

PSYCHED OUT

When it comes to the supernatural, I am a reluctant believer. But the New Age airy-fairyness that spreads in California as rampantly as eucalyptus trees gives me the willies. So on my way to Lafayette to meet psychic Chuck Coburn, I am equal parts hopeful and wary.

Coburn's wife, Shirl, answers the Avonlady doorbell and guides me inside the sprawling house. Why, with wire-rim glasses and salt-and-pepper hair and mustache, Coburn's just a normal guy.

Make that a paranormal guy. Some twenty years ago, as a thirty-five-year-old businessman who ran his own \$8 million-

a-year construction firm, he had "no belief in psychic awareness." Then one Sunday evening, while dining in a San Francisco restaurant, Coburn had a clear image of a woman across the room being violently choked by a man. Minutes later the woman was choking on a piece of food and her male companion put his hands around her throat in an attempt to dislodge it.

Coburn was so profoundly affected by his clairvoyance that he shut down his business to become a psychic. Today he gives private readings, teaches and has assisted the police in finding missing persons.



In his recently released first book, *Funny You Should Say That: A Lighthearted Awakening to Psychic Awareness*, Coburn paints himself as a metaphysical Renaissance man, guiding readers through his own mystical journey that packs in the whole New Age kit and caboodle—crystals, past lives, you name it.

Coburn, who often precedes statements with "this may sound wiggly," makes even the most far-out phenomenon seem possible. He gives me a forty-five-minute reading, pinpointing the year I met my husband and describing my childhood. I was a quiet girl with cat-eye glasses. Had he called my mother?

The day after I met Coburn I called him to ask if I left my glasses at his house. No, sorry, he says, you didn't. After chatting for a few more minutes, he says, "Look in a place you've already searched thoroughly. I think you'll find your glasses there."

Who knows why, but I go straight to my car and feel under my car seat—the very same place I had scoured the day before. Presto: my glasses. I call Coburn back. "There are two explanations," he says. "One, you just hadn't looked hard enough the first time. Two, your spiritual guide knew you were going to look there and manifested them for you."

"Well, that's a little hard to believe," I say.

"Well, whether you believe it or not doesn't matter," he says. "At least you have your glasses back."

—Leslie Crawford