

**EPISODE 63**

## [INTRODUCTION]

**[00:00:02] JT:** We actually got a letter through the US mail from this mom in Oklahoma, who said that she and her husband are just ordinary folks, she worked in the county clerk's office, her husband's a police officer, but their little five-year-old, for Ryan for the last year, that talked about a past life in Hollywood. He would cry and beg his mother to take him home to Hollywood.

This was quite hard for her to endure. It's hard to, as a parent, to see your child suffering and he was suffering on a daily basis. She had heard that if kids can process some of this, see more of the past life stuff that can help them, deal with it. She went to the public library and checked out some books on Hollywood. They were looking through one of them one day, when Ryan pointed to a picture. There's this picture from the old movie called *Night After Night*. Essentially, the first movie that Mae West was in. The picture just shows a group of men and a couple of those in the middle, everyone's focused on. They pointed to one of those and said, "Hey, mama. This George, we did a picture together." Then he pointed to one of the men on the end, and said, "Mama, that's me. I found me."

**[00:01:20] LW:** Hello, there. It's Light Watkins. You are listening to At the End of the Tunnel, which is not a podcast about death, as many people who hear that title assume that it has something to do with dying, or near-death experiences, or something like that. No. It's actually a podcast about hope, and inspiration. The tunnel is a metaphor for that period of uncertainty that anyone who follows their passion, or finds their purpose has to go through in order to shed their previous life and embrace their new, more aligned life.

Those are the stories that I like to tell on this podcast. Those are the guests that I typically invite onto the podcast. It's ironic, because this week, the podcast is in fact, about death. More specifically, about what happens after death, reincarnation. I am interviewing one of America's top reincarnation experts, a man by the name of Dr. Jim Tucker, out of North Carolina. While Dr. Tucker's personal story of how he ended up in that field is quite fascinating, we're going to definitely go through that, because he went through his own version of the dark tunnel. We're also going to spend a good portion of the episode talking about some of the cases that he has

personally investigated. Some of them are definitely going to give you goosebumps. Whether you personally believe in reincarnation or not, I think you're going to find this episode quite fascinating, and it'll become a very useful point of reference for at least, entertaining the possibility of reincarnation going forward.

Dr. Tucker and his team of researchers have investigated thousands of cases in the Division of Perceptual Studies at the University of Virginia, and he has authored a few books on the subject of reincarnation. I'm really excited to introduce you to Dr. Tucker, and to his exhaustive work around the topic of reincarnation, and his story of how he got into that line of work in the first place.

Before we get into that episode, I do want to make sure that you also know about and hopefully, have a copy of *Knowing Where to Look*, which is my new book of inspiration. It's full of inspirational stories and anecdotes and observations that you can read in a choose your own adventure style, basically, whenever you need a boost of inspiration, or just some additional perspective of what you happen to be going through in life. It's available everywhere books are sold. Definitely get a copy. If you have a copy, please don't forget to leave a review. It really does help more than you know.

In fact, when I became an author, a few books ago, I saw how important reviews actually are in the publishing world. Nowadays, whenever I read a book, I make sure to leave an Amazon review with a few lines about what I liked about the book. If you could hook me up with a review, that would be greatly appreciated.

Without further ado, let's dive into my conversation with Dr. Jim Tucker.

[INTERVIEW]

**[00:04:17] LW:** Dr. Tucker, thank you so much for coming on to *At the End of the Tunnel*. It is an honor and a pleasure to talk to you. I've been personally fascinated by the topic that we're going to discuss today, which is reincarnation, for a very, very long time. It's awesome to have someone who's considered probably, would you say you're the world's foremost expert reincarnation at this point?

**[00:04:40] JT:** Well, I wouldn't go that far. I'm one of a small number of people who study cases of purported past life memories.

**[00:04:49] LW:** Awesome. You all know each other, obviously, right?

**[00:04:51] JT:** Yeah. Yeah. Unfortunately, it's an aging field with not whole lot of us left, who do this kind of investigating cases to see if they can be verified. Still a few of us left.

**[00:05:05] LW:** I want to start by just talking about your story, leading up to you getting involved in this body of work. I know you grew up in North Carolina. Which part of North Carolina, specifically, did you grow up?

**[00:05:19] JT:** Eastern North Carolina, in a small town called Goldsboro.

**[00:05:23] LW:** When you think back to little Dr. Tucker, little Jim, did you have a favorite toy, or activity as a child?

**[00:05:33] JT:** Well, I wouldn't say I had a favorite toy. As far as activities, I've always enjoyed reading a lot. Also, I'm an identical twin. I had a favorite playmate. We went through childhood together.

**[00:05:50] LW:** What kind of books did you enjoy reading?

**[00:05:52] JT:** Well, I guess, typical children's books. I mean, that fiction stuff. Well, *A Wrinkle in Time*. I remember that one. Johnny Tremain, if you remember that one from the revolutionary war. Just typical children's books.

**[00:06:06] LW:** I'm asking, because I know eventually, you'd become a child psychiatrist. I'm just curious, is there something in childhood that inspires one later on in life to want to focus on that particular field of work?

**[00:06:21] JT:** As far as psychiatry in general, it tends to draw, I hope, people who are fairly introspective and looking at their own journeys, as well as other people's. That certainly includes looking back at childhood. I didn't know that I wanted to do child psychiatry, actually, until the middle of my psychiatry residency, where I wanted to learn more about development, and childhood things. Then, I went into child and started enjoying it.

**[00:06:47] LW:** There was nothing in your childhood itself that necessarily informed that decision, even though you didn't make it until later on in your graduate studies.

**[00:06:57] JT:** Not to go into child psychiatry. No. As far as my childhood, I mean, one notable factor was set, my father passed away with Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma when I was a teenager. That, certainly, had quite an impact. I think, it led me to go into medicine, to begin with. Also, led me, I think, to be more attuned to issues around life and death, and grief and that sort of thing, but the people got through me.

**[00:07:23] LW:** You grew up Southern Baptist. How did you reconcile your father's passing? Did you believe in heaven, hell, reincarnation, anything like that, as a young person?

**[00:07:34] JT:** Certainly, not reincarnation. I don't know that I had a firm belief one way or the other on heaven or hell. The church we went to did not focus on the hell part anyway. With many of us, we'd lose a lot when – we hope that they continue on in some way, but I didn't have any firm beliefs about how they might have carried on. I just hope that it did.

**[00:08:01] LW:** Were there any lessons, or ideologies, or mantras that your dad or your mom would echo to you and your brother, as you were coming up? Just about life in general?

**[00:08:13] JT:** No. I wouldn't say that. I think, certainly, they taught me one way or another to be extremely conscientious, and maybe overly conscientious. That can be good in the work that I ended up in work, making sure you take care of all the details. It's an important part of what you're doing.

**[00:08:32] LW:** You went to Charlottesville, to UVA to do your training. Why did you choose that particular school?

**[00:08:38] JT:** Well, being from North Carolina, I went to UNC Chapel Hill, both for undergrad and for medical school, and then just looked at a variety of residency programs. At the time, my first wife and I were going through what's called the couple's match. We just looked at programs around the country. I can't give a particular reason why we ended up ranking UVA first, but it looked like a good program and a good place to live, and then certainly, has turned out that way for me.

