

# Case Study: effects of life-long spirit attachment, and its removal

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## Part I: Some aspects of my life story

Early In 2016 I visited David Furlong as a client, with the presenting problem of dysthymia (low-grade, chronic depression), which started when I was about 18. I am now 61. Initially I lived with it giving me several difficult months each year. It wasn't formally diagnosed as depression until I was 30 (one GP thought I had glandular fever, as so many students did).. From then on it was treated with anti-depressants by various GPs. These worked alright, but I was always aware that they were only treating the symptoms, and I was always wanting to find a real cure.

In pursuit of that cure, I tried numerous treatments including counselling, full blown psychotherapy, Gestalt therapy, psychosynthesis, hypnotherapy, body work, mindfulness and creative writing. When I wasn't actively trying one of these, I told myself that the depression was just a chemical imbalance, which was largely genetic (thus justifying the continued treatment with other chemicals).

By the time I arrived at David's door at the age of 60, I had also developed over these years a spiritual practise of listening to my "inner voice", with various lengths of time spent in a variety of Christian churches between 18 and 35, then dabbling in the New Age movement, and ending up as part of my local Quaker Meeting from the age of 50 onwards. So when David did a guided meditation to meet with my Higher Self (H-S) it felt pretty familiar territory. My H-S presented himself as a centaur named Alleyn.

## More background details

I was able to share with David various events forming part of my life journey, but which I didn't understand the relevance of at that time.

A major life event was going to university at 18. Within about three weeks of arriving for the first time, I was invited by my lab partner (I was reading engineering) to go with him to hear a Christian preacher talk about the relevance of Christianity to modern life. I had had the usual vague Church of England upbringing, with occasional church visits plus lots of school assemblies, which left me thinking that Christianity was pretty irrelevant to all modern life. The preacher was a sort of intellectual version of Billy Graham, and I was duly converted and absorbed into a very strong Christian fellowship within my college.

What occurred along with my conversion to Christianity was a major change of behaviour, perhaps even one of personality. I went from a very withdrawn, severely shy teenager totally lacking in confidence in any social situation, to a virtually normal, friendly person interested in other people and comfortable with being with them. I certainly did not become an extravert, but at least I was a fully functioning introvert, able to cope with – even thrive in - normal life.

Previously in my teens I had a few acquaintances who I did electronics or music with, but no-one I could call a friend who I could share my thoughts and feelings with. That was my state of mind from 11 through to this conversion period at 18. My only emotional "outlet" at this time was playing the piano, an activity I started about the age of 6, and I was very good at it, entering and winning numerous competitive classes in the Brighton Music Festival. At home I would play for many hours at a time: in this case think of the film "*The Piano*" rather than someone doing hours of tedious finger exercises. Indeed, if my piano playing had a problem, it was that I never did any exercises, and my technique was always poorly developed – but apparently more than made up for by emotional expressiveness.

By the end of my first year at university another change became apparent in my inner world – and that was the arrival of depression. I was struggling with the heavy academic work required. By the end of

the second year I was totally unable to function in the exam room in many of the papers. At Cambridge that's a serious matter because there are no retakes allowed. You either pass – or you fail. Fortunately I went to my tutor and told him about the problem before the results were announced – and I was duly packed off to the university counselling service. I don't recall them achieving very much except to discover that *"I had never shared with another person so much personal detail"*, which was, of course, perfectly true. I failed the exams, but was awarded a pass on the basis of my previous coursework.

In subsequent years I experienced the depression in various ways. Firstly loss of energy and interest in life. I never missed a day's work, but I could readily sit at my desk all day and do nothing. Secondly, I would get semi-suicidal thoughts like "What is the point of going on?", "You are worthless", and similar. And I noticed a sort of "tunnel vision" effect in my head – I have noticed the same effect from drinking too much alcohol, which is of course a depressant.

### Past life experiences

At some point in my 30s, during a normal "quiet time" (that many Christians practise), I received a vision or "inner picture" of a Victorian woman, dressed in the typical crinoline dress of that time, standing by a grand piano. The room had the usual cluttered look of the time. Nothing was said and nothing happened. I mentally filed that away, since there was nothing I could do with it apparently.

