

CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING CHANGE AND DETERMINING ITS LIMITATIONS

IF YOU LOOK AROUND in the room you occupy now, you will observe a number of situations that you may accept as the results of natural events. For example, you may turn on a radio and hear voices coming, apparently from nowhere. You know, however, that these sounds are created by the amplification of radio waves that are picked up by the radio antenna. In fact, you do not even think about what causes it, accepting the sound from the radio as a natural event. Similarly, because of the contributions of modern science, you have learned to accept that there are bacteria floating around the room, little squiggly monsters that can invade your body and cause you to become ill. If instead we were sitting in the same space 5,000 years ago, and if I were to make the same comment about those squiggly little monsters or about those waves of energy that carry voices, you might not have stayed too close to me. You might have thought I was crazy—or worse, a consort of the devil.

It is possible that what I am about to discuss with you now may evoke the same fears. What is important here, however, is that you understand that just as there were events that our ancestors did not understand and either dismissed as being unreal or relegated to the supernatural, so too there are events that you do not understand now and, for similar reasons, still either relegate to the supernatural or dismiss as figments of the imagination.

You may believe that you are much more sophisticated than they were and that you have a better understanding of what is real. Yet