

# "Explaining Away" Your Own Experience(s)

**By Michael Mannion**

In "[Matthew's Story](#)," another article on the [Journal](#) of the Mindshift Institute, an experiencer given the pseudonym of Matthew explored the implications of a recent extraterrestrial dream he had. Because of the dream, he was considering being more open about his experiences. In a further conversation, Matthew elaborated on a little-discussed phenomenon—denying or “explaining away” one's own anomalous experience(s).

Ideological or characterological debunkers are frightened by both the unknown and the possibility that their vision of reality may be severely limited. As a result, they are motivated by their anxiety to “debunk” or “explain away” phenomena that threaten their worldview. However, these debunkers are not the only ones so troubled. Some of the people who have anomalous experiences that expand their consciousness—and necessitate the development of a new definition of reality—can find themselves at times as frightened as the most ardent debunker.

A number of years ago, Matthew and a friend had a sighting of an elliptical light late at night and an encounter with non-human intelligences. Both he and his partner, given the pseudonym of Amber, have explored their sighting and encounters with a well-known expert in the field. ([Amber's story](#) can be found in the Mindshift Archives in a two-part article.) Matthew and I have discussed his story in great detail, but in this conversation, he spoke about his emotions in the first few days after his anomalous experience.

“I always thought that if I had an experience like this,” he said, “if I actually saw what we call a UFO, that I would want to tell everyone I knew about it. Instead, I didn't tell anyone. I didn't even talk to Amber about it. And she did not discuss it with me. We were together on our own for three days, away from home in a small town where we didn't know anyone. Yet, over that three-day period, we did not talk about the amazing light that had woken us up from a deep sleep at 2:30 in the morning.”

I asked Matthew if he knew what might account for his unusual behavior.

“It still puzzles me,” he replied. “I can understand my not telling some closed-minded people I know. And I know why I wouldn't bring it up at work. Too many in the field would not understand and would just write me off.”

It is ironic that Matthew is uncomfortable speaking with many people he knows through his work since he is involved with organizations devoted to “expanded consciousness.” But too often, just like debunkers, many who explore new realms of knowledge are not open to what is now called the extraterrestrial phenomenon. They too seek to “explain away” this anomaly. Frequently, their worldview does not include Matthew's type of experience. It must be explained away as a misinterpretation of some other experience that fits in with their worldview. Some of the prominent people in these organizations, run by the self-

proclaimed “cultural creatives” of our day, believe, along with the highly-touted writer Ken Wilber, that those who say they have had encounters with extraterrestrials are like people who say they have seen Elvis alive. Closed minds are not limited to the debunkers of the old paradigm.

“But what really troubled me,” Matthew continued, “was not the reaction of other people. Or my fears of how others might respond to my telling them about my experiences. What was most disturbing in the days following the sighting and encounter was how powerfully my own organism tried to repress the memory of the experience. I could feel a tremendous force in my body pushing down, pushing down in my solar plexus to the core of my being. I heard myself thinking, 'You didn't see that...You didn't see anything...It's all in your imagination.' And then I heard a deeper part of myself answer, 'But I did see the light on the lake...I did have that experience.'” Matthew smiled. “It was quite a battle for the next few days.”

Matthew was deeply impressed by the involvement of his whole being in the denial of his own experience. “The encounter caused a bioenergetic expansion in my body, a movement of energy from the core of my organism to the periphery. It was a reaching out toward the world, an expansion. But my organism could not tolerate it. Then an opposite movement of energy took over, a bioenergetic contraction set in, or a movement away from the world. This movement of energy, away from the periphery of my body and toward the center of my body, is the physical process that we call anxiety. And this deep biophysical anxiety reaction is what I think is at the root of my denial of my own experience. The power of my own bioenergetic reaction to my own experience taught me something about myself that has helped me to better understand, and be more tolerant of, the debunkers and those who fear the enigma we now call the extraterrestrial phenomenon.”

I asked Matthew what he had learned that has helped him understand those who fear or reject the possibility of encounters with non-human intelligences.

“I came to understand that I am like them in many ways, more than I'd like to admit,” Matthew said simply. “I found out that I too, at times, want to deny my own interactions with this new reality. My own intense struggle to deny my own experience has helped me be more empathetic with others who reject the reality of anomalous phenomena.

“A friend, someone who is not at all open to the possibility that my experiences are real, explained that he could not accept them because, as he said, 'then I would have to change my whole view of reality.' That remark sums it all up quite succinctly. He and many others cannot accept the reality of these experiences, but I am not really concerned. I have learned to accept the inability of many people to be open in this area because I have felt those same feelings myself.”

Matthew ended our talk by sharing a conclusion he has reached based on his reflections about his encounters with non-human intelligences.

“It is pretty clear to me,” he said, “that there is no 'them' and 'us' involved in this matter.

There are not only two sides—debunkers and believers, skeptics and experiencers. Instead, I see a spectrum of understanding. Where any individual is on that spectrum is determined in great part by his or her capacity to be a true skeptic—that is, an open-minded seeker of the truth—when it comes to anomalous phenomena such as encounters with non-human intelligences.”

As Matthew and Amber continue to explore their encounters with non-human intelligences, and share what they are learning, they provide insights into this enigmatic anomaly that are not found, to my knowledge, in the reports of others who have had similar experiences. Their stories will continue to be presented in the coming months because they are an integral part of the mindshift now underway.

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