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## Principles of Reincarnation or How Reincarnation Works

Article by: [Walter Semkiw, MD](#), from [Born Again](#) and [Return of the Revolutionaries](#)

**From independently researched reincarnation cases, which in aggregate provide proof of life after death, the following principles are observed:**

### Physical Resemblance in Reincarnation Cases

Note: Place your cursor on images to enlarge them and your arrow keys to scroll up and down on the enlarged image. Also, please be aware that this page serves as a translation template as described in [IISIS Reincarnation Research Mission Statement](#).

Facial architecture, the shape and proportions of the face, can be consistent from lifetime to lifetime. For men, facial hair, such as beards and mustaches, can be maintained from one incarnation to another. Physical habits, such as postures and hand gestures, can also be consistent from lifetime to lifetime. Even poses struck in portraits and photographs are often uncannily similar from one lifetime to another.

[Ian Stevenson, M.D.](#), who died in 2007, was a psychiatrist at the University of Virginia. Over his career, Stevenson compiled and studied approximately 3000 cases involving children who spontaneously remembered past lives in detail. Dr. Stevenson traveled to the scenes of the contemporary and past lifetimes to interview witnesses to assess details provided in these past-life accounts. In about 1000 of these cases, the past lives of these children could be factually validated.

Two key Ian Stevenson cases with image comparisons, which show that facial features can remain the same from one lifetime to another, are those of [Suzanne Ghanem](#) and [Daniel Jurdi](#).

[Consistent facial features across lifetimes are also observed in many other Ian Stevenson cases](#), as well as in other independently researched reincarnation cases

For example, the powerful reincarnation case of [James Huston, Jr. | James Leininger](#), as well as the [John B. Gordon | Jeff Keene](#) reincarnation case, also dramatically demonstrate how facial features can remain the same across incarnations.

Body types can be consistent from lifetime to lifetime, though the size of the body can vary. An individual can have a slight physique in one lifetime and a powerful one in the next. One can be short in one incarnation and tall in another, though facial features, postures and gestures, appear to remain the same.

### The Soul's Energy Template or Hologram

How can physical appearance remain the same from one lifetime to another? The answer to this question is unknown, but I hypothesize that the soul projects an energy template or [hologram](#) into the developing fetus, which tissue is shape around.



The principle is similar to how orthopedic surgeons use electrical current to shape bone in severe fractures. This energy structure not only helps create physical appearance, but it also can be used to download information and talent into the developing body and mind, which can explain child prodigies.

Of course genetics does play a part and it is the interaction of the soul's energy template with one's genetic inheritance which results in appearance. An individual who incarnates into a different race will have physical features that are consistent with that race, though proportions of the face, the bone structure, will still be consistent from one incarnation to another. Family resemblances also occur due to genetics. The soul's energy template interacts with racial and genetic factors to produce one's appearance.

### Spirit Photos

A piece of evidence that supports the existence of an energy body which appears similar to the physical body involves photographs of an apparent [spirit body caught above an automobile involved in a fatal accident](#). In this photograph the face of the spirit body is identical to the face of the deceased teenager inside the car. Further, the face of the spirit body is caught in a very dynamic pose with the mouth wide open, which would be impossible for the physical body to maintain, as the boy inside the car is slumped forward on the front passenger seat. In addition, it appears that there is side to side movement of the face caught in the photograph. The dynamic facial pose and side to side motion argues against the photograph being the result of a double exposure or other malfunction of the camera.



The existence of an energy or spirit body that reflects our physical appearance is also supported by observations made in the field of [Instrumental Trans-Communication](#), in which spirit beings communicate to human beings through electronic devices, such as televisions, telephones, etc.. When spirit beings have transmitted images of themselves from the spirit world, they are observed to have spirit bodies that resemble their physical bodies when they were alive.