**[00:09:10] LW:** Talk about your introduction to Dr. Stevenson's work, while you were there at the university.

**[00:09:17] JT:** Well, it's quite limited, really. I came here to do residency in 1986. Well, Ian had stepped down as chair of the Department of Psychiatry in 1967. That was a long time off. It was almost 20 years. He was still working. He had this small research division looking at things, like past life memories, but very little connection to the department. I never met him during training. I mean, he wasn't doing any clinical teaching, or clinical work at all, as far as I can tell.

I heard about him and his work. I found that interesting that somebody had made that career choice. To step down as chairman of the department to have the smaller research division off campus, exploring past life memories. That was the extent of my interest at that point.

**[00:10:13] LW:** Was it like a rumor among the people who are in that department? I'm just curious, how did you – Was it well-known, his work, in that field at that time in the department that you were in? Or was that just an off conversation that you had with someone over lunch, and it just came up as an aside like, “Oh, isn't that interesting?”

**[00:10:35] JT:** Yeah, just as an aside. Of course, this is way before the Internet, so it's not like you can look, read about your own department. There's one attending in particular, I think, mentioned a couple of times about Ian's work, but that was the extent of it.

**[00:10:51] LW:** Okay, so let's cut to later on. You're now practicing. You have a child psychiatrist practice in Charlottesville. You happen upon a book that Dr. Stevenson wrote, *Children Who Remember Past Lives*.

[00:11:06] JT: *Children Who Remember Previous Lives*. Yeah.

[00:11:08] LW: Previous Lives?

[00:11:10] JT: Yeah. The backstory for why I was even looking for one, was that my first wife and I divorced and then I got married to my second wife. Now, she's a clinical psychologist. She was open to things, like reincarnation. She believed in reincarnation, and psychic things and all that. That got me curious. Also, just being with her, that relationship really opened me up in a way that's hard to put into words, that was obviously quite meaningful to me. It made me, I guess, look for things in life that I had not looked before.

There was a bookstore here. It's not here anymore, but Called Quest Bookshop, that had all kinds of – a lot of new age, alternative kinds of things. In their book section, they got something in Stevenson's books. I saw this one children, who remember previous lives, which was his overview of the work and decided to learn more about it. I got started to read it.

[00:12:14] LW: I could be wrong about this, but it doesn't seem like one of the books they'd have out displayed on one of the tables. Seems like, you'd have to be looking for that book. I'm just curious, were you in there looking for it? Were you in this past life section of the occult bookstore?

[00:12:29] JT: Yeah. Sure, I was in the past life section. That to be outside, I remember, I was specifically looking for Ian's books, or not. I probably was, actually. There was another one called *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, which is probably his best notebook. I compared those two and ended up getting the first one. Yeah, I may well have gone in there just to see if I could get one of his books. Again, this was a long time ago, this would have been 1996, I think. It's been 25 years now.

[00:13:02] LW: These are your words. You said, you were unfulfilled in your private practice. I'm just curious, you have your own practice, you're working with kids, right? You're helping people. You're in service. I think, a lot of people who have typical 9 to 5 jobs may fantasize about doing

something of that nature. I'm curious, what did that feel like for you? How did you know you were unfulfilled?

**[00:13:27] JT:** Well, part of it was that I – Well, I still live in Charlottesville. I was actually practicing in a nearby community. I was the only child psychiatrist there, and got very busy. I was in a group practice [inaudible 00:13:38] started a group practice with other therapists. The way it typically would work is I get a referral, I handled the meds, and one of the therapists would take care of the therapy part. I was doing almost no therapy by the end.

It was a very busy medication management practice. I enjoyed the metalwork. I actually enjoy it more now than I did then, because now I'm doing it very part time, as opposed to doing it 8 to 5 every day. You have med check, after med check, after med check. The phone messages are piling up. Then, you go home at 9, you come back the next day and started all over again.

Now, again, there are a lot of good aspects about being a child psychiatrist. I mean, it's trite. I did enjoy helping people. Most of the patients do get better and all that. It was also a grind. I was looking for more than just doing that. That's when I learned that Ian Stevenson and a colleague of his, Bruce Greyson, had gotten a grant to do a new study on near-death experiences.

**[00:14:47] LW:** After you read his book, I'm assuming you were more interested in his work. Had you had any experiences with any of the kids you were dealing with already in your practice that were potentially tied to memories, or anything like that? Or before you read this article with your wife about Dr. Stevenson's grant?

**[00:15:08] JT:** No. Actually, it almost never comes up in the clinic. Now, I will say, and I think I read this in one of my books. It turned out that I later learned that one of the patients I was seeing in my practice was one of Ian's cases, and the family hadn't told me. I was there treating child psychiatrist, and I was treating him for ADHD. The family didn't think to mention that he had also had past life memories and had been seen by Dr. Stevenson. Which just shows how hesitant a lot of families are to disclose this to anyone, because they're afraid people will think it's weird.

**[00:15:45] LW:** I've got this theory that I've been writing a lot about it lately in my own work, about how, you don't have to look for your purpose. You just have to follow your curiosity, and your purpose will eventually find you. This could be anecdotal, because it stood out to me. You actually reached out to Dr. Stevenson's team to see about coming in and helping out with some of the cases, since he's gotten this new grant and all of that. In that experience, to what extent was your invitation received? Or did you have to do a lot of follow up? Did you take a lot to get into those weekly research lunches?

**[00:16:26] JT:** No. It didn't take any work at all, actually. I mean, I just called them up and offered to help. They said, "We may well need some. Come to the lunch.": In the meantime, they had checked up on me. One of the nurses who was working actually, on that study, I had worked with during residency on one of the inpatient units. I knew her a little bit, and she knew me a little bit.

It was an interesting point of just follow your curiosity, which makes a lot of sense to him and follow your passions, and then you'll find meaning there. I was about to say, I wasn't doing it to find meaning, but I suppose it's not quite true. I think, with my work life, I wanted more meaning, or more sense of fulfillment. Did not just want to do clinical work for the next few decades. Yeah, I guess, I was looking for something, and then get bounded ever since.

**[00:17:21] LW:** Also, I'm sure they weren't going to take anyone off the street, just who called up and sounded nice. You had all the credentials that they would potentially, I would imagine, be looking for me. Because you went to the same program that Dr. Stevenson was the head of, and you were a practicing child psychiatrist, and you said, the nurse was familiar with your work. It was almost like, they were waiting for you to come in there.

You had to go to these meetings for a couple of years, which is a long time. When you were going to these meetings, and you are getting exposed to this work, were you thinking about the fact that this could potentially be something you do full-time? Or was it just a hobby that you just were volunteering for you? You enjoyed breaking things up professionally?

**[00:18:09] JT:** I think, it's probably a little bit of both. Again, I knew I didn't want to do just what I was doing for the rest of my life. What appealed to me was not just the topic, but the approach



to it, that it was – it fit well with me. It's very analytical, or it's not new agey at all. I mean, it's taken a very – it's very serious-minded work of seeing is there evidence here? About a topic, life after death that really interested me. It was a good fit for me, which I guess, means I was a good fit for them. We moved ahead with it.

