relax and listen to my voice and tell me what you see.”

“The boat sank. We’re in the water. Me and my two kids. I’m trying to keep them up and get us to shore, but I don’t know which way. The kids are crying. It’s my fault.”

“Don’t worry. Try to stay relaxed. We’re right here for you. Just tell me what is happening.”

“I’m so weak. I can’t keep their heads out of the water. My arms and legs won’t move. I’m slipping under the water,” crying while he’s speaking. “It’s my fault. I can’t get my nose out of the water. I’m trying to hold my breath and make my arms and legs work, but they just won’t. I don’t know where the kids are. Things are getting black. I can’t see anything. I can’t breathe.”

“It’s OK, you’re still on the couch and you can breathe here.”

“Now I’m floating.”

“Floating in the water?”

“No. I’m floating above the water. I see the water below me. I see some things in the water from the boat. It’s harder to see.”

“Why is it harder to see?”

“I just keep getting higher and higher. I can’t see anything else.”

“That’s OK, Joey. You don’t need to try to see anything more for me, OK?”

“Yeah.”

“You can open your eyes and get up for me now if you are ready.”

“OK,” Joey said while swinging himself back to a sitting position on the couch. “Are we ever going to do this again doctor Steve?”

“We might Joey. We might.”

That day Doctor Steve Davison had an eye opening experience. He saw a three year old boy who was deathly afraid of large bodies of water because he “remembered” drowning in a lake with his two children. Steve had his secretary keep an eye on Joey for a few minutes while he conferred briefly with Jean and John. All three of them were stunned at what they had heard and they all were at a loss as to where Joey’s vision had come from. Steve asked them to keep a

careful watch on Joey at home and give him a call if they saw any changes. Less than an hour after they left he received a call from them.

“Doctor?” Jean asked.

“Yes. Has something changed?”

“Yes. I just don’t understand. The minute we got home Joey asked if we could all go swimming.”

“Swimming?”

“Yeah, he was so excited. Joey and John are already out in the pool. He’s having a great time.”

“No fear?”

“None, and he’s paddling around out there like a fish.”

“Excellent. Let me know if anything changes.”

“Sure, and thanks doctor. Thanks. Bye,” Jean hung up the phone.

Steve sat there dumbfounded. Could it be that simple? Could these seemingly irrational fears be very rational after all? Could these fears just be real fears from somewhere else or somewhen else? Were they fears that had surfaced from a trauma in a previous life? Steve began to explore this possibility with a number of his patients and began having amazing successes.

There was four year old John Caufield who had an extreme fear of heights. He described falling to his death in a mountain climbing accident. Three year old Jennifer Williams had become very afraid of cars which challenged her parent’s ability to get her help. Steve had come to their house to see her. In their first and last visit Jennifer described how her car had careened off an icy mountain road and how she had lived pinned in the wreckage for a day before she had died. Five year old Craig Thompson was deathly afraid of fire. In their first session Craig told how he had loved being a fireman and how proud he was to be one. He described in detail the last fire he was at where they were trying to rescue someone in an upstairs apartment when the floor gave way under them. He and two of his best friends were burned to death that night.

Still, with all his success, Steve found it hard to believe that what these kids were telling him could possibly be real experiences. Then he met seven year old Joshua Peters.

Joshua was a very bright youngster with orange red hair and a face full of freckles. He had been home schooled because of his extreme fear of the sun that had kept him indoors much of the time. Because of this fear Steve met with Joshua and his parents, Henry and Rhonda, in the evenings after sundown. Unfortunately, the first few meetings had met with very limited success. Steve could seem to lead Joshua just so far and no further. He would seemingly teeter on the edge of revealing the source of his fear, but would then pull back.

During the course of their meetings Steve was able to find out quite a bit from Joshua, and this might have been helped somewhat by his age. It was highly unusual for children to remember previous lives much past the age of four, but clearly Joshua was an exception. From their meetings Steve had determined that the life Joshua remembered was as a five year old girl named Heather. He was also able to describe and tell a lot about details of the surroundings. From this Steve was able to determine almost the exact location of Joshua’s previous life experience. The place he described in detail was a restaurant next to the inner harbor area of Baltimore. Also from Joshua’s descriptions Steve was able to tell that the previous life would have had to be extremely recent. In fact, too recent. A couple of buildings Joshua described were less than five years old, and that didn’t make sense with Joshua being seven. Still, everything else that he related in their sessions made complete sense and Joshua never wavered

or contradicted anything he previously had said. Steve was a little bewildered, but just wanted to make a breakthrough during their session that evening.

“Joshua, are you ready to talk like we have before?”