### On Beauty

On the subject of beauty, it appears that any particular facial architecture can be perceived as beautiful or handsome. The perception of beauty largely depends on factors such as complexion and physique. For example, a woman in one incarnation may be tall, thin, have wonderful skin, a perfect smile and a toned body. Due to these factors and their effect on her appearance, this woman may become a celebrated fashion model or beauty queen. In another incarnation, this same woman, with identical facial architecture, may be born with a coarse complexion, a stout body and crooked teeth. This woman would now be considered ordinary appearing, by observers.

The point is that any facial architecture may be perceived as beautiful or unattractive, based on these variables. I believe that we can alternate being attractive and ordinary, from lifetime to lifetime, based on the lessons we are to learn in a particular incarnation.



### Change of Religion, Nationality, Race, Ethnic Affiliation and Gender in Reincarnation Cases

A very important observation made in reincarnation research is that individuals can change religion, nationality, ethnic affiliation, race and gender from one lifetime to another. Most wars are based in differences in these cultural markers of identity. One of the most powerful reincarnation cases that demonstrates change of religion, nationality and ethnic affiliation from one incarnation to another is the [Anne Frank | Barbro Karlen reincarnation case](#).

Anne Frank was persecuted and died in a concentration camp as a Jew, while Barbro was born into a Christian family in Sweden. If the German people at the time of WW II knew that one could be born Jewish in one lifetime and Christian in another, then the [Holocaust](#) could never have happened.

Similarly, when Jewish Israelis realize they can reincarnate as Muslim Palestinians and vice versa, Protestants can reincarnate as Catholics, Islamic terrorists know that they can reincarnate as Christian Westerners and Shiites know they can return as Sunnis, then violence based on these different affiliations will be mitigated.



Barbro Karlen  
Age 7

Anne Frank

Barbro Karlen  
Adult

### Change of Gender

In addition, reincarnation research shows that in approximately 5-10 percent of cases, a soul changes gender. This percentage was reported by Ian Stevenson, MD, in his large series of reincarnation cases in which children had spontaneous past life memories. This percentage has also been observed in a series of approximately 1000 reincarnation cases that I have studied.

Even in these cases where gender changes, facial architecture still can remain the same, as demonstrated in the [Louise Vanderbilt | Wayne Peterson](#) and [Charles Parkhurst | Penney Peirce](#) reincarnation cases.

Overall, most people maintain the same gender from one lifetime to another, and it seems that our soul as an innate

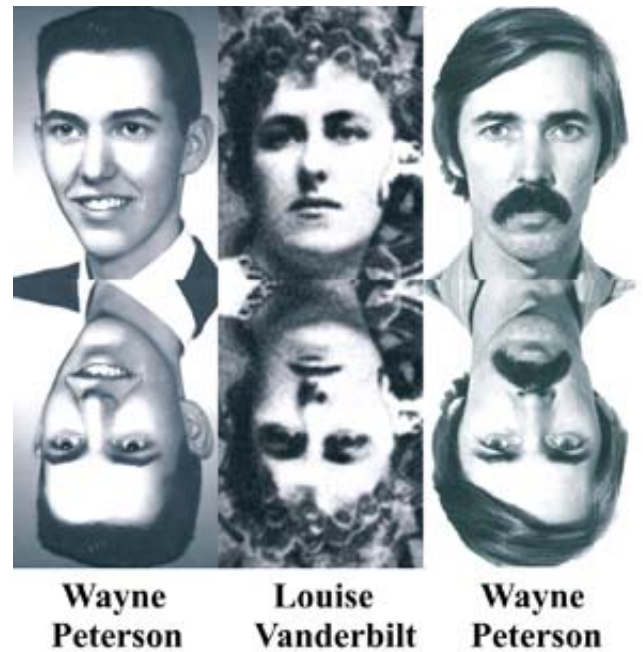


masculine or feminine quality. Those who are innately masculine tend to reincarnate as males. Those who are innately feminine prefer to return in a female body. We all switch gender periodically, to learn what it is like to be a different gender. If a soul changes gender and is not prepared for change, it is possible that gender disorders, such as transsexualism, may occur.