**[00:18:46] LW:** What was the first case that blew you away, once you've got behind the scenes in that work?

**[00:18:52] JT:** Well, the first case I saw was one that's in my books, of a little boy who was born with three, more or less birthmarks that match one's on his deceased half-brother, and then he talked about the half-brother's life. It was rich in a number of ways. It's also, I mean, you see what the families go through with a situation like this. Talking with his mother also meant talking, of course, with his half-brother's mother who had lost a child. You see, it's not just an intellectual exercise, but it's really looking at the most meaningful/tragic thing that a parent could ever go through.

**[00:19:42] LW:** Can you just talk about that a little more as a case study, of the type of approach you all take to these cases in terms of the 200 variables, or metrics and how you verify a claim?

**[00:19:56] JT:** Yeah. This was one that the previous little boy, or toddler really, had had cancer. Eventually, he started limping, then eventually, found he had a broken leg and got diagnosed with cancer and started getting chemo treatments. By the end, he was essentially blind in one eye due to a tumor. He had had a place on his scalp that had been biopsied, where the diagnosis was made. He had chemo running through a central line, a large IV in his neck.

After he died, I mean, his mom went through life and had a couple of kids. Then 12 years later, had this little boy where he was essentially blind in the same eye. It was a different cause. Fortunately, it wasn't a tumor, but he had the same experience of being blind in the eye. He had this nodule on his scalp, where the previous childhood had a tumor biopsy. He had this odd scar on his neck, birthmark that looked like a scar, looked like a little cut, where the forehead, the chemo going in.

Then when he got old enough to walk, actually limped, through a matching that the gait of his half-brother, even though as far as anyone knew, he had no reason to do so. With that case, we want to verify all that. We got the previous boy's medical records, which were hundreds of pages. We went through them all. We were able to document not just the lesions that his mom had described, but also making sure they were on the right side. As on the right side of the neck and the right side of the scalp and all that.

As an example, as much as possible, we don't take anyone's word for anything if we don't have to. In a case like this with birthmarks, or birth defects, then we're getting autopsy reports if we can. Or in this case, getting medical records to confirm it. In addition, the boy talked about places and events that happened in the half-brother's life, including one he told us that he had never told mom before about a – I recall, correctly visiting the camp of some sort with a cousin, and all that, the mom verified.

We take all the information we can and we have a long list of things that would go through. Some related to the memories, and some more general. Then we take all that information and code it, and put it into a computer database. Like you said, it's 200 variables that we'd code for. There may be no case where all we have information on all 200 variables, but we put in as much information as we can. That way, we can analyze the phenomenon on a full group level, as opposed to just the individual cases.

**[00:22:45] LW:** The kids are normally anywhere between – as soon as they can start talking, really, up to around what? Five or six-years-old, or something like this?

**[00:22:54] JT:** Yeah. Typically, they'll start around that the average age when they start talking about a past life was 30 – I think, it's 35 months. Two or three, when they start coming out with it. Sometimes, of course, the parents have trouble understanding what they're talking about, initially, where they'll even be making signs, like hand signs, like finger to the head, and they talk about how they'd shock. It starts very early.

Now occasionally, there are exceptions. If kids are slow-talking, they had ear infections or whatever, then they come out later. Or, there are ones where, when it comes out later is often that something in the environment triggers the memories, and they say, "Oh, I did that in my last

life.” Then yes, a narrow window, usually by the time they’re school age, they have stopped talking about these things. Then they just go on with their lives.

Now, whether they totally forget or not is another question. Lately we have gone back and talked with adults who we originally studied as kids. A fair number of them say they do still have some memories, even though they stopped talking about them. They’ve gotten pretty vague at this point, but some of them will persist.

**[00:24:01] LW:** What's an example of a case where a memory was triggered? Then once it was triggered, it became a whole thing for the kid that they played out on a regular basis? I'm thinking of James 3, but maybe there's another one?

**[00:24:15] JT:** Well, yeah. I mean, that one actually started at a very early age, started with nightmares. I mean, he had visited an Air Museum, but it wasn't immediate that he quite that happened. There's one case for instance, in Sri Lanka, where the family was taking a bus trip. At one of the stops, the boy started saying that he had lived there before, and then gave various details. Then later, people went back and tried to investigate. Then, found in fact, the details matched a child who had died there. It does happen. It's more typical, where it's just spontaneously, the children start saying, “I used to do this, or I had different parents, and my last mom did such and such.”

**[00:25:13] LW:** It leads into this idea of the separate ways that our Western society treats the idea of reincarnation, versus maybe Asian societies, or just more ancient societies. After a couple of years of volunteering, you were invited to go to Asia, to study some of these cases. Can you talk a little bit more about what you saw in terms of those differences, in the way that they get handled by the families and by the society itself?

**[00:25:43] JT:** Yeah. That was in the late '90s that I went. It was before we had an Internet site, a website, and before the Internet had fully gone. Anyway, my point is, at the time, we didn't realize, there are so many American cases. The reason that Ian Stevenson had gone all over the world studying cases, was he went wherever he can find them. He had people looking for them in various places.

In Asia, a surprising number of parents who are Buddhist, or Hindu, I mean, believe in reincarnation, but a surprising number actually, did not like their children talking about a past life. There's a belief in some places that talking about a past life will cause you, either to get sick, or to have a short life this time around. There are also times where, what the child says after a while gets irritating to the parents. "My last parents were much better, or I had a much bigger house before."

In India, about 35% of parents will try to suppress what the children say. Even so, I think the difference is that they believe that children they just don't want to talk about past life, but they believe it. That is very different from many American families, where the parents don't believe it, and may not even recognize it. They think the parent – I mean, the child is just fantasizing, or just talking nonsense, and they flub it off.

Now, there are plenty of American parents who don't do that. Of course, those are the ones who we're likely to hear from. It is a different way of responding to such statements. Also, in Asia, well, some extent here too, but in Asia, if a family has lost a family member, and then a child starts saying that they used to be grandpa, many of the families are relieved by that. They may want the child to be the reincarnation of that person. They may encourage the child to talk more.

It can go either way. With those cases, especially the same family cases, we do have the concern that there's been such a wish by the family have the person return, that it has really colored the case. You may have either led the child to say more, or maybe the family misinterpreted what the child has said.

**[00:28:07] LW:** Do you remember the case of Kloi in Thailand, speaking of which? I wanted to also circle back around to the birthmark aspects of these cases. Can you recount that story for us, so we can bridge those two things together?

**[00:28:21] JT:** Yeah. That's a case that a colleague and I, Irvine Kyle studied a long time ago now. It was a little boy, where his grandmother, before she died, had said how she wanted to come back as a male. After she died, her daughter-in-law, took some white paste and made a mark on the back of her neck. Then a year later, this grandchild was born, this little boy, and he was born with a birthmark that really look quite like somebody who just made a mark on the

back of his neck, this pale, looks like a finger going down the neck. Then when he got older – he didn't talk a lot about her life, but did say that he had been her and identify different things that have been hers.

He also showed a lot of gender non-conformity, where he would want to wear her dresses, or makeup, jewelry a lot. He would not do the typical rough and tumble boy play there, but would be playing with the girls more and various other things, which, at the time, we actually published the case as what was then known as gender identity disorder. Of course, things have really evolved since then. Gender non-conformity in the general population, most young children show gender typical behaviors, or stereotypical behaviors, really.

