

What the Dolphin Said by Leslee Goodman

Judith Simon Prager, PhD, is a therapist, author, and teacher who trains first responders and medical personnel around the world in Verbal First Aid, the protocol she and colleague Judith Acosta, LISW, developed to create calm, relieve pain, promote healing, and even save lives in emergency situations. She has co-authored several Verbal First Aid books with Acosta, including *The Worst Is Over: What to Say When Every Moment Counts*, which the International Journal of Emergency Mental Health called “the ‘bible’ for crisis communication.”

In 2017, Prager published a different kind of book, *What the Dolphin Said*, about her journey to understand the non-verbal communication dolphins use to bring healing, comfort, and indeed, joy, to children and adults with all kinds of disabilities, as well as to able-bodied divers, sailors, surfers, and others who encounter them in the ocean. As she became more familiar with the dolphins and their work with human patients, she became convinced that some of them are trying to convey, not just another form of communication, but an urgent message of empathy and connectedness that they hope we humans will grasp before we destroy ourselves and the planet.

Prager has some experience “tuning in” to the energy and experience of others for the purpose of healing. She says that, in her therapy practice, focused and benign “presence” is often as healing as any words she and her patient might exchange. Prager also uses guided imagery in her work and designed a pilot study for Cedars-Sinai Medical Center’s cardiothoracic surgery unit involving pre-, intra-, and post-surgical guided imagery. She has written about her results with alternative therapy techniques in her memoir, *Journey to Alternity: Transformational Healing Through Stories and Metaphors*. Together with her husband, Harry Youtt, she has been an award-winning instructor in UCLA Extension’s Writers’ Program since the early 1990s. Her website is www.judithprager.com. – Leslee Goodman

The MOON: Please tell us about your relationship with the dolphin you call Apollo.

Judith Simon Prager: The story really begins earlier than that because for 20 years I have been teaching a protocol called Verbal First Aid to first responders and medical personnel all across the United States. I taught it in China after a terrible earthquake that killed 80,000 people. I taught it in Borneo. I teach it biannually in England at the European School of Osteopathy. I love Verbal First Aid because words can change the outcome of a crisis situation. Adrenaline-charged words or calming words change the chemicals that flow through our bodies. When I first started teaching it, firefighters were saying, “Look, if I have to rescue someone from a burning building, what difference does it matter what I say? It matters what I do!”

But it turns out that the words make a big difference. They affect how a person

heals—physiologically and emotionally. A frightened person can start to heal the moment they hear calming words. The words also make a big difference in how they remember a crisis event. The right words can help a person remember the crisis, not as the worst thing that ever happened to them, but perhaps as a time when people came to their aid, or maybe even a time of their own courage. Because of that reframing, they often don't have to experience post-traumatic stress. That is a stunning outcome. Verbal First Aid is also an important tool for physicians—who get sued most often not for a poor outcome, but when their patients believe they didn't care.

All of this is by way of saying that I understand and appreciate the power of words. I'm a writer. I'm a poet. I've written advertising copy. I even wrote for ABC's General Hospital. I believe in the power of words. And Verbal First Aid was a perfect use for that power.

But then I started noticing in my therapy practice that there were times when the breakthroughs weren't a result of the words at all. What mattered in those cases was presence—something that felt like mind-to-mind, or heart-to-heart, communication. I wondered whether maybe there was something like Non-Verbal First Aid that was just as important as Verbal First Aid. I started realizing that there are beings who don't use words for healing, such as therapy dogs who go to hospitals and lift the spirits of patients, or sit with people who are dying. There are horses in equine-assisted therapy who are very sensitive to children and adults with disabilities. And then I found the dolphins.

Nearly everything that happens in *What the Dolphin Said* is an accurate representation of my experience to learn more about non-verbal healing communication; however, because it is partially narrated by a dolphin, I am calling it a novel based on true events. The real dolphin, whom I call Apollo in the book (after the god of the sun), the woman who has my experiences, whom I call Selene (the goddess of the Moon), and the head physical therapist, whom I call Matthew, are real characters.

Before I met Apollo, I went down to the Bahamas with a group of cranial sacral physical therapists who involved dolphins as part of their work with adults with a wide variety of ailments. At the termination of those sessions I was allowed to get into the water with the dolphins and one of them, as it seemed to me, "shot me in the heart" with a sonar blast. One of the other physical therapists witnessed it and said in surprise, "What just happened?" At the time it was quite painful, even though I came to believe it also opened my heart chakra, which apparently was the dolphin's contribution to my education and understanding of their work at a very personal and physical level.

