

BOOK REVIEW

Sensitive Soul: The Unseen Role of Emotion in Extraordinary States by Michael A. Jawer. Park Street Press, 2020. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1644110829.

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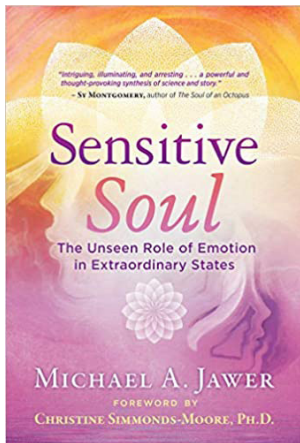
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Strong emotions underlie many telepathic events. Brain waves, the basis for electroencephalography, were discovered by Dr. Hans Berger after he suffered a serious accident and his sister, hundreds of miles away, who could not have known about this, sent a telegram to ask if he was okay. Attempting to figure out how this could have happened, Dr. Berger ultimately recorded the first brain electrical activity, from his son. Similarly, a wife bolts upright from a deep sleep the moment her husband is killed in battle, on another continent. A murder victim's life is later remembered by a child, unrelated and totally removed from the event. A lecturer suddenly experiences a pain in his knee so severe that he cannot continue his talk; simultaneously, it turns out, his twin brother has been hit in the leg by a car.

Emotions are instinctive and form the core of human nature. Michael A. Jawer, the author of *Sensitive Soul*, sees them as a “fundamental binding source” that connects humanity and makes the world turn. He applies this thesis to a wide range of medical and paranormal topics. Post-traumatic stress disorder is seen as an emotional sensitivity rather than a pathology. Migraines can be precipitated by emotions. Autism is seen as an engulfing and terrifying bombardment of the senses. Emotional stress may modify genes, via epigenetics, allowing transmission of fear across generations.

Also covered is a wide range of phenomena that are incompletely understood. Mirror senses (based in part on the discovery of mirror



neurons), synesthesia—the ability that some people have to blend the five senses such as seeing colors when hearing sounds, out-of-body experiences, dissociative disorders, child prodigies, and environmental sensitivities. And animals. A chimpanzee enjoys a beautiful sunset, a dolphin is aware that someone on a nearby ship has died. Jawer feels that strong emotional content drives these examples.

While emotional reactivity causes some seemingly paranormal events, like telepathy, it can also result from them, or simply accompany them—the reader can position the cart and the horse. I've known very emotional people who aren't telepathic, and some stolid folks who are. While about 70% of the American population holds some paranormal belief, a much smaller fraction actually experience these events, and an even smaller minority experience them regularly. Jawer considers this last group to be “thin boundary” people, penetrable by the strong emotions of others, even at great distances. Jawer's theses are consistently interesting, and *Sensitive Soul* is a consistently interesting book, particularly in the very wide range of topics it covers, some of which I mentioned above. The work is scholarly and well-referenced, never boring, and very up-to-date on things that intrigue us. It belongs on your bookshelf.