

SUMMER'S PATH

by Scott Blum

(Published by Hay House)

Eleven Questions

***Summer's Path* is the prequel to your best-selling book *Waiting for Autumn*. Is your new book going to be hard to follow for those that have read *Waiting for Autumn* first?**

I don't think so. If you've read *Waiting for Autumn* first, then *Summer's Path* is basically a massive flashback that provides insight for what the characters have gone through and why they are the way they are. But since *Summer's Path* precedes the setting of *Waiting for Autumn* by only three months, it's also interesting to read *Summer's Path* first. In other words, you can read them in either order. And although the journey will be slightly different, you'll end up at the same place.

What is the main difference between *Summer's Path* and *Waiting for Autumn*?

The main difference is that I am personally the main character in *Waiting for Autumn*. However, in *Summer's Path*, the story primarily follows two other characters, Don and Robert, when they first meet each other. It's also obviously a different writing style since *Autumn* is written in first person and *Summer's Path* is written in third person, but there are definitely some of the same characters that are in both books.

***Summer's Path* was originally published as an E-book where it made #1 on Amazon's Kindle Charts. Why would you subsequently publish it as a hardcover book after so many people read it in its digital form?**

The E-book was only available for a few weeks as a special promotion before my first book came out, but during its brief debut it touched many lives and I received several incredible letters from people who thanked me for sharing it. However, there was something that didn't sit right with me about it. I didn't understand what bothered me at first--it just didn't feel finished. But I had already committed to releasing it before *Waiting for Autumn* came out, and I'm still glad that I did. However, with the benefit of seeing *Summer's Path* through the eyes of others, I was finally able to discover what was missing. I had subconsciously contributed my own blind spots to the characters when telling their story. I didn't want to face certain difficult parts of myself while writing, so it was easier to leave them out altogether, and that's exactly what I did. Fortunately, I was given the opportunity to revisit the book and I ended

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up adding two entirely new chapters that filled in the parts I had subconsciously left out the first time. I was also able to spend much more time in editing and wordsmithing than before. The hardcover is definitely a more mature edition of the story on many levels.

What is *Summer's Path* about?

Summer's Path is the story of Don Newport, an engineer who comes face-to-face with his personal destiny under extraordinary circumstances. After losing his job and his health insurance, Don learns that he has a terminal disease, with only a few months left to live. On his deathbed, he meets Robert, a brazen angel of death who promises to help him with a graceful exit. As Don prepares to say his last goodbyes to his loving wife, Robert attempts to change Don's perspective about his mortality and proposes an exceptionally unique option.

You take on some pretty heavy subjects in *Summer's Path* such as cancer and suicide. What is the purpose of these subjects in your book?

Both cancer and suicide are associated with one of the most misunderstood aspects of our time on this earth, which is dying. The transition of death is no more a horrible event in this lifetime any more than the transition of birth is. Of course both cancer and suicide cause a great deal of suffering for everyone involved, especially loved ones. But what is important to focus on, is not the suffering itself, but what gift the suffering is providing to those involved. Sometimes the lessons learned from these dramatic exits are meant for specific individuals which may be may not be obvious at first blush. Oftentimes the soul benefit of these events are so obscured by the suffering it seems unfathomable that anything good can come of it. But given enough time and perspective, I believe that these events will eventually reveal themselves as part of an overall plan the universe has for us all.

But don't you also assert that people get cancer because they did something wrong in their life?

Absolutely not. People have a tendency to misunderstand how destiny works and specifically what role soul contracts play in our life. It's true that I believe that unexpressed emotions can manifest themselves into physical problems which may eventually prove to be fatal. But people that have a propensity to stuffing their emotions, might very well be doing that because of a predestined agreement they made before they were born. Some of the most significant clauses in our soul contracts include the lessons we need to learn during our particular lifetimes. And those lessons are oftentimes learned by way of some form of suffering. Unfortunately, it's not very easy to learn important lessons by simply having a good day. Good days are usually our rewards for learning our lessons, which frequently stem from very difficult experiences. Terminal diseases such as cancer are often tools to help work

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through some significant life lessons that have the ability to help not only the person with the disease, but their loved ones as well. Most of the time, embracing our soul destiny (especially if it contains significant suffering), is actually the most "right" thing we could do and is as far from doing something "wrong" as it gets in this lifetime.

One of the key elements of the book centers around the concept of Walk-Ins. What are Walk-Ins and how common are they in real life?

