

## ***The Very Real Experience of UFO Encounters***

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Over the last several years, as a UFO sighting investigator with Minnesota MUFON (Mutual UFO Network), I have interviewed scores of UFO witnesses and close encounter experiencers. People have described events spanning the full range from seeing a few unexplained lights in the sky to experiencing very personal and very close encounters with the extraordinary. In the last couple of years, as a clinical hypnotherapist, this UFO work has deepened. The close encounters people have described have taken on a whole new, very real aspect. What at first seemed to be a scattered, superficial phenomenon has become one of tremendous depth and extreme complexity, with very deep implications for the personal reality of each of us.

As I began to meet more and more close encounter experiencers, the impact the phenomenon has had in their lives quickly became apparent. It was one thing to read about it in the many, excellent books that are now available. But it was truly moving to really see, hear and feel the emotion with which they relate what has happened to them. To those who are "chosen" for contact, the phenomenon can be life-altering, even shattering. Thus, it has become a mission for myself and others, to help those who have been either blessed or cursed by the contact phenomenon, to come terms with it - and to get on with the rest of their lives.

At a recent science fiction convention, I conducted a workshop on UFOs and the close encounter phenomenon. We initially covered the normal "UFO 101" material, introducing the topic of UFO's and close encounters, talking about the different types of sightings, etc. As the talk progressed, we covered UFO related topics of progressively higher strangeness. In the latter half we discussed the close encounter phenomenon in depth, talking about conscious manifestations such as missing time, the frequent puzzling UFO and anomaly sightings, and the physical, mental and spiritual changes that seem to manifest in experiencers' lives.

I noted that several people, who had seemed relatively uninterested during the earliest portions of the talk, began to show increasing interest as we entered into the topic of close encounters. When the workshop moved into the emotional effects of the experiencer phenomenon, I noted the attention of several of them now suddenly riveted on the front of the room. As I began to describe the effects of the phenomenon on peoples' lives, I noted one person in particular now had tears running down her face. After the workshop, this particular person and I talked for several more hours. She described in detail the many ways in which the phenomenon had affected her, and how uninvited and completely inescapable it was to her.

Later that evening, as I had time to reflect on what she had said, it again struck me how this person was just one of many who have been "chosen" in this way. I had earlier made a mental note that several others in the room had indicated some degree of personal involvement as well - and this was just one small gathering. I also remembered that when looking in the literature, one finds that about one percent of the population probably has experienced the phenomenon in one way or another<sup>1</sup>. This means that in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area alone, there may be twenty thousand close encounter experiencers. I wondered how many of them had experienced the same things that this person had.

Again and again I am struck by both the effect that the close encounter phenomenon has on peoples' lives, and its pervasiveness in our world. To some it is an honor called "contact". To others, it is a curse called "abduction". To the majority of experiencers, it is a mixed bag, some

good, some bad, and much of it very puzzling. But every experiencer, at some point in their lives, will probably have to come to terms with a phenomenon that to them, has truly become very, very real.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.nidsci.org/news/roper\\_surveys.html](http://www.nidsci.org/news/roper_surveys.html)

Discussion of the 1991 and 1998 Roper Poll of Unusual Personal Experiences

Notes: The criterion for being an experiencer is experiencing 4 of 5 indicator phenomena more than once.

The overall estimate of the 1998 poll is that approximately 1% of the population fit this criterion..