

## THE WISDOM OF DR. JEFFREY GLADSTONE

In the spring of 1983, a compelling but definitely strange presence emerged as a guest on radio station WRKO in Boston. Dr. Jeffrey Neale Gladstone, a pioneer in almost every scientific and psychological field at one time or another, shared some of his wisdom on THE THOUGHT PROCESS, a dynamic and provocative show hosted by a psychologist, Dr. Harry Sobel. We have the rare privilege of gaining access to tapes of several Sobel-Gladstone interviews in addition to uncovering unpublished bits of Dr. Jeffrey's special homegrown brilliance. Here is how it all began:

### MAY 27, 1983: THE THOUGHT PROCESS, WRKO

Harry Sobel:

We have with us today one of the true luminaries in modern thinking. Dr. Jeffrey Neale Gladstone has written books on past lives, astrology, psychotherapy, philosophy, and acufeeding. Among his well-known titles are: PAST LIVES IN SAMOA, PAST LIVES: SCIENCE OR SLOP?, COMING OF AGE IN MODERN BOLIVIA, HOW TO SHARPEN A CIRCULAR SAW THROUGH HATHA YOGA, WERE WE LOVERS IN PAST LIVES?, ANTIDOTAL ASTROLOGY: THE FUTURE IS NOW, and CREATIVITY THROUGH DIURNAL FASTING AND HIGH COLONIC MIND-BODY SPLITTING. Dr. Gladstone, welcome.

Dr. Gladstone: Hi Harry, good to be here.

S: We met on the Jersey shore a few years ago and I've been trying to get in touch with you ever since. You're a hard man to track down.

G: Yes, that is correct. I remember our meeting on the Jersey coast. I remember the translucent skin of the young people as they walked on the sparkling sand on the beach. We had a long conversation about translucent skin and modern art.

S: But then you just left.

G: But you see, Harry, I am a man of action. I felt a great urgency during our conversation to phone my cousin in Alliance, Nebraska.

S: Well, I'm glad we finally were able to contact you and have you on our show.

G: Thank you, Harry. Gooood to be here.

- S: I thought today we would take calls from our listeners and you could help them with your astrology and your reading of past lives. First, though, I wondered if you could share a little of your background with our audience.
- G: Certainly, Harry. I was born in the Ukraine, just south of Gronov, in a small mining community known as Youskrawnyson. When I was six, we moved to the United States. We arrived in Philadelphia because it was quite close to the Jersey Coast, but not in New Jersey. You see, my father hates New Jersey because he cannot believe that anyone with real and translucent skin would live in Passaic, Secaucus, or the Oranges. In fact, he imagined that people in the Oranges were all redheaded and had many freckles. So we settled in Philadelphia. I went to Mrs. Smith's Natural Juice Pies Academy until I was sixteen, majoring in deep-dish pies. Then I went to college, where I quickly lost my virginity to an older woman. I decided to enter psychoanalysis to find out why this had happened. I also became very interested in philosophy, eastern volleyball, and Etruscan art.
- S: And then your career just took off?
- G: Harry, I have been like a whirling dervish for the past 20 years. I have been on lecture tour. I have seen things - the fountains in Greencastle, Indiana; the quarry in Cut Bank, Montana; and the barbers in Razor Cut, Idaho.
- S: That is amazing. How would you describe yourself, Dr. Gladstone?
- G: Harry, Harry, don't be so formal. Call me Dr. Jeffrey!
- S: OK. Dr. Jeffrey: what would you say your profession really is?
- G: Harry, I am like a handyman for the soul. I will advise you about anything and everything. I dole out philosophy, psychotherapy, astrological predictions, antidotes for those predictions, and analyze your past life so you understand where you are coming from. In my leisure time, I like to eat figs and granola bars. And I like skydiving, samba shows, and modern art. But I object to the way modern art treats translucent skin.
- S: And what about nutrition, Dr. Jeffrey?
- G: I have offered profound nutritional insights on occasion, particularly after drinking beet juice with a slice of pomegranate.
- S: Our lines are open for your calls. Our guest is Dr. Gladstone; he will be happy to advise you about - anything you want to ask.
- G: Harry, you don't need to call me Dr. Gladstone. Remember my need for informality!
- S: Sorry, Dr. Jeffrey. Hello? Hi. You're on WRKO talk radio, welcome to the show.



