

Shrink Rap Radio #308: My Long Run of Synchronicities

Kelly Sullivan Walden Interviews David Van Nuys, Ph.D.

(transcribed from www.ShrinkRapRadio.com by Jeremy Devens)

Introduction: My guest today is me! On this interview you'll hear me being interviewed by dream worker Kelly Sullivan Walden, who was my guest on Shrink Rap Radio #301 about dreams and the hero's journey. She interviewed me for her podcast show which is called the D-Spot. That's D as in "dreams," not G as in "oh my god! Golly gosh! Gee whiz and gee willikers!" I'm going to assume you know my bio. If you're new to the show you can always find it on the Shrink Rap Radio home page. Now on to the interview, which has a big slice of my bio that's not on the website.

Kelly Sullivan Walden: I've got an unbelievable guest today. I'm so looking forward to speaking to him. We're going to be talking about adventures in synchronicity. One of my favorite topics of all time. Any time I talk about synchronicity or think about synchronicity, I feel like there's an electricity that starts to buzz around me. Life becomes more alive, and all of a sudden, I feel like the universe is speaking to me, and doors open up where I couldn't have anticipated before. Telephone calls happen from people I was just thinking about. There's no more pushing up stream, it's like this downstream, gentle, magical journey whenever synchronicities are mentioned. So we will speak today in depth about synchronicities and how they have effected and changed the life of my guest.

My guest today is David Van Nuys Ph.D. We call him Dr. Dave, he's got this incredible podcast called Shrink Rap Radio, which we will talk about towards the end of this show. He's a professor emeritus and past chair of psychology at Sonoma State University, a unique department with an international reputation in humanistic, transpersonal and existential psychology. David is also an experienced clinician, having practiced for many years in California and New Hampshire, as well as being a popular workshop facilitator for a number of growth centers in

the US and Europe. He served on the board of directors on the division of Humanistic Psychology of the American Psychology Association. He's the founder and president of [e-focus groups](#), a research consulting firm, with a client list that includes a number of Fortune 500 companies, among others. David is co-author of the book [This is the Zodiac Speaking: Into the Mind of a Serial Killer](#), in which he profiles the infamous Bay Area serial killer. Oh my god! I must find out more about that, it's a little scary, but I need to know about that. But beyond all this, David has created several podcasts, most notably Shrink Rap Radio, which is now in its 7th year, with listeners in over 70 countries. Today, we're going to talk about his very personal journey with synchronicities and with dreams, and I could not be more thrilled and excited to bring Dr. Dave to the D-Spot today. Dr. Dave, welcome!

Dr. Dave: Thank you very much, Kelly! I really appreciate the set up that you gave to the topic of synchronicity. It's a perfect framing, I think, for the conversation that we're going to have.

Walden: I think the first time that I really got synchronicity, I was reading the book [The Celestine Prophecy](#) years and years ago. I was reading the book and listening to it as an audio tape, I think it was before CD, that's how long ago it was (laughs). As I was listening to it and driving in my car, everything I would think about, I would see billboards that would reflect those thoughts, every turn, every thing that happened, I felt like I was in a field of magic. I became, from that moment on, hooked on synchronicities. What do they mean? What happens when we're in them? Those are some things that I'm really excited to explore. Do you want to tell me a little bit about how you first got introduced to the realm of synchronicity?

Dr. Dave: I don't remember quite when I first heard the term. Probably when I was getting into Jungian Psychology, and a book that was very influential on me was [Boundaries of the Soul by June Singer](#) that, conceptually, is probably one of my earliest contacts with synchronicity.

I want to share with you this wonderful story of a series of synchronicities in my life, and the thing that triggered it was you and I had spoken some time back, or maybe I was listening to one of your shows and you mentioned [Betty Bethards](#) and I realized that's a contact between you and me that I never would have guessed.

Walden: Yes! Yes, yes. [She wrote a wonderful book on dreams](#) and I think of her as someone that I definitely look up to and have a great deal of respect for. We ran out of time to be able to tell us the Betty Bethards story, so now we've got time!

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I'm going to tell you this whole story, and I'll just give this little peak behind the scenes to set it up, to say that this whole story, really, the larger story is about the quest to find my biological father. I was raised by a step father, the only father I really remember, and as it happened, my life has many interesting (laughs) aspects and turns, as most people's have, I suppose. My mother married a black man, my mother being Caucasian, and me being Caucasian, my mother married a black man when I was just a baby. She had... An affair, actually, with a married man. I'll hang out all our dirty laundry here...