Some years later once I had moved into my New Age phase, I signed up for a session of past life recall with two therapists. I described a life, apparently living as this same Victorian woman. She was keen on playing the piano, and her favourite composer was Frederic Chopin, who died in 1849 and whose music was extremely popular with the army of professional and domestic pianists that abounded in those days, long before hi-fi, iPods and the rest. This appeared extremely significant to me at the time, because I had long been very keen on Chopin too – my own interest starting from the age of 9! (Put this into the context of the 1960's world gone totally mad on the Beatles, and you may appreciate how unusual this was.)

I also "recalled" that this woman was the daughter of a solicitor in Guildford, Surrey, thus totally in keeping with the crinoline dress and the grand piano. She was very against marrying the man her parents chose for her. She apparently held out to about the age of 25, until it was obvious she was in danger of getting stuck on the shelf, when she gave in and married her suitor. She then unfortunately got pregnant, but died in childbirth about the age of 28.

I further recalled other lives, in much less detail. One was as a retired sea captain, sitting by the docks and watching the ships coming and going. He was a somewhat sad character too, though I didn't find out why then. Another life was a woman in late 19<sup>th</sup> century France – possibly a farmer's wife. And another life as soldier in WWII – the only "event" in this case was meeting an enemy soldier in the sand dunes of North Africa and him shooting me dead.

### A childhood trauma

I also mentioned to David an event that occurred when I was about 18 months old. I have never recalled it, but only heard about it from my mother. She was taken badly ill with flu back then, and her mother (who was apparently rather domineering) called round, saw how ill my mother was, and duly marched off with me for the next week. My father didn't apparently demur at this (father's didn't do much hand-on stuff in those days!), since he had a full time job as a teacher, plus he was studying for a degree in his spare time.

In recent years, my mother tells me that when I came back from my grandmother *"you were never the same child again. You were sort of wary, not sure whether I could be trusted"*. Those who have read up on psychological attachment theory will recognise the problem well enough. Its been described in many children, particularly those abandoned to orphanages.

## Part II: The Therapy

I worked with David to explore these few facts. In particular the Victorian woman. We explored her world and her life more fully. It transpired that she was the typical upper middle-class young lady of her time. She didn't attend a school (that wasn't common for girls back then), but she did have some home tutoring. About the age of 15 she was sent out to be further tutored with the governess of another young lady who was daughter "at the big house", so possibly part of the family of the local squire. She met this other young lady at church, which she attended every week (C of E of course) as all "decent people" did in those days.

Around the age of 16 she entered into a sexual (lesbian) relationship with this governess at the big house. Somehow the pair of them were discovered (I could never get the full details of this trauma), and that was life-changing event for her. I could never get hold of the moment of discovery: I can only speculate that the pair of them were caught in bed together, perhaps by a servant, who then reported what she had seen.

The practical effects were dramatic. All contact she had with the governess and everyone at the big house ceased immediately. The governess was dismissed. Her father – the solicitor – suffered some public shaming and loss of reputation, which was bad enough to affect his income for a while. She was then kept safely at home, not allowed to see anyone, since apparently normal friendships even with females had already led to debauchery! And of course friendships with men were equally taboo in those days.

What also apparently happened to her was a public shaming in church. Again I was never able to access the exact details of what took place, but I can speculate that the vicar preached a sermon about sexual sin, knowing full well that she was in the congregation, and that every person present would know exactly who his remarks were aimed at.

The result was that she accepted her virtual "house arrest", and withdrew into herself. She reconciled herself to playing the piano to try and work out her troubled emotions. Her parents did try and marry her off, bringing at least one suitor to meet her. She rejected him, probably because she was truly a lesbian and felt no attraction to men at all.

As in my earlier explorations, she eventually gave way to her parents demand to get married at the age of 25. She still could not go through with a sexual relationship though after marriage, and only got pregnant when she was raped by her husband. I didn't recall when this occurred in the marriage, so I don't know whether she lived a life of continual rape from 25 onwards or whether there was one sexual act. Either way she got pregnant by 28. When almost at term, she entered confinement. She consciously chose to die, which she did, taking the unborn child with her. It was clearly an act of revenge on both her husband and her parents, and a tragic end to a life with much potential.