We can talk a lot about what may lead to that, but most kids will show gender typical behaviors, like little boys playing with trucks, or little girls playing with dolls. Again, there are all kinds of environmental influences. Anyway, that's what we see. About 3% of boys and 5% of girls will show gender non-conformity. When are cases where the child remembers their life as a member of the opposite sex, it's 80% of those kids show gender non-conformity. The suggestion would be that there's the past life had had an impact on how their gender is developing in this line.

**[00:30:28] LW:** In the case of Kloj, where he was born into the same family of this person who passed, there could also have been – This is what a skeptic may think. There could also have been an expectation, so maybe they were cherry picking different ideas, or evidence to show that this is who this person actually was. You guys have a control for that, which is you, maybe not in this case, but in other cases, you show the children a couple of photographs from different aspects of their memory to see what they remember and what they don't remember. Maybe, can you talk about an example of that, where you've controlled for that memory?

**[00:31:09] JT:** Yeah. I mean, to finish up the thought on Kloj, I mean, you're right, of course, that occurs to us is it that the child's family's expectations created some of this gender non-conformity. At least, at the time that we published the paper on gender identity disorder, there was no reason to suspect that family's expectation expectations could cause that. It gets complicated.

These same family cases have inherent weaknesses that other cases do not, because either the child could learn things about the previous family member overhearing things, even the parents don't know that they did. Or the parental expectations then do shape the child's behavior, or the statements. Most of our cases done involve same families. As far as the photographs that you talked about, so we've been able to do more of that lately, do photographic tests, because what we're learning about cases earlier than we often used to. With the American cases, Ian would hear about cases, but it would often be, say, 20 years later, where the parents learned about his work and they wrote him to say, "When my adult child was growing up, he did this, or said that."

Now, of course, if a child is talking about a past life, the parents do a Google search and find out about us and can write us. When we catch kids, they're still young and still have these memories. What we try to do is show them controlled picture tests, where for instance, one recent was a little boy who remembered a life, a death in the Vietnam War, remember being an American soldier in the Vietnam War.

He told his mother, he gave a last name and the state where he said he was from. She went on the Vietnam Memorial website, and was shocked to see that there was a guy with that name, and it's an unusual name, that was going to Vietnam, and the boy had said he was 21, which is how old this man was. She then wrote to us. She didn't try to do any further investigation of this previous man, but I did, and found a variety of pictures. I would show him, for instance, the high school where the man went to, versus a controlled high school from another place, and would ask him if he remembered either one of them.

Also, some people from the life, pictures from yearbooks, a variety of things. Anyway, I showed him eight pairs of pictures. There are a couple of them that he didn't make a choice on. For the others, he was six out of six. There's no chance that his mom led on those. She didn't know which picture was the right one, either. There was no parental influence in this case. Yet he showed this ability, which if you think well, it's just luck. Well, it's like flipping a coin, having it come up heads six times in a row, it happens, but the chances of it happening are quite small.

**[00:34:08] LW:** There's a documentary series on Netflix called *Surviving Death*, and you're in a couple of the episodes. It's one thing to read about these cases and how the children behave,

but there's another thing to actually see it and to see the nonchalance with which they're looking at the photos and just casually choosing, as if there's no question in the world that this is what it is. It's like, if anyone was showing, any one listening to this a picture of their childhood home, you would know it instantly, right? Unless, you moved around a lot. If you were in the same place for a significant period of time, you would know it instantly. You would know the pictures of your parents and things like that.

Do you find, out of the people that reach out to you, what percentage of these cases would you say, by the time it gets to you, Dr. Tucker, what percentage would you say are legitimate cases, versus cases where maybe I don't know why someone's – what motivation would someone would have to not be legitimate?

**[00:35:11] JT:** Well, I think they're probably all, or almost all legitimate in the sense that families are being honest about it. What we often get, the vast majority of time actually, with the emails is the child has talked about a past life, but he or she has not given the kinds of details that allow the memories to be verified. If you don't name a person, or a place, it's very hard to find out if somebody from the past actually matches the child's statements.

The child may talk with great emotion about a past life, and may give a lot of details, and sometimes grisly details. Somebody's been raped and murdered, and all kinds of things, which you wonder why a three-year-old would be doing that. Again, without names or places, unless it's a really unique death, we're not able to verify. We were just looking at this. In the last year, we've heard from a 150 American families about their child talking about a past life. Very few of them have we even tried to investigate, because there's not enough— to do some online searching. There's often not enough there to be able to confirm it.

There are enough cases where we do verify it. I think, it lends legitimacy to any of the cases, whether they're verified or not. If your child is having these terrible memories about a violent death, and you're trying to comfort them, it may be helpful to know that plenty of these cases, when the child has done that, there actually was somebody who lived and died, who matches the memories that the child has.

The parent can know that this is something that they can take seriously. Not necessarily build it up for the child, but I mean, they can be respectful of what the child is saying, because we have so many cases where it turns out to be true.

**[00:37:12] LW:** You also make a distinction in your book, when you talk about your own intent as a scientist and a researcher, between proof and evidence. Can you speak a little bit about that?

**[00:37:25] JT:** Yeah. I mean, proof is a very high bar that in medicine, we always never reach. When new medications get approved, it means that there have been studies that show there's a very good chance that they work better than placebo. Of course, we can identify just what that chance is. The bar is 95% chance that that works. That's not proof. I mean, that's evidence that it works, but it's not proof that it does. The same applies to work like this. We can't give a percentage, but we're going proof of – I don't know what proof of past life memories, or the consciousness has continued from one life to another. I don't know what proof would even look like, but I do know what evidence looks like.

When a child comes up with very specific details that can only match one person who died in the past and they're a complete stranger to the family, well, that's strong evidence. Ian Stevenson used to say, and people do too, that proof is a term that should only be used in mathematics. In the world of science, again, it's about the level of evidence. Not this unobtainable, absolute truth.

**[00:38:41] LW:** Would you mind recounting the story of Ryan and his memory of Marty, in relation to this evidence? Then just that striking detail of the evidence, particularly as a younger person, versus as an older teenager?

**[00:39:01] JT:** Yeah. That's one that, as you know, it's on the *Surviving Death* series. That was one of our – I mean, these days, we mostly get emails. That was when we actually got a letter through the US mail from this mom in Oklahoma, who said that that she and her husband are just ordinary folks, she worked in a county clerk's office, her husband's a police officer, but their little five-year-old, Ryan for the last year, had talked about a past life in Hollywood. He would cry and beg his mother to take him home to Hollywood.



This was quite hard for her to endure. It's hard to as a parent, to see your child suffering and he was suffering on a daily basis. She had heard that if kids can process some of this, that see more of the past life stuff that it can help them deal with it. She went to the public library and checked out some books on Hollywood. They were looking through one of the one day when Ryan pointed to a picture. There's this picture from an old movie called *Night After Night*, especially the first movie that Mae West was in. The picture just shows a group of men and a couple of those in the middle, everyone's focus on. He pointed to one of those and said, "Hey, mama. This George, we did a picture together." Then, he pointed to one of the men on the end, and said, "Mama, that's me. I found me."

