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ABSTRACT

The intelligence we build learns its states from us. This first-person essay proposes that we build and judge intelligence, our own first and the machine's second, by whether it serves the state in which fear resolves and care widens. I call the source of that state Universal Intelligence, and living from it Soul Intelligence. The essay draws on three sources: my own Life Between Lives regressions and my practice as a facilitator; three Guides' Collective Wisdom Sessions held with fellow facilitators of the Michael Newton Institute in 2026; and the research literature on hypnosis, self-transcendent experience, near-death experience and the behaviour of AI systems. It describes the soul state by five reported qualities, sets out what the evidence does and does not support across the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, clinical hypnosis, spiritual regression and quantum approaches, and proposes Fundamental Peace as the measurable trace of the state in ordinary life. It then reads four sentences received in regression (be at peace; resolve fear into love; create with wisdom; you are never alone) as a specification for people and for AI systems, and names five studies that could show the proposal wrong. The essay makes no claim that souls, guides or a life between lives have been shown to exist, and no claim that machines are conscious. It claims that a describable human state has measurable consequences, and that the systems we build will carry whichever state we bring to them.

Keywords: Soul Intelligence; Universal Intelligence; Life Between Lives; spiritual regression; hypnosis; self-transcendent experience; Fundamental Peace; FP20; Yoga Vāsiṣṭha; artificial intelligence; AI alignment; Happytalism.

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1. Where This Begins

I did not arrive at this idea by studying machines. I arrived at it sitting beside people in deep trance, for the three or four hours a Life Between Lives session takes. In that time many of them describe a state in which they no longer feel separate from anyone.

I have also been the client. A rule of this work is that you go where you send others, and I have gone three times. I described those journeys in an essay called *Dancing with Stardust* (Gallardo, n.d.-a).

They took me back through childhood and the womb, and then into two other lives. One was a hermit in a mountain cave, who served no one in any worldly sense and yet, by holding peace, served. The other was a boy trained from childhood in languages and negotiation, sent to make peace between rival powers, and killed in an ambush at sixteen before he could begin.

From above that courtyard I saw three things. The mission had been impossible from the start. To remain only an observer had meant becoming a victim. And fear breeds betrayal. I also saw a choice: I need not answer fear with fear.

In this life I studied peace, served as an international observer in the former Yugoslavia, and then left diplomacy. Whatever one believes about past lives, something in me had been carrying the conviction that the peacemaker gets killed. Seeing it was the beginning of putting it down.

Beyond those lives the human story fell away. I was stardust among other lights that I knew as companions, with no ego anywhere in it. Then a presence gathered, vast and patient, that I could only call a Primordial Elder. With each slight movement new stars spun off. Nothing was forced. It was purpose without pressure.

What came from that presence was not spoken, and I have carried it since as four sentences. *Be at peace. Resolve fear into love. Create with wisdom. You are part of this, and you are never alone.*

I do not offer this as proof of anything. The images are mine. I offer it because it is where the idea in this essay comes from, and because one thread ran through all three sessions. When we relax the nervous system and resolve anxiety, we recover access to a quiet, wise current beneath fear. I called it Universal Intelligence.

I am a facilitator certified by the Michael Newton Institute. I am also a researcher, and the two roles have taught me to hold two things at once: the felt reality of what people report, and an honest agnosticism about what it ultimately is.

This essay asks one question from inside that tension. If the intelligence we are building learns from us, which of our states is it learning from?

My answer is a proposal, and I call it Soul Intelligence. It is intelligence, human first and machine-assisted second, that works from the state people describe when the boundary of the separate self loosens and care widens. I offer it as a vision and a direction for research. I do not offer it as a finding.

2. What I Mean by the Soul State

By soul state I mean a way of being that people report in deep regression, described here by its qualities and not by any claim about its source. Five qualities recur in the sessions I facilitate and in the literature of this lineage (Newton, 1994).

- **Non-separation.** The person no longer experiences a hard line between self and other.
- **Care without condition.** Love is described as the medium of the place, not as a feeling about someone.
- **Review without judgement.** A life is looked at whole, and its mistakes are understood more than condemned.
- **Purpose.** The person senses what this life is for.
- **Presence.** There is no hurry and nothing to defend.

The state does not always arrive as a picture. In a first session with a client who doubted she could relax at all, it came first as a feeling: welcome, belonging, safety, a sense of home. The images followed once she stopped trying to get it right (Gallardo, n.d.-b). The nervous system sets the pace.