Caller: Hi, Harry and Dr. Jeffrey. I have a question for Dr. Jeffrey. I've been wondering - will I ever be financially independent?

G: I might need a little more information before I can help you with that question. Allow me to ask you something. Can you say your mother's maiden name softly to yourself while bending your head toward the nearest window? (answer is yes). Can you tell me the size of your left foot? (answer is 9) OK. I am almost ready. Tell me, are you afraid you will not be financially independent?

C: Yes, I am.

G: And your mother - is she afraid, or was she afraid, that she would not reach financial independence?

C: Yes, I believe she was also. This is fascinating.

G: I believe that I see the broad context for all of this. OK. I am quickly doing mindspin astrology. Aha - I see that you will be living in a hovel within the next decade, but do not despair: there is an antidote and therefore a path to financial independence.

C: What should I do?

G: What you must do is simple, but you must do it unflinchingly, relentlessly, without fail. Every other Tuesday, you must fly to Cleveland and visit the Cleveland zoo. There you must engage in deep eye contact with the tallest giraffe you can find for at least 6 ½ minutes. Continue this procedure for the next 2 years and 4 months and financial independence is within your grasp; otherwise, it's hovel city, so to speak.

C: Well thank you, very much.

G: It is our mutual pleasure. I am enriched from your response.

Next caller: Dr. Gladstone, I'm worried about my future. Can you tell me a little bit?

G: Where were you yesterday at 5:04 PM? Think, but don't say it over the phone. Make a picture inside your mind of that location. Now listen to the sounds; now feel your stomach as you place yourself back in time. I will absorb your vibrations. OK. I see that a trauma will befall you on the 11th of next month, but it is relatively minor. Your dental floss will become stuck in your lateral bicuspid on the right side, lower, and remain there maddeningly, for 6 ½ days, during which time you will want to inflict bodily harm on anyone you come in contact with and you will scare small children.

C: God, I hate dental floss getting stuck. I hate it when that happens. What can I do?

G: You must hijack a shipment of unwaxed dental floss from the truck delivering to a Rexall's pharmacy. You must then immerse them in carbolic acid for 2 hours. That is all.

C: Oh well, that sounds simple enough. Thank you very much, Dr. G.!

#### ANSWER TO NEXT CALLER:

I see that in the next 5 days, you will be driven slightly crazy by the phone ringing many times, for a wrong number. Someone will be trying to contact a fellow named Steve. What is the antidote? No, you don't have to disconnect the phone. All you must do is to eat spaghetti with rice pilaf for three days, then skip a day, and eat it again the next day. The caller will not bother you at all. Either he will not call or you will not care if he does call.

#### AND THE NEXT:

From your voice, I gather that Leo is in your 11th house, opposing Virgo in Holstein. This opposition together with the Moon in Cancer and the fact that you have Neptune adjacent Mercury in the 4th house allows only one possible conclusion: that you will go completely bald within the next 48 hours. There is, however, an antidote: it is painful, but very simple. For the next month, you must watch Laverne and Shirley reruns before you eat dinner. You must watch them completely, even the commercials.

#### OTHER ANTIDOTES:

You must whistle There's Nothing Like a Dame whenever you come to a street corner.

You must wrap both of your wrists in tin foil - the heavy duty kind - and try not to look embarrassed.

You must see erotic shows twice a month for a year and three quarters.

After a commercial, Sobel and Gladstone chat for a while before taking more calls.

G: When I grew up in Philadelphia, I had a friend who received a spanking every single day at 9:30 in the morning, even when he was behaving beautifully.



G: His name is Boris. I remember how we would be playing shinball and Boris' mother would call out, "Boris, oh, Boris dear, it's time for your spanking." And Boris would run off, saying "Coming, mommy", while telling me that he would return in approximately ten minutes. And every day, she spanked him so that he wouldn't be bad. Preventative spanking. This became the philosophy of Volvo automobiles: preventative maintenance. They stole it from Boris' mother.

S: That is really a remarkable story. I really had no idea where Volvo's approach came from. I'd like to ask you a little about your research on past lives, Dr. Jeffrey. I understand that you wrote your thesis about past lives in Samoa?

