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BODY:

It is a quiet weekday evening and a suburban mother is visiting her neighbors. Suddenly she feels a quick, inexplicable pang of anxiety. Then she hears a voice in her head; it is the sound of her daughter crying for help. For a brief moment she wonders what is happening. Then she jumps up from the table and tells her puzzled friends that she has to go because her daughter is in trouble. She runs home and, opening the front door, sees her daughter lying on the floor, crying out in pain. A short while before, the girl had fallen down the stairs and broken her leg. Several years, ago, the Corsicana, Texas, police department spent three months searching for the body of an eighteen-year-old. When they finally turned to a psychic in desperation, they were given a description of the area where the body could be found. The location was so accurately described that the police briefly wondered if the psychic had been involved in the crime. A group of scientists--including professors from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Oxford University and Warsaw University--recently traveled to Egypt with psychics and a film crew on an unusual mission: They were out to prove the validity of psychic archeology. Before "The Alexandria Project" ended, the team had discovered the ruins of Mark Antony's palace, what may be the ruins of a palace belonging to Cleopatra, the probable site of Alexander the Great's tomb, and a legendary library. The incidents above are real; the study of psychic phenomena now occupies the minds of leading scientists in this country and abroad. Though the public may still associate this field with tea leaves, tarot cards and crystal balls, more than three hundred eminent scientists worldwide are involved in parapsychology research. They are all members of the Parapsychological Association, an affiliate of the prestigious American Association for the Advancement of Science.

And even those scientists whose research is in more traditional fields are looking to the work of parapsychologists with fresh interest. Recent polls show that more than one fourth of this country's scientific elite believe in extrasensory perception (ESP). And nonscientists are even more convinced. A majority of Americans believe in ESP and also claim to have had psychic experiences. According to the experts, this is not far-fetched: "In my opinion, almost everyone has psychic abilities," says Keith Harary, an experimental psychologist and co-author with Russell Targ of *The Mind Race: Understanding and Using Psychic Abilities* (Villard Book, 1984).

How do scientists define and analyze this ability? Parapsychologists call their field of study psi. Psi can be divided into two categories--ESP and psychokinesis (PK). ESP includes all those abilities--telepathy,

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clairvoyance and precognition--that allow people to receive information through channels outside the five known senses. PK is the ability to move or influence objects by thought.

Nobody knows what energy, force or power is responsible for psi. But, while it would be easy to argue that psychic phenomena don't exist because they can't be explained, it would be a mistake. After all, says Dr. Gertrude Schmeidler, professor emeritus of Psychology at City College of New York, and psi researcher, "We may not know what is responsible for psychic phenomena ... but the same is true of gravity. We know it works, but we don't know why." Much current psi research is directed toward understanding the laws that govern psychic phenomena, with the hope of someday discovering the force behind them. While psi may still be controversial, it is no longer as mysterious as it once was. Here's what is known about the hidden powers of the mind. A mother's sudden, strong feeling that her daughter needs help is a typical case of telepathy. Many people have reported experiencing this direct mind-to-mind contact, usually during a crisis, when someone is in pain, in danger or dying. Telepathy is most likely to happen between people connected by a strong emotional bond.

Besides a close tie between receiver and sender, successful extrasensory perception also seems to depend on a person's ability to calm his or her mind so that telepathic information can get through. Many ESP researchers are using meditation, hypnosis, relaxation and other methods of sensory deprivation to reduce the constant flow of information reaching the brain from the five known senses.

Exciting new research at New York University has led to a plausible theory of how telepathy might work. Lloyd Kaufman and his colleagues are using a new device called SQUID (superconducting quantum interference device) to measure the brain's electrical activity several centimeters above the scalp. Dr. Kaufman is able not only to detect the brain's electromagnetic energy through thin air, but he also claims to be able to distinguish between different areas of the brain being stimulated. According to Karen Gravelle, a biopsychologist and co-author with Robert Rivlin of *Deciphering the Senses: The Expanding World of Human Perception* (Simon & Schuster, 1984), "What if there are people who can actually see this energy field? There may be people who can 'read' other people's mental state from this information, and these would be the people we consider psychics." The man entering the storefront psychic parlor in Washington, D.D., is not an average man-off-the-street. He is a Navy official, and for nearly a year he has visited professional psychics. Each time he shows the psychics top secret photographs and charts, and asks them to determine by clairvoyance the location of Soviet submarines.