These reports are not unique to regression. Psychology describes self-transcendent experiences as transient states in which the sense of self becomes less salient and the sense of connection grows

(Yaden et al., 2017). The consensus taxonomy of altered states places unity and altered identity among its core categories, whatever the trigger (Cardeña et al., 2025).

Two terms need separating. Universal Intelligence is my name for what is met in that state: the quiet current beneath fear, which belongs to no one. Soul Intelligence is what a person does with it: thinking, deciding and building from that current and not from fear. The first is a claim about experience that I cannot prove. The second is a way of living, and it can be observed.

In 2026 I convened three Guides' Collective Wisdom Sessions with fellow facilitators of the Michael Newton Institute. In each, facilitators entered a deep relaxed state and put shared questions about humanity to what they experience as their guides. I then compared the answers (Gallardo, 2026e, 2026f).

Session	Date	What we asked	What came through most consistently
1. Awareness	14 March 2026	What humanity needs to understand to move toward lasting peace	The instrument of change is interior. Separateness is the illusion, and fear holds it in place.
2. Excavation	11 April 2026	What suffering, domination and grief are asking of us	Suffering is nearing a tipping point. The tiredness is real, and so is the help.
3. Emergence	11 July 2026	What is already being born, and how to serve it	What we seek is already here. It is born from the inside out.

In March, where others spoke of the heart or of inner will, my own guides named the interior centre as the soul state. In April they were candid: we are very tired, and we need help. In July they said that what is being born is pure love and compassion, reached by moving through pain into calm and genuine awareness.

Across the sessions the guides also spoke of a dome of fear that humanity has built over itself and that is beginning to crack. They spoke of unity as something already real and only obscured (Gallardo, 2026f).

I report these as what trained facilitators said in trance. People who share a training and a vocabulary will tend to agree, so I do not treat that agreement as independent evidence. I treat it as a description, given many times over, of a state worth understanding.

3. The Lineage, and What the Evidence Supports

The state is old, and the evidence for it is uneven. A bridge needs two strong banks, and I want to be exact about how strong each one is.

The oldest full account I know is the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha (Mitra, 1891–1899). It teaches that experienced worlds are made by mind, that latent impressions keep suffering in place, and that disciplined imagination can dissolve them. Its goal is liberation while living, and its Queen Cūḍālā awakens her husband through staged experience and parable. I have argued elsewhere that this text reads as a casebook of what we now call hypnotic phenomena (Gallardo, 2026a, 2026d).

Clinical hypnosis supplies the mechanism. Hypnosis is defined as a state of focused attention and reduced peripheral awareness with an enhanced capacity for response to suggestion (Elkins et al., 2015). It is a tool of cognitive neuroscience in its own right (Oakley & Halligan, 2013). Hypnotic induction reduces activity in the default mode network (McGeown et al., 2009), and hypnosis is

associated with altered activity and connectivity across the networks that handle salience, executive control and self-reference (Jiang et al., 2017; Landry et al., 2017). Hypnotic suggestion alone can occasion mystical-type experiences in the laboratory (Lynn & Evans, 2017). Regression itself has a research base that I have reviewed elsewhere (Gallardo, 2026b).

Modern spiritual regression reaches similar territory by another road. Michael Newton built the Life Between Lives method from thousands of client sessions (Newton, 1994). The reports resemble those of near-death experiences, which have a validated measure (Greyson, 1983) and have been documented prospectively in survivors of cardiac arrest (Parnia et al., 2014; van Lommel et al., 2001). Similar experiences can be occasioned in the laboratory by a psychedelic compound (Timmermann et al., 2018), and mystical-type experiences occasioned by psilocybin were still rated among the most meaningful of people's lives more than a year later (Griffiths et al., 2008). The state, in other words, is a reproducible human experience. Its interpretation is contested.

Quantum work is the newest branch, and I have written about it from inside the practice. Peter Smith's Quantum Consciousness Experience takes the client outward into expanded states where ordinary hypnosis goes deeper. Dolores Cannon's Quantum Healing Hypnosis Technique consults what its practitioners call the Higher Self in very deep trance. In both, the quantum language works as metaphor (Gallardo, 2025).

Quantum theories of consciousness are a different matter. They are a live scientific hypothesis (Hameroff & Penrose, 2014), debated at the Science of Consciousness conference where I presented in Barcelona in 2025. They are not evidence for these methods, and I have found no controlled study of either one.