I repeatedly tried to fill in the gaps in these "past life recollections", but was always prevented from doing so. Indeed, I was very puzzled by my ability to recall all sorts of facts about this woman's life, but trying to enter her most critical moments proved impossible. At one point we discovered a spirit attachment, which I described as "a grey lady". She was clearly trying to stop me accessing much of the detail above, by trying to shut down all communication. She managed to block contact with Alleen and my guides, so for a short while we were stuck.

This "grey lady" was definitely not the Victorian woman. Indeed, she appeared to be more of my grand-parent's generation. I had a sense she was somehow connected with the Victorian woman – and playing the piano came in somewhere too. David said she was angry – presumably at our efforts to disturb her in her "home"! Without getting a definite name, I did sense she was my great-aunt Elsie. She died in 1957, about the time of the trauma with my grandmother. She was also a professional concert pianist. David managed to remove her without confirming her exact role in my problems, so we moved on.

Even with the removal of the grey lady, I could never quite grasp how far the Victorian woman's lesbian relationship went, how they were caught, or how she was shamed in church. When I struggled for more detail of her life, all I could get was a picture of her about the age of 5, happily playing by the garden pond, with her father pointing out many instructing bugs and small animals.

### **Healing this “past life” and moving on**

David decided that we did not need to spend more time on attempting to relive her traumas, so he led me through various acts of forgiveness for the people in the life of this Victorian woman. Her parents, her husband and the vicar in particular. I got to a point where I thought all outstanding matters arising from that life had been settled – indeed I experienced a sensation of bodily “lightness”.

We then looked at another past life – the sea captain. This one was a happy life at sea until the owner of the ship decided that his son should be made captain of the ship instead of me. I told the owner that the son was not competent – and I was duly forcibly “retired” and put out to grass. I was very sorry to lose my life at sea and also day to day contact with my crew, whom I regarded as dear friends.

On the first voyage of this ship with the son as captain, they ran aground, and all hands were lost, including the son. The sorrow of this huge loss was profound, both for me and for the owner. I was then left to brood over this dreadful outcome.

And so the healing came to an end. Or so we thought.

### **Work by myself**

I was driving through Europe on holiday, when the next stage occurred. I would wake up in the middle of the night, thinking about the Victorian woman and the sea captain. At some point I noticed a distinct difference between these two “past lives”. Nothing to do with the details – there was no obvious connection between them. What I noticed was that when exploring the life of the Victorian woman I was always the onlooker, working as a third person or as a reporter of the events unfolding – I never once experienced this life in the first person as though I had actually lived it.

This was in sharp contrast to the life of the sea captain. I was him, feeling the sorrow of the loss of his friends, and sitting in the sunshine by the dockside in later life. This life I could “re-live” in person; the Victorian woman's life I could not.

I went back to David to tell him I was convinced that the Victorian woman was not a past life at all, but a spirit attachment. David agreed, but said it had been dealt with either way, so there was no more work to be done. That turned out to be not quite accurate.

### **More inner work**

Further lying awake at night brought forth another picture, this time of a field with a lot of large rocks sitting in it – a bit like a pre-historic stone circle, but with the rocks arranged at random.

So more work with David followed. David asked these “rocks” to reveal who they were. They turned out to be more “bits” of the Victorian woman. They were duly released to the Light. It seems they were traumatised sub-personalities of the Victorian woman, which had been left behind in my psyche. David speculated that this may have occurred because we had not gone through a standard spirit release procedure with her, since we thought at the time we were dealing with a past life.

### **Effects of the therapy**

Very slowly over the next six months following this further therapy with David, I started to reduce the dose of the anti-depressants. I was fully aware of the normal effect of doing this, being an old-hand at experimenting with the dose. Typically, I would start to notice depressive thoughts crowding in within a week or so of reducing the dose. It wouldn't need much change: 100mg down to 75mg (of

sertraline) per day would be quite enough. I kept on a steady reduction, 100 to 75 to 50 to 37.5 to 25mg, and finally to 12.5mg before stopping them completely.

The depression never showed itself again – at least it hasn't so far, and that's now (at the time of writing) about a year of elapsed time since the removal of the Victorian woman's spirit. I appear to have more emotional life now, which I put down to *not* taking the medication. I also have mood swings, but they are temporary lasting only a few days. (Depression is usually not diagnosed unless low mood lasts at least two weeks continuously). I am thus now experiencing what most people call "normal life" for the first time as an adult.

