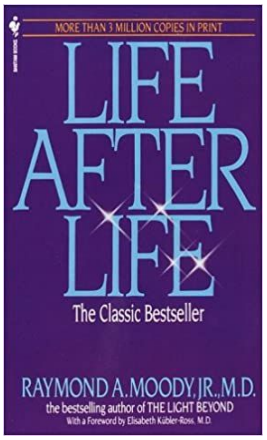
InPresence 0073: The Wisdom of Nonsense with Jeffrey Mishlove

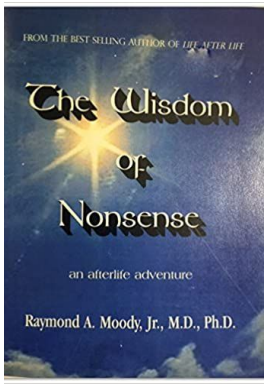
Video Transcript - *New Thinking Allowed* with Jeffrey Mishlove
www.newthinkingallowed.org

Recorded on May 3, 2018
Published to YouTube on May 13, 2018

Copyright © 2020, New Thinking Allowed Foundation

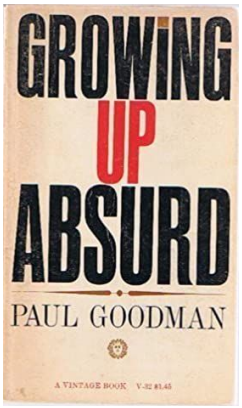
(00:19) Hello, I'm Jeffrey Mishlove, and today I'd like to talk about the wisdom of nonsense. Nonsense! You know, yesterday I talked about Raymond Moody's contributions, and indeed they're quite remarkable. As I mentioned, he's the author of *Life After Life* – a book that's sold probably about twenty million copies by now and really inaugurated the entire discipline of near-death experience. That is, the study of near-death experience, which has become a major focus of people from many different professions. And then, as I pointed out yesterday, he went on to talk about grief counseling – and the use of the psychomanteum for grief counseling – and his exploration of the relationship between the psychomanteum and the necromanteion, the ancient Greek temples for communication with the departed.





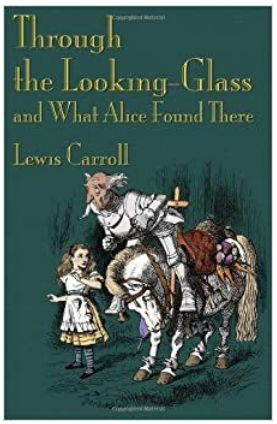
(01:20) Now, Raymond Moody has also written a book – and I have a privately published copy, number fifteen, signed by him because I helped support his work in creating this book – and it is called *The Wisdom of Nonsense*. Nonsense! I think it's very important, because how many have you, especially when you begin to delve into this realm of parapsychology, run into somebody who would tell you it's all nonsense? Moody is saying, "Yes, it is all nonsense, but that doesn't mean that it's wrong or that it's bad. We live in a world filled with nonsense on many, many different levels; we are surrounded by nonsense."

(02:10) I remember, to give you an example of what I'm trying to get at, in the Sixties, when I was a college undergraduate student, there was a very popular book – I believe the author was [Paul] Goodman – called *Growing Up Absurd*, and it pointed out all of the many, many absurdities of modern life. Things that we take for granted that seem totally rational and sensible to us. Well, what do they result in? War, pollution, mass examples of mental illness. By that, what I mean is, perhaps as much as a third or a half of the population is on psychiatric medication. So, one wonders, what does it even mean to say something is absurd,



something is nonsensical? Well, literally it means not having to do with the five senses. It's nonsense if you can't see it, touch it, taste it, smell it or hear it. That's nonsense! By definition, extra-sensory perception, then, is a form of nonsense. Survival after death is a form of nonsense. How is it possible that a spirit who has no eyes is able to see, and a spirit who has no ears is able to hear, and a spirit who has no mouth is able to communicate?