Walden: I love it.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, a very charismatic man, who she was totally in love with, and who when she sat me down tot tell me the whole story, the way she reported it was 'I knew he was married, and he wasn't going to leave his wife, but I told him I wanted a baby by him.' So, I was a love child.

Walden: Wow!

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So, I'll pick up more of that piece of the story. It's interesting that you've been talking about the hero's journey, as you know that's also something that I'm interested in, and integrating the hero's journey into the whole cycle of dreamwork, so that's another

thing that we share. I'm looking forward to being in your workshop at the upcoming IASD Dreams Conference.

So, the hero's journey starts off with a call, and *I* got a call. It was at a time when I was coming near the end of my doctoral program, and... I didn't have a lot of confidence about where this was leading. I was being trained to be a clinical psychologist, and as I looked around at various jobs, I wasn't very interested in what seemed to be out there, in terms of working in a prison or working in a mental hospital. At that time, private practice, the way they taught us at University of Michigan, was you didn't go into private practice until you had a lot of experience under your belt, you had gray hair, etc.

Walden: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: So I found myself casting about 'what am I going to do?' Then some colleagues, some fellow students of mine were going to go to a meeting of the Association of Humanistic Psychology. Now, some of our listeners probably weren't born yet, the time period I'm talking about is probably around 1968-1969, and it was one of the very first AHP conferences, either the first, the second or the third. This was a very exciting time. [Fritz Perls](#) and [Ram Dass](#) and [Carl Rogers](#) and [Stan Grof](#), all of these sorts of stellar figures... [Abraham Maslow](#), they were all being drawn under this umbrella of [Humanistic Psychology](#), and it was a *very* exciting time.

So, I decided to join some of my friends on a drive down to this conference, and in the car ride down, one of the remarked that she was going to be... She was a little further along in the program than I was, so she was very seriously looking for a job... She said she was going to interview with a man from Sonoma.

Now, I'd never heard of Sonoma, although I'd seen an article in *Psychology Today* where they showed various trends in psychology, and at the top of several trends was the word Sonoma.

This was the 60's, so I assumed it was a psychedelic drug (laughs). So I was wondering 'where can I get some of this Sonoma?' My friend told me 'well, this is a small college in Northern California, and it's relatively new, and they have a pretty wide open program. Among other things, they have a master's program in Humanistic Psychology.' So, she was interested in applying for a job there. So, I happened to remark 'well, gee do you mind if I talk to the guy that you're going to interview with? I might be interested in this as well.' She said 'sure go, ahead.'

I did try to talk to this guy, and it was one of these situations where it was 'cocktail party time' and he was standing with a drink in his hand and looking a little blurry eyed, and is as trying to make my case, every time a pretty girl walked by, it was a break for a big long hug (laughs). He would get into this 'hug-a-thon' and I just got irritated and thought 'what the heck, I'm not willing to put up with all this' and I decided I wasn't going to try to deal with the situation, and maybe I would put my resume in his box, and if it was meant to be, it was meant to be, and if it wasn't, it wasn't. So I just walked away.

Later on, towards the end of this conference, something happened where there was supposed to be some kind of closing musical event, dance event, literally an old fashioned band, guys with bardo type of music (laughs), and... somehow, I found myself in an alternative happening in the third sub-basement of the Silver Spring Hilton, I think it was, some big hotel like that, where there was a spontaneous gathering of people in a big circle, and people had turned trash cans upside down, and they were drumming, and somebody brought out a flute, and there was no leader, but there was a spontaneous, communal circle. I had never experienced anything quite like it before, in fact, one or two people stripped off their clothes. It was the first time I'd been a situation like that with nudity in that way.

Walden: Wait, back up for one second. I want to make sure I'm following you. So, this is a circle... (laughs)

Dr. Dave: A spontaneous gathering in a sub basement, you know, way down in the bowels of the building... I don't know how I found my way down there, or how these other people found their way down there, but here we were.

As a couple people stripped off their clothes, it was interesting to me that it was in no way sexual. My fantasies were if I ever found myself in that situation it would be very sexually arousing, but it wasn't. It was more a statement of 'this is my body, this is how God created me, and it's okay.'

Walden: Wow.

Dr. Dave: That was the message that came through to me, really powerfully. Without anybody saying it, without anybody making a speech.

So, in this group that had no leader, we started humming... Chanting.. We sang Christmas carols... We sang camp songs... It wasn't near Christmas, but anything we knew in common, or that you would think other people might know, it would somehow get started and go around the circle.

I saw this fellow across that I had tried to interview with 3 days earlier across the circle. His name is [Gordon Tappan](#), and we had eye contact, we just locked eyes, and we held the sustained eye contact for the longest time. I think my recollection is we both had tears in our eyes. We were both moved both by the spontaneous happening. Now, he was 30 or 40 feet away from me, so there was no conversation between us, but there was this incredible eye contact.