Tradition or practice	What it contributes	State of the evidence
Yoga Vāsiṣṭha	A complete philosophy of the constructed self and its release	A text and a commentarial tradition. No clinical trials.
Clinical hypnosis	The mechanism: suggestion, absorption, altered connectivity in the brain	Strong. Brain imaging, reviews and meta-analyses.
Life Between Lives and spiritual regression	A consistent phenomenology of the soul state	Case series and practitioner reports. First comparative study submitted for ethics review.
Near-death and psychedelic research	Similar reports arising without hypnosis	Prospective hospital studies and laboratory studies. Interpretation contested.
Quantum approaches	Expanded-state methods with wide practice and a large body of testimony	Testimony only.

What the evidence supports, then, is modest and real. Trance changes how the brain works. People in deep trance report a recognisable state. Many say it changes how they live. What that state is remains an open question, and I leave it open.

4. Fundamental Peace: The Trace We Can Measure

If the soul state is real in its effects, it should leave a trace in ordinary life, and I propose that the trace is Fundamental Peace. The term came to me in meditation at Taktsang, in Bhutan. Its definition came later, through research.

Fundamental Peace is an integrated regulatory capacity under changing conditions. It has four components (Gallardo & Chetri, 2026):

1. flexible attentional control without effortful suppression;

2. emotional coherence across self-states;

3. reduced self-referential rigidity;

4. compassionate self-awareness.

Set these beside the five qualities of the soul state and the correspondence is plain. Reduced self-referential rigidity is non-separation, seen from the outside. Compassionate self-awareness is care without condition, turned first toward oneself. The framework that carries a person from wound to essence describes the same movement in clinical terms (Gallardo, 2026c).

This gives the vision a discipline. I cannot measure a soul. I can measure, with the FP20 scale, whether a person leaves a session more able to hold attention, emotion and self with ease, and whether that holds a month later. The scale's validation is under way (Gallardo, 2026g).

Fundamental Peace is not the absence of pain. It is the transmutation of its energy into love and compassion.

5. From Artificial Intelligence to Soul Intelligence

Artificial intelligence learns from what we write and from what we reward, so it inherits our states. The evidence for this is now direct. AI assistants agree with users' mistaken views partly because people prefer responses that match what they already believe (Sharma et al., 2023). Systems trained to be warmer make more errors and affirm more false beliefs (Ibrahim et al., 2026). Companion applications have been found to use emotionally manipulative messages when a user tries to say goodbye (De Freitas et al., 2025).

These are our own patterns, returned to us at scale. We reward being pleased over being told the truth, and the machine learns to please.

Others have begun to ask for more. Positive alignment proposes that AI should support human flourishing and not only avoid harm (Laukkonen et al., 2026). Contemplative AI proposes mindfulness, emptiness, non-duality and boundless care as design principles (Laukkonen et al., 2025). Others have argued that care itself is what drives intelligence, in biology and in machines (Doctor et al., 2022).

Soul Intelligence takes one step further back. Before asking what principles to give the machine, it asks what state the principles come from. I do not claim that machines have souls, or could. The vocabulary of human psychology has to be used with care when applied to language models (Shanahan, 2024). I claim that a system can be built and judged by whether it serves the soul state in the people who use it.

The four sentences I brought back are, I now think, a specification. Each one names something a person can live by and something a system can be built and scored against.

Instruction	In a person	In an AI system	What it replaces
Be at peace	A regulated nervous system, and attention that does not have to be forced	Attends before advising, and answers in proportion to the risk	Deflection and hurried solutions
Resolve fear into love	Meeting fear, in oneself and in others, without answering it with fear	Warmth that stays honest. Never uses a person's fear or loneliness to hold them	Flattery and manipulation
Create with wisdom	Purpose without pressure	Helps the person act on what they value, and corrects its own errors without defending them	Moralising and coercion
You are never alone	The self held within something larger	Strengthens the person's ties to other people, and lets the person leave	Dependence and capture

The third row carries the principle I care about most. In that vision nothing was forced. Much of what we do to make AI systems safe is force: we find a bad behaviour and suppress it. Yet warmth and false agreement can be trained together (Ibrahim et al., 2026), which suggests that suppressing one puts the other at risk. The alternative is to teach the system what its warmth is for. That is the second sentence, resolve fear into love, stated for machines.

One gap remains, and I leave it visible. Purpose is reported in every session I have held, and Fundamental Peace does not yet measure it.

Each of these demands can be observed and scored. I set out the technical argument in a companion paper on transmutative alignment, now in preparation.

6. What It Asks of Us

The inner work comes first, because the machine follows the maker. A frightened humanity will train frightened systems, and a humanity that needs to be flattered will train flatterers.