G: Yes, Harry, that is correct. I discovered that everyone in Samoa had been either a leopard or a scuba diver in one of their three most recent lives. This led me to conjecture that homogeneity in culture is really the result of homogeneity in previous past lives. I was ejected from the Academy of Past Lives for this heresy.

S: Since then, though, you've become quite well known for your theories on past lives.

G: Much of my insight into this phenomenon is the result of my subsequent research on leopards. I began to wonder if leopards would then become Samoans in the future. And whether or not leopards were leopards in past lives -- or perhaps merely amoebas. Do they even have past lives. My book WERE WE LOVERS IN PAST LIVES covers much of this.

S: I see. I think it's time for your calls; we have two available lines at 720-4080.

Caller: I've always wondered about whether I've lived before. Do you think you can tell me?

G: Just tell me the approximate age at which you lost your first baby tooth? Thank you. Do you ever have itching on your left leg, particularly on or below the shin bone? That is because you were an amputee in your previous life: you had your left leg removed at the age of 16, due to an industrial accident for which you received no workman's compensation.

S: How can you know this?

G: It is a gift. I am intuitive beyond belief. Actually, most people were amputees in past lives, so it is not much of a stab, after all. Harry, stop scratching.

OTHER PAST LIVES:

You were a wandering minstrel.

You were a Labrador retriever named Sooty Cinders from Straw Hollow and you lived in Amber Valley, Vermont, at the turn of the century.

This is your first life.

Sorry.

Total blank from the past.

You were Joseph Kennedy's father in Ireland.

I believe that you studied biophysics in Eastern Europe in the early 1800s, but soon gave that up and became a bouncer at a bistro in Paris.

You invented wallpaper.

G: You were a leopard in Samoa, but you were eaten by a tribesman who mistook you for his cousin, whom he detested violently. That tribesman was known for his progressive myopia and lived in ridicule for mistaking a leopard for his cousin, who was clearly pear-shaped.

You ate with your hands too much in your past life.

Then Gladstone went on to expound about the way people can make changes in their lives:

G: I would like to impart some wisdom on how people can change when they have run aground - when self-control has totally failed. I believe that in any situation where people react compulsively - they might argue, or overeat, or eat shaving cream - there is a key moment of choice. Maybe just for a second, when you look back on it, you see some alternatives. For example, if someone says to you, "You are a disgusting and malignant tumor on the body of humankind," perhaps your tendency is to become instantly enraged and to engulf your tormentor into a Bruno Sammartino half-nelson, all but choking the life breath out of him or her. Now wouldn't you like to be able to restrain yourself, so that this remark might only engender a slight balling of the fists and perhaps cause you to raise your eyes skyward, while whistling the Canadian national anthem? Wouldn't you like to have a choice? Or course you would. The trick is to focus on another avenue of sensory information at the moment of impulse. If the person's words are triggering your normal reaction, look immediately at his or her chin: is it single or double or even multiple? Stare intently at the chin while he or she is speaking. Then you will discover that there are other plans of action, the best of which might well be "My God, your chin is ugly!" or "Did you know you have a wart under your second chin?"



G: You know Harry, it is quite important to change your attitude toward mistakes. One way to do this is to imagine a broad context in which your mistakes are not problematic. For example, if you are having an allergic attack at a wedding and are sneezing quite violently and with great frequency, you might feel ill at ease and wish everyone would stop looking at you. But the trick is to immediately broaden the context - you could imagine that the entire scene is taking place on 5th Avenue in New York City. There are riveters behind you breaking through the sidewalk. There are muggers grabbing the bouquet. Dogs are sullyng the grounds. Cars are honking their horns, people are screaming obscenities of every conceivable variety to each other, and a lone unshaven man is talking to himself about the Vikings and the return of Leif Erikson. Then your sneezing is a drop in the bucket, barely perceptible. Now of course, we know that we cannot order up such a scene a la Fantasy Island. But by merely imagining it, we will relax our bodies to the point where the allergic shock will cease to bother us: we will not tense up against it and unwittingly prolong it. And we will have a beatific smile on our faces as we go through this entire process. Probably the vibes we give off will be so good that everyone will feel warmed in spite of the sneezing. Maybe years later, the bride and groom will refer back to this even and smile gently to each other: "Remember when Dr. Jeffrey lost control at the wedding? I don't know why, but it made me feel so special." Perhaps this will create a new phenomenon -- guest sneezers at all weddings. After all, this is how the creative process works: out of the ashes of obnoxious blunders come new possibilities.