So that was my experience as the conference, I mean, I didn't talk to him, but I did leave my resume in his hotel box as I said I would. About

2 or 3 weeks later I got kind of a pro forma letter, and it was somebody at Sonoma State University saying “thank you so much for submitting your resume, very nice to meet you, unfortunately the position has been filled, do let us know how things progress for you in the future,” that kind of thing.

Walden: Hmm... Right.

Dr. Dave: So, I would say about 6 months go by, and I’m really realizing now that I *am* going to get a degree here. (laughs) I was always so sure that I would get out of there, out of the University of Michigan and get that Ph.D., but now it was looking pretty inevitable, so, again, I was concerned with ‘how am I going to find a job?’ It just so happened I had a clinical internship at the VA hospital outside of Detroit, and I had, on this particular day, there was an underground tape that was circulating at the time by Ram Dass and it was called [One Man’s Journey to the East](#) and it later became his book [Be Here Now](#), and he described how had gone to India, he was a Harvard professor with tenure, and he lost his job as a result of their experiments with LSD, and he went off to India and met a guru there who absolutely blew his mind. This was a *very* inspirational tape.

Walden: That book was just monstrously successful and really brought meditation to so many people

Dr. Dave: Exactly, and I was already studying yoga at that time, and very interested in altered states of consciousness. I was doing a dissertation on hypnosis and meditation, which was pretty groundbreaking for that point in time, given everything that’s happened since then

At any rate, here I am at the VA hospital, and I’m playing this tape for the psychiatric staff of one man telling his story, and the psychiatrists are kind of stroking their chin and saying ‘hmm, very interesting. It almost sounds like the man has had a good analysis.’

Walden: (laughs) Of course they'd say that!

Dr. Dave: Yeah, which would be the stamp of approval if that had been the case. So I'm really racking my brain... 'my goodness, where am I going to get a job, with my particular set of interests in that particular time, with an interest in altered states of consciousness and spirituality and psychology and psychotherapy,' how was I going to put all that together. And I remembered Sonoma State, and that fellow that I sort of met, and I said "What was his name again?" kind of racking my brain, and I was able to pull his name up; Gordon Tappan, and I wonder if they have an AP directory here at the hospital, because he might be in the American Psychological Association. So sure enough, I was able to find an APA directory in the hospital and I found his contact info, so I thought "when I get home, I'm going to contact him and just see if maybe theres another job opening or something."

So, later that evening, when I arrived home in the late afternoon, as I'm putting my foot on the steps, I hear the phone ringing. I go into the house... I get chills every time I tell this story... I pick up the phone and the voice on the other end says "Hi, my name is Matt McCreary, you don't know me, but I'm the chair of the psychology department at Sonoma State University"

Walden: Oh my god

Dr. Dave: "And we have a job opening, and that's why I'm calling you. It's not that we don't have any applicants, and qualified applicants, rather it's that we have too many, and we have ones that each faculty person is pulling for their particular person that they want to have. So, we decided that we would break the deadlock by hiring somebody that we don't know."

Walden: (laughs)

Dr. Dave: "...We would just take a chance on somebody we that don't know. And Gordon Tappan spoke up and said 'well, I met a chap who I

think might work out,” and he said “it’s on the strength of that that I’m calling you now.” I told him “My god, I was going to call Gordon Tappan just now, this is either an omen, or the strongest coincidence that’s ever happened in my life, and I said if you offer me a job I’m just going to take it.” He said “Well, send us some materials.” I sent them some materials and I think there was a subsequent conversation, he said “We’d like to fly you out here.” and he said “It’s not so that we can look you over, rather it’s so that you can look us over. We want you to feel good about it and feel really sure about it.”

So that was amazing synchronicity number one.

I did fly out, and I was kind of turned off to it actually, because I got together with Gordon and again it was everybody hugging everybody (laughs) and me kind of standing on the side. I looked like a real dude, I got all dressed up and they were all casual. Shaved off my beard, got all cleaned up...

But it just seemed too... Even though there were things initially that kind of turned me off, I thought, the way this has come, there’s got to be more to this. This amazing way of getting brought out there. So, I took the job.

Moving right along. After I was there, after I had come and relocated with family and so on in Northern California, in Santa Rosa area, and I’d been there for some time... One night I saw some posters advertising a psychic in San Francisco. The psychic’s name was Betty Bethards, and I thought “Well, that might be interesting..” This was a time of my life that I was very open at a lot of possibilities, and I thought “I’ve never been to anything like that, so why don’t I go and check this out.”

