



Interview with Penney Peirce: *The Unofficial Bio*

Penney, what forces shaped you as you grew up?

My inner life was always active, but my outer life kept shifting constantly as well. My family moved around the country every two years, following my trouble-shooting management consultant father, who worked for a large corporation. I've lived on the East coast, West coast, and all points between—in New York City, on the North Shore of Chicago, and on a farm in Kansas where I briefly attended one of the last one-room country schools. Living in so many environments helped me understand people more than any psychology course ever did.

I always asked Why? and never felt satisfied with superficial answers. I guess I've been a spiritual detective all my life—looking below the surface for the hidden dynamics of life, creativity, personal growth, relationships, and identity. When I was young, I didn't believe that germs made people sick, or that drugs and surgery were the only solutions for disease. I thought there must be deeper causes underneath those pesky germs.

For years—even as a small child—I wouldn't say the word "God" because I didn't know what it meant. I couldn't believe God was an old man with a white beard on a throne in the sky. I mused about why wars were fought over religion, and decided I would find the core truths that were present in every religion—and THAT would be what I would "believe"! My mother felt she had had previous lives, which made perfect sense to me. My father was the son of a Baptist minister, and had been forced to go to church until he felt suffocated by it. So early on, he told my mother, "Let the girl decide for herself about God."

I grew up with a strong connection to nature and animals. As a child I communicated with my pets (dogs, cats, lizards, horses, mice, fish, sheep, and goats) telepathically, and lived for many years in a country setting where I was befriended by old farmers and horse people. I spent hours alone looking out from bluffs, hilltops, and tree branches, or cozied up next to streams, or in temple-like spaces in the woods. At the same time I was enthralled with art. I drew endlessly and had inexplicable urges to write poems. I've kept a journal since I was seven and won a National Scholastic Magazine writing award in junior high. About the same time a friend and I started a local newspaper for our community.

I began remembering my dreams and talking about them quite early, a habit that continues today. When I was thirteen I woke from a dream about 3 am, got up, went to my desk, drew a diagram of the "space-time continuum," and wrote a detailed explanation of how the drawing explained reincarnation, psychic ability, and time travel. Then I went back to bed. In the morning, I was flabbergasted. This was the first of many graphic "teaching diagrams" that have poured through me—and many of them are now in my books.

How did your formal education contribute to your intuitive ability?

In college, I studied interior design at the University of Cincinnati, where I quickly became interested in "the psychology of spaces," perhaps what today would be called feng shui. I wanted to understand the effect environments had on our state of being and consciousness.

I then moved to New York City where I took classes at Columbia and The New School, stretching my knowledge of psychology and human behavior. It was here that I developed an expertise in graphology, which was my first exposure to character reading. It was also during this time that I became actively interested in psychism and studied with Hans Holtzer, the famous "ghost hunter." Meanwhile, I worked for a well-known lighting designer.

Still hungry for knowledge about "environmental design," I got a scholarship to an intriguing program called *social design* at Disney's innovative "dream school," California Institute of the Arts, north of Los Angeles. In this program, which was taught by an interdisciplinary team of psychologists, sociologists, urban planners, photographers, and various kinds of designers, we concentrated on projects like: redesign the elevator so people will talk to each other inside, redesign the funeral, or the doctor-patient relationship, and we looked at questions like "What effects does advertising have on mass consciousness?"

This taught me an incredible amount about working with patterns and "design thinking." After that, I studied graphic design and learned to symbolize bodies of information clearly, how to sum up an idea as a logo, or use typefaces that conveyed subtle states of emotion.

I credit my training in two- and three-dimensional design, as well as the abstract thinking skills I learned in social design, with helping me eventually discern the hidden patterns in people's lives. There certainly was no official training at that time for becoming a professional intuitive! But somehow the soul finds the perfect path into whatever expression it needs. I've learned that firsthand—and, that you *can* get anywhere from here.

How did your intuitive abilities develop after that?

After graduating from CalArts and working as a graphic designer at Atlantic Richfield for several years, I took a job as a corporate art director in Mill Valley, just north of San Francisco. I found myself in the midst of the burgeoning self-help movement, which was fascinating to me. I was like a dry sponge, soaking up courses in Tai Chi, meditation, nutrition, healing, metaphysics, and shamanism.

I studied to develop my clairvoyance (who knew you could?!) and found that not only was I good at it, but seeing into people's souls and the under-patterns of their lives was almost all I could think about. I knew it was a key to my life's work. In addition, my dream life expanded exponentially and became unusual and often precognitive.

My relentless search for truth and the mysteries caused me to probe deeper and deeper into what is real, and not be too attached to the temporary mindsets we use to stabilize ourselves. What are the core principles and experiences that are common to all people? This led me to study the dynamics of perception itself, because I saw that the problems and suffering we experience are the result of "mistakes" in perception. When I first heard about the Buddhist concept of *skillful perception*—using our consciousness to create more harmony in ourselves and the world, rather than adding to the pain and suffering that already exists—I secretly cheered, "YES!"

What led you to become a professional intuitive?

After studying and reading voraciously for a number of years, I was laid off from my job as an art director in a corporate downsizing. I maintained a freelance graphic design business for several years to fill in the financial gaps, but I also realized I could make a living teaching metaphysical classes and doing readings. I simply let people know, and there was a natural flow that brought enough clients to my door to get the new career rolling. Eventually the work as a spiritual counselor and teacher took over and I was able to make my entire living from that.