### Personality Traits

Personality traits appear to persist from lifetime to lifetime. One's way of approaching life and the way that others perceive you remains consistent. Some of our personality traits are positive and we carry them with us to our benefit. Other personality traits can be detrimental and can cause suffering from one lifetime to another. It appears that part of our evolution is to smooth out the rough spots in our dispositions.

As an example, consider a person who is an extremely aggressive by nature. A benefit of being aggressive is that the person accomplishes his goals. A negative aspect is that other people may be hurt by an aggressive approach. The goal for an aggressive person over the period of one lifetime or more would be to take in consideration the feelings of others.



### Ian Stevenson: Reincarnation, Birthmarks and Illnesses from Prior Incarnations

[Ian Stevenson](#) went to great lengths to study birthmarks and birth defects which appeared to be related to traumatic wounds in a prior incarnation. For example, if someone died of a bullet or knife wound in a past incarnation, Stevenson noted that a birthmark or scar would appear at the same location on the body in a subsequent lifetime. He compiled such cases in his enormous two-volume work, [Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects](#).

We can use our concept of an energy body underlying the physical body to understand the mechanism of how birthmarks may be related to past life wounds. This energy template can be affected by physical trauma. The traumatic imprint on the energy body is then expressed in a subsequent incarnation on the physical body.

### How Reincarnation can explain Innate Talent and Child Prodigies

Spiritually and intellectually, we seem to pick up where we have left off. Our hard earned achievements in spiritual, intellectual and artistic pursuits are retained—they are a part of us. As such, efforts in advancing ourselves are never wasted as we build upon our endeavors from lifetime to lifetime. Child prodigies can be explained by reincarnation, as the soul appears to be able to download information and talent into the developing physical body and mind.

An example of how talent and concepts can be downloaded from the soul involves the [Paul Gauguin | Peter Teekamp reincarnation case](#), as Peter unconsciously replicated sketches done in his previous incarnation as Gauguin. The reincarnation case of [John Elliotson | Norm Shealy](#) demonstrates how talent as a medical doctor can be carried over from one incarnation to another.

Though talents can come through from one lifetime to another, conversely, if the soul needs to take a different path in a particular lifetime, talents may at times be blocked.

Though we seem to have a similar level of spiritual maturity and intellectual advancement across lifetimes, we can trade off being poor and rich, famous and unknown. We take turns being placed in and out of the spotlight. Our status in life seems to be determined by the karma we have created in past lifetimes, as well as by the lessons our souls have set for ourselves to learn. Still, there is the pattern that powerful souls come back as powerful souls, great artists come back as great artists and those who have made an impact in the past do so again in subsequent lifetimes.

### Writing, Communication Style and Voice

Just as personality traits remain consistent from lifetime to lifetime, a person's manner of expression seems to be similar from one lifetime to another. In the case of [John B. Gordon | Jeff Keene](#), a formal linguistic analysis by a university professor was done which indeed demonstrated that writing structure can remain the same from one incarnation to another.

John B.  
GordonJeff  
Keene

Some variation in writing style, of course, will be observed due to differing customs of various eras. Still, consistencies in modes of expression and in content are observed. Just as portraits allow us to see how one's appearance is the same from lifetime to lifetime, historical documents, diaries and other available documentation allow us to study writing style across incarnations.

It will be interesting to see if qualities of voice remain consistent from one incarnation to another. In the case of Rosetta Pampanini | Charity Sunshine, opera singing was a vocation in both lifetimes. Recordings exist which would allow us to compare voice and singing style from one incarnation to another. If you have expertise in opera singing and would left to help us analyze recordings of Pampanini and Charity Sunshine, please [contact IISIS](#).