Sometime later I was invited to go down to a dolphin therapy center in the Leeward Antilles and meet the dolphin who is central to my story, Apollo. I felt as if he recognized "the mark" the other dolphin left on me. Perhaps there was something Apollo could read on my heart that told him, "Dolphins have been here." At any rate, he wouldn't leave me. He swam back and forth in front of me, one eye fixed upon me at all times, for 20 minutes. He knew I was there for a purpose and he seemed intent upon our fulfilling it. Matthew, his human partner, remarked on it. He said, "That's so interesting. There's something between you two." Our connection was larger than ordinary.

Just before I left Apollo, he lifted the top half of his body out of the water on his tail, looked directly at me and started sending me a volley of squeaks and clicks. I know many marine biologists think the squeaks and clicks are their language, but I believe it's merely part of the way they communicate—and not the most important part. I tried telling Apollo, "I'm sorry! I'm too stupid! I don't understand." But he didn't care. He kept on communicating, as if he was giving me a download. That turned out to be the last time I

saw him.

I just have to tell you that when I decided I wanted to learn about non-verbal first aid, the path that opened up for me was so magical and easy. I would write to people and say, "I'd like to come down and learn from the dolphins." This is something millions of people want to do—swim with these amazing creatures—so I expected they would say, "Sorry, we're doing serious work here and we don't have time for voyeurs." But instead, everyone said, "Yes. Please come down. We're starting a new session. We welcome you." I would come and meet these beings—the dolphins—some of whom, like Apollo, seemed to have been waiting for me.

Then Matthew, Apollo's human partner, told me about all the ways that the dolphins nonverbally connect with children who can't speak, or who have other profound disabilities. Their disabilities mean nothing to the dolphins. They go right past the "disability" to connect with these youngsters. There was one young boy who couldn't talk but could communicate by writing on a board. As I report in the book, this young boy wrote, "Why is it that the dolphins understand us and know what we want and people can't do that?" Matthew had answered him, "Let me think about it." The next day, Matthew directed Apollo to move the boy around the lagoon, but the young boy mentally communicated to Apollo, "I want you to hug me." Apollo ignored Matthew's instructions and instead gave the boy a hug. The boy wrote a new message that evening: "The impression that dolphins can read what we think I have to confirm. I wanted to cuddle with Apollo but he was given other prompts and he refused them and cuddled with me. Very felt good to be fully understood by another being. But I am deeply disappointed that it's not working in people."

What I'm trying to say in this book is that we humans have limited ourselves. We too can communicate as the dolphins do. There are so many times people say, after the fact, "I knew it. I just didn't act on it," or "I had a suspicion," or "I could feel it." There's a theory of mind that connects all consciousness, and I believe the dolphins are trying to draw our attention to it. There are ways that we can tap into it, but we have chosen to be limited by three dimensions and our five senses, even though there's so much more available to us. And how much more wonderful would it be if we could know each other's minds and hearts? If we could commune with others across distances, or differences in language or ability, and know that we are united in a kind of oneness? When I watched the dolphins demonstrate this, and when it seemed that Apollo was so emphatic about telling me this, I felt like I could do no less than write it all down and give voice to him.

The MOON: In your book, you share a very intimate understanding of what is happening inside Apollo's thought processes. Can you describe how you received this communication?

Prager: When I started writing the book, I was just going to document my own experience. But—and first let me give a spoiler alert!—after I learned that Apollo had died, I was completely disconsolate because I thought that was it; the end of the communication. I'd gone to be with him, and I hadn't been able to understand his communication, and now he was dead. I remember being home and thinking, "I don't know why I even went through this whole exercise—the long, exhausting search to try to connect with him and understand his message, because I don't even understand what my part in it is." Then, one morning I woke up and I thought, "Well, I'll write about it." When I did, Apollo just started talking inside my head. I heard his thoughts very clearly. Of course, some of what I wrote is my own explanation of the science behind dolphin abilities, the way their brains are constructed, the way scientists have been able to figure out what is going on when

they use echolocation, and so on. But, Apollo's thoughts are not from me. There are things he says that I would never have said; I've never even thought. For example, at one point, Apollo says, "Choice is a lower form of understanding. When the understanding is profound, there is no choice to make." When I read that the other day it just took my breath away. I didn't even remember writing it. But he's right. "Choice" describes decisions like whether to have pizza or pasta. But when your understanding is profound, there is no choice to make. You understand what you must do.