So it looks like a decisive win for spirit release therapy. Maybe the larger life purpose in trying so many other therapies first was to highlight the true cause more clearly.

### **Part III: Reflections on the effects of this spirit attachment on my life events**

The spirit release literature has mostly been written by therapists, detailing how they have discovered the cause of their clients' distress and how they relieved it. Reports from the clients themselves on the effects of living with a spirit attachment for many decades are fairly thin on the ground.

It is worth noting that in some spirit release sessions it is possible for the therapist to conduct a dialog with the attaching spirit, find out why they are present and what they have been doing to the human being they have taken up residence with. In my case, none of that happened because we both thought we were dealing with a past life of my own.

I am thus left with her life story as given above, along with my own life story, which includes some pretty strange occurrences: these start to make some sense when subjected to some analysis.

#### **Playing the piano**

I started learning the piano when I was 6 years old, after an aunt died and left me her piano. Although I started by picking out the tune to "Z-Cars", I was sent to learn properly and by the time I was 9 I was moderately competent – unlike most boys of that age I wasn't out playing football (which I disliked) but practicing the piano. When I was nine I asked for the sheet music for Chopin's 4<sup>th</sup> Ballade for Christmas – which I got. Fairly soon I could play the opening pages of this piece.

Looking back, I have to wonder why I chose something so obscure? It's hardly Chopin's most popular work. Indeed it is a very difficult and mature piece that few adults would aspire to play. Why not the Beatles, which were in full swing in 1965? Or any pop music at all? I was completely out of step with contemporary culture – and more to the point, my schoolmates.

By 11 I was still playing the piano – and started entering the Brighton Competitive Music Festival. Typically I was the sole male amongst a sea of all-female competition.

This strong interest in 19<sup>th</sup> century piano music looks to me suspiciously like it belonged to my attached spirit – rather than me. Chopin was in fact a "superstar" in his day (1810 – 49), the equivalent of the Beatles in fact for my generation. It's also possible the "grey lady", discovered during the therapy, was in fact my great-aunt Elsie, and she also had a strong hand in pushing me into playing the piano. When alive, she taught at the Bournemouth School of Music, which she ran with her sister Ivy (who taught violin). My mother says I met her when I was about one years old: I was sat on her lap and she put my fingers on a piano keyboard. She was taught by a world-famous pianist called "Solomon". The recording I had at 9 years old of Chopin's 4<sup>th</sup> Ballade was of him playing it.<sup>1</sup>

To add to the strange "coincidences", it is instructive to look up "Solomon pianist" on YouTube. One of the first videos that shows up is of him playing Brahms' Intermezzo Op.117 No.2. This is a piece I played in my teens a great deal. Indeed I performed it numerous times in public. What is extremely

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<sup>1</sup> I listened to it on numerous 78rpm records. You can now look up the same recording on YouTube.

surprising is that Solomon performs the piece just as I performed it! Indeed, the video could be of me playing it. But at 14, there was no YouTube, and I had no recordings of the piece (by anyone), so the only likely influence was a spiritual one.

It looks like my very early musical prowess was largely due to my spirit attachments.

### **An incident at secondary school**

When I arrived at Brighton & Hove Grammar School at 11, I was just another small boy in shorts. My voice hadn't broken by then, and given my musical abilities I was sent off to join the school choir. Apart from singing in events like the yearly carol service, there was the daily routine of singing in assembly. The hall where these took place had a stage at one end, about 5 feet above the floor. The choir, along with the headmaster, all trooped up on to this stage every morning, with the big ones at the back, and the small ones at the front in rows.

One morning after getting up on stage, I was suddenly overcome with acute embarrassment. I went very red in the face, a fact that didn't escape the boys in the front rows down below, who teased me mercilessly about it later on that day. I seemed to be embarrassed about standing up in front of the whole school and singing. This was extremely odd, because I was not only used to singing in that choir, in my primary school I had regularly played the hymns for assembly. So performance was hardly something new to me.

I suspect that something about the setting – being in front of hundreds of people on a stage – triggered off a replay of my attaching spirit's embarrassment after being exposed as a lesbian.