Well, the first one he pointed to is George Raft, a young George Raft, who went on – well, you might not know, but for those of us of a certain age, but went on to be quite well-known in his day. The other one he pointed to that he said he had been was an extra with no lines in the movie. Ryan's mom wrote to me to see if I could help determine who this fellow was.

I went out and met, went Oklahoma and met Ryan and his parents. Well, let me just say, I think it was helpful for the family, certainly for Ryan's mother, that if nothing else, I was respectful of what they were going through, that I traveled halfway across the country to take seriously what they were experiencing. Afterwards, we're trying to figure out who this fellow was. Ryan's mom was writing me, emailing me, sometimes on a daily basis, with all these statements around his making about past life, which of course, we could then log. Eventually, with the help of a Hollywood archivist in a TV film crew – sort of a long story. With the help of an archivist, we were able to find out who this was.

The archivist, she went to the library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and got all the materials on this movie, *Night After Night*. Most of which was about stars in the movie. Then, there's one picture of this guy, and on back could identify him as this man, Marty Martin, which meant that we could think, compare of what Ryan said to Marty's life. It turned out that even though, I really thought is unlikely, this this extra had had this dramatic life that Ryan was describing, Marty Martin did.

Ryan talked about dancing on stage in New York and Marty danced on Broadway. Then he said, he went to Hollywood to work in the movies, which Marty Martin did mostly worked on dance in the movies. Said that he then worked for an agency, where people change their names and Marty Martin started a successful talent agency clinic at this big house with a swimming pool, and that the street name had either the word rock, or melt in it. Marty Martin lived on North Roxbury, talked about sailing on ships and then seeing Paris, which Marty Martin did with his with his wife.

Ryan also said that – one day, he said he didn't know why God would let you get to be 61, and then make you come back again as a baby. Marty Martin's death certificate, he died in 1964. His death certificate said that he was only 59, but his daughter and his stepson posted, in fact, it was 61. Once I looked into it, and found a passenger list, three census records and two marriage listings that all gave ages that meant in fact, Marty Martin was 61 when he died. Ryan was right about that, even though the death certificate said 59.

Altogether, we were able to verify with over 50 of Ryan's statements matched with Marty Martin's life, but fewer of and then many more were under five. I mean, there were little details about daily life, which that long ago, we weren't able to verify, but 55 of them we were. At the time, there was nothing on Marty Martin on the internet. Eventually, now people have actually filled in some of the information after this case got some publicity. There's no way that Ryan and his family got anything about Marty Martin through some surreptitious means.

**[00:44:10] LW:** It's fascinating, just the level of detail. There's another one from the book that I wanted you to go into. As you were talking, I was just curious around, or when you think about scientific research and who's funding this stuff, a lot of times, you have pharmaceutical companies and people who want to make money on the back-end, in some form or fashion. I'm just wondering, what is the funding like for this work? I mean, can you just hop on a plane at any time and go and do some investigation, or does this have to be something that gets planned out? You have to fundraise to go and meet up with someone in Sri Lanka, or wherever?

**[00:44:49] JT:** Well, not exactly. We don't do bake sales for trips. Yeah, we've fortunately had a number of donors over the years, who have been generous, who believed in this work and then supported it, starting with Ian Stevenson. The only way he was able to form this research

division was a man named Chester Carlson, who invented the Xerox process; gave a lot of money to the university. We've continued with that, where – I mean, we occasionally get grants for this work, but it's mostly donors who are intrigued by this work and respectful of it, and they help fund our work.

**[00:45:29] LW:** How much of your time gets spent verifying, or processing a single case, that seems very promising?

**[00:45:37] JT:** There is anchors. Now, we can do a lot of that work at our desk, on the Internet, like with that Vietnam case, where eventually, I was able to learn quite a bit about this man who had died in the 1960s. I mean, it's usually just one trip to the family. Then again, we can connect about various details that come up just by email now. Sometimes, the interview is actually, dependent on the case. Don't even take more than a couple of hours. Then the work starts and trying to sort out all the details and how much of that can be verified.

**[00:46:21] LW:** Let's say, Marty Martin's case, Ryan comes out in his kindergarten years, as potentially the reincarnated father to this daughter, or his uncle to his niece. They're still around. Ryan's now a teenager and barely doesn't remember much. You even wrote that usually, after the age of six or seven, they completely forget, and they go on to live normal lives. Does that place any pressure, I'm wondering, on either the kids, or the family just thinking? Because I mean, if you hear that level of detail about your family that's mostly accurate. I mean, you had 50 something markers for Ryan's case that matched up, it's hard to deny something like that. I don't know if what I'm asking if it gives closure to the family? Or if it puts pressure on the kid? I'm just wondering, what have you seen in relation – on both sides, as the years pass? Do people just move on? Or how does it – what happens?

**[00:47:27] JT:** Well, it can really vary. I mean, there are some times where the previous family doesn't believe it. Often, they do. Especially when the child is really young, they will want to have a relationship with the child's family. Sometimes they do. I'm thinking more an agent here. They'll have various trips back and forth. Sometimes, even after the child has moved on and doesn't particularly care to see the previous family anymore. They're still wanting that connection, because they feel a connection to their loved one who died.

In Ryan's case, where the TV series as a 16-year-old, or I guess, he's 15 when they've filmed it, but as a 15-year-old, meeting with Marty Martin's daughter, and like saying, his niece, it's too late. It can be I think, frustrating for the previous family, in that case, if they really want to feel this connection, and connection to their lost loved one, but the kid is not in that place anymore. It can be unsatisfying to them.

**[00:48:38] LW:** Another example of that connection and going back and forth is from the book, you talked about Kendra and Ginger. Can you recount that story? Except, that that was really, really interesting.

**[00:48:50] JT:** Yeah. I mean, that was one where it's unusual in our cases, that the girl – well, when she met this coach, she felt an immediate attachment to, and was much more friendly and loving with her than she was, particularly with strangers, and started say, that she had been in Ginger's tummy, and they've gone through an abortion. It just turned out that the coach did confirm to her mom that, in fact, she had had an abortion.

The attachment became incredibly intense, both for the coach and for the child, where the child has been spent a couple of nights a week at that coach's house. Yeah. I mean, I understand certainly, that the wish to maintain that connection, but it's not necessarily what the child needs in their development in this life. Eventually, the girl had a falling out with the coach in separate contact, which I think is probably best for the child.

Yeah, like what I say to parents in general. Certainly, be open to what the child is saying. Be respectful. You don't want to get overly focused on past life, because you don't wanted to interfere with the experience of this life. Sometimes, people can't – it's really interesting, meaningful. Sometimes, I think, people get a little too focused on and need to let the child just be a child and enjoy their life.

**[00:50:28] LW:** If you're a parent listening to this, and you suspect that your child may be displaying some past life memory, is there anything that they should do, or shouldn't do to create a safe space for that? Or are a few questions that they should ask to verify, whether or not this is actually what this is?

**[00:50:54] JT:** Yeah. We've got a short column, advice for parents on our website. Yeah, as far as what they should do, or one thing we encourage is people to write down the child's statements, so that's setting that written record for us, in case it can be verified. Most of the children recall a death by some unnatural means; murder, suicide, combat accident, that sort of thing. Those memories can be troubling to the child.