So I went down to hear her lecture, and she was doing some readings of people in the audience, and she said to me “I see your aura, you have a lot of green in your aura. I think that you must be a teacher, a wonderful teacher.” So, you know, I’m kind of... “Okay, that’s pretty good,” but I’m discounting it a bit. I went to the university of skepticism (laughs),

formal training in psychology at a place of like the University of Michigan is the academy of skepticism...

Walden: (laughs) Right.

Dr. Dave: So, I'm a tough nut to crack in some ways, I really have to be hit upside the head with a 2x4 (laughs). So, she did this rather interesting session, and it ended with a meditation. She said "Close your eyes... Put your hands in your lap in a certain mudra with the fingertips touching, and allow yourself to bring in to your mind the image of the highest being that you can think of." So I'm thinking, let's see... There's Jesus on the cross... No, that's kind of... Even though I grew up with that, that's not it. Ram Dass, no he's just another guy. Then, kind of spontaneously, without any real bidding, now I'm not a person who does this kind of thing easily, I have to say, but the image of [Hotei](#) came into my mind. Now Hotei is the Chinese God of laughter, and you see little statues of him all over Chinatown. He's the guy with the big belly, his hands thrown up over his head... People call him the laughing Buddha. The Chinese version is Hotei, but he's the one that people call the laughing Buddha. As soon as I got that image in my mi... In my *inner vision*, I just kind of thought... I *knew* it was right, and it filled me with a kind of joy, such that as I drove home, I kind of laughed out loud the whole way. I sort of got a message from it, which is "Don't be so serious. Take things lightly. Get laughter in your life." So it was just wonderful.

Now, some time goes by. It may have been the next day or the next week, I don't recall, but the Dean of the school I was teaching in, one of the colleges of the larger University, the Dean calls me in. Very nice man. I didn't know if I was in trouble or what, and he says "I'm just calling you in to see how things are going for you here, I know you've been here now for some months at Sonoma State, and I just want to know how it's going." So I told him "Well, I went down to this psychic lecture and it was kind of interesting," and I told him about my experience and he said "That's really interesting." He said "Some years

ago, I had a student who went to see a psychic, and her roommate had been missing, and this psychic told her that, in fact, her roommate had been murdered, and the psychic gave them information that actually led to the discovery.” It turned out that the psychic had been right, and the police were led to the body, etcetera.

Now, I know that sounds kind of grizzly, but I said “Wow! That’s amazing. I’ve never seen such concrete proof like that. I would really like to see somebody who had that kind of skill myself.” He said “Well, you know what...” Now, this is the Dean, a very straight laced guy, he said “You know what, that student gave me the psychic’s card, and I’ve been carrying it around in my wallet for years, sort of intending to go, but never had, and I’ll tell you what, if you go see this psychic, I’ll pay for your visit.”

Walden: What?!

Dr. Dave: So I said, “Oh, boy, that’s a good offer. Okay!” So he gives me the card, and it turns out that the psychic, her name was Dr. Georgiana Sagee, lived in Fairfax, a community not too far, Bay Area community. So I went down there that day, all kind of primed, and I wondered “What will I ask the psychic that will prove to me that she’s real?” And I thought, well, I don’t want to just be so skeptical that I’m just trying to trick her, I want to be sincere, and have a sincere wish around this. So, I thought, I’ll ask her about my real father, my biological father who I never really knew, and is he still alive, and can I find him and how? That’s what I’ll ask her.

So, I go to the house, it’s in kind of a suburban development. Nothing pretentious looking about the house. I knock on the door... The woman who opens the door, it turns out is her sister, but there in the hallway is the largest wooden image of Hotei that I’ve ever seen.

Walden: What?!

Dr. Dave: So, remember, it's that vision of Hotei that led me to tell the story to the Dean, who gives me the card that takes me down to the psychic, and here's this life size statue of Hotei in the vestibule.

Walden: Oh, wow.

Dr. Dave: So, that was pretty amazing.

Walden: Undeniable.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So, then I go in to meet the psychic. This very large... corpulent woman... A little ditzy seeming. She asks, you know, "How can I help you?" and I tell her "Well, I'd like to find my father, my biological father, who I've never known." and she said "Well, was he Jewish? Because I'm getting my Rabbi spirit guide." and I said "Well, as a matter of fact, yes he was Jewish."

Walden: Huh...

Dr. Dave: So, she proceeded to tell me... A number of things. She said "Yes, he's alive. Yes, he would be happy to see you. He's been to Israel and he's been living in another state, he has lived in a state that starts with 'N' and you'll find him within the year."