According to investigate reporter Ron McRae, in his book, *Mind Wars* (St. Martin's, 1982), these visits actually occurred. Although the Navy officially denies the story, McRae claims to have government documents and interviews that prove the Navy employed nearly three dozen psychics for espionage against Russia.

Clairvoyance differs from telepathy in that only one person is involved--a receiver who can somehow "see" distant objects and events.

The most dramatic examples of clairvoyance today come from police departments, where psychics are helping to locate missing persons, murder

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weapons and criminals. During the past few years, police chiefs across the country have become less skeptical about psychic assistance. More law enforcement agencies are using psychics than anyone realizes, says Marcello Truzzi, a sociologist at Eastern Michigan University who is conducting an extensive survey of the practice. One night while sleeping at his sister's house, Mark Twain dreamed that his brother, Henry, was a corpse lying in a metallic burial case in the living room. The next morning he told his sister of the dream. A few weeks later Henry died when a ship's boiler exploded.

Twain's dream was precognitive. Precognition is the perception of events in the future. Much of the lab work aimed at understanding precognition involves a type of experiment that scientists call precognitive remote perception.

In one such experiment, Pat Price, a former police commissioner from Burbank, California, sat in an electrically shielded room with two scientists from SRI International, an independent research institute in Menlo Park, California. At 3:00 P.M. on the day of the experiment, a third scientist got into his car for a drive, not knowing where he was headed. He knew only that his right and left turns would be determined arbitrarily by the flow of traffic.

Price's task was to determine where the third scientist would be at 3:30 P.M. At 3:05, with a tape recorder running, Price began to describe a boat dock along the bay near a Japanese pagoda. At the agreed-upon time, 3:30, the third scientist pulled his car over, walked around and drove back to SRI. Where had he been? The Redwood City Marina, where there is a popular pagoda-shaped restaurant.

According to the experts, no special talent or training is needed to be a success at remote perception; it's simply an ability that many of us have (see quiz, "How Psychic Are You?" page 56, to find out how you can participate in our remote perception experiment). Psychokinesis is defined as the ability to move or influence objects by thought alone, without the use of any known physical force. In theory, this mind-over-matter power would enable a paralyzed man to mentally move a glass of water to his lips, a gambler to influence the fall of the dice by his thoughts, a mother to concentrate and lift a 2,000-pound automobile to free her child trapped underneath. But psychokinesis has only been demonstrated in laboratories on a much smaller scale. Perhaps the most unnerving aspect of parapsychology research is the recent talk of a psychic arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union. A few years ago an intelligence report on the progress of Soviet parapsychology raised the possibility of a massive Soviet psychic warfare project. Sooner or later, the Defense Intelligence Agency report said, the Soviets would be able to know by psychic means the contents of secret U.S. government files, the deployment of troops and ships and the location of our military installations.

There is so far no evidence that the Soviets can do any of this yet. But just in case, the Pentagon wants to be prepared. The Navy, the Army, the Air Force, the Marines and several intelligence agencies, including the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, have all conducted psychic research. Tax dollars currently fund almost forty separate projects, to the tune of millions of dollars a year. Some parapsychologists have questioned the motives behind such military uses of psi, and have gone on to pursue a number of less threatening, more commercial applications. One of these scientists, Russell Targ, says that "after a hundred years of laboratory experiments, more acceptance will be gained for psi if it is shown to be

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useful in the marketplace."

In 1982, Targ left SRI International, where he had researched psi abilities under government contracts for the past decade, and formed Delphi Associates, a consultancy in applied psi research. He intends to show how useful psi can be in such enterprises as the exploration of oil, gas and minerals.

Others who see promise in harnessing psi talk about its potential for doing everything from diagnosing disease to choosing investments. But while enthusiasts dream of a future where psi can be put to good use, research is still in the early stages.

While we can't be sure about accurately forecasting the future just yet, it's a safe bet to predict that a lot more attention will be paid to psychic phenomena and psychic research in the days and years to come.

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