“Sure, doctor Steve.” Joshua relaxed on the couch and closed his eyes.

“Good. Just take a couple of minutes to relax just like we did before. Then when you are ready tell me what you see. OK?”

“Mmmmm hmmm,” Joshua grunted assent as he stayed perfectly quiet for almost two minutes.

“I’m in the restaurant again, with my mom. We’re having the fish and chips. I always liked the fish and chips.”

“Good. Is there anything else you notice in the restaurant?”

“People next to us are talking. They seem to be worried about something. They are saying something about people getting killed somewhere.”

“Can you tell where?”

“Uh, no. They say a name, but I don’t understand it. It sounds kind of foreign.”

“OK. Is there anything else you notice?”

“The restaurant has a TV. I like TV.”

“I like TV too. Do you see what’s on the TV?”

“Nothing fun.”

“Nothing fun like what?”

“There is some guy talking. He seems real serious. He seems to be talking about people getting killed too in some strange sounding place.”

“Is it a news broadcast?”

“I think so. It’s not fun.”

“Why is it not fun?”

“The man seems worried. Everyone is worried... I hear a jet. I like planes.”

“Me too. Is the plane close?”

“I don’t know. My mom is paying the guy and we’re going to leave the restaurant.”

Realizing this was the point where Joshua always stopped, Steve prompted, “Remain very relaxed and remember you are right here, but you can tell me what you see.”

“Mmmmm hmmm.” Joshua again grunted assent but had visibly stiffened.

“The sun is so bright. Why did mommy have to make us go outside? It’s so bright...”

“Can you tell me more about how bright the sun is?”

“My eyes are closed, but it’s still so bright. All I can see is the sun. It’s hot.”

“Is it summertime?”

“Uh, no. Mom said she wanted to go today because it was a nice spring day. She said it’s too nice to stay home. I wish we had stayed home.”

“Why do you wish you had stayed home?”

“The sun is so bright. It’s so hot. I... Uh...”

“It’s OK. Relax. Take a couple of big deep breaths. You are right here and I am right here. When you are ready you can tell me what is happening.” Steve waited.

“It’s not just hot. It’s burning. The sun is burning.”

“Do you have a sunburn?”

“Uh, no... The sun is burning me. It’s so bright. My eyes are closed but I still see it. Now I hear the sun. I don’t know where my mom is.”

“It’s OK. Just relax.” Steve was on the edge of his seat hearing this for the first time. “You can tell me what is happening. It will be alright.”

“I’m flying through the air.”

“Like a bird?”

“No. It’s the sun. I’m burning. It’s so loud. The sun is throwing me through the air. I want my mom.”

“You’re doing fine. I’m right here for you. Just relax and everything will be fine. Take your time.”

“I’m not burning anymore. I can see. I still hear the sun.”

“What does the sun sound like?”

“It’s rumbling. Terrible rumbling. I can see. I’m way up high. I don’t know where my mom is. I see a big cloud.”

“A big cloud in the sky?”

“No, it’s below me. The cloud is on the ground but it’s coming up into the sky.”

“The cloud is coming up?”

“Yes. It’s getting bigger and bigger. It just keeps coming up.”

“Do you know why the cloud keeps getting bigger?”

“The sun made it. I don’t know. It’s changing shape. It’s starting to look like a tree. A cloud shaped like a big tree.”

“What else do you see?”

“Nothing. I’m going somewhere else, but I don’t see. I don’t know.”

“It’s OK. Just relax.”

“I don’t see any more. There isn’t anything else.”

“It’s OK, Joshua. Relax for a few moments then when you are ready you can open your eyes and sit up. OK?”

“Mmmm hmmm.” Joshua began to wiggle and finally sat up. “It was scary doctor Steve.”

“I know Joshua, but you’re here now and everything is OK. You don’t have to be scared any more.”

“OK. Are we done?”

“Yeah we’re done. Can you run out and ask your dad to come in for a moment?”

“Sure.” Joshua hopped off the couch and ran to get his dad.

As Steve waited he wondered what he was going to say. How do you explain something like this? Certainly what Joshua described didn’t seem to be a past life experience. Had he just made up a great story in his mind that had scared him? Still the details that he described were haunting.

“You wanted to see me?” John asked.

“Yes. I think we have made a bit of a breakthrough. I won’t go into details, but let me know how he’s doing. Give me a call if anything changes, and thanks for bringing him in.”

“OK, sure. G’night.” Henry stepped out and closed the door.

Steve sat there wondering. How long would Joshua live? He hoped for Baltimore’s sake it would be a very long time. After all, who would ever believe him if he told them a seven year old just described experiencing the future nuclear annihilation of Baltimore?