So, I paid her, I thanked her, went back out to my car, kind of thought about it, and I thought "Well, I don't see anything really substantial to hang my hat on here." I could try to... I mean, I could go to the Israel embassy, I mean, I knew his name was Ed Robin, so that much I knew, but I just didn't seem like I had enough that I was going to be able to track him down.

I kind of didn't think about it, didn't follow it up or attribute all that much significance to it as time went on. So, most of the year went by, then I unexpectedly received a letter from my mother. Now, I need to back up a little bit and tell you some other synchronicities here are that when I was an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, I really

fell into folk music, the whole folk revolution and learned to play the guitar. My favorite musician was Woody Guthrie, and just loved everything about Woody Guthrie music, Woody Guthrie songs and so on... It turned out, and I think my mother might have told me this, not sure when I learned this, but Woody Guthrie... It must have been much later, because I read [Woody Guthrie's book Bound for Glory](#) It turns out, that book was written in my father's house. My mother and father, their affair was in Los Angeles, where I grew up, and that's where Ed Robin and his family lived at that time.

He was a kind of cultural figure, he was a communist, as many intellectuals were during that period, and he got persecuted by Jon McCarthy and the house of un-American Affairs Activities Committee and, like so many other people, kind of went underground and disappeared.

So this is what my mother told me when I was an undergraduate in college, and I began to express a desire to find my real father. She said "I'll try, but it's going to be hard, because..." and she told me this whole story, and how people were very reluctant if you went asking after somebody from that period of time. People were reluctant to say if they knew anything about anybody. Because he lost his job, it totally changed his career, I was later to find out.

So... I know this a long and difficult story here, but I hope everybody is following.

Walden: Oh, it's such a wonderful story, I'm hanging on to your every word. Keep going, keep going.

Dr. Dave: So, one day, out of the blue, I get a letter from my mother, and in it, is a letter to her from Woody Guthrie's wife, Marjorie Guthrie, who it turns out, my mother had known and was friends with. Unbeknownst to me...

So I start reading the letter from Marjorie Guthrie, which starts out

“Dear Louise, Sorry it has taken me 10 years to answer your letter, but of course it was under a big stack of letters, to-do’s, stuff that I had to deal with, and I’m sorry it took me 10 years. But, of course, yes, I do know where Ed Robin is...” And she gives his address...

Now, you’ve gotta realize this is 30~35 years after I had been born, after they had their affair, he could have lived anywhere in the world and, in fact, had moved all over the country, but the address that she gives is in Berkley.

Walden: Wow!

Dr. Dave: And it’s not at all far from where some of my friends live. So, this opened up like a 3 year old place in me, like I was a 3 year old, “Oh, my daddy, my daddy!” (laughs) And I just felt like “Oh, he’s going to be rich and famous and he’s going to life me out of all my problems.” Just how wonderful it’s going to be, and I had fantasies of how I would approach him, that maybe I would become a postman and I would deliver his mail for a period of time, and then we would become friends, and then, one night over chess, with Brandy's, I would remark “By the way, Dad....” (laughs).

So that was the kind of fantasies that were activated inside me. In fact, I ended up sending him a letter... Saying “I’m David, your son by Louise” telling kind of the details of my life, and my graduate school history and all, and basically submitting a kind of resume, hoping that he would be happy and excited to meet me.

Walden: Yeah.

Dr. Dave:...And... Various adventures ensued. His wife totally freaked out, because his wife knew about that affair, and was threatened by it, and when she saw the return address on the letter, she freaked out, thinking it was my mother trying to reestablish contact with him.

So, he met me in a mutual space, in a restaurant. Drove down, and we met in a restaurant, and started talking, and then later he took me back to meet her.

Turned out, long story short... Too late for that, but I bonded much more strongly with her than I did with him...

But here's some more synchronicities for you. It turns out that this father who I had been questing for was *all around me*.

Just the week before, I'd had dinner with people in Tiburon, and it turned out that a man there, a psychiatrist, was good friends with my father, unbeknownst to me, they'd known each other for years. Turned out I had masters students, adult masters students who were also very good, long term friends with my father. I was leading student groups at Napa State hospital, and it turns out that my uncle, my father's brother, I had an uncle there who was the head social worker there for many years. I was in the Esalen catalogue that year, I was leading a wilderness dream and [Gestalt therapy](#) and psychodrama group, co-leading with another friend, and it turned out that I had a half-sister in the same catalogue, who was doing dance therapy through Esalen. Turned out I have a half-brother who is also a social worker. Turns out my cousin and my siblings were taught to play the guitar *by* Woody Guthrie.