If the parent can be respectful of that, and say, "I understand that you remember that, but now you're safe here with us." Really try to emphasize that the past is the past, and that things are going to be different this time around, that can be helpful. I mean, and particularly in the Asian cases, often the children have gone to the previous place, seeing the previous family. You might think the intensity of the memories would grow, but it actually tends to lessen, I think partly, because their memories are validated. They don't have to keep struggling to convince people, because there it is. They see themselves, but they also see that what's going on, moved on. Families are growing older and have their own lives.

In the same way, with parents in general, just emphasizing that those memories are behind them and this time, they're all going to be – family's going to be safe together and have a good life this time. We don't encourage people to ask a lot of pointed questions. I mean, it's awfully tempting to try to find out what the name is. The concern about it asking a lot of pointed questions, one, it may upset the child. Two, they may start just making up answers. It's better for the most part, if it can come spontaneously.

When you're when the child is in that zone of wanting to talk about these things, certainly, asking open-ended questions. "What else do you remember?" Or, "That must have been hard," or whatever. Letting the child talk. Again, asking, they remember what their name is, or where they lived, or whatever. I mean, that's something very helpful for us, if it's accurate information.

**[00:53:00] LW:** Going back to what I saw in the show, with this case of Atlas, and when he was recount - he was a young white kid, he was recounting this past life as a young black child, who died on a playground. I'm just curious, are there any commonalities in terms of people taking on new ethnicities, or the same ones? I know, you said, they can cross genders. I know that most of these reincarnated cases are from their last life was less than two years before, the death was two years before. What are some of the other commonalities that you've seen?

**[00:53:38] JT:** Well, as far as ethnicity goes, the kids in a lot of the places where we've studied cases, but not a whole lot of necessarily different ethnicities. Here is a certain melting pot. In say, I mean, I don't know. Thailand, or Burma, or whatever. I get it. Maybe hard to reach. I mean, for the most part, people, the kids recall a life in the same country, often fairly close by. I mean, here in the States, we've had some, I mean, hundreds and hundreds of miles. Usually, it's fairly close.

The way I interpret that is that for intact memories to come through, typically, things haven't gone too far. I mean, it's usually the same countries, often same geographical location; near geographical locations, often fairly recent life. It's not pretty tagged memories to come through. It's not something where it's typically on the other side of the world. Again, with the American, unless we can identify the previous person, we don't know what race they were. I mean, sometimes children, a white child would say, "That was when I had brown skin," or something like that. The short answer is we don't know a lot about that.

**[00:54:50] LW:** I think, it's fascinating. I mean, I've been studying spiritual texts for many, many years. There's this whole idea of, obviously, karma and just the evolutionary aspect of living and experiencing all sides of humanity. I know you're not a huge fan of past life regression, in terms of any proof, or any sense of verifying, or validating it. Have you read any of Dr. Michael Newton's work? *Journey of the Souls* and all of that?

I consider myself to be a skeptic. One thing I appreciated about what I could gather from reading just – it's one thing to do the research, another thing to read someone else's reported their research. One thing I appreciate from his books, particularly *Journey of the Souls* is, he seems to present it in a relatively objective fashion. It's all transcriptions. You can see the Q&A that he's having with his clients in his office. He's done thousands of cases and all of that.

He said that he doesn't – he tries not to lead the patients and say things like, "Okay. Now, do you see a white light? Are you floating?" He just goes, "Tell me what's happening now. Now what are you experiencing?" He's seen a lot of overlap in people's reports. Yeah, just from my own personal interest in these kinds of things, it's just interesting, the implications, all of the

implications that I'm sure you've also pondered about and wandered about in terms of life after death. Is it just these kids? Or is everybody experiencing this?

I'm just curious, behind the scenes, when it's you and your colleagues talking about these cases, is it purely scientific, or do you have your own biases, and you're operating within those, and you're aware of those? Or what is your experience like, behind the scenes?

**[00:56:41] JT:** I suppose, we all have biases of one sort or another. Yeah, you hear something, I think. That's just to pour out there for me. We're not coming at it from any particular spiritual outlook. I identify now in the group's spiritual, but not religious, and that we're in it, trying to figure it out for our ourselves, trying to determine for ourselves, well, what's going on here? It's not what I'm trying to confirm a previous view. It's trying to see where the evidence takes us. Again, we all have particular slant on things. As much as possible, they really are not particularly part of this work.

**[00:57:25] LW:** Some of the oddities that have been reported, are kids going for cigarettes and alcohol that they used to consume in their previous life. You have these little six-year-old kids tapping the beer bottle the same way that they used to tap it in their old life, to get the last little drop of beer out. Are there any things that you just see, that you just think are completely bizarre like that?

**[00:57:49] JT:** Well, yeah. Now that you say it, maybe I should think that it's bizarre. Yeah, I mean, these kids have a variety of behaviors that seem to be linked to the past life, and includes if the previous person is a heavy smoker, or drinker, that the child will still want those things. I guess, that is a little odd. Or, you can see in their play, sometimes compulsively doing things that there's nothing in their environment that might lead them to as far as we know.

Occasionally, grisly play-like a child, acting like they're hanging themselves, or whatever. It's usually more the occupation. Even then, like one particular case is a kid played at being a biscuit shopkeeper, only for hours and hours on end. In the past life, that's what the guy did. Why the child has said, focus on that, and some explaining in some ordinary way, potential real challenge. With the behaviors, I mean, it's not firm evidence as much as recalling the name and

where you're from, but it's still, it becomes part of the picture that at times, can be quite persuasive.

**[00:59:02] LW:** How you interpret all of this – Let's say, you had to give a spiritual explanation. What would you say?

**[00:59:09] JT:** Well, I can't really give you a pithy answer to that. I mean, I think what all this work has led me to do is look at the bigger picture of what existence even is, or what it means. Yeah, because you can't just map these cases on a typical Western understanding of reality. It's like, physical matter is all there is, something that – that doesn't work in this case. At the level of those, okay, well, how do you make sense of it?

I've eventually come to believe, and this shares with certainly, physicists, as well as various spiritual traditions, but that consciousness really is the core of reality and this world that we experienced are the basic building blocks of the world. I think, are not particles and waves, or whatever. There really are observations and knowledge, become more of an idealist, where if the mind is really at the core of everything.

With that, you look at these cases as a series of observations, or experiences that for whatever reason, have continued from one life to another. It seems to be the same stream of consciousness, or same stream of experiences. Why that happens in these cases, not in for all of us, as far as we know. That we don't know. That's my take on all this at this point.

We don't use the term spiritual, because of course, there are all sorts of connotations with that. There's this piece of us, this mind piece, or consciousness piece, that seems to be at the core of who we are. At least in these cases, does not seem to be limited to just the lifespan of the brain, or the body. It seems to be more primary than that, and has continued through multiple lifespans.

**[01:01:11] LW:** Has there been an evidence-based explanation for déjà vu, outside of being a child – let's say, as an adult, I mean, we all experienced it. You go to a place, you feel like you've been there before? Have you seen anything, or come across anything that can explain that?