(03:42) Now, there are different kinds of nonsense. For example, if I go [unintelligible], well that's nonsensical. But, this is also nonsensical: "'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves / Did gyre and gimble in the wabe: / All mimsy were the borogoves, / And the mome raths outgrabe." That's another form of nonsense. That was a line from the famous poem by Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky." So, in our culture we have various levels of nonsense, and they serve important purposes. Nonsense – and you find it in poetry, you find it in surrealistic art – is a way of leading the mind away from the world of the senses, into other realms, other ways of perceiving and imagining things. That's why Moody feels – Raymond Moody feels – that the study of nonsense and different types of nonsense is a way to lead us into an appreciation of the afterlife. I would go so far as to say higher dimensions of consciousness and spiritual realms, as well.



(04:57) It's why, I think, some of the pioneers in the surrealist movement, people like André Breton, were deeply interested in tarot cards, amongst other things. The symbolism of the unconscious mind is completely nonsensical, and yet, you could say it's draped in wisdom. Now, Raymond Moody is sometimes quite critical of the field of parapsychology and psychical research, and other people are too. How can you endeavor to establish the existence of these other realms that are beyond the reach of the normal senses and yet do it using an empirical method, which is, by definition, limited to observations that are made through the senses? That itself seems like a form of nonsense. And yet, I can say, for one-hundred and fifty years psychical researchers and parapsychologists have endeavored to do exactly that, with a measure of success.

(06:05) I don't think Raymond Moody is entirely correct, when he – as he has done on occasion – suggests that parapsychology is really a pseudoscience. I think what he means is what I pointed out, the absurdity of trying to use the sensory methods for exploring the realm beyond the senses. I think that progress has been made, but it's been slow progress. Even though parapsychology is accepted by the American Association for the Advancement of Science as a legitimate science, the truth is, in practical terms, there's hardly any emphasis on the data of parapsychology and on universities and on mainstream scientific journals it's just there squeaking on the margin. Now– and that to me is a form of nonsense, the denial of the data that does exist is a form of nonsense.

(07:06) So, an appreciation of nonsense is maybe a very healthy thing for maintaining one's sanity in this world in which we live. Another thing that Moody points out, ironically, is that nonsense can get

your attention a lot faster than logic. Isn't that interesting? Well, one of the points that I derive from Moody's book is that if you look at shamanism, it seems completely nonsensical: that shamans can change their form from a human into an animal and back, or that they can travel into dream realms fully conscious? These things seem nonsensical, and yet, maybe it is by developing a greater appreciation for the power of nonsense that we break out of the crust of our socialization in which we live in a nonsensical world that we take for granted and we assume, "This is the way things should be, this is logical, this is normal, this is rational." Maybe it's just the opposite.

(08:23) There is a peculiar paradox and that is that many of the things that we assume are normal, rational, and the way things should be, actually, if you look at them, they are absurd, they are nonsensical. And the things that we conventionally call nonsensical, they are the things that lead us deeper into our subconscious, into the realm even of our superconscious, into the realm of higher reality and greater knowledge. It's about breaking out of the crust of conventional thinking.

(09:00) Let me ask you a few questions: Are there aspects of your own life that seem completely nonsensical to you? Are there things that you need to rebel against because they are so nonsensical? Do they need to be straightened out? And on the flip-side, are there areas where you might grow, yourself, by developing greater appreciation for the nonsense that exists? That the nonsense that we find ourselves in, it's like an art form, like surrealism, like a beautiful dream, or maybe a horrible dream. It can cut both ways.

(09:44) Now, an interesting point – and I'll end here – is that, I know a few of you differ with me politically, and I think it's funny in a way, because truths that seem so self-evident to me, strike some of you as completely nonsensical, and then, things that some of you post about your political beliefs, strike me as completely nonsensical. So, what that tells me is it's very important to develop an appreciation for things that we regard as nonsensical. Are there things that you disparage in your life because they seem like nonsense to you? Perhaps it's time to take a new look at them. Thank you for being with me. (10:36)

New Thinking Allowed Foundation



Supporting Conversations on the Leading Edge of Knowledge and Discovery with Psychologist Jeffrey Mishlove

Visit our YouTube Channel for More Videos