Walden: (Laughs)

Dr. Dave: Yeah. So, *all* of these synchronicities.

Now... In terms of what the psychic said. Yes, I did find my father in about a year, or he found me... Somehow it came to pass. Oh! And my father and his brother, my uncle, they had taken courses at Sonoma State, about a year before I'd come they'd done some encounter group stuff there at Sonoma State.

Walden: I've gotta know... I mean, this story, I'm in tears, I'm so moved. This is so beautiful on so many levels. I'm just so curious about

that first meeting, as you're sitting down and looking at him. What was that like, and was he kind, was he interested, was he aloof? I have to know that about that initial meeting.

Dr. Dave: He was a kindly figure... He had a big bushy white mustache, white hair, a fisherman's cap, a bit of a belly, like I do (laughs). He was warm, and seemed warm and friendly enough, but also a little bit aloof. He had a little dog with him, he had his pet dog, and as we went to the car, he was going to drive me up to his house in the hills to meet his wife, and the dog didn't come when he called the dog to the car. So he said "I'm going to start driving and the dog will... This will teach the dog to come." So he starts driving off, and the dog does in fact start chasing the car.

So I'm looking out the window, as this little white dog is running as fast as he can, trying to catch the car, and he loses the dog. Now I'm having the feeling as I'm looking back at the dog, and I'm feeling like "This man lets go of attachments too easily" (laughs). Of course, I was totally identifying with the dog.

Walden: He did that right in front of you... You lost the dog, you didn't go back and find the dog?

Dr. Dave: I searched for the dog a little bit. I can't remember now if they ever did find the dog or not, but at least temporarily it got lost, and I was *totally* identified with the dog.

Walden: Wow.

Dr. Dave: He had suffered... He had been through a major depression and had been hospitalized for it. So some degree, I think, by the time I found him...

Walden: Ah...

Dr. Dave: He may have been a bit burned out, in a way... Other people saw him as very charismatic, but he had gone through major depression around not having written ‘the big book’ that he always thought that he would write. He had been a writer. I carried the same cross around myself, so this was of great interest to me. And...

Let me move on, and then I’ll come back to say a little bit more about him.

Walden: Yes. Great.

Dr. Dave: The conclusion of the story I’ll just come to... More or less, the conclusion.

Walden: Please.

Dr. Dave: We ended up going to... My family and I got a chance to trade houses and jobs with a professor at University of New Hampshire, so we ended up going away for two years, but by this time, things with that side of the family had kind of cooled down; they lived an hour away, I kind of thought, you know, “Well, what do I do now? Do I now to have Sunday dinner with this family every week?” You know, I hand’t been that close to the family I grew up with, what was I going to do now with this new one. They probably had similar feelings, and somehow we just drifted away.

I was gone for two years. When I came back from New Hampshire, one day, I’m sitting in my little office where I was doing psychotherapy at the time in our house, and one day I turned on the radio to the local PBS station. Now, it was already tuned to the local PBS station. I turned on the knob, and the voice came on and said “Ed Robin died today.” And then I turned the radio off.

And that was it. That was the end of the circle. That was that.

It felt like a full circle had just come to a close.

Walden: On the local PBS... Was he famous enough for people to know who he was?

Dr. Dave: Yeah, he was enough of a local figure to get announced, and he had started, he had finally written a book about his experiences with Woody Guthrie, and he had started doing a one or two man show telling Woody Guthrie stories with a musician, and was enjoying some success, and then, I guess, he died of a heart attack.

The family didn't contact me to invite me to the funeral or anything, and I didn't follow up, somehow, I guess, you know, I guess there's some residual. I mean, I don't know what I expected, but there was some hurt, some disappointment, some sense of loss.

So...

Walden: Yeah. Even though you were able to close the circle, he wasn't the ideal father that you perhaps hoped, or...

Dr. Dave: Yes. Yeah... It felt like he could have been, but I just didn't feel as fully embraced. I wanted him to be excited about me and my accomplishments, but he knew so many *more* accomplished people, that I wasn't getting the feeling that I was more than just a little blip on his radar screen.

Walden: He probably just didn't have the capacity, being depressed and kind of, a bit, maybe self absorbed in his own pain.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, that was my wife's take. My wife's take was that I was better off not having grown up with him, that he was pretty narcissistic, and... Self involved.

Now there's one more thing to squeeze in here that really does complete the circle.