It was messages like this that made me feel I had some right to say I was speaking for the dolphins who are here to tell us something. I also took courage from a quote by Buckminster Fuller, the 20th century architect, systems theorist, and futurist, who said, "Dolphins may well be carrying information as well as functions critical to the regeneration of life on our planet." Fuller, too, surmised the dolphins are here to tell us something. I also think that's the reason so many people's hearts leap up when they think about dolphins and whales; why there is this resurgence of interest in them. It's because dolphins are here to remind us who we really are, what we are capable of, and that we forgot we're all interconnected.

At the very end of the book, Apollo says, "Your experts say that we exhibit 'altruism' when we rescue you without expecting anything in return, and they wonder why. Now, you may see. We believe that we all meet in consciousness, in oneness. We believe that what happens to one of us, happens to all of us because we are connected by the invisible bonds of love and light. That is why, when one of us is beached, we join that one. It is the most natural thing for us, as it could be for you. To care for one another as if each one were a brother, a sister, a loved one. As if the other were yourself. Ultimately, you will wonder how anyone could do less." That's what I think they are telling us. And they do it without words. They say that words lock things in and make feelings and experiences too limited. They seem to communicate on a higher level, one of the instant "ah-ha!" of insight, of knowing.

I was apprehensive about three potential criticisms when I wrote this book. The first is that dolphin-assisted therapy makes use of dolphins in captivity, and it might be construed that I was advocating more of that. I'm not. I don't believe we should capture animals for our benefit. Nevertheless, I do believe that there are dolphins who want to be with us, who want to work with us, just as I also believe there are dogs, horses, and possibly other animals who take so much pride in being useful and helpful. I saw a horse who came into his own when he helped a child learn how to walk. The horse was so sensitive to exactly what the boy was feeling and seemed to become so thrilled with himself for his contribution to that boy. It was as if he said, "Look at me. I am important." Matthew, too, told me that the last hour of Apollo's life the trainers kept telling him, "Go rest," because he'd been sick for months and it was clear that his health was deteriorating. But Apollo wouldn't leave his work. He worked with a child until the last hour of his life. He used to butt the other dolphins away when the trainers would say, "Let Stormy come over here and take over this patient." Apollo wouldn't; he was committed to working with his patients. I believe it's the same way that you and I are here for a purpose and our greatest frustration is when we are thwarted in fulfilling that purpose. So, even though I believe that we shouldn't misuse animals, I'm not sure that dolphin healers are being misused. You couldn't train a dolphin to be a healer; they wouldn't have anything to do with it if they weren't interested in healing. The ones who want to do it are the ones who do.

There's even a funny section in my book, where Apollo, who has just found his way to the healing center, wonders whether it is ethical for the dolphins to interfere with humans! He

discusses it with a female dolphin he meets, who has also “wondered about the correctness of interfering with the progress of the upright beings.” But they decide the times warrant it. They feel, as I do, that we’re not “using” each other so much as partnering with them. When I met Matthew, he acknowledged this. He introduced me to Apollo as his partner and said “He is the smarter of the two of us. I always defer to him.” He told me about an instance where he signaled to Apollo to guide a boy around the lagoon by his foot, but Apollo refused and led the boy by his shoulder. Later, Matthew said to the boy’s mother, “This is really odd, but Apollo refused to guide your son by his foot.” The mother said, “Oh, I forgot to tell you. He had surgery on his foot a few months ago.” Apollo knew that without being told; somehow they just read us. If Apollo had been “trained” to be a healer, he would have followed Matthew’s instructions and received the fish reward, or whatever. But that wasn’t Apollo’s motivation. He wanted to do the right thing for the boy.

So that was my number-one concern in writing this book: that animal rights activists would say, “This is wrong; it shouldn’t be allowed.” I’m not saying that it should. I’m saying I met with a dolphin who had a message for us: That we can be more. We can remember we’re interconnected. We can meet in another place, and we can care for each other in another way.

The second thing that I was concerned about was that parents of children with autism and disabilities would think that I was trivializing their challenges, that “all you have to do is blah, blah, and the difficulties of your child’s condition will disappear.” Again, that’s not my intention. Having a child with disabilities in areas our culture considers important can be extremely challenging. I don’t intend to in any way over-simplify that. I just want to show the gift the dolphins give them by being able to access a child who—from our perspective—seems locked inside a body that won’t cooperate. Dolphins can, in many cases, connect emotionally with these children anyway, and that’s a gift.