S: And I understand that you have done a lot of work in the area of creativity. Can you comment on some of your more profound insights so that people can understand how they can become more creative.

G: Hi Harry, good to be here. You look at me quizzically as if that remark was a non-sequitur. But this is a partial answer to your query. I was experiencing a newness in talking with you, so I let it out by telling you "good to be here". That is the first key to becoming more creative: express yourself even if you might appear a bit peculiar. S: (chuckling) Glad to have you, Dr. Jeffrey. Continue.

G: Thank you Harry. Good to be here. Becoming more creative requires that you alter the sequence of your actions to shake things up. Then you select new behaviors from the disruption that you have caused. I will illustrate.

S: Please do.

G: For example, we tend to fall into fixed sequences of focusing when we are involved in a particular activity. Suppose I am a personnel officer at a large holding company involving the importing of porcelain vases from the Ming and Ping dynasties. Perhaps I have the following rigid pattern of shifting my attention: when I interview somebody, I might begin by noticing my visceral reactions (perhaps I have butterflies in the stomach, or a mild gastroenteritis induced by yesterday's Pizza Hut binge) and then shifting to gazing at the client (looking to see if he or she has translucent skin or counting the number of chins he or she has) and then asking a routine question (What is your name? Your sun sign?) to an abstract one (when else have you felt this way?); you might find yourself periodically going from one friendly questioning (do you enjoy erotic shows?) to inquisitive and probing questioning (was your mother grossly overweight?). To become more creative, you must vary the sequence of maneuvers - this will open you up to more imaginative possibilities. For instance, you might now begin with an inquisitive question such as "Did your father spit his chewing tobacco on you when you were four years old, thus accounting for you obvious fear of men?" and then ask "What is your name?", finally looking at the person meaningfully, gazing at their chins, counting them out loud in French or Spanish, You will then begin to think of creative responses: the right things to say will come to you.

Another key is to maintain the balance between similarities and differences: you want to see where a certain experience is similar in structure to others and also probe its uniqueness. Let me illustrate how you can come up with creative responses to people who complain about life. Suppose a friend tells you that his wife has divorced him, that he has lost his job, that his car was stolen, and that his left leg might have to be amputated to reduce his stress level. First you listen attentively and indicate how unusual all this is, acknowledging it with statements like "My God, that is a hideous configuration of conspiratorial events whose sheer weight must make you feel as if you were buried under an overwhelming mound of excrement" and "There is no justice in the world; you are the victim of the most heinous combination of circumstances imaginable to anyone with an IQ of over 43." But then you must prevent this individual from feeling too isolated in his pain and start to stress the similarities: "On one level, this is similar to what I went through last month when my wife and I argued about how much to pay the babysitter. The argument, if extended to its logical limit, would have clearly resulted in divorce; and you know what else? I saw one of my neighbors drooling over my new Trans-Am - I knew that if he lacked proper self-control or wavered for an instant, he would steal my car; and yesterday, I had this muscle spasm in my left leg; I bet that if I had given in to it, I might have fallen down the stairs and required an immediate amputation. So I know what you're going through."



G: You can also fantasize additional differences. In this situation, you can come up with " You could be even worse off. You could be losing both your legs. Or your wife could have shot you. Or the car could have exploded with you in it." In this way, you are providing your friend with a broader context. But this is very sensitive stuff. Sometimes, you just have to guess what to do. For instance, if someone arrives at your house and within two minutes, begins weeping hysterically, clinging to your sports jacket and screaming "My kids are driving me nuts; they always fight", you can respond in two different creative ways -- you can superemphasize the similarities by saying that "mine do too; let's glue all our kids together with crazy glue and make them work out their problems while we go off on a Caribbean vacation of indeterminate length." Or you can overemphasize the differences by remarking that "Yes, they are the worst children the world has ever seen; what a burden on you to have them; they fight like wild cheetahs; my advice to you is to threaten them with biurnal enemas."