Walden: Please, Dr. Dave. I'm all ears.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Just this past week, I was interviewing a Jungian Analyst. As you know, I do lots of interviews like this, and I

Walden: There's been a lot of activity by the way in the chat room about this conversation. But go ahead.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, I've been following threads of my own interest, so there's been lots of interviews with Jungians and Jungian Analysts, as well as Positive Psychology is another strong thread, mind and body has been another strong one, Neuropsychology has been another strong one. At any rate, I'm having an interview with one of my favorite Jungians, and something she said somehow triggered in me a recollection of a dream, of a lucid dream. I haven't had that many "Big Dreams" in my life that I could remember without consulting my dream journal. I keep a dream journal, but the number of dreams that I could recall off the top of my head are maybe two or three or four, not very many.

Well, this one dream popped into my head, from years ago, and I suspect it was from before all of this whole account that I just told you. I suspect it was from before finding my real father, although I haven't had time yet to look back in my journals to see if, in fact, it was, but I think it was.

So this dream that I had many years ago. In this dream, I am an actor in a play, and there is a phone on the stage, and as part of the drama the phone rings and I pick it up, and I think I'm supposed to act like I'm talking to somebody on the other end of the phone, but then, in reality, there wouldn't be anybody on the other end of the phone. When I pick up the phone, in fact, there *is* someone on the other end of the phone and it's my now dead step father, who raised me, and who is the person I experienced as 'father' all my life. He's saying to me "The circle of your existence is about to come to a close."

Walden: Oh my god.

Dr. Dave: At that point I become lucid, and as happens to me the few times I become lucid, I become lucid and in the lucidity is the *awareness* of “Oh my god, this is my dead step father talking to me, and this could really be him from the other side.”

And, as happens to me with lucid dreams, as soon as I realize I’m having a lucid experience, I get so excited that it wakes me up.

Walden: (Laughs)

Dr. Dave: So, I woke up. Well, what to make of that message though? “The circle of your existence is about to come to a close.”

You know, these many years later, I’m still alive so, at one level, one could’ve gotten frightened (laughs) and thought “Oh boy, this means I’m about to die!”

Walden: Right

Dr. Dave: Or is it something else? Well, what I realized just this past week when I was interviewing this Jungian, I had this insight “Oh my god.” Because I had talked about this experience, as I’ve shared this story with other people over the years of this set of synchronicities finding my real father. I’ve talked about it as a circle, and that when I turned on the radio and “Ed Robin died today” that that was kind of the feeling that I had inside was that the circle was closed. Now I have the perspective that that dream, that was the circle, and in a sense, it may have been my step father *blessing* even, my quest to find my biological father, who he could have perhaps perceived as a rival.

Walden: Mmmm... Ah...

Dr. Dave: You can talk now (laughs). That’s the end of my story.

Walden:...How divine. And how perfect to have that dream, to have him be the mouthpiece, the father figure that *was* in your life give you that blessing.

Dr. Dave: And the other things that it illustrates is that we may not fully understand a dream at the time, and it's real significance may emerge much, much later. Years later in this case.

Walden: So the timing of you receiving that dream, that was *after* your biological father passed away. Is that correct?

Dr. Dave: No, that was after my *step father* passed away, but probably *before* my biological father passed away. In other words, I think the dream was before I discovered my real father.

So the dream was kind of predicting something that was to unfold in the future, and blessing it. That realization, that *understanding* of the dream, I only had last week.

Walden: Oh

Dr. Dave: Even though everything else I've been telling you has been 10 or 20 years or 30 years old.

Walden: Oh wow. I love that this newest piece just came in last week, and then here we are getting to talk about this. May I offer one more piece that feels kind of magical to me about that dream?

Dr. Dave: Yeah. Yeah, go ahead.

Walden: [I interviewed, not that long ago, Chief Golden Light Eagle](#) He's a Lakota Chief, and a big dreamer, and he talked, in kind of bizarre ways about his perspective of dreams, and he was talking about when your karma is complete, even though karma wouldn't be it necessarily in Lakota terms, I'm sort of using my own words here, but when it's complete, then your dreams take on a different dimension.

Dr. Dave: Hmm

Walden: Who we are when we still have lots of karma and baggage, what we dream about, would be very distinct from who we are and what we dream about once we put all that to rest.

Dr. Dave: Mmhmm.

Walden: At that point, as that circle is complete, then a whole new circle can begin that's a bird of a *completely* different... A horse of a different color, a bird of a different feather (laughs)

Dr. Dave: Yeah, definitely.

Walden: A different kind of existence is possible with this whole new amount of bandwidth that would then be available.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, definitely, I do feel like the whole father quest circle is pretty much completed. There were ways in which I think I was looking for a father in other older males, and so on. Ambivalently; looking, not looking, approaching, pushing away, that kind of thing. It feels like that's no longer... It doesn't have that numinosity for me that it use to.