### **Further decline**

That embarrassment started off a whole new chapter in my life, where I now couldn't be sure whether I could do anything in public or not without an attack of this strange "disease". I was regularly called on to perform on the piano at school – but I would be in absolute torture for a month or two beforehand, dreading a repeat of the earlier embarrassment. This was in strange contrast to the other performing I did in public – at the Brighton Music Festival, where I was performing before a critical audience, and my playing would be publicly criticised by the examiner. I had no problem with that sort of performing – but put me in front of the school audience and I was extremely disturbed and never played well.

Added to this, I became noticeably shy. I stopped being friendly and outgoing and enjoying playing with other kids. As I entered my teens I became quite withdrawn, not speaking to anyone beyond what was absolutely necessary for daily life. Certainly no sharing of inner thoughts or feelings. I was at an all-boys school, so I had little contact with girls. The few occasions when such contacts did occur, I could make no use of them. Even when I liked one girl, I was far too withdrawn to connect with her in a meaningful way.

Piano playing became my one means of expression of feelings, and I would play for hours at a time. Not practicing as such. Simply playing music, much of it normally only accessible to the very mature, to keep my loneliness and isolation under control.

Again this appears to mirror the life experience of the Victorian woman. She withdrew from the world following a severe embarrassment in a public place, probably her church.

This period ended when I went to university and was converted to evangelical Christianity. Over a period of about three weeks, I had a remarkable change of personality, going from shy and withdrawn and avoiding people to being friendly and able to be with people while studying or just sitting drinking coffee and chatting. It appears that my real self had broken out from the control of my attaching spirit, who could no longer dominate me in the way she had. The price I had to pay though was depression, which set in within the year.



## Heavily Christian

Evangelical Christianity became the centre of my life from those first few weeks at university onwards. I was part of a heavy going “discipling” group in Cambridge (called *The Navigators*). It involved one-to-one work with an older Christian, and many hours of deep bible study. We were expected to discover the principles of Christianity for ourselves and then live them out in daily life. We were watched and monitored intensely and often taken aside to be given some friendly advice.

It was probably not at all good for someone with my background. What I really needed were some normal human relationships, but while I was certainly no longer withdrawn from everyone, there was a certain artificiality about the people I mixed with and the way they related to each other. They were all trying to be “good disciples”, and live up to the teaching being doled out every week.

For most students at Cambridge, they were involved in the Christian Union for three years, then went off somewhere else to work once graduated. They would probably join a church, but most of those I heard from subsequently were no longer actively pursuing their faith within a year or two of leaving. That was not true for me. I stayed in Cambridge for one thing, so there was no life change to provoke a review of my involvement with the “Christian scene”. I had intensely absorbed the Christian message and that remained the case for many years after leaving Cambridge, until I was forced by life circumstances to abandon it as something I had tried but found wanting.

I now suspect my heavy involvement in Christianity was largely driven by my spirit attachment. She was evidently extremely guilty about her “lesbian sin”, and was looking for forgiveness. That message of divine forgiveness seemed to be very important to me at 18 when I was converted, but looking back on it I can’t see what I had to feel guilty about arising from the life I had lived so far. I had withdrawn from society and thus had had little scope to cause harm to anyone by that age.

## Getting married

I got married when I was 25. If you are now thinking that all was fine from then on (apart from the depression) you would be quite wrong. The marriage – and my choice of marriage partner was extremely odd.

By the age of 23 I had graduated and was then working for a large electronics company in Cambridge. I was also active in an Anglican church, which had a very lively young people’s group, mostly made up of post-graduate students. Not all were students though – amongst them were nurses and other people from the town who attended the church and were the right sort of age. The group did a variety of activities, amongst them a lively music group of which I was naturally a part.

In terms of finding a life partner it was a promising environment. I was not promising material though, having managed to get to the age of 24 having had no girl-friends at all, and with an uncompromising Christian faith which absolutely forbade sex outside marriage, and didn’t favour anything very much that might lead up to such sexual relationships.

So, when I got friendly with some of the non-student girls in the group, I was comfortable with it just involving casual friendships. Strangely I got on with women very well, having had a number of female friends at college, and now gaining some new ones. But it seemed impossible to convert any of these friendships into a partnership – and I do wonder what mixed messages a heterosexual man with an attaching lesbian spirit was sending out to them?