I worked closely for four years as business manager for, and co-presenter with, trance medium Kevin Ryerson, who gained recognition through his connection with actress Shirley MacLaine. I became affiliated with Dr. Jeffrey Mishlove's Intuition Network and The Center for the Study of Conscious Evolution, which included the founders of Findhorn, Barbara Marx Hubbard, Susan Campbell, and other leading edge thinkers.

I then joined the staff of The Center for Applied Intuition, founded by Dr. William Kautz, a scientist from SRI International, who developed a technique called *intuitive consensus* to use intuitives for scientific research. It was through this organization that I first traveled to Japan to teach and counsel, a connection that continued for over twenty years.

This was a period when I felt I was recognizing and remembering old knowledge I'd had in previous lives, honing my consciousness skills once again, and synthesizing a comprehensive worldview—one that would apply to the challenges of today. I learned a tremendous amount from doing tens of thousands of "life readings" for people around the world—and everything confirmed the true sanity of the soul, the reality of reincarnation, and the compassionate nature of the Divine.

Did you do anything special to increase your intuitive skills?

All through these years, I continued studying with talented people and from books, broadening my understanding of metaphysics, ancient history, philosophy, cross-cultural

communication, and writing. In addition, during these years, I led a variety of spiritual study tours—to Peru, Egypt, the American Southwest, and Mt. Fuji.

I meditated daily and focused on opening, balancing, and clearing my chakras and the subtle energy in my body, working with an image of diamond light, which I equated with the vibration of the soul. I filled and replaced opaque energy with glossy clear transparent energy. I kept a journal and wrote every day, documenting the things I saw in meditation, dreams, what I felt energetically, how I related to life experiences and what I might be learning from them, and what was going on just under the surface of my awareness.

I also asked myself questions and answered them with "direct writing"—questions like "What is right livelihood?" Or, "What is prayer?" I found that there was a wise part of me, an inner teacher, who answered these questions with amazing insights. Basically, I subjected everything in my life to examination, and tried to face my fears and work through places where I experienced avoidance behaviors. I practiced looking for the soul in others, and actively tried to understand the true motivations underneath petty behaviors. I wrote quite a bit of poetry as well, walked in nature, and gardened.

What do you like most and least about being a professional intuitive?

I enjoy working deeply with other people at a soul-to-soul level and dealing with the real issues of life. I enjoy the exchange that occurs at this level, which I experience as pure, simple, and sincere. I am always surprised and entertained by the creative ways people live their lives, and by how much people know in their deeper selves. That surprise factor keeps me humble and open.

I also love teaching and making complex metaphysical ideas real and practical for people. There's something about the way an abstract idea suddenly translates into a diagram, an example, or a larger understanding that thrills me—it's like magic, especially when the explanation or description strikes a chord in the other person.

What I like least is that some people are still uncomfortable—skeptical, judgmental, or fearful—when they learn I work with intuition. They might have preconceived ideas about how intuition is "supposed to" look and function, or they think I'll see some terrible hidden secret and judge them for it, or that I'll save them or create a miraculous result and they won't have to do anything. Of course, I only see what the other person's soul shows me at that moment, and to me, it's all positive, all in service to evolution. Making this subject palatable, popular, and normal is a big part of what I do, yet wouldn't it be great if we could all just get on with USING intuition productively?

What or how do you see when you give a reading to a client?

I used to be more visual. Over the years I shifted to auditory, then tactile modes, and now I receive impressions of abstract patterns of knowledge all at once over my entire body. I feel the other person's life as though it's my own—even physical symptoms or sensory emphases like acute hearing or smell. Then I somehow decode and describe this information, and the process involved, as articulately as I can. This has caused me to

become empathic; I call it *conscious communion*. When I finish a session I come back to my own body and persona, and forget what I've been merged with—I just leave it out there.

Penney, what is your leading edge right now?

Personally, I am always shedding old skins, dissolving old identities and beliefs. Many things ring false and many more ring true. There is a new way of being—without the clutter of beliefs and thought structures, without the patterns of behavior we have internalized from other people, and without the great need for control and personal willpower. We're learning to just BE, with transparency all through us and around us, welcoming every experience as an ecstatic thrill, allowing the creative urges to rise and flow out of us into forms with an equal kind of heat, and feeling how we really belong to the whole cosmos.

So, I try to dissolve the false and validate the real. It's a daily and nightly process, since much of the old fear-based flotsam and jetsam comes up at night when the linear mind stops pushing forward. I'd say my themes right now are:

- achieving a soul-based life; discovering what that really feels like and how it functions
- reinventing myself for today's needs
- helping others understand and integrate "new perception" to live in a transformed reality
- exploring innovation as aided by high-level intuitive, collective consciousness
- becoming an entirely loving person



I am intrigued with the dynamics of the soul—things like the mechanics of reincarnation, and how truly complex and multidimensional it is. As always, I am fascinated by the differences in the way people perceive reality—different cultures, generations, soul groups. My most recent fascination is partly about the way people are processing information, learning, and functioning in today's superficial, high-speed, over-stimulating world. It is especially challenging to help catalyze full integration of body, emotion, mind, and spirit when our attention spans are so short.

These are exciting times, yes—and challenging times. Perhaps the greatest use of intuition now is to fall through the false realities of old perception into the real experience of the soul, what I've called our "home frequency." We're also using our intuition to develop a felt sense of what it's like to live in the present moment using the new spherical-holographic perception of The Intuition Age.