

InPresence 0021: Seneca, My Inner Healing Adviser with Jeffrey Mishlove

Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove
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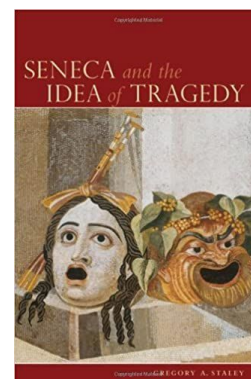
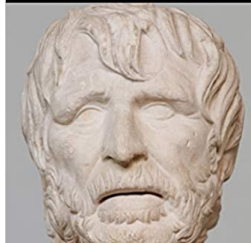
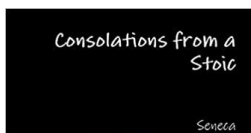
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(00:38) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove. Today I'd like to talk about the historical figure of Seneca the Younger, the Roman statesman, playwright and philosopher, and how he came to become my "inner healing advisor". It happened in the late 1980s. The whole event was captured on video because at the time I was producing a series called *Inner Work*, and in that series I interviewed hypnotherapist Dr. Martin Rossman from Mill Valley, California. He actually put me into a hypnotic trance on tape, and said, "You are now about to get in touch with your inner healing advisor. It could be any figure whatsoever. It might be a chipmunk, or a person. Let's see what comes".

(01:33) And as I'm in the trance state, I had this image of a man wearing what seemed like ancient garb, a toga of some sort. I thought to myself, "Well, I really want to work on my public speaking abilities, so let this be Demosthenes, the great Greek orator." As the figure approached me, he said, "I'm not Demosthenes". I said, "Well, who are you?" "I'm Seneca." And I said, "Well, Seneca, you're here, you're my inner healing advisor, what would you like me to do?" And he said, "Study my life." Then, Martin Rossman brought me out of the trance. I had this silly grin on my face as if something quite remarkable had happened. I began studying the life of Seneca, and discovered he's one of the most fascinating people in all of human history.

(02:36) He wrote tragedies, and his tragedies were largely responsible for influencing the great Elizabethan playwrights, who took tragedy to an even higher art form. He actually ran the Roman Empire for 5 years. It's considered the Silver Age of Rome. He was the tutor to the Emperor Nero, when Nero was still a young teenager, and so Seneca had administrative responsibilities for running the empire. He was considered one of the great Stoic philosophers of the Roman era.



(03:15) He's noted for many – what we would call pithy – sayings. For example, the saying "live each day as if it were your last", can be attributed to Seneca. He wrote what were called "consolations," to help people through difficult times in their lives, and that's part of the Stoic philosophy. He was also, probably, the wealthiest man in the empire at one time. Being the tutor

to the Emperor, he accumulated a vast fortune. But being a Stoic philosopher, he lived simply, he ate fresh fruits and vegetables, he slept on a hard bed, he took cold baths.

(04:01) So he lived almost an ascetic life. He died in 69 AD, when he was accused of conspiring against the Emperor Nero. There was a conspiracy known as the Piso Conspiracy – I mean, Nero turned out to be quite a tyrant at the end of the day. Nero thought that the conspirators wanted to install Seneca as emperor, which would have been a logical choice since he had experience in government. So, Nero sent his centurions to Seneca’s house, where there was a dinner party going on, and ordered Seneca, right then and there, to take his own life.

(04:51) Historians who recount the incident say nobody in human history was more prepared to take their own life, except perhaps Socrates. Seneca turned to the Centurion, and he said “Can I write my last will and testament?” The Centurion said, “No, you have to do this immediately.” So Seneca turned to his dinner guests and he said to them, “I bequeath to you my life. Study my life”. Those were his last words according to the historians. I found that very striking. There were a whole series of synchronicities that then seemed to occur for me – or coincidences – concerning the life of Seneca.

(05:42) I had a trance medium once – a good friend of mine, Kevin Ryerson – claim that I was Seneca in a past life. Well, I’ve never had any memories of that. Although, to be honest, there were one or two brief moments when I felt that I actually had, for an instant, the experience of being in the court of Nero, and being the most highly honored person in the presence of the Emperor. I don’t know what to make of it – it was so brief – but in any case I don’t have any reason other than these tiniest of experiences to think that I was such a person in a past lifetime.