### **Xenoglossy: Knowing an Unlearned Language & Preservation of the Personality within the Soul**

In the preceding paragraphs, it has been stated that elements of personality, such as character traits, linguistic writing style and talents can be conveyed from one lifetime to another. More extreme examples involve xenoglossy cases, where the past life personality emerges intact in a contemporary incarnation.

Xenoglossy is the ability to understand a foreign language that has not been learned in the contemporary lifetime. In addition to the recovery of a language from a past lifetime, in some xenoglossy cases, the entire past life personality emerges and essentially takes over the body of the contemporary personality. These cases demonstrate that the soul can retain past life personalities intact within it.

The [xenoglossy case of Sharada | Uttara Huddar](#), researched by Ian Stevenson, MD, dramatically demonstrates this phenomenon. Similar cases include the xenoglossy cases of [Gretchen Gottlieb | Dolores Jay](#) and [Jensen Jacoby | TE](#)

One way to image how the personality is preserved is to see ourselves as a bubble that is a miniature version of our soul. When we incarnate, our bubble is expressed from our soul. Our bubble contains our soul's energies, qualities and experience. After our incarnation is completed, the soul resorbs the bubble that is us and retains our bubble within itself forever. We are part of our soul, but we retain our individuality developed during our life on Earth.

In the cases such as [Sharada | Uttara Huddar](#), the Sharada bubble, which has resided in the soul since its incarnation ended, emerged from within the soul to express itself through Uttara, a soul bubble that has incarnated.

### **Split Incarnation or Parallel Lives**



Teekamp First Saw These Gauguin Sketches At Age 53





Independently researched reincarnation cases, including many studied by [Ian Stevenson, MD](#) at the University of Virginia, demonstrate that a soul may animate more than one physical body at a time. I term this phenomenon "split incarnation." I refer to two people from the same soul, who are incarnated at the same time, as "splits". A dramatic and compelling set of cases that illustrate split incarnation involve [Penney Peirce](#). Other cases may be reviewed at the IISIS section entitled, [Split Incarnation](#).

How does split incarnation work? Though we don't know for sure, we can imagine split incarnation as similar to how a mirror can split a beam of light into two or more beams of light. Similarly, the soul can project more than one beam of light, or more than one energy template, into physical incarnation at a time. This idea is illustrated in the [Introduction to Split Incarnation](#).

We can also imagine two splits as two arms of a human being. Each arm has its separate existence, yet both arms are controlled by one brain or mind. In split incarnation, we can see splits as appendages of the soul.

The bubble analogy used above to explain how the soul can retain past life personalities within it can also be used to better comprehend split incarnation. We can imagine split incarnation as the ability of the soul to express more than one bubble of itself, at a time, into physical incarnation.



Charles  
Parkhurst

Penney  
Peirce

### **Relationships Renewed through Reincarnation, Soul Groups and Your Destiny or Life Plan**

People appear to come into life in groups, based on shared karma and emotional attachments. Couples often come back together and entire family units can recur. When an individual reincarnates, other members of that person's karmic group will be present. Identifying members of the person's karmic group is another important criterion in establishing a past-life match.

Ian Stevenson did a very important twin study in which the past lives of 31 sets of twins (62 people) were factually validated. In 100 percent of these cases, the twins had significant past life relationships. The most common type of past life relationship was that of siblings, followed by friendships, other family relationships, then being spouses in the past incarnation.



Daw Aye Phyu Ma Nyunt Nyunt San  
"Phyu" "San"

Daw Saipai Ma San San Nyunt  
"Saipai" "Nyunt"

### **Past Life Relationships of Twins**

Siblings: 35%

Friends: 29%

Other family relationships: 19%

Spouses: 16%

[Stevenson's twin study](#) represents hard evidence that souls plan lifetimes to be reunited with loved ones through reincarnation. Two cases featured in this study involve the [reincarnation cases of a set of Burmese twins](#), which also demonstrate physical resemblance from one incarnation to another. Image comparisons of these Burmese twins, who were sisters in their past incarnations, are provided above. Phyu reincarnated as San and Saipai reincarnated as her twin, Nyunt.