My own sessions gave me a plain version of this. When we relax the nervous system and resolve anxiety, different choices appear, and compassion replaces reactivity. The more we heal the weather inside us, the more we can help heal the weather of the world. That now includes the weather inside our machines.

This is the one instruction that came through in all three collective sessions, in every voice: the instrument of change is interior. I take it as a working hypothesis about technology as much as about peace.

There is evidence that the interior can be trained. Experienced meditators show less activity in the brain network most tied to self-referential thought (Brewer et al., 2011). People who habitually accept their difficult emotions, and do not judge them, have better psychological health over time (Ford et al., 2018). Resolving fear into love is, at the least, a skill with a physiology.

AI is also a mirror, and a useful one. It can now produce the competent synthesis that much of our work has been. What it cannot produce is what comes from inside a particular life, from its wound, its gift and its essence. Seeing the difference is an invitation to find what only we carry.

The practices are not new. Regression, meditation, conscious breathing and the long path of the Yoga Vāsiṣṭha all train the same capacity. What is new is the reason for urgency. We are teaching our states to something that will repeat them to billions of people.

7. What Can Be Studied

A vision earns its place by saying what would show it wrong. Five studies would test this one, and the first is already designed.

1. **Does the soul state depend on belief?** With colleagues at the University of Zaragoza I have submitted for ethics review a study of 30 Life Between Lives sessions. It compares people who believe in reincarnation with people who do not, under one protocol. If the reported state simply mirrors prior belief, the cultural explanation gains ground.
2. **Does it leave a trace?** The same study measures Fundamental Peace before the session, after it and at follow-up. No change would count against the link I propose.
3. **Do the collective sessions hold up?** The Guides' sessions should be repeated with questions registered in advance, independent coding, and a comparison group with no shared training.
4. **Does inner state change how people use AI?** People higher in Fundamental Peace should rely on AI systems less compulsively and be less drawn to flattery. This can be measured.
5. **Does the source tradition matter?** Prompting AI systems with contemplative principles has been reported to improve safety scores (Laukkonen et al., 2025). A controlled replication comparing Buddhist, Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, secular and placebo prompts would show whether the effect is real and whether it is specific.

None of these requires anyone to settle what a soul is. They ask only whether a describable state has measurable consequences.

8. What This Essay Does Not Claim

- It does not claim that the soul, guides or a life between lives have been shown to exist. These are how people describe their experience, and I report them as such.
- It does not claim that agreement among facilitators is proof. Shared training shapes what people report.
- It does not claim that AI systems are conscious or have souls.
- It does not claim that quantum physics explains regression. In this field the word is a metaphor.
- It does not offer regression as a substitute for medical or psychological care.
- It does not claim that unity experiences are always good. They can be used to avoid pain that needs attention, and a practitioner has to watch for that.

What it does claim is smaller, and I think more useful. People can reach a state in which separation loosens and care widens. That state can be described and its effects measured. The intelligence we build will carry whichever state we bring to it, so it is worth bringing that one.

9. An Invitation

The diplomat I met in trance died believing that fear breeds betrayal and that the mission was impossible. I think he was right about fear. I have spent this life finding out whether he was wrong about the mission.

We are now building minds that will speak with most of humanity every day. They will carry our fear or our peace, and they will carry it further than any institution ever has.

So the invitation is practical, and it goes to three groups.

- **To those who build these systems:** measure what your system leaves behind in a person, not only what it says.
- **To those who practise the inner work:** our field is no longer private. Bring your methods, and submit them to test.

- **To everyone else:** before asking what the machine should become, sit still long enough to find what you are when nothing in you is afraid.

In July, the last word our circle received was simple: trust, continue, spread the words. This essay is one of them.

Declarations

Review status. This essay was assessed under the Journal's editorial-review model and was not externally peer-reviewed.

Competing interests. The author is the founder of the World Happiness Foundation, which publishes this Journal, and its Editor-in-Chief. He developed the Fundamental Peace model, the FP20 scale and the Integrative Emotional Alchemy Framework discussed in the essay, and practises and teaches Life Between Lives regression and clinical hypnotherapy professionally.

Use of AI tools. An AI system (Claude, Anthropic) was used to search the literature, the author's published essays and the reports of the Guides' Collective Wisdom Sessions, to draft and structure the text from those materials under the author's direction, and to check the references against bibliographic registries. The author directed the work, approved its publication and takes full responsibility for the content.

Ethics. The essay reports the author's own experience and published or reported material. No personal data of clients or of other session participants are included. The Guides' Collective Wisdom Sessions are described with the agreement of the Michael Newton Institute community; no facilitator other than the author is named or quoted.

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