Walden: Interesting. I might be interested about... I am interested in what could happen now, with your biological father on the other side, along with your step father, and what kind of guidance or information or insight you might receive from them.

Dr. Dave: Oh...

Walden: I know there's a woman I recently spoke with whose mother... She had always had a very strange relationship with her mother in this life. Very, very difficult relationship, and now that her mother's on the other side, even though it's taken a while, there's this new relationship that's forming, as it seems that her mother is evolving and becoming a bit more enlightened, the communication, telepathic communication, dream communication seems to be increasing in it's levels of harmony and love and more beautiful relationship is possible to be born, so it

seems. So perhaps your father, your biological father will have some availability to be able to support you and recognize you in ways that he might not have been able to while he was here.

Dr. Dave: I'll take that as a hypnotic suggestion and let it percolate and see what happens (laughs).

Walden: I want to presence with a few things in the chat room. My celestial co-host has been talking about some of his feedback about this. First of all, he said somewhere that he lived near Sonoma State and had an interesting connection with that. He said that he finds it interesting when something happens in life and a long ago dream comes back to him, I think in 3 dimensions when the circle is complete it means that you've moved up the spiral. Perhaps that's another hypnotic suggestion, that you're moving up the spiral.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. I definitely resonate with that. I do have that feeling. And, you know, I've recently retired from Sonoma State and, in hindsight, I have to say that I felt absolutely lead there, and that it turned out to be... I can't imagine another place that would have been as good a fit for me.

Walden: Oh, it sounds like you found true north.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, yeah, I think so.

Walden: Mmm.

In general... In the last minute or two I have you here... I know you've got your podcast, Shrink Rap Radio, that we want everyone to listen to. I've listened to probably a dozen of your interviews, and each one is chock-filled with insight, and they're entertaining, as well as insightful, and I know that [you offer CEUs that people can get if they listen](#).

Dr. Dave: The CEUs, by the way are for professionals, if they're MFTs or Psychologist or Psychiatrists or Social Workers who need continuing

education units, they can get them just by listening to selected podcasts, and the information is all there on the site.

I have to say that when I started this podcast series seven years ago, and it was right, pretty much, at the beginning of the whole podcast thing starting to happen. I started in 2005, which is really the year that it started, although I certainly wasn't the first person, I was a little late in 2005. I wanted to open up... I wanted to interview people, and I wanted to expose the world to a kind of broader view of psychology than people tend to get in most psychology departments, a more Catholic, if you will, view of what's possible in Psychology. I didn't know if there'd be an audience or not. It turns out there is an audience, and it's just been so well received. If my memory were better, I would have learned a lot (laughs). I think I have learned a lot.

Walden: It's absorbed. It's past the level of the logical mind. It's in your cells.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Walden: I love the subtitle of your show, "Shrink Rap Radio: All the Psychology You Need to Know, and Just Enough to Make You Dangerous." I love the Irish guy (intonation)

Dr. Dave: Yeah (laughs)

Walden: If you want to know more Psychology and information that will give you *tons* of insight, and make you a little dangerous (laughs), then go to shrinkrapradio.com and find out more about my amazing guest today Dr. Dave. You are such a fascinating guy, you've made me, as I've been listening to your stories of this *incredible* synchronicity, I love that you paid such attention, and that it weaves together so well. It's caused me to really remember some significant synchronicities in my life and appreciate them so much.

So, as I let you go, I'm going to ask you one quick question, and see if you can answer this in 30 seconds or less. Then we'll switch gears and talk about the reward stage of the Hero's Journey.

What is a synchronicity? Why do we have them? How can we have more of them?

Dr. Dave: Woah, 30 seconds. Well, I think synchronicities are the universe's way of letting us know that there's something bigger going on, that we don't see the whole picture. For me, it's a reminder, that there's a bigger story going on. It also, to me, I take it to mean that "I'm on the path," so if you want more of them, if you turn your attention to *your* path, and if you turn your attention to your inner world, such as meditating or tracking your dreams, then I think you're more likely to have more and more of them coming into your life.

Walden: I *highly, highly* agree Dr. Dave. Shrink Rap Radio. You are a gentleman, a scholar, a brilliant heart and soul, and I so appreciate you David Van Nuys Ph.D. Dr. Dave from Shrink Rap Radio, I hope that we can do this again sometime, and maybe I'll get to share some of my synchronicities with you sometime, and we'll just keep going back and forth forever. That's my dream.

Dr. Dave: That sounds good to me, and I really appreciate this opportunity to share my story.