The third thing I worried about is that scientists or marine biologists might not agree with everything I say dolphins are able to do, and I know that. Science has reached a certain point in their understanding of dolphin abilities, and I go farther based on my own sense of it. At the very end of the book Selene, my alter-ego, recoils from the words that Apollo had written through her. She had just keyed them in and they’ve appeared on the screen, but she knows they’re not hers. She reads them and pushes away from the screen. What if people argue over them? What if they disbelieve? What if they have their own agenda and dismiss it all? What if they think her foolish? And then her fingers type the words that allow her to claim her vision. They are more words from Apollo: “Say it is just a story then, a myth, a fable, a dream. A part of them will remember. A part of them will know.”

So I’ve pushed through these concerns in telling this story because it’s time for us humans to remember that we’re supposed to be connected. We’re supposed to be a different kind of being: not selfish, not self-aggrandizing, a part of the whole, not separate and apart. I believe that my experience with the dolphins showed me the way so I wrote it.

The MOON: I’m so glad you did. I was aware of your concerns while I was reading the book. I could empathize, because it’s an issue I struggle with myself. I was wanting to encourage you not to be afraid. You’re entitled to your viewpoint! Of course, it’s easier for me to tell you than to tell myself.

Prager: At one point in the book Sophia, Selene’s wise older friend, tells her “The truth is eternal. They can burn witches. They can crucify saintly people. They can try to squelch

an idea different from theirs. Call it names or sit on it. Dress it up to appear unappealing or unholy or, if all else fails, they can stuff it into a box in the attic or the basement. But that idea will outlive them if it is meant to be.”

The MOON: Right, but that doesn’t make it any easier for the witches and the sensitives who are trying to communicate their truth without drawing fire.

Prager: A lot of scientists—Max Planck among them—have said that older scientists don’t change their minds in response to new theories, even when presented with credible evidence. More often, it’s just that the older generation dies and the young people have grown up with the newer theory. Although it’s very hard to give up your own beliefs, somehow we have to hope that new ideas are allowed to blossom and emerge. Then, too, these are not new ideas I’m presenting; they’re old ideas. They just have been buried under fears and selfishness. Now it’s time to awaken again. It’s really time to awaken.

The MOON: The healing center where Apollo lives is one where the dolphins can come and go if they want. Is that a fact? Are there centers like that?

Prager: There are some. In Australia there are natural lagoons or inlets where dolphins come and work with kids. They’re free to come and go at will. The center I visited reportedly opened the nets and let all the dolphins out as a hurricane approached because they didn’t want them slammed against the barriers of their very large lagoon. Although they let them go, afterwards the dolphins came back because it’s their home. Many of them were born there. It’s a different kind of captivity than Sea World; it’s not about performance for entertainment. The human-dolphin relationship is based on mutual respect that is quite interesting. It’s not perfect by any means. The dolphins do have “trainers,” whom I’m pretty hard on in the book because they keep thinking they’re instructing the dolphins, when the dolphins are actually so much smarter than the trainers and just indulging them. The dolphins are clearly there to do the good work and they do it so astonishingly. To see a child who has never spoken, speak; who has seldom felt understood, feel understood by the dolphins. I’m not saying that all children with autism should be taken to work with dolphins; I’m saying those of us who want to be therapists and healers should learn how the dolphins do it!

One of the things that Matthew said to me was that so often we humans have such expectations for these kids. As soon as the kids do something we want them to do, we say, “Good. Now do this.” The dolphins, though, have no performance expectations of the kids. They love them as they are, and somehow that’s even more freeing. Apollo describes the dolphins’ effect on special needs kids, “How they love us. All of them, especially those who are not like the rest, who struggle with restricted movements and words. We seem like them in many ways. Like some of them, we are clumsy. We cannot even hold things well in our fins. We drop a ball when we are meant to catch it. We cannot put on a shirt and button buttons. We do not wear shoes, and like these children, could not tie them even if we did. Some of them cannot walk, but neither can we and yet we are joyful and valued. Not able to talk. At least not like others—so that other humans understand you. Not a disability to a dolphin. We cannot talk and we are considered perfect just as we are. We are present and full of kindness, and everyone who encounters us leaves infinitely more joyful. All we need to do is be. We model that for everyone. But they, these little ones considered different, take it to heart.”