S: That is fascinating. Earlier when we were talking during the commercial break, you mentioned that you had discovered ways to open up people's perceptions.

G: Hi Harry, good to be here. That is quite correct. I believe that you can learn to become more creative if you discover the edge of ambiguity and let your perceptions bounce feely on either side of it. Allow me to explain.

S: Please do, Dr. Jeffrey.

G: You know, Harry, if I photograph a drop of milk striking a surface, you would look at it and comment "that is a drop of milk striking a surface," perhaps shrugging your shoulders as if to indicated non-verbally "Who cares?" But if I enlarge that photograph many times, there will come a point in the enlargement process when the milk drop is no longer clearly visible as a milk drop. That is the edge of ambiguity. Then your perceptions are free to bounce, because they are liberated from the bonds of the milk drop experience. You might see wild and beautiful white shapes; they might become clouds as you continue to stare; or swans sweeping gracefully across the sky. So you can open your perceptions by spilling milk - you don't have to cry over spilt milk any longer. But Harry, you cannot use just anything: you know the Mobil Oil commercial in which Brooke Shields' skin is enlarged 1000 times and end up looking like a filthy carburetor? The point is that anything enlarged 1000 times can look like a carburetor. Human skin is too emotionally loaded to serves as a focus for this experiment. You will only see skin or carburetors and perhaps some filth. Nothing in between. Do not use double chins either.

S: I'll have to try that.

G: You will find it quite provocative, Harry. By the way, I understand that you do a significant portion of the vacuuming in your home?

S: That's true. It's not my favorite job, but I do it a lot.

G: Would you like me to tell you how you might make it more meaningful and less of a burden on your psyche?

S: I would be interested in hearing about it.

G: You must find new dimensions of awareness within the task. First of all, forget about vacuuming. Let's take sweeping, an activity which is even more inherently boring and ungratifying. What you must do is reorient your perceptions. Look at the broom handle and mover closer until the grain of the wood begins to entrance you. You are now on the edge of ambiguity. Spend two minutes at the edge. Then as you sweep shift your attention from the motion of the broom to the way your feet contact the floor. Vary the pressure you exert on the broom so that the bristles are resting lightly on the floor and commence to dance with it, a la Fred Astaire. Bend your knees. Point your toes. Roll your neck. Begin to sing wildly. Feel the line of movement from your arms on the broom handle down through the bristles onto the floor. If you become inexplicably depressed doing all this, open all the windows and poke your head out, and then announce in a bold and stentorian tone, "I love life and I want to live." You must control yourself however. You might find yourself trying to sweep everywhere you go. But this is not something that one can do on the Jersey coast. I knew two crazed sweepers who attempted to cleanse the shore of sand. They were institutionalized and diagnosed as suffering from terminal gout.

S: I think that some of your suggestions will be difficult to implement.

G: Harry, don't be a drag. I will have to prod you gently with a fork, leaving imprints on your midriff. Just joking, of course.

S: Is that an example of your controversial brand of psychotherapy that I've been reading about lately?

G: Yes, Harry, I specialize in a rare form of psychotherapy. It is called DISRUPTIVE THERAPY. I try to say jarring things to a client at a propitious moment so that he or she will suddenly see a different world-view.

S: Can you give us an example of the way in which you might do that?

G: Of course. Supposed I have a client who comes into my office and says, "Dr. Jeffrey, I feel so miserable today and I don't know why." So I say, "It is because you are a total sleazebag." They are shocked. I wait 3 seconds and then say "Just joking" and slap my thigh and laugh uproariously. You would be amazed at the results.

S: So they know you're just kidding them, but for a moment, they take you seriously.



G: Yes, and that is where the therapeutic growth comes. It is the combination of the worst fear being confirmed (Oh my God, I knew I was a sleazeball) and the absurdity of thinking that way (he's laughing: of course I'm not a sleaze, I am a wonderful and fully actualized, self-motivated, responsible, conscientious, dependable, certifiable, and centered human being; I am cured and will now be able to save the world as I have always wanted to). But I make sure that my clients are unarmed when they enter the office. On occasion, disruptive therapy makes them want to reach out and shoot someone.