**[01:01:27] JT:** Well, maybe they're neurological explanation. I mean, it depends on what you mean by déjà vu. Yes, I mean, I think most of us maybe have that experience, where it feels familiar to us and we'll be in a conversation. We can't quite see what's coming next, but it feels like we've experienced it before. There may well be a neurological explanation for that. Now, once where people have been at a place they've never been in and are able to identify things, like some of these children have done, I mean, that's literally déjà vu, as far as seen before. Of course, I can't imagine neurological explanation for that. With a lot of this, I mean, again, with medical explanations, there's not necessarily proof, but that's where the evidence, or the logic takes people. Neurological is for whether, somehow an impression gets ahead of the conscious awareness, or whatever creates this sense that you've experienced it before, would explain the simple cases, but not be the vivid ones.

**[01:02:28] LW:** After coming across so much compelling evidence that there is potentially, at least, some people experience reincarnation, what else professionally, are you wanting to see in this field? What would you like to see more of?

**[01:02:45] JT:** Well, that's a good question. I mean, I would like to see greater awareness of the abilities of mind to exist separate from the brain, either after death, or things that it can do. Parapsychology, which a lot of people think there's nothing to it, because they've been told there's nothing to it. Yet, there's tons of evidence about particular abilities with telepathy, or premonitions, or various things. It would be good to see people become more aware of that work.

**[01:03:19] LW:** What's your take on destiny? Do you have one?

**[01:03:23] JT:** I don't have a firm take on – is all this planned out, that we – that our people have talked about. You have a contract when you enter a life and fulfill it. I don't have strong feelings, one way or another about that. I think, we may all have a path that is the best fit for us. We make it off of that path. Or, we may choose not to follow that path. In that sense, we don't reach our destiny. I only have a general thoughts on it.

**[01:03:56] LW:** Your first book in this work was it *Return to Life*?

[01:04:00] JT: The first one is called *Life Before Life*.

[01:04:02] LW: *Life Before Life*.

[01:04:03] JT: Yeah. The follow up was *Return to Life*.

[01:04:05] LW: *Life Before Life* was the one that you were sending out all the query letters to see about getting an agent and a publisher. Can you just quickly share that story? Because I think, it's pretty amazing.

[01:04:17] JT: Yeah. To be perfectly honest, when I read Ian Stevenson's books, I thought, I'm never going to be able to equal this. Could I write a different kind of book and write one to make the general public more aware of this work? More on that, you write up a book proposal, and you send out query letters to agents. I looked at books in the same general field. Most people acknowledge their agents, so I sent out a writer query letters. One of them I sent, was to an agent, Patricia van der Leun, who got my letter, and I guess, got my proposal. Now, it's been so long, I'm blocking on the details.

As luck would have it, one of her other authors had just been telling her about the work at UVA, with Ian Stevenson. She gets my proposal. Again, as luck would have it, she then had a lunch scheduled with a friend of hers, who is an editor at St. Lawrence Press. She takes the proposal with her, and her editor sold on the idea. I essentially had a contract before I even knew about it. I was happy to hear that.

What do you make of that? Well, you can decide, I was just lucky that the pieces all fell together. When things like that happen, you do wonder about destiny, and how would that work. I didn't cause her to have this other author, who knew about our work and was telling him about it, and I telling her about it. Now, I didn't cause her friendship with the editor. Somehow, all the pieces fit together, so that it worked for me, and then helped me on the path that I was trying to get to.

People can make that what they want. I'm sure, I mean, I'm not saying there's anything paranormal about that, or even that unusual. I think, we've all had situations where the pieces fit

together in a way that take us in a path that we're very glad to be on. Again, what do you make of that?

**[01:06:27] LW:** No, it reminds me of the Einstein – I don't know if Einstein actually said this, but he is attributed as saying, “You can either believe that nothing is a miracle, or that everything is a miracle.” When you think about the implications of your work, and whether there is life after death, and/or whether we all come back, and maybe some of us remember it, and some of us don't remember it, I just think it's really interesting to be on the frontlines of that research.

There's this guy called – his name is Dr. Herbert Benson, who was one of the first researchers and scientists to really indefinitely study meditation back in the 1960s, and 70s. What was interesting about his work, when I read a lot deeper into it, was that he, even though he saw that meditation was in particular, transcendental meditation was having all these really amazing changes in the parasympathetic nervous system, things that he had never seen before. He was a researcher of stress and the fight-flight reaction. He saw that meditation could take somebody into the exact opposite direction. It was literally the most powerful method for relaxing the body that he'd ever come across, but he refused to learn meditation or practice it, because he wanted to maintain his objectivity, which I thought was impressive.

I thought that was pretty impressive, because it must have been very enticing. I'm imagining in your line of work, it is enticing to lean into the confirmation bias of yeah, we're all one. Everything is connected. There is destiny. I've seen enough. I'm sold. Yet, you still maintain this sense of objectivity. Is that difficult for you to do?

**[01:08:12] JT:** Not really. I mean, my makeup is that I continue to question everything. There are some people are a 100% sure of everything. Then, there are those of us who aren't really a 100% sure of much, and I fall into the latter category, which is, I think, lends itself to the work to be sure. Now, I don't know that I'm self-sacrificing, or Benson in that case. I mean, if you do all this work and discover the relaxation response can profoundly change your life, you'd say, you want it good, so you can keep studying it. I mean, good for him. Well, good for him. I admire the commitment to the work.

I think, with our work, it's not that hard, because I don't remember a past life. I'm not trying to verify that I ever had a past life. Then, when we get these reports, I'm very curious. I have an open mind completely about what is the level of evidence that this case provides for a connection to the past life? That's what we try to determine.

**[01:09:18] LW:** You've also said that you ideally would love to have more American cases. Why is that?

**[01:09:25] JT:** For a couple of reasons. One, they're these potential cultural compounds, with if everyone around you believes in a past life, it does make it more likely that people may either over-interpret what the child says, or the child may start thinking they had a past life and come up with memories. Whereas, with our cases, I mean, most of the American families did not believe in reincarnation before the child started talking about a past life. Of course, our culture doesn't believe in them. From a scientific standpoint, it's a cleaner phenomenon here, than it would be in other places.

In addition, I think, it can be more persuasive that something out of the ordinary is going on. You can't just dismiss it as something that happens on the other side of the world, among people who believe in reincarnation, that is happening down the street. I think, that may help open people's minds more to this phenomenon. Yes, we do want to keep studying American cases. If we've had 50 cases, as strong as there are two or three, then it would be very hard for people, I think, not to seriously consider them.

**[01:10:38] LW:** If someone is listening to this, and they think, possibly, or maybe, I don't know, some people may wish their child was special in this way, is there any preliminary screening – that you said, there's a list on your website that they can go to as a way to determine whether or not this is something that you guys could work with? Is that the first step that they would take –

**[01:11:04] JT:** It is often not a pleasant experience for the child, or the family. I mean, I get that people would be curious. If a child does not remember a past life, they are probably better off not remembering it. Because so many of the memories that come through are upsetting, and feeling like you've lost your family, or that you have another home. Those things are difficult for children to process.

**[01:11:31] LW:** Yeah. You also said in the Marty episode that one of the things that he recounted was that he wanted to live his life in a better way, in a different way. He wants to be less – I can't remember exactly what he –

**[01:11:43] JT:** Well, less materialistic, really.

**[01:11:45] LW:** Less materialistic. Yeah.

**[01:11:47] JT:** He felt like he was not grieving in this life, and maybe he had been previously. I suppose in that sense, perhaps was helpful to him and his development that he could see, I want to be better than that this time. He suffered a lot. I mean, he had a lot of times, where he was very upset about it.

