

Chasing Smallwood:

**Conversations
with a “past life” American
about the challenges,
opportunities and meaning
of his time and ours**

By

Frank DeMarco

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Chasing Smallwood: Conversations with a “past life” American

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Hologram Books
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Dedication

To all who explore unknown territory

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with whom I have discussed my and their experiences.
Every such discussion helps lessen the sense of isolation.

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I. Introduction

This didn't start out to be a book. Initially I thought it was a diversion from a different book. I had taken six months off from my job to write a book about developing your skill at healing and interacting with guidance. About six weeks into it, in mid-December, 2005, I found myself, day by day, sitting at my kitchen counter in the early morning, drinking coffee and writing in my journal, moving between my normal consciousness and an altered state in which I was able to allow someone else to form the words. This was not trance channeling, nor automatic writing, nor self-hypnosis. What it was – and how you can learn to do it yourself – is one of four implicit themes of this book.

A second theme is the portrait it paints of Joseph Smallwood's life in 19th century America. In the course of our conversations (I don't know what else to call them) , he painted a fascinating picture of his life, values, experiences, and opinions, centering on his life in the West and his experiences as a Union officer during the Civil War.

A third theme is that those in the non-physical world want us to wake up to the challenge of our times, one that we are not yet facing, a challenge resembling that posed by the Civil War – which no doubt is why Joseph rather than someone else came to talk to me.

And the fourth theme, the most important, is about how and why the physical world is important to the nonphysical world, how our choices affect things on the other side.

So, a book with four interlocking themes:

- how to communicate with the dead;
- the life of a 19th-century American;
- the massive task facing us today, and
- the physical world's place in the scheme of things.

Joseph will speak for himself, and I'll talk about the last two themes in the concluding chapter. But what about that first theme? What makes me think that I can talk to a dead man, or that a dead man could – or would want to – talk to me? Common sense certainly suggests otherwise.

The trouble is, “common sense” depends upon too many unstated assumptions. It assumes that the present is all that exists, and that the past is gone and that the future is not yet created. It assumes that the dead either cease to exist or exist beyond the range of the living. None of these assumptions is true. Centuries of recorded experience,

including much that is recorded in the world's scriptures, testifies to people seeing the future and communicating with the dead, and even modern quantum physics seems to be beginning to provide mathematical explanations for how it is possible to communicate across time. (Or maybe not. Regardless, I do not concede to "science" the authority to tell me how much of my experience is or is not possible.)

We think of the dead as gone, but it is not so. Their souls live on, as alive as when they were here, but outside of time and space. *Being* outside of time and space, *all* times and *all* spaces are available to them. This is how, when we communicate with them, they can know what we know (interacting with our minds "from the inside" so to speak) and can react to that knowledge. This is why we can communicate with them about the things in our life, and why we can get the benefit of viewpoints formed in very different space and time environments. In fact, the minds that we form here appear to be the gift that our souls carry across when we cease to live on this side of the line between the material and nonmaterial worlds.

But how can we prove that in talking to the other side we aren't just making it up as we go along? Naturally we tend to ask, "Can the source of this information be pinpointed?" Ultimately the question is unanswerable. And in a way, what difference does it make? Maybe the information is coming from another life, and maybe not. Maybe it is actually from another part of your own mind unsuspected by you. How are you to be sure? But – since good information is good regardless where it comes from – the relevant question becomes, "Does this information resonate? Is it helpful?" You just need to be careful about what you're ready to believe. This is not the place to be jumping to conclusions.

And that brings us to the question of "perception" versus "story" as it pertains to psychic exploration.

A while ago, experimenting with remote viewing, I learned first hand that there is a *big* difference between accuracy of *perception* and accuracy of *interpretation*. This cleared up questions that had plagued me for years about the process of obtaining information from the other side. The mind is always ready to connect the dots. That's how we make sense of the world. But it's also how we sometimes delude ourselves.

Think of your mind as containing two active elements, the perceiver and the interpreter, which weaves a story from whatever has been perceived, connecting the dots as best it can, enabling us to make at

least tentative judgments when we have insufficient data. That's well and good, but it brings its own dangers, because accurate perceptions don't guarantee accurate interpretations. In fact, because particularly accurate perceptions often carry strong conviction, and because that conviction can rub off on interpretation, the paradoxical truth is that sometimes the better the perception, the greater the chance that the interpretation will go seriously wrong. And because you remember the strength of the feeling accompanying the perception, you may be tempted not to examine too closely whatever interpretation you have attached to it.

Initially in my "past-life" explorations of Joseph's life (more than a dozen years before the sessions in 2005 and 2006) I built a coherent or semi-coherent story, and waited for confirming evidence to surface. I was sure that "if he is real, there is some data out there to objectively demonstrate it." Yet although he became ever more real to me, the data remained either absent or sometimes positively contradictory to his story. This invalidated both ends of my "either-or"! The facts haven't been there, yet his reality *is* there. After all these years, still I know and can not prove.

Some of what I take to be facts may be wrong. Some of them *must be* wrong. Quite possibly this is a mixture of fact, distorted fact, and unconscious invention, all jumbled together. It is up to us to unscramble the story as best we can. Yet – Joseph Smallwood is there, and you will see for yourself that he has a lot to offer us. You're going to have to judge the material on its own terms, rather than looking for external validation. Does it resonate? Is it helpful? Does it lead you to new understandings?