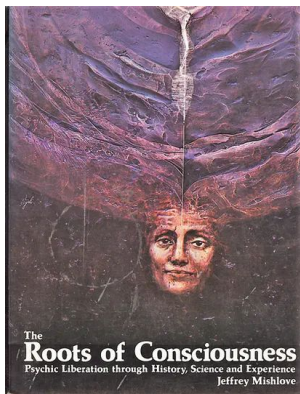
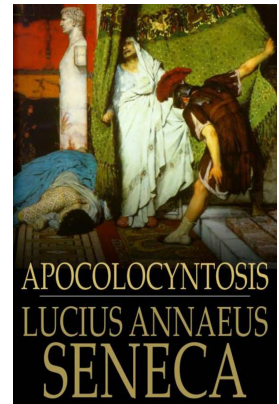
(06:26) However, one day, while I was en route to the city of Cordoba in Spain, which is the city where Seneca was born, I received an email from an American psychologist named Brendan Engen. And Brendan wrote to me, and he said, “I’ve heard that you are the incarnation of Seneca, and I’ve been told that I was the incarnation of one of Seneca’s close associates. I’d like to talk to you about that”. I wrote him back and said, “No, I’m not Seneca, but what a coincidence that you should be writing to me as I’m heading to the city where Seneca was born. What I think is going on is sort of a Jungian synchronistic resonance.” Brendan suggested, “Gee, this could be an important idea. You should write it up.” And I suggested to him, “Let’s write it up together.” And we did. We wrote a journal article on “archetypal synchronistic resonance” based on these experiences and many other synchronicities that passed between us at the time.

(07:39) I’ve even conducted three New Thinking Allowed interviews with Brendan, and we go into details about that. You’ll see a link in the upper right-hand corner to the first of those videos. There’s another little part of the coincidence, though, that I don’t think I’ve ever described before. During the 1980s and ‘90s, I was the President of a nonprofit organization called The Intuition Network. We were funded by a most remarkable gentleman named Buck Charlson, who was the inventor of the hydraulic

motor and power steering. He had a deep interest in intuition. He felt that his inventions came to him through intuition, and he wanted to contribute back to the field.

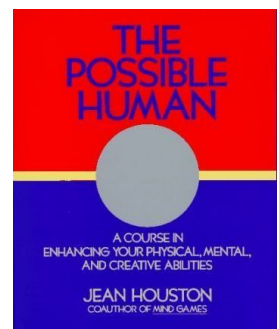
(08:38) Now, Buck Charlson had a very deep interest in reincarnation, and at one point he confided to me that he believed himself to have been the Emperor Claudius in a past lifetime. Well, the Emperor Claudius is the one who preceded Nero, and Seneca had quite a relationship with Claudius, because what happened was that Claudius exiled Seneca. There was some sort of a scandal. I don't know what to make of it. Seneca was accused of having an affair with a member of the royal family, and so he was exiled to a lonely island. It was a miserable time for him, and he begged to be allowed to return to Rome.

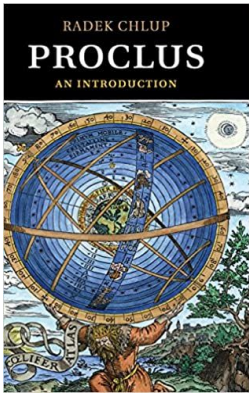
(09:26) But it wasn't until Claudius died – I think he was murdered by his wife at the time, Agrippina, who was Nero's mother. After the death of Claudius, Seneca was brought back to Rome to become Nero's tutor. Seneca actually wrote the eulogy that Nero gave upon Claudius' death. After that, Seneca later on wrote a play called the *Apocolocyntosis of Claudius*, in which it describes how Claudius is elevated to the status of a god: he goes to heaven, but there he has to confront the other Roman Emperors, like Augustus, whom he had many conflicts with. It's a highly satirical work. So, it was ironic that I had this close relationship with a man who also believed himself to have been, in historical times, in a deeply intertwined connection with Seneca.



(10:36) Now, what is the lesson here for you? I can say this about Seneca. When I first encountered this experience, I knew nothing about him, but when I read through *The Roots of Consciousness*, I saw there was a brief mention of Seneca there. What I had written about Seneca – what was known about him – is that he wrote books on science, amongst other things. But, he believed that it's important to draw moral lessons from scientific facts. Every time we look out at the world of science, it's not just telling us – as modern Western scientists tried to be value-free – don't draw any morals from it. Seneca had the opposite point of view.

(11:27) So, I think the lesson here, for those of you who are viewing this little monologue, is that you also have access to vast resources within yourself, things that you might not ever dream of. I think of myself as having been very privileged to have had this connection, and I'm grateful to the hypnotherapist Marty Rossman for facilitating it. But, this is actually, what could be, quite a common experience for most people, if you open yourself up to it. I know my friend Jean Houston – about whom I have spoken in a past monologue – had a similar experience with the ancient Greek philosopher Proclus, who was one of





the last of the Neoplatonic philosophers. As a teenager she'd hear this little voice going, "Hocus pocus, where is Proclus?" And as such, she developed this intimate connection. It's as if great historical figures from the past still exist – you could say in hyperspace – and are there if we open ourselves up to reach out, and offer us their guidance and their wisdom. I'll leave you with that thought. Thank you for being with me. (12:51)

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