The MOON: Yeah, that’s beautiful.

Prager: So this is what Matthew told me that he has observed. The dolphins model

unconditional love, acceptance, and joy, and it's contagious. I believe their healing abilities are also related to the vibrations they emit. The human brain generally works in beta wavelengths when we're conscious. But the alpha wavelength is much more relaxed, meditative, and sometimes creative. Alpha waves are called the "frequency bridge" between our conscious thinking (Beta) and subconscious (Theta) mind. They are known to promote feelings of deeper relaxation and contentment. The dolphins apparently function primarily in the alpha state and our brains entrain with theirs when we're with them. A diver friend of mine said that every time she went out to dive, different captains of different boats would say, "If you encounter wild dolphins you will come up exhilarated." Their contentment and joy is contagious.

I believe those kinds of changes in vibration are essential if we're going to maximize our abilities to connect with other people and, collectively, rise to our potential, instead of feeling locked-in, small and fearful, and alone. We are all in this time on Earth together.

You know, when people do a good thing for someone else it can change their whole mood. For example, you see someone hold the door for a woman who has a stroller and groceries and can't even get to the door, and when she says, "Oh, thank you!" the person who held the door lights up too. When we are in that kind of connection, we're witnessing the best of humanity and it makes us feel so good. Doing something kind for someone else is the best self-care. It's not a matter of getting a massage or a pedicure. Go and do something, just any beautiful thing, for someone else and you'll see that your spirit is lifted and you shift your vibration. Dolphins do that for us. That's part of their message: if we did that too, we'd feel better and the world wouldn't have so many problems.

The MOON: I used to work with an intercity teen program, and one time the kids volunteered to staff a water station at a marathon. Our job was simply to hand cups of water to the runners as they passed. By the end of our shift, the kids were euphoric. They'd done something kind for several hundred people, most of whom had said thank you. As you said, if we were able to learn what the dolphins are here to teach us, we wouldn't need the dolphins to teach us anymore.

Prager: Exactly right. The dolphins would love that. They don't necessarily want to be teaching us; they're the messengers. And I felt like I was a messenger writing the book. If the message is delivered and received I'll be thrilled. I'll go do something else. Then the dolphins can focus on the message of safe oceans. If we become more heart-centered beings, we will change our habits so that our oceans can be free of plastic and radiation and sonar blasts and acidification. That will resound to everyone's greater well-being.

The MOON: I practice shamanic journeying with a guide (Anna Alkin, a frequent contributor to these pages) and find the experience of journeying similar to the communication experiences you describe in your book. I meet and converse with other beings on my journeys—underwater, in the air, or elsewhere—while physically I'm sitting in a room in north central Washington and my fellow journeyers are in Ohio, Canada, Oregon, and Paris. Many times we come back with similar messages. Can you tell us more about your process for communicating with Apollo?

Prager: Regarding shamanic journeying, yes, it's communication beyond words. I do guided imagery in my therapy practice, as well, as I describe Selene doing in the book. Selene takes a young girl client on a visualization journey to meet a dragon who helps her to find her father and to find out that it wasn't her fault that he drowned.

The MOON: Right.

Prager: I think going inside is a big part of the answer. We can achieve a non-verbal connection somewhere else. I'm personally convinced that three dimensions are not all there are to reality. Many thinkers have told us that time and space are just a construct of the brain, and that we are so much more than a physical brain. There is more that we're meant to access—and it's not just in dream life. It is, as you say, in journeying, and in other states of consciousness. But we've lived in a box. We've decided our limits, which are three dimensions, and the only reality is what science can measure. I don't mean to knock science at all. I'm grateful for what science has been able to give us. But so far science is limited to what the five senses can prove, and there is so much more out there. If we didn't have Geiger counters we would never know about radioactivity, for example. If we didn't have a television, we'd never know there were television wavelengths passing through the room with us. If we didn't have X-rays, or ultrasound, we wouldn't have access to all kinds of images that are invisible to the naked eye. We know there are sound waves we can't hear, but dogs can. We know there are parts of the light spectrum we can't see, but we've developed technology to measure it. We can't even imagine how many things might be present, but remain invisible to us because we don't have anything by which to measure them...yet.

