

## ***Close Encounters - There May Be More Than You Think***

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To most readers, UFOs and close encounters are a fascinating enigma. For many people these might be merely an interesting mystery, something that happens to someone else. But for others, they are more than that. An experience may take the form of a missing hour or two during a drive, a nightmare that is all too real, or perhaps a vague memory of something uninvited visiting during the night. To these people, in some way, such unexplained events are very real.

In my conversations with close encounter experiencers, as a UFO researcher, and simply as a sympathetic ear, one of the most common complaints I hear is that experiencers feel isolated from those around them. They lack someone they can tell about their experiences without the fear that the other person will conclude they are crazy. Just exactly how alone is the experiencer? A quick look at some numbers suggests that the phenomenon is extensive among us. It would appear that there are far more encounters, and many more experiencers than you might think.

While we may never know the exact numbers, we can make some rough, order-of-magnitude estimates. In doing so, we find numbers that are surprising. A recent poll<sup>i</sup> estimated that about one percent of the population has had enough unexplained encounters that the person can be considered to be an experiencer of "the phenomenon." In the Twin Cities metro area, there is a population of roughly two million people. One percent of two million people implies that 20 thousand people living in the twin cities area may be experiencers - a staggering number to think about. In my UFO studies, I have probably talked with at about 40 close encounter experiencers. This calculation suggests that this is only about two tenths of one percent of the experiencers in the local area.

Let's look at the numbers in another way. We can make a "ballpark" estimate that an experiencer might undergo about 10 close encounters during her/his life. Since many people live to be 80 years old, some quick arithmetic yields a lifetime average of roughly one encounter every eight years. One percent of the population, each experiencing one event every eight years, gives us about 1.25 events per thousand people per year. Dividing this number by 365 days per year gives slightly less than 3.5 close encounters per million people per 24-hour period. This means

that among the two million residents of the Twin Cities metro area, there are approximately seven UFO encounters every 24 hours.

With numbers such as 20 thousand experiencers, and an average of about seven encounters per night in the metro area, we can begin to get a feel for the magnitude of the phenomenon. We can no longer think of such encounters as rare, isolated events. Instead they are very common within our society. To those who are not experiencers, this may be startling. For those who are, and who feel isolated, it may be a comfort to know that there are more of you than you might think. You are not alone.

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<sup>i</sup>Unusual Personal Experiences: 1991 and 1998 - National Institute of Discovery Sciences  
[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.