

TO FLY
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I don't remember exactly when it was, but one day I discovered I could defy gravity just by using my mind.

I was walking down the empty street on which I lived. On a whim I felt like skipping, as I had done as a child. Perhaps to see if I could still do it. I could! I felt my neighbors should not see me, a middle-aged man, skipping, but I persisted. After all, it was early in the day, the street seemed deserted, and hopefully I wouldn't be observed, at least for long.

I remembered third grade when our teacher, Miss Foss, probably very experienced I now realize, would encourage her rambunctious students to skip around the outskirts of the desks in the middle of the morning, same in the afternoon. We'd get rid of some of that third-grade physical energy that no doubt made her subsequent teaching easier. Some of the girls were faster than the boys, as we played some sort of tag I can't fully recall.

In the exuberance of my middle-aged skipping rediscovery, I sheepishly tried to see how I could change my stride -- lengthen it, primarily. And then it happened.

At the top of a hard stride, it seemed I could delay my return to earth! I could extend that inevitable drop by thinking about it! Concentrating hard.

Whoa! This was mind-boggling. But I was approaching busier blocks on my way to the Metro. Even more I felt I should not be noticed. So, I returned to a normal walking gait, but thinking I've got to explore this phenomenon more, later!

Even then, after enough normal walking, I thought to try to lift off the ground -- just a bit, for a short distance -- mid-stride and not skipping. Yes! My brain brought it about. And yes, indeed, this did have to be explored more, later.

I tried again on the same street, not the next night, but at night sometime later, when I would not be easily seen with only streetlights. I wondered about the limits of my new-found ability. Yes, I could do the skipping thing, but I also tried just to stand still and lift myself off the sidewalk. I could do it! I felt like I was sort of squatting as I did so, not entirely vertical or standing up, but I was not uncomfortable. I

could change my height off the ground, move in different directions, go up a slanted bank or little hill, move in a circle, turn, and alter the speed with which I did these maneuvers. I was quite versatile. I could do all this by merely thinking what I wanted to do. No flapping of arms or legs was necessary.

I was even surer, however, that it all had to be my secret, not to be revealed to anyone. Why, I don't know.

A myriad of questions arose, not all at once, but persistently. How far could I go? How high? How long? How fast? Could I do it indoors? Could I transit while holding something with me (other than my clothes, which seemed unaffected)? Or pick up an object after I was airborne? If I fell off a high place somewhere, could I stop myself from harmfully hitting the ground? I felt answers should await another time. I went home from "my evening jog." I had greater confidence, plus wonder, excitement, and exhilaration. I eagerly anticipated necessary further experimentation.

At the same time, I wondered could my mind suddenly lose control of my antigravity-ness and I would tumble dangerously to the ground from who knows how high? Could I lose my power entirely just as surely as I had never discovered it before? Was it I alone who had this power? How could I find answers to these many questions?

A few days later I went to a nearby grassy park that had nicely spaced trees surrounding it -- a new setting that seemed both open yet secluded enough to avoid onlookers. In some shadows I let my mind focus. Slowly, deliberately, I mindfully rose off the ground. I moved effortlessly along its grassy contours. As the sensation grew familiar, I felt a lightness, as if the earth itself was relinquishing its grasp on me. I willed to go up and up, to the top of a tall tree nearby. As I looked down on the park, I plucked a leaf off the treetop. I could have gone higher, but I chose to flit around just above the canopy, which I did easily. Then I "landed."

Some of my many questions were not yet answered, and I was -- for want of a better word -- suspicious. I decided to Google this phenomenon, and eventually I was led to input "Dreams of Flying." Oh, oh. I hadn't thought of dreams. There were 17 pages of multiple entries! It seems more than a third of us have such

dreams; they're more common among children. They can represent a sense of freedom and the ability to rise above limitations. And countless other emotions, spiritual and otherwise, good and bad (though mostly good): power, liberty, accomplishment, longing for freedom, desire to escape, independence, confidence.

Hmmm. I haven't been able to fly since! But it was fun. Sweet dreams to you, too!