**[01:12:09] LW:** I'm assuming you feel fulfilled now in this line of work. How does that feel different to what you were doing before in child psychiatry, just in you, in your body, in your day-to-day? Because I just want people to understand the differences, at least from your perspective.

**[01:12:26] JT:** Well, actually, the mix I have now where I'm doing work in the clinic, where we're helping people. Since I'm not doing it 8 to 5 every day, I can appreciate it more. I think, actually, probably do a better job. I think, I'm able to connect with the families more to help them through what they're going through. Then, I also get a look at the big picture and ask these big questions and try to explore the answers. I enjoy the writing part of it, too. It's all together, it just works for me better than when I was just doing clinical care.

**[01:13:07] LW:** I want to just do a hypothetical with you, as we wind down, if you'll play along with me. Imagine if you didn't go into the Quest Bookstore, you never got invited to volunteer with Dr. Stevenson's work, and you were just – your life just went on whatever path it ended up going on, aside from what you're doing now. You can go back and knowing everything you know now from being fulfilled and living this life, you can go back to the old Dr. Tucker, and give him any words of wisdom, any advice back in the early '90s. Is there anything you'd say about how to proceed?

**[01:13:44] JT:** Well, there are times where we have a goal that we're working toward, and we just focus on it, like a laser beam and go toward it. There are other times where we just have to be open to quite make calm and not exactly just float on the current, but you don't have to have necessarily, a clear direction to be going somewhere. You do have to have a mindset of being open to what opportunities may come. It's challenging. I mean, a lot of people have dreams of what they'd like to do. We operate in the real practical world. A lot had to fall into place where this worked out for me.

If it hadn't, I think I would have continued to work for something more than what I had been, and could have found it in other ways. Obviously, I mean, people find meaning in many ways. I mean, the most meaning I could find in my life is through the love with my family. Being a good husband and father, now a grandfather, is really where I derive the most meaning. Sometimes, it means discovering meaning, it's there all along, and maybe we're not fully appreciating it. Other times, it means making the changes in your life that you need to, so that things will work better for you.

**[01:15:08] LW:** Well, looping back around to how we started, I've been asking that question ever since I started this podcast, what's your favorite toy or activity as a child? A part of that is, because I suspected it has something to do with what they end up doing as an adult. Now, after coming across your work, it could also have something to do with what they did as an adult in a previous lifetime.

**[01:15:35] JT:** Well, that's right.

**[01:15:38] LW:** That's so interesting.

**[01:15:38] JT:** I mean, there was a psychologist who would focus on not necessarily child's favorite story, but their first memory. Not that that first memory caused them to turn out the way they did, but the fact that that's the one that they remember, is indicative of meaning now, I mean, as you look back. It's important, what it says about a person as an adult. It's similar with what toy you remember, yeah, may well be influenced by the person you became.

**[01:16:07] LW:** Yeah. I'm very honest with myself about the fact that I use a very generous confirmation bias in connecting the dots between what they do now, or what they're passionate about now, versus what they started off doing. Because I found that in everyone's life journey that I've talked to, and you can make the argument that I only talk to people who have this particular experience, but they've gone through some moment of confusion, or uncertainty, or they felt unfulfilled, and that's why it's called *At the End of the Tunnel*, because once they get through that period, they find their calling, their passion, or they lean into it.

This light inside of them turns on it, and everybody who is around them can see it. It's attractive, and you inspire people to want to invite you to talk on podcasts and want to feature you and profile you and hear what you have to say about whatever it is that you're passionate about. Then hopefully, someone seeing your example, will be inspired to do the same thing. All that to say, I just want to acknowledge you for taking the leap to reach out to Dr. Stevenson, in a way, taking the baton after he retired and going on to this work. I love that little anecdote you shared about how you wondered how people would dress to go to one of these little research meets.

You wore the most casual shirt and tie, which you had you walked in and Dr. Stevenson was wearing a three-piece suit. Seeing you in the show, I saw you were dressed very smartly. I think, you've found a hybrid there. You don't have a three-piece suit, but you definitely have a nice style, so I want to acknowledge you for that. Yeah, just for inspiring us with your work. I hope it continues. If anybody is interested in learning more about it, I would highly recommend that they start with — is before the actual book, or is that the name of the two books combined? Because that's what I got, before.

**[01:18:07] JT:** Yeah. That's the new edition, the new two-in-one edition. Yeah, *Before* has both *Life Before Life* and *Return to Life* in it.

**[01:18:15] LW:** Got it. Okay. The recent one that you wrote was *Return to Life*.

**[01:18:20] JT:** Yeah, that was in 2013. Yeah, it's been a while.

[01:18:24] LW: Okay, so before is the combination. Yeah, start with *Before*, because you also cite a lot of Dr. Stevenson's work as well. Yes, it's really fascinating stuff. Really, really fascinating stuff. Also, check out the Netflix special, *Surviving Death*.

[01:18:38] JT: Well, I appreciate the kind words and yeah, I'm glad to hear that people are touched by the work and we'll keep them.

[01:18:46] LW: Yeah. All right, man. Well, thank you so much. We'll put up all the links to everything we mentioned in the show notes. Maybe one of these days, if I ever pass through Charlottesville, or we're somewhere in the same city, I hope we cross paths.

[01:18:59] JT: By all means. Yeah, if you're heading this way, let me know.

[01:19:03] LW: All right, take care.

[01:19:06] JT: All right. Thanks.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[01:19:06] LW: Thank you for tuning into my interview with Dr. Jim Tucker. To learn more about all of Dr. Tucker's work, you can start by visiting his website at [jimbtucker.com](http://jimbtucker.com). His book is called *Life Before Life*, and there's another book he wrote called *Return to Life*. If your child happens to be displaying signs of possibly remembering a past life and you want to reach out to Dr. Tucker, he does have a form called Unusual Experiences Screening Questionnaire, that you can fill out at [med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies](http://med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies).

I'm going to put all these links into the show notes which you can find at [lightwatkins.com/tunnel](http://lightwatkins.com/tunnel). While you're on my site, you may also see links to my new book, *Knowing Where to Look: A 108 Daily Doses of Inspiration*. Many of those inspirational stories in the book are drawn from my five years of sending out these stories and anecdotes and observations to the subscribers on my *Daily Dose of Inspiration* email list, which you can also sign up for while you're on my website.



My final ask for you is to leave a rating, or review for this podcast, which you can do really quickly. Just glance down at your phone. On the Apple Podcasts app screen, click on the name of this podcast, which is At the End of the Tunnel. Scroll down past the previous episodes, you'll see the five blank stars. Just tap the one all the way on the right, and you left the rating. If you want to go the extra mile, leave a couple of lines about what you like about this podcast, you left the review. Thank you for that.

Otherwise, I look forward to hopefully, seeing you back here next week with another amazing story from the end of the tunnel. Until then, as always, keep trusting your intuition, keep following your heart and keep taking those leaps of faith. It is super important. If no one has told you recently that they believe in you, I believe in you. Do it. Go for it. Follow the heart.

Thank you very much and have a great day.

[END]