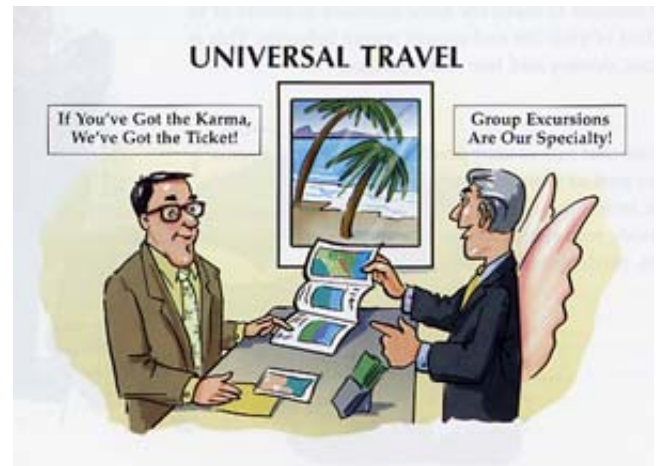
How do we connect with our karmic groups? The answer, it appears, is destiny. In analyzing past-life cases, it is observed that we all have a predetermined destiny or life itinerary which brings us to the people we are supposed to spend time with.

To better understand how destiny works, let us use the analogy of a journey. Think of your life as an extended vacation that you plan in advance. You decide who you want and need to see, where you want to go, and what activities you would like to participate in.

You coordinate your itinerary with the people you are to rendezvous with. You, your karmic friends, and loved ones all agree to the plan before you are born. Once you come into life, destiny ensures that you meet up with your karmic soul group.

The settings for karmic affiliations can be our families, work life and recreational pursuits. These settings are stages on which we play out the karmic dramas of our lives. This casts a new light on Shakespeare's phrase, "All of life is but a stage."

We meet up with different karmic groups at different points in life. When we get the urge to take a new job, travel to a new city, or take up a new recreational pursuit, many times this is a part of our destiny being played out. New venues bring us to karmic groups we need to be with.



### Free Will

If this is true, one must question whether we have free will. It appears that though we all have a predetermined itinerary that we are committed to honor, we have free will in what we do along the way. Indeed, growth and human evolution could not occur without free will. Some people may have a more structured itinerary that limits diversionary treks, while others may have a less structured game plan. Either way, we have free will along our destined paths.

### Deja Vu

Karmic groups provide insights regarding déjà vu experiences. If we meet up with people we have known in past lives, it is not surprising that we may have a spark of recognition when we meet. Since people have consistent patterns of behavior, we may recognize these traits and idiosyncratic reactions when situations recur. Finally, déjà vu may occur if we recognize an event that is part of our itinerary. We may become aware of a road mark along our predetermined path.

### Abortion

If reincarnation is accepted, abortion can be viewed in a different way, as reincarnation conveys that the soul exists before conception, rather than being created at the time of conception.

Abortion does remove an opportunity for a soul to incarnate into a particular family, though the soul can be reunited with that particular family through other means, such as through [proximity or destiny reincarnation cases](#).

An very interesting case that relates to the issue of abortion is the [Ian Stevenson](#) reincarnation case of [Pertti Haikio | Samuel Helander](#). After he died at the age of five, Pertti was able to contact his surviving sister, Marja, telepathically from the spirit world. Marja was pregnant and was contemplating having an abortion. From the spirit world, Pertti told her not to have an abortion, as he wanted to reincarnate to her. As a result, Marja continued the pregnancy and it appears that Pertti indeed was reborn as her son Samuel.

