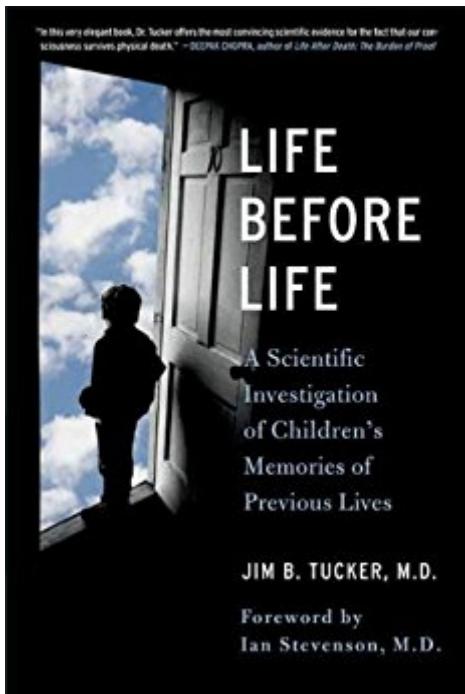


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Life Before Life: A Scientific Investigation Of Children's Memories Of Previous Lives



Synopsis

For the past forty years, doctors at the University of Virginia Medical Center have conducted research into young children's reports of past-life memories. Dr. Ian Stevenson, the founder of this work, has always written for a scientific audience. Now, in this provocative and fascinating book, Dr. Jim B. Tucker, a child psychiatrist who currently directs the research, shares these studies with the general public. *Life Before Life* is a landmark workâ "one that has the potential to challenge and ultimately change our understandings about life and death. Children who report past-life memories typically begin talking spontaneously about a previous life when they are two to three years old. Some talk about the life of a deceased family member, while others describe the life of a stranger. They may recount details about previous family members, events in the previous life, or the way they died in that life. The children tend to show a strong emotional involvement with the apparent memories and often cry to be taken to the previous family. In many cases, parents have taken their children to the places they named, where they found that an individual had died whose life matched the details given by the child. During the visits, some children have recognized family members or friends from that individual's life. Many children have had birthmarks that matched wounds on the body of the deceased individual. Researchers have studied more than 2500 such cases, and their careful investigations have produced an impressive body of work. *JAMA*, the Journal of the American Medical Association, stated in a review of one of Dr. Stevenson's scientific books that, "in regard to reincarnation he has painstakingly and unemotionally collected a detailed series of cases . . . in which the evidence is difficult to explain on any other grounds." *Life Before Life* explores the various features of this world-wide phenomenon, describing numerous cases along the way. We meet a boy in Michigan who, after being born with three birthmarks that matched wounds on his deceased brother, begins talking about events from the brother's life; a boy in Turkey who gives a number of accurate details, including the name, of a man who lived 500 miles away and died fifty years before the boy was born; and a girl in Sri Lanka who is able to recognize the family members of a deceased stranger as they are presented to her one by one, giving specifics about their lives that she could not have known from their appearance. Dr. Tucker presents this material in a straightforward way, relating extraordinary stories that have been amassed with a scientific approach. He then considers how best to interpret the evidence, and he lets readers reach their own conclusionsâ "which, for many, will be profound.

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Customer Reviews

In "Life Before Life," Dr. Jim Tucker, successor to Dr. Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia Division of Personality Studies, presents their work in a way that is rigorous enough for the scientific community, and yet readable by the lay audience. Dr. Tucker's approach is disarmingly straightforward, as he rationally examines all sides of the issue. In a non-threatening manner, he presents evidence which, if taken seriously, is inherently radical. Where I would characterize the stance of mainstream science with red flags like "in denial," Dr. Tucker calmly acknowledges that mainstream science is by nature conservative; where I would say something like "reincarnation has been proven, already, let's get on the stick," Dr. Tucker carefully explains what the alternative interpretations are, the extent to which they are plausible, and the extent to which they probably are not. If it were possible to convince mainstream science with a calm, rational, non-threatening explanation, this book would do it. To borrow from something philosophy professor Dr. Robert Almeder told me when I interviewed him for "In Another Life," if it were possible to calmly and rationally explain to a man that his brother is a murderer, without his going into denial and ridiculing you, then Dr. Tucker is the man who could do it. In short, the information is here. The work has been done, and the results are in. To use one of Dr. Stevenson's own analogies, the tennis player has hit the winning shot, and it was in-bounds. Now it is up to the scientific community, and the society at

large, to come to grips with it. In order to do that, they will have to admit that much of our currently-accepted philosophy is wrong, psychology is wrong, genetics is wrong, and much more.

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