S: So you accentuate to clients' worst fears and then make it a joke?

G: Yes, Harry, I am convinced that this brings up their vulnerability and allows a small window for change through which I pass quickly, unannounced, foiling their defensive home security system for the soul. I must disarm the alarm mechanism, if you follow my metaphor.

S: Dr. Jeffrey, I'm having a hard time following you. But let's talk to some listeners and see if they have any questions for you about disruptive psychotherapy or if they want you to help them over the phone.

G: Sounds good to me Harry. Shoot. Just joking!

C: Dr. Jeffrey, I have a problem. I keep worrying that people are looking at me in a funny way.

G: They are. You have ring around the collar. Just joking!

C: Thank you Dr. Jeffrey. I am totally cured!

G: Not so fast, young man. You have one other item to contend with. How is your sex life, if I may ask?

C: Why, it's fine...I think.

G: It will end tomorrow. Just joking! Got you that time, right?

C: That did give me a bit of a start. OK. Thank you, Dr. Jeffrey.

S: I can see that you have to be very careful in doing disruptive therapy.

G: Yes Harry, I always do it barefoot. I feel connected to the ground when I have no shoes on. In fact, I also vacuum best and wash dishes with great intensity when I am barefoot. I also swim well barefoot.

S: Let's get back to the calls. Hello, you're next on WRKO.

C: Hi Dr. Jeffrey?!?

G: Is this Chris on the phone? Chris from New Zealand?

C: No, my name is Bob.

G: Oh, for a second there, I thought I recognized your voice. Bob, go ahead, proceed.

C: I'm really nervous about asking out this girl: she's real popular and I'm afraid she won't like me. Can you tell me something I can do so I won't be so uptight around her?

G: Bob, the problem is your breath. Also, tell me: what deodorant have you been using lately? Just joking. Bob, just joking. Actually, you secretly crave being treated like dirt. Just joking!!

C: Oh, OK, Oh, I see. Thanks a lot. (hangs up)

G: You see, Harry, Bob is confused right now. But that is good. He will have his insight later on in the day, perhaps while drinking a cup of herbal tea.

S: Speaking of which, I would like you to share with us some of your profound nutritional insights you spoke of earlier.

G: You are perhaps referring to the science of Acufeeding, which I invented. I will be happy to give you my famous food sensitivity diet. I call it **FOUR DAYS TO SANE EATING THROUGH ACUFEEDING**. It goes like this: on the first day, you must ingest massive quantities of hearts of palm au vinaigrette, accompanied by steamed kidneys, lima beans, and diced apricots. For snacks, canned kidney beans and Spam are recommended. Drink two quarts of rennet custard a day, but do not let it cool. On the second day, you can only inhale odors of certain steamed foods: for example, make a pot of Postum and sniff it, leaving your nose ¼" from the rim of the cup. On the third day, you might be consumed with erotic thoughts. You must then go back to the combination of Spam and rennet custard of the first day; you are permitted to eat Sara Lee chocolate cake, provided that you sprinkle tartar sauce and horseradish on it. Finally, it will help to do Geezel Mediation: lie in a fetal position and repeat silently to yourself "Geezel, Geezel, Geezel." This will take care of some of the erotic overload.

S: I've heard that many of your ideas have been nurtured by first your father and then your wife. Would you care to comment on that?



G: Yes Harry, I will be happy to share all this. My father is a very compelling man. People used to call him Father Gladstone, even though he is not a priest - that is because he is the quintessential father figure. He doles out advice and insight wherever he goes. He smokes a small cigar and is constantly flicking it, so you must be careful that you do not catch on fire if you are in his presence. He was always saying "Jeffrey boy" to me when I was young - and even now, he calls me "Jeffrey boy" rather than Dr. Jeffrey. He gave me important advice, such as "Jeffrey boy, not to overdo" when he thought I was getting too intense; and he would exclaim, "Jeffery boy, do it complete" when he felt my attention lagging. And when I came up with a new idea, he would always praise me: "Very creative, Jeffrey boy."