I wrote another whole book called *Journey to Alternity: Transformational Healing Through Stories and Metaphors* that includes descriptions of everything from past-life regressions to astonishing healings that, by scientific terms, can only be called miraculous. Even scientists are now saying that nonlocal effects happen; that atoms act upon each other at a distance. So I'm not alone in believing that we live in a holographic universe, which basically means that the whole is contained in each of the parts. So yes, science may not yet have been able to confirm what you and I experience during shamanic journeys, or past-life regressions, or miraculous healings, but if we come back from these experiences with wisdom, or with healing, or with a new and a profound understanding, or a deeper love, what more "proof" do we need?

Scientists who have done research on holographs tell us that when you cut a holographic plate in half, you don't get the front half of a horse, for example, on one plate and the back half of a horse on the other. You get a complete, albeit smaller, blurrier horse on each half. Cut the plate in quarters and you get four blurry images. That's because in a holograph all of the information is "smeared" over the plate.

If the universe is indeed holographic, all of the information in it is smeared through all of it. We are each part of it and we each have access to all of it. I love the way someone expressed it: "There's only one moon but it is reflected in every little puddle." We are each a reflection of the universe, but the whole may be so blurry that it's really hard to know what it is that everybody else knows. However, it's not impossible. If our brains are holograms then everything is accessible to us at some point, which is why your journeying is so important. I believe we are not just three-dimensional bodies, but also part of the universe, and that's a whole lot bigger. Thinking this way helps you get to the place where you recognize we're all connected; we're all part of this hologram.

The MOON: I guess one concern is that the experiences could be called imaginary and, while my imaginary experiences may be benign—at least to me—I wouldn't necessarily want to endorse, or put a lot of faith in, other people's imaginary experiences.

Prager: I am not in a position to speak about shamanic journeying except to confirm your best experiences with it. What Apollo seemed to be telling me was that we are all interconnected and can know each others' hearts and minds when we meet in that higher

vibration, that other dimension that we share holographically. It's a kind of telepathic communication, which I saw him demonstrate with children who couldn't speak but could think. They had a meeting of the minds. You could call it "tuning in."

The head physical therapist, whom I called Matthew, told me that he had experimented with what he learned from Apollo with one young patient who wanted to give it a try. He asked her why she had been so unhappy lately. They both separately drew a picture and the pictures matched—the moon, as it happened. It was stunning to him that they could communicate that way. We're not "reading" others' minds but sharing thoughts, especially with permission. Even the government has done non-local studies, including killing! at a distance—as documented in *Men Who Stare At Goats*, and "remote viewing," in which psychic viewers in studies at Stanford Research Institute were able to find a downed Russian bomber in Africa and locate a kidnapped American general in Italy, among other things.

The MOON: Tell us more about the unique abilities dolphins bring to healing humans.

Prager: They have echolocation, biosonar, for starters. That's how they find things in murky water. They're expert diagnosticians. They send out vibrations that can penetrate skin, for example, so they can read our organs. They love it when they find somebody who has metallic implants, like a hip replacement. They think that's hilarious. They love pregnant women. They can see that too. Their abilities are akin to our reading an ultrasound. They send out a sound wave and can see the image that bounces back.

They have extraordinary brains, very different from ours, with an extra lobe, sometimes called a "paralimbic lobe," plus an oil sack we call a "melon," which can focus a sonic beam through the water or air, strike an object and bounce it back for interpretation. Some people call it an acoustic lens. This helps them use echolocation to figure out the configuration—inside and out—of whatever they are "reading," its distance, speed, and so much more. In addition, their "paralimbic lobe" apparently processes both emotions and cognitive abilities in a way of thinking that we don't have. Some investigators have speculated that cetaceans can process more complex thoughts and emotions than we can. Also, while we humans process sight, sound, and other sensory and motor inputs separately and more slowly, the dolphin's paralimbic lobe brings this all together in one, processing information rapidly with a richness that we cannot understand. For example, there are strong possibilities that cetaceans can project an auditory image that replicates a sonar message that they may receive. So a dolphin wishing to convey an image of a fish to another dolphin can literally send the image of the fish to the other animal via sound.

These are some of the ways they are able to be such expert diagnosticians. Perhaps they also employ ultrasound for healing. I read about a doctor in Israel who uses MRIs to locate growths and other problems in his patients and then uses focused ultrasound to zap them—whether they're tumors, brain lesions, uterine fibroids, whatever. He calls it "surgery without scalpels."

