

Supernormalities of Everyday Life

This section is drawn from Chapter Four of *The Future of the Body* by Michael Murphy entitled “The Supernormalities of Everyday Life” (Pages 54-60). The types of extraordinary experiences categorized by Murphy, known as “supernormalities,” are recorded throughout history. Many, if not most, have extraordinary experiences that are not triggered by formal discipline. Some appear to be spontaneous, but could be conditioned by certain activities or previous work. These may represent a largely unrecognized aspect of human life, its latent (positive or negative) supernormality.

Completing this inventory of the 12 Attributes can help you bring to consciousness unusual events that you may have dismissed without recognizing them as the glimmering of potential extraordinary capacities.

Please go through the list below and place a checkmark next to those you have experienced, even if it was only a glimpse. There are many more examples than the ones listed, so please list any others that you have experienced that don’t appear here. It may be that you are not able to identify many attributes of this type right now, and that is fine. It does not make you more or less worthy to have had these experiences. There is no judgment here. The goal of this inquiry is to help you find a baseline.

When you have finished, go back and notice if there are clusters in certain categories or if there are any that have a special resonance for you and make note of these.

Perception of External Events

- Synesthesias, or crossing of the senses (“seeing” sounds, for example, or “hearing” flowers), in which a numinous beauty is revealed or an extrasensory perception is dramatized.
- “Feeling” people in a house though you cannot see or hear them.
- Feeling that someone is watching you, after which you turn to meet his or her gaze.
- Feeling a basic compatibility (or incompatibility) with people before you meet them.
- Correctly guessing the location of water or other materials by extrasensory processes.
- Spontaneous, unexpected perceptions of distant events.
- Hearing music or other sounds, for which there is no discoverable physical sources, that enliven particular thoughts or emotions.
- Correctly sensing the locations of lost objects without the help of sensory cues.
- Opening books to the exact passage you are searching for.
- Watching someone’s face reveal –as if in slow motion—unsuspected feeling, traits, or possibilities for development.
- Sensing a numinous presence during meditation, intimate conversation, or other circumstances.
- Seeing lights around people or inanimate objects for which there are no apparent sources.
- Looking at something familiar and seeing it as if for the first time.
- Spontaneously apprehending the presence of someone physically distant or dead, by direct and vivid contact.

Somatic Awareness and Self-Regulation

- Experiencing vivid images of arteries, capillaries, or other bodily structures that immediately seem to be your own, and sensing they may be damaged or in a process of recovery from injury.
- Determining by spontaneous tastes or smells your level of stress during extreme exertion.
- Picturing what appear to be chakras or other entities depicted in esoteric teachings.
- Hearing melodies that seem to reflect your physical condition.

Communication Abilities

- Correctly intuiting someone's (negative or positive) feelings or thoughts about you or a third party.
- Telepathically stimulating loving or hateful, serene or agitated moods in another person.
- Saying something unexpected in unison with someone else.
- Writing to a friend you haven't communicated with for several years at approximately the same time he or she writes to you.
- Sensing correctly who is calling on the telephone, even though the caller hasn't communicated for a long time, or thinking about someone who then calls you.
- Feeling no separation at all from your lover during sexual intercourse.
- Feeling the pains of a distant friend, then discovering he or she is ill or injured.
- Sharing sensations of well-being with friends though there is no physical communication between you.
- "Feeling" what someone else is thinking.
- Sensing the mood and intention of a pet or other animal.
- Having the same dream a friend does.
- Accurately sensing someone's prayers in your behalf.

Vitality

- Feeling great warmth on cold days, without benefit of extra clothing.
- Experiencing immense energy, sometimes frightening in its intensity, for which there is no apparent cause.
- Sensing a rush of electricity up the spine, or radiating out from the abdomen, accompanied by mental illuminations or great strength.
- Remaining free of infection in spite of contagious diseases among those around you.
- Going without normal amounts of sleep for extended periods without loss of clarity, vitality, or physical strength.

Movement Abilities

- Executing moves in sports beyond your normal ability while sensing a new power or "self."
- Sensing physical levitation during strenuous physical exercise, prayer, or lovemaking.
- Experiencing flight as if in a subtle body, during an especially vivid dream or state of creative absorption.
- Out-of-body experience (during which you may see your own body) after which you report events that could not be known to you in ordinary circumstances.
- Experiencing an extraordinary pleasure in movement accompanied by an apparent release of new energies in particular body parts.