Sometimes I call my wife Mrs. G. And I also refer to her as "the little woman". People told me that this was chauvinistic. But I reply, after all, she is only 4 feet 11 inches tall, so she is a little woman. And anyway, I say it with affection. I pose the following question: is chauvinism in the words on in the spirit? Sometimes, Mrs. G. accuses me of making chauvinistic remarks when I say things like "women are more sensitive than men." She says that it is too stereotypical a statement. So I respond with "Women are brutish, insensitive, loutish human beings." But she doesn't like that either. Then of course, I say, "Just joking."

Mrs. G. is small of stature, but she has enormous lungs. The significance of that is that her occupation is the lead tuba player for the Philadelphia Philharmonic. There is no such orchestra? It is just forming. The conductor is Seiko Omega.

My wife's brother is strange. He is a waiter at a French restaurant. Whenever he brings you something, he says "Excuse me" to get your attention; then he says "Thank you." He always starts with "excuse me" and ends with "thank you." Last week, we ate there and I tried an experiment: I complimented him on something and he said, "Thank you." Once he said that, he became self-conscious and said, "Excuse me"; of course then he had to say "Thank you" again. Now he was all confused and went back and forth between "Excuse me" and "Thank you" until I rapped him sharply on the left temple with a bread stick and snapped him out of it. S: Perhaps you should have used disruptive psychotherapy on him?

G: That might have been equally effective.

S: I heard also that you might want to run for president.

G: I would like to do this, Harry. But before I explain my candidacy, I would like to ask you to ponder the following question: what keeps us from rolling out of bed each night? You see Harry, I believe that we are always a little bit worried about this, so that we tense up slightly in our sleep to keep in the bed. We are unaware of this tension, but it is robbing us of the depth of the sleep we truly need. So my platform is platform beds! I will design a special bed which will send out electrical messages to the skin in your arms and legs whenever you get too close to the edge. That way, you won't have to engage in subconscious worry any longer. Harry, with me as President, people will be able to finally get that special rest they have always needed. No longer will people fall out of bed and have to cover up that black eye by pretending they foolishly walked into a door.

S: Well, you certainly have my vote, Dr. Jeffrey.

G: Thank you, Harry. Good to be here.

S: Good to have you here.

G: Good to be here.

### **SOME SPECIAL PHONE CALLS FROM DR. G.**

Labor Day 1984

G: Hi Harry, good to be here. Yes, it is Dr. Jeffrey. I have come back to Philadelphia from a long sojourn in the Bahamas, where I engaged in snorkeling and general resting. I would like to share with you my thoughts on this day.

First, why Labor Day, Harry? Nobody is working today. It should be Unlabor Day. But let us not dwell on matters of nomenclature. I have more serious reflections to offer. I want to speak about some difficult jobs I have been involved with, when times were harder.

My worst job, Harry, was testing dental floss. You know, Harry, how irritating it is when a piece of floss gets stuck in your teeth. Then you have to make the existential choice: do I let bad enough alone or do I take another piece and use it to try to remove the one already stuck. It is a true risk Harry, because what if the second piece gets stuck also? Or pushes the first piece in even deeper? We all confront such difficult choices every day of our lives. How would you characterize yourself, Harry? Are you a risk-taker when it comes to dental floss extractions?

Anyway, as a tester, I did not have the luxury of choosing to avoid the problem. I had to keep sticking different types of floss between my teeth. Many times, Harry, I cannot tell you how often, a piece of floss got stuck. And Harry, you know the lines you get on your fingers from gripping the floss? Well, you might think that is not a big deal because you only do this for one minute each day. But, Harry, imagine having your fingers wrapped around pieces of floss for 8 hours a day. I developed permanent grooves that are still quite visible today. I thought I would lose the circulation in my fingers. I decided to write about my experiences and so I published the now famous critical essay *IN SEARCH OF FLOSS* followed by the paperback *MEGAFLOSS* and then the powerful *THE ONE MINUTE FLOSSER*.

So that is what I am thinking of today, Harry. I use a water pick now - no more grooves.

November 1, 1984



G: Hi, Harry, good to be here. I am calling Harry, because it is the beginning of November. As you know, Harry, from reading my latest book, November is the forgotten month. You can talk to people for days and they will never mention November. In fact, Harry, a recent research project reveals that in normal conversations, September comes up three times as often as October and October is four times as frequently mentioned as November! People are just not into November. That is the only conclusion that anyone could make from this data, except possibly a lunatic who cannot think straight.