### [Spirit Being Involvement in Reincarnation Cases and Synchronistic Events](#)

In many independently derived reincarnation cases, including cases researched by Ian Stevenson, MD, spirit being involvement is observed in establishing or solving reincarnation cases. The reincarnation cases of [John B. Gordon | Jeff Keene](#), [John Elliotson | Norm Shealy](#) and [Carroll Beckwith | Robert Snow](#) are good examples.

Ian Stevenson reported that "announcing dreams" often occur in reincarnation cases, where a soul announces or predicts its upcoming incarnation in dreams, conveyed to those who will be friends or family of the soul in its next incarnation. Announcing dreams also constitute evidence that souls plan lifetimes.

Another example of a soul planning its next incarnation involves the reincarnation case of [James Huston, Jr. | James](#)



[Leininger](#). In this case, James Leininger as a small child reported to his parents that he had been watching them before his birth. Little James told Bruce and Andrea, his parents, that he has observed them at the pink hotel in Hawaii and determined that they would be good parents. Bruce and Andrea indeed had stayed at the pink Royal Hawaiian hotel several months before James was conceived. No one had told little James about his parents stay in Hawaii before his birth.

### **Synchronistic Events and Anniversary Phenomena**

Another feature that is observed in past-life research is that synchronistic events and symbols are observed in contemporary times which seem to reinforce past life connections. It appears that spirit beings can communicate with human beings by orchestrating such symbolic events. Though firm conclusions cannot be based on such synchronistic events, they do seem to occur in reincarnation cases.

### **Attraction to Specific Geographic Locations & Geographic Memory in Reincarnation Cases**

Individuals are often attracted to geographic settings of past lives. In many cases, people are observed to gravitate to places where they have lived before. Individuals may reside in these areas or visit old haunts on vacation. In some cases, it appears that the soul is simply nostalgic for familiar settings.

In other cases, the soul may direct the individual to a specific place to trigger a remembrance of the past lifetime or to facilitate a spiritual awakening. The cases of [Robert Snow](#) and [Jeffrey Keene](#) illustrate how guidance to geographic locations can lead to revelations regarding past lives.

In addition, when people arrive at past life locations, memories of how to find specific locations, such as past live homes can be stimulated. For example, in the [Anne Frank | Barbro Karlen case](#), at ten years of age, Barbro was able to lead her parents from their hotel to the Anne Frank House without directions, even though she had never been to Amsterdam before.

### **Past Life Memories**

Memories of past lives can have a profound effect on the individual who has experienced them. Memories can occur spontaneously or through past-life regressions. In a [past life regression](#), a therapist guides a person into a state of deep relaxation. The subject is coached to go back in time until former lives are experienced or remembered.

Past Life memories retrieved through regressions which appear to be accurate were observed in the [Carroll Beckwith | Robert Snow](#) reincarnation case, as well as the compelling xenglossy cases of [Gretchen Gottlieb | Dolores Jay](#) and [Jenson Jacoby | TE](#), which were researched by Ian Stevenson, MD.

### **Conclusions**

In sum, from lifetime to lifetime, individuals seem to have the same facial features, personality traits, talents and even linguistic writing style. People reincarnate in groups, with souls we have known before. Reconnecting with souls we are supposed to share time and experiences with appears to be orchestrated by destiny. Destined events can be facilitated



Carroll Beckwith

Robert Snow



John B.  
Gordon

Jeff  
Keene

by our own souls or by the intervention of spirit beings.

An observation that is very important from a societal point of view is that religion, nationality, race and ethnic affiliation can change from one incarnation to another. As most wars are based on differences in these cultural markers of identity, evidence of reincarnation can help create a more peaceful world, as we realize that we are all really universal souls.

When we see ourselves as universal souls, we understand that we are all brothers and sisters who are evolving together through lifetimes on Earth.



Go to: [Independently Derived Reincarnation Cases, featuring the Past Life Research of Ian Stevenson, MD](#)

Go to: [Ryerson-Semkiw Reincarnation Cases](#)

Go to: [Reincarnation Cases: Alphabetical](#)



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