Thus when I took a trip to Gettysburg to validate Joseph's story, I experienced strong feelings, and received messages from the other side. But – I could not and cannot find *objective* evidence of the man's existence. In 15 years I have been unable to find it. What's more, the only evidence I have found for *any* of the various "past lives" I have seemed to find has all been internal. Strong, meaningful, life transforming, but internal.

So am I being lied to? Did Joseph perhaps not exist? And if later the famous men who supposedly talked to me said they knew Joseph, doesn't that mean they too were illusion? And if the guys upstairs said so too, doesn't this mean they are lying to me? Yet they have woven themselves into the fabric of my life. They've helped me do good. They've accompanied a lot of growth. Where am I? And now what do I

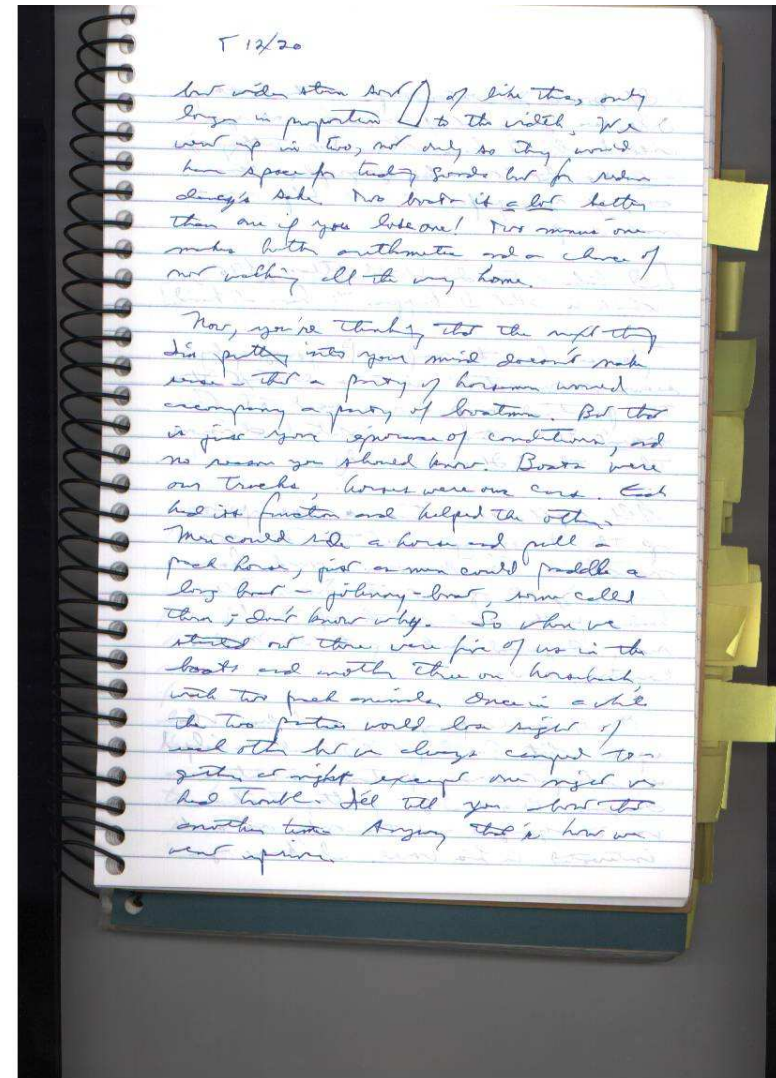
do? I feel a little bit like Daniel Boone, who was asked in his old age if he had ever been lost in the woods. "No," he said, "but once I was confused for three days."

For many years I have been attempting to discover the truth about what we call "past lives." New experiences have changed my opinions on the subject repeatedly. I am still not sure of my footing. I do think that the concept of reincarnation is often upheld or opposed for reasons that stem from inadequate definitions of who and what we are. I think that when we devise better definitions, many things that now look contradictory will be seen to be opposite ends of a polarity, and things that look impossible will be seen to be inevitable consequences of the way things are. But in the meantime, we are left floundering. As in so many areas of life, our disintegrating culture cannot say to us "I of my own knowledge" about the afterlife.

The only alternative to taking things on faith, or refusing to think about them at all, is to do our own exploring. Explorers by definition move into poorly mapped or unmapped territory, and by their own experience help fill in the map for those who follow. It cannot be required of explorers that they always know what they are doing, or where they are going, nor can it be required of them that they not pursue leads that turn out to be dead ends. All that can be required is that they be resolute, honest, and a bit skeptical even of the maps they themselves help to draw.

Therefore it follows that the very last thing an explorer can do or should do is to stick to the "respectable" or the "common sense" explanations and pathways. What kind of exploring would that be? Even more difficult sometimes, the explorer must be willing to continue despite doubts, suspicions and confusions. Sometimes you just have to keep on going and trust that eventually things will sort out.

If that isn't totally comfortable for you, think how I feel! If and when you start doing it yourself (I talk about how to do it in the concluding chapter), you will come to the work I've done (more or less in public) with a new level of understanding – and with new sympathy, I hope.



Scribble, scribble, scribble – and I was never happier

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