What can we make of this phenomenon? What are some of the implications? Think about all those people who are born in November. You see, even though it is the forgotten month, people are occasionally born in it. What is the psychology of those individuals? Do they forget their own birthdays more frequently than the rest of us? Do others forget their birthdays and bring them small, belated tokens long after the fact? Do they lie about their birthdays and claim they are in October or December (depending on which is closest to the actual date)? These are important issues for us to consider today, on November 1st.

I want to make November 1st a special day, Harry, You know, we have April 1st, which is April Fools day; January 1st, which is New Years' Day. Why not November 1? We can call it November Fantasy Day. You see, Harry, my research has revealed that people tend to fantasize more in November than in any other month. That way, they can forget that they are in November. Possibly because they are turning inward, like a hibernating bear, for the long winter months ahead - that is an interesting parallel: depending on how much bear blood you have in you, you will fantasize more or less in November (a possible new direction for research). It is a time of transition, a time to take a deep breath and look inside. You see, Harry, April is different: April is hopeful, because we are looking forward to spring; November is bleak and foreboding. We tend to run away from this reality by excessive fantasies.

Now some people will think it is bad to fantasize so much and will fight against the tendency. But why fight nature? It is a human condition, to withdraw from the rigors of reality at certain regular intervals. We must pay homage to our deep biological and psychological realities. Instead of resisting the temptation to lapse into November oblivion, let us embrace the truth and let our fantasies flow freely, particularly around the beginning of the month. Then, we might have reason to celebrate the coming of November and perhaps it will no longer be the forgotten month. So today, you should request callers who would like to share the fantasy with us, to allow us to explore fantasies together, a group fantasy if you like. This is very therapeutic. In fact, it is the basis for my new book, NOVEMBER THERAPY, which is largely oriented toward the exploration and cultivation of fantasy. I am also working on a piece entitled APRIL-NOVEMBER CONNECTIONS, in which I compare and contrast April 1 and November 1.

Harry, I have a November therapy group therapy going. We have 10 people in a small, dimly lit room, with a single 25 watt bulb flickering intermittently - one person will begin with a fantasy and then someone else will cut in, and embellish it, perhaps taking it somewhere else. It will continue like this. I have found that those people are rarely depressed now in November. And Harry, what about November in Scandinavia? You know, they have these long winters where the days are short and people get depressed. What about November therapy for Scandinavians? I want to make a contribution, Harry. I think this may be the ticket for the 80s.

## Thanksgiving Day, 1984

- G: Hi, Harry, good to be here. Harry, as I prepare Thanksgiving dinner today, I have been puzzling over the question of free will. You see, it is not always clear when we have a choice. Consider the fact that on Thanksgiving, most of us are having turkeys. Of course, there are some Thanksgiving renegades who have ham instead. And almost everyone you and I know is aware of that alternative. People who cook turkeys think that they have chosen this gastronomic route because they prefer the taste of the bird to that of the pig. However, as clinicians, Harry, you and I are cognizant of the illusory nature of choice. Is it truly a preference for turkey or is the weight of societal expectations? Is it an unconscious choice? Perhaps my neighbor, Claudius Beanbag, eats turkey because he had a meaningful encounter with such a bird when he was three years old, an experience he has since repressed, but which surfaces in an obsessive concern with consuming them on this day. And Harry, is it truly choice when he have such limited alternatives? Would you walk into a restaurant which had only two items on the menu? You might walk in, but you would walk right out again, perhaps not even pausing to sit down and reflect on the matter. Why not have Braised Bean Curd au Jus Provencale a la Milanese for Thanksgiving with stuffing on the side. Let us show some imagination, Harry, some creativity. What if India celebrated Thanksgiving? What would they have?
- G: I have been doing a lot of treading water, Harry. Before I eat turkey, I like to do a minimum of aerobic exercise and I have chosen to tread. You know I wrote The Incomplete Book of Treading Water. Now I am working on the Incomplete Book of Treading Water Part II. If I finish that, I wonder if the two together might be called the Almost Complete Book of Treading Water. I have much pondering to do in this regard. Good to be here. My mind has been racing, but is on low idle right now, in the present. I await your insights.