A woman stopped me at one of my talks and said, "I was swimming with wild dolphins, and one of them kept tapping on my shoulder, tapping on my shoulder. When I got home, I went to the doctor and asked if he could check. I had a tumor growing there. If the dolphin hadn't told me, I wouldn't have known."

When I was observing the dolphin-assisted therapy in the Bahamas, one of the patients had had cataract surgery. His father had gone blind, and so he'd had the surgery, but he was worried about it. Two dolphins swam up to him lying in the water, one on each side,

and tapped three times against his temples, each tap harder than the last. They also vocalized. That's all they did and then they swam away. The next morning, when the man rejoined the group he said, "My peripheral vision is entirely open." So whatever they do, whatever they're sending and whatever they're seeing, they are diagnosticians first of all, and second, they seem able to do things to help. To me, it's just stunning that they want to. They're able to, and they want to.

The MOON: In the book you write, "Dolphins have a higher ratio of association of neurons in the neocortex to neurons in the limbic system," and you link that to greater emotional intelligence. Can you explain why?

Prager: Reasoning in the brain is controlled both by the cerebral cortex and the limbic system. Emotional thoughts, as we all realize, can assume control, affecting and sometimes confusing our ability to think clearly. So the higher ratio of association neurons in the neocortex in relation to the limbic system's neurons can provide more emotional intelligence, more emotional stability. It's believed that dolphins, with their higher ratio in the limbic system, might have greater emotional self-control that could allow them to use those influential emotions for empathy and altruism, allowing them to be more kind and thoughtful.

The MOON: You mention in the book that in Greek mythology the god Apollo first appeared to humans at Delphi as a dolphin. Hawaiians, as well as some Native Americans, also say that their ancestors come from the Pleiades and first incarnated on earth as cetaceans. The non-physical entity Kryon, too, says that whales are the Akashic Record keepers, which is why they must not be hunted and why they will never be permitted to go extinct. Apollo seems to share their cosmology.

Prager: I didn't know about the Native American and others' beliefs. I just knew that Apollo received a calling so great from "the Old One," the ancient blue whale, the oldest whale on Earth, that it couldn't be ignored. Your reference to whales being the Akashic Record keepers makes sense in that regard. Including the Old One as part of the story only came to me as I was writing it. I understood that Apollo had been assigned to be this messenger, although he's just an ordinary dolphin, by an ancient creature whose wisdom and respectability was beyond question. I don't even understand why I'm called to do this, let alone why Apollo would be.

Dolphins, however, are perhaps one-fiftieth the size of a blue whale. Apollo is in awe to be next to her. Yet she says to him, "We know you can do it." And so he accepts the assignment to try to wake up humankind. You saying that whales are the keepers of the karmic records gives credence to her rationale. She tells Apollo, "There isn't a whole lot of time left and everybody knows that." Human beings are threatening the very planet right now. So there isn't time not to want to be your brother's keeper, or to not want to take care of each other and this planet. There isn't time.

Receiving this message, I wrote the book with a kind of urgency. I sent it for review to a Harvard professor who lectures on dolphins. He told me that the book, the dolphin's message, has "never been needed more." He shared my sense that this is the moment. This is what I feel. This is what Matthew was saying. This is what the Old One was telling Apollo, that there's an urgency now. We cannot ignore it anymore. The dolphins are saying, "This is our last try to reach you guys. Are you paying attention?"

The MOON: Have received any ongoing communication from Apollo since publishing the book?

Prager: When Apollo died, Matthew sent me a dolphin fluke necklace that has Apollo's name on it. I wear it always. I live near the Pacific Ocean and there are times when I'll walk to the beach and say, "Please show yourselves because I need another boost of faith." Just the other day, a whole pod came and surfed in the direction that I was standing, and I felt that as an affirmation; a validation.

I'm not a marine biologist; merely a messenger for what I believe is the message the dolphins are bringing us at this crucial time. Apollo says to Selene near the end of the book: This is the moment of awakening. It is for this that we have come. It is for this that YOU have come. Hard as it may be for you to believe—and it was certainly hard for me to learn it, too—you are one of the reasons we were here and that is because this is your moment. What you perceive as our playfulness is merely an invitation for you to come closer.

So when it seems that we are here to help you heal, or here to entertain you, or here to be your friends, while that is all true, that is not all.

The "all" is that it is time for us to hear their message and awaken to our interconnectedness, to consciousness, to altruism, to love.

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