So I didn’t read much into a town girl, Jane, who asked me to come with her to visit her nurse friends at the hospital (on the edge of the town). Needless to say, Jane had designs on me, and before I knew what was happening, we were “an item”. Again I didn’t think it was going anywhere, because I didn’t find her at all attractive, either physically or mentally. But I was an intensely Christian man just trying to be nice according to what I had been taught. At the same time, I was getting strong “inner voices” telling me I had to do the decent thing and marry her. I was very much into “obeying God’s

will” at the time, and I interpreted these voices as God speaking to me with clear instructions as to what to do.

Even so, I was intensely conflicted. Part of me knew that Jane was not the right person for me at all. Indeed, I was so confused I booked a counselling session with one of the church leaders, who also knew Jane. It didn’t help at all. So I ended up marrying Jane, and settling into married life. That was fine for quite a few years, and we had three children as a result. Strong Christian faith kept us together – until that was no longer sufficient to deal with my depression that was getting ever worse. After eight years of marriage, Jane took our three boys to see her mother for Christmas one year – and never returned.

Looking back on that marriage, I strongly suspect my Victorian woman attachment had a big hand in my choice of wife. She perhaps knew that I couldn’t be stopped from eventually finding a partner, so she stepped in and made a choice that suited her. After many years of being around gay and lesbian people, I know a lot more now than I did then. Jane would accurately fit the rather rude description of “dyke”. She had a masculine face, and a masculine body shape. She was not feminine in the normal sense – and part of me found her distinctly unattractive.

This is really the only sense I can make of my choice of Jane as my first wife. Other people have subsequently commented that they could make no sense of my choice of wife, but they didn’t like to query it with someone who appeared “to know what they were doing”!

### Choice of career

Before I went to university I was offered a place at the Royal School of Music to potentially pursue a career as a concert pianist. But from the age of 12 I had also developed a strong interest in electronics. Each of them were very demanding career choice and I could not do both. I had a period of wrestling with the question, but my difficulties of performing at school persuaded me that performing in general was too big an unknown – I simply could not rely on my psyche to “play ball” so it seemed like a poor basis to build a career upon.

I can now see no connection between the interest in electronics I started at the age of 11 and my attaching spirit. That appears to be the one area where my true self struck out for freedom during my childhood.

I have little doubt that the depression, while controlled to a degree, was sufficiently disabling to hinder my progress professionally in electronics. It didn’t actually force me to take lots of time off work – but I could readily go to work and sit at my desk, looking busy, but doing very little (that’s an advantage of a professional/managerial job!). While many of my Cambridge contemporaries are now “captains of industry” (and the equivalents elsewhere), I never progressed beyond middle management.

And concerning the career I rejected at 18, I have played the piano less and less in the last 20 years or so. I can readily go several years without touching the keyboard. I even have a strong indifference to most music. It’s not that I don’t like it if I happen to hear something familiar, but I can’t be bothered to either play any myself, or put on recordings. Music has largely become irrelevant to my life.

### Summing up

So my Victorian woman spirit attachment appears to have controlled my childhood, and dominated many of the major events of my adult life. It looks like there was a covert war going on inside me from my early teens onwards. My first strike for freedom was when I broke out of teen years withdrawnness at 18: the spirit hit back with depression<sup>2</sup>. And followed that up by leading me into a quite

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<sup>2</sup> Having heard of a subsequent case of someone with PTSD, where the symptoms were not his own but that of the attaching spirits, I have to wonder whether it was actually me that was depressed at all? Was it in fact depression of my Victorian woman attachment, who had been progressively pushed out of my life? At the moment we don’t have sufficient detailed models of the psyche to answer that question.



unsatisfactory marriage, which has had many repercussions down the years – not just for myself, but also for my children.

Why did it take so much time and effort to uncover what was really going on? For one thing, spirit release therapy and the ideas behind it are hardly mainstream, so most therapists have never heard of it, and most would reject any idea of spirits that can interfere with the lives of human beings. Even when I consciously encountered the spirit world around the age of 45 for myself, it was only in general terms as part of the New Age movement.

Beyond that, I can only speculate that for some much greater purpose (well outside this lifetime) it has been important for me travel this entire road of investigation and discovery. A favourite teaching that I learnt early in my Christian days is from Jesus:

*"Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)*