The simple explanation is that Walk-Ins are souls that inhabit a body after the original soul has left. To say it another way, when a person is dying sometimes another soul takes over the body and uses it for a period of time after the initial soul has "died." This is much different than the more well-know practice of "possession" where an unfriendly soul forcibly takes over a body while the original soul is still alive and inside. By contrast, a Walk-In is a much more friendly agreement that is often pre-arranged before birth, although sometimes an agreement also can take place during one's lifetime. And although the traditional definition of a Walk-In includes having one soul in a body at a time, my experience is that Walk-In "visitors" are much more common while the original host soul is still present. The reason for "visitors" is usually the same as a Walk-In that completely takes over—a particular soul needs a body to accomplish a particular task that requires being incarnate. This might be because a body might be in a coma and the soul needs to be able to communicate to its loved ones, or because they have passed and need to accomplish something significant. Walk-ins are much more common than we think, and many of us are subject to their effects without knowing it.

You also talk about animal communication in your book. Is this something that everyone can do?

Yes, I believe everyone has the ability to communicate with each other on an energetic level, and most of us do already without even thinking about it. Although there are several species of life on this planet, there is only one species of energy. And the act of communication is simply the process of transferring energy from one place to another. We are used to translating our energy of feelings, thoughts or desires into the language of words or expressions, and those cues are then re-translated into the recipient's own energy. But once we get to know someone well, we have a tendency to be able to communicate this energy without using words or expressions. We can simply *feel* what the other is feeling without having to translate. This is the same process we can use to communicate with animals or even plants. The hardest part of this is not letting our brain get in the way and questioning what we are sensing. 10% of the effort is the communication itself and 90% is fighting our conditioned response that its not possible.

Can you explain what embodiment is?

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This is based on the work of Judith Blackstone who I was fortunate enough to work with on this very methodology. Our souls are made up of three distinct spirit bodies that all work together. They are our spirit of awareness, spirit of emotion and spirit of sensation. And when these three spirit bodies are fully activated within our soul, we naturally integrate our soul with our human body, and that is what is called embodiment. Most of us favor one of our spirit bodies at the expense of the others which is why so many of us find it difficult to live in balance with ourselves. For example, I personally feel most comfortable giving my spirit of awareness much more energy than I do to the others. What that means is that I find it difficult to remain grounded in my body and I often have much more pressure in my head. But when I regularly do embodiment exercises, I become much more integrated and I can draw from the energy of my entire being which gives me more presence, energy and stamina for pretty much anything I want to do.

You are also the co-founder of DailyOM, which is a popular website that has over a million subscribers. How is working with DailyOM different than writing your own books?

I've spent most of my career being "behind the camera" and helping the careers of others succeed as best as I can. In DailyOM, my job is to help other authors reach as many people as possible through our website and newsletters. Whether it's with on-line courses by bestselling authors like Debbie Ford, Judith Orloff, Gay Hendricks, Neale Donald Walsch or dozens more; or helping spread the word of DailyOM's own content which is generated by my talented wife, Madisyn Taylor. I seldom contribute any content myself to DailyOM, which allows me to be more objective about it than the authors themselves. But writing books forces me to come out from the shadows and have the light shown directly on me. Of course it makes me feel vulnerable and nervous that people won't like me or what I have to say, but it's also exhilarating to be able to say exactly what I mean and not have to filter my own thoughts through the point of view of the other authors that I work with.

Do you have any thoughts concerning the current state of the literary world?

I believe the current state of the literary world is exciting, dynamic and poised for a significant revolution that is in the midst of changing the business of words forever. The mass acceptance of email was the first major contributing factor followed quickly by the web and most recently the mass viability of digital publication readers like the Kindle and iPad. All of these technological advances are in the process of changing not only how words are consumed and purchased, but are already beginning to affect the creative expression itself. In the same way the digital revolution turned the music industry upside down, the same thing is happening in the literary world. Certain types of publications are being commoditized and I predict that paperback books will soon follow their newspaper and magazine siblings as a

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thing of the past. However, I also believe there will be a huge resurgence in hardcover books and anything special that uses the object of the book as something special. We are bombarded with words in the form of spam, Twitter and Facebook updates, and text messages. The good news is we are now collectively reading much more than we have in recent history, the bad news is we are wasting valuable time with words of little consequence. However, with our collective literary appetite expanding by the terabyte, we are quickly becoming less satisfied with the emptiness of junk words and will begin to explore our own personal tastes. This will manifest itself by expanding the types of works that will be available. *McSweeney's* foreshadowed this revolution during the past few years, and the recent fad of literary mash-ups (ala *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*) are both great examples of the micro-niches that will become even more viable as more authors and readers exercise their diverse tastes.