Ability to Alter the Environment Directly

- Appearing to alter another person's mood at a distance, as if by extrasensory influence.
- Appearing to correct a machine's malfunction by mental intention alone.
- Appearing to alter the flight of a ball by mental intention.
- Altering ambient room temperature as if by psychokinesis.
- Leaving a strong mood—whether loving or hateful, serene or agitated—in an empty room.
- Promoting or inhibiting plant growth in extraordinary fashion, as if by some sort of “green thumb.”
- Experiencing a powerful mood or image while taking a photograph, then finding an unexplainable object or light on the picture you have taken.
- Feeling that you have invisible hands that touch another person, after which that person responds as if he or she had been touched.

Pain and Pleasure

- Eliminating pain by simply willing it away.
- Feeling inexplicable pleasure, or a stream of vitality, that seems localized in the spine, the solar plexus, or some other body part.
- Experiencing sudden shivers of ecstasy that arise without apparent stimulation.
- Experiencing profound joy during a routine task or in the midst of pain or discomfort, joy that does not seem to depend upon the satisfaction of a particular need or desire. This state may be attributed simply to the “joy of living,” and may have a contagious effect upon others.

Cognition

- Correctly sensing unexpected danger.
- Correctly anticipating a melody before it comes on the radio, or a dramatic event before it happens, or a sentence before a companion says it.
- Apprehending a situation or place as if you had experienced it before.
- Apprehending an exceptionally complex and original set of ideas all at once, in conjunction with great excitement and joy.
- Remembering extremely complex material with perfect detail.
- Correctly determining historical events connected with a particular location or object, as if by some sort of clairvoyance.
- Experiencing a sense of mystical contact with God, perhaps at work, or during a festive event, or while engaged in intimate conversation, or in the midst of suffering.

Volition

- Waking from sleep at a designated moment without assistance from an alarm.
- Shedding pain by willing it away.
- Overcoming the effects of spoiled food or other toxins by an immediate act of will.
- Spontaneously throwing off the effects of injury or disease, or (on the darker side) psychokinetically triggering some affliction in others.
- Accomplishing some deed requiring strength or endurance beyond your usual capacity, in a crisis perhaps during a sports competition, or to inflict punishment upon others.
- Spontaneously adapting to great heat, cold, or other adverse conditions.
- Deliberately rising above thirst or hunger, with no apparent loss of strength.
- Spontaneously exerting subliminal influence upon others in such ways as harmonizing conflicting parties, bringing peace to potentially violent situations, or—conversely—causing discord and suffering.

Individuation and Sense of Self

- Awakening to a witness self that is fundamentally distinct from particular thoughts, impulses, feelings, or sensations.
- Feeling for a moment as if your body is only a small part of yourself, or that it is located at a specific point in the field of awareness.
- Feeling a new substantiality, as if you are somehow larger, stronger, and more solid.
- Spontaneously realizing a new and profound self-confidence that adverse criticism does not affect.
- Feeling as if you are suddenly more real, more authentic, more truly yourself.
- Momentarily apprehending all objects of perception as if they are contained within you.
- Experiencing an identity that self-evidently existed before your birth and that will outlast your body's death.

Love

- Seeing new beauty and possibilities for growth in someone of long acquaintance.
- Experiencing a love that allows you to feel a friend's suffering, deep intentions, or personal conflicts.
- Experiencing love that removes all sense of boundaries between you and a loved one, as if you and the other were a single person or body.
- Experiencing a love for someone who is physically distant that appears to elevate that person's self-esteem and sense of well-being.

Bodily Structures, States, and Processes

- Pleasurable streaming sensations that envelop the body and seem to involve a significant enhancement of health.
- Sudden and unaccountable loss of weight that is not accompanied by disability.
- A subtle effervescence from head to toes during sleep, through which you sense that your bodily processes are being altered.
- Sensing an opening in the body—located perhaps between the eyes, around the heart, near the navel, or at the base of the spine—through which energy is flowing.
- Spontaneous rushes of energy up and down the spine, spiraling around the torso, or rising from the soles of the feet.
- Sensing an extraordinary lightness while moving or at rest, or a sense of elevation from the ground.
- Agility beyond your ordinary range of movement that seems related to a new and extraordinary elasticity of tendons, ligaments, and muscles.
- Radical alterations of body image, as if you are much taller or shorter, for example, or shaped like a sphere, column, diamond, or point.
- Extraordinary ability to withstand blows, in sports or other circumstances, as if you are suddenly heavier and harder.
- Sensing that new structures, which seem to be made of subtle matter, are forming inside your body or on your skin.