

An *angel* saved me from *myself*

Jet-setter Susie Anthony thought she had it all but her fast-living ways nearly killed her. Then a spiritual encounter turned her life around

Rocking back another glass of champagne, I looked through the window of the private jet as we approached Tokyo. Moments earlier, with my Gucci stilettos kicked off, I'd savoured the delights of first-class cuisine, using jewel-encrusted cutlery and designer crockery.

'This is the life,' I thought. 'Travelling the globe, meeting millionaires, presidents, kings and sheikhs all over the world.'

My life had way surpassed the dreams I'd had as a student in the late 1970s, when I'd studied for a business degree at Thames Valley University in London. I'd always been driven but I never envisaged coming this far. I'd worked my way up until I got lucky and became PA to the businessman running the multi-millionaire tycoon Tiny Rowland's empire in Johannesburg, South Africa. There, over the next eight years, I managed to buy three homes, including a farm, a few cars and an impressive art collection.

By 1990, at the age of 33, I found myself hungry for more excitement. When a job came up as the executive assistant to the fifth richest man in the world, Harunori Takahashi, I jumped at the chance. He was head of EIE International Corporation, the five-star luxury leisure resort and hotel company.

LIVING THE DREAM

So here I was landing in Tokyo, after buying up famous art for my boss and paving the way for him to negotiate billion-dollar deals.

Striding out of the airport in my Chanel suit, carrying my Louis Vuitton handbag and suitcase, I headed to Takahashi's skyscraper offices in the city. I glanced at my Rolex. The debrief would take me into yet another 18-hour day but that was all part of the job.

After a lengthy catch-up with Takahashi, it was dark when I arrived at my apartment and collapsed into my king-size bed. 'Just need to grab a few hours before an early start,' I thought, falling into a heavy sleep.

I worked hard and played hard. And I knew when people looked at me they saw success. After all, I'd been blessed with attractive looks, a slim figure and brains too. But occasionally, I felt like something was missing.

A DOWNWARD SPIRAL

The business world was all about hostile mergers and acquisitions. The demands of my career made it difficult to stay in touch with old friends and impossible to make new ones. More and more often, I felt lonely and miserable. Part of me wanted something else but how could I let go of everything I'd worked so hard to achieve? After all, my lifestyle now needed vast amounts of money to maintain. So I kept going but secretly loathed myself for doing it.

A few months into my new job, I started to feel different. Not just fed up, but listless, empty and drained. Friends suggested I go to a doctor in Harley Street the next time I was in London. I was diagnosed with exhaustion and given vitamin B injections with a big dose of amphetamine. This gave me extra energy.

Back at work in Japan, I found that once again I could carry on late into the night, six days a week. By the time the weekend arrived,

I'd stay up partying into the early hours before finally keeling over into a fretful sleep the next day. Every night, I'd take sleeping pills.

When I couldn't go back to London for the injections, I went to diet clinics to get amphetamine pills. But after a while, they seemed to work less and less.

When a friend suggested I try cocaine I was horrified – and refused. But later I told myself I could handle it: 'You're strong. You're just doing it so you can work harder.'

So I started taking cocaine when I went out clubbing. But within six months I was using my own stash on a daily basis. It was easy to hide my addictions, as in Tokyo I was 6,000 miles away from friends and family who might have noticed something was wrong.

THE DRUGS DON'T WORK

By now, I was spending £500 a day on drugs, not to get high but just to function and work all the hours I needed to. Food and sleep were no longer essential. I'd wake up and start on

'I bought a kilo of cocaine, smuggled it in my hand luggage and began to binge'

the cocaine. I'd take appetite suppressants to get me going, valium to calm me down, a couple of bottles of wine at lunch, all interspersed with more cocaine, plus the occasional Prozac or ecstasy tablet if I went clubbing, finished off with sleeping pills. It was a chemical hell but I was such a control freak that I still managed to work.

However, for the first time in my life I noticed I was having difficulty breathing when I climbed the stairs one day. I thought I was developing asthma but it was the drugs attacking my immune system. I had repeated kidney infections and suffered bouts of fainting.

When I was 34, a year after I moved to Japan, I flew back to Windsor to visit my mother. Then one night, after another evening of excess with friends, I got home and splashed water on my face in front of the bathroom mirror. My shocked image stared back – I was turning blue. I opened my mouth to cry out and foam and blood splashed into the sink. Horrified I realised I was bleeding from virtually every orifice, then everything went black.

When my distraught mother eventually found me, she called the paramedics and told them how long I'd been unconscious.

'Five minutes?' they said, aghast. 'No, 55 minutes,' she replied. They couldn't understand how I was still alive.

In hospital, I slipped into a coma for five hours. When I came round, a doctor said: 'You're a very lucky lady. Somehow you've survived a heart attack, full brain seizure and brain haemorrhage.' I stared at him, stunned. But I made such a quick recovery I checked myself out the next day.

On some level I knew I was lucky to be alive, but feeling desperate I reached for more

drugs. I was too proud to let my frantic mother, brother and friends help. I gave up work and moved from Tokyo back to my apartment in Johannesburg.

A few months later, at the beginning of 1992, I went to see some friends in Amsterdam. There I bought a kilo of cocaine for £25,000, smuggled it in my hand luggage back to South Africa and began to binge.

ROCK BOTTOM

Holed up in my flat over the next two months, incapable of going out, I ploughed through my cocaine, plus all the other drugs and tequila I had to hand. But it wasn't



From top: Susie in Johannesburg enjoying the party lifestyle; Susie with her dog in South Africa when she had a drug problem; on the way to see Credo Mutwa; Native Americans and shamans in Palm Springs

about having a good time. I hated myself and kept thinking, 'Get me out of here!'

Feeling utterly lost, death seemed the only way out. I began to think: 'If there is a God, if there are angels, please send me one to help.' Then I'd say, 'Dear God, please don't let me die,' before doing yet another line of coke. I was willing myself to die yet terrified of it at the same time.

One Good Friday, I started on the cocaine as soon as I woke. After I'd snorted a particularly long, wide line, I found myself looking down on my body as it began to convulse on the bed. Then it turned a dark indigo blue (I now know this was due to a lack of oxygen) before eventually the shaking stopped and I realised I was dead. At the same time, I was acutely aware of existing somewhere outside my body.

I looked around and the room was infused with a bright, sapphire-blue light and an incredible loving energy. I felt immense peace. 'See, there is a God,' I said. 'You're OK.'

Then a kind of energy began to talk to me telepathically. I didn't see an angel with wings but the energy certainly felt angelic. The voice told me his name was Michael, an archangel.

'Am I dead?' I asked.

'Yes, but you're going back. It's not your time yet. You've got a job to do.'

I was surrounded by such a wonderful feeling of love and healing energy I didn't want to go back to my old drug-crazed life.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

The angel told me I would become a healer and teacher, showing the way for others like me who had lost their path. He said I'd have angelic, shamanic and spirit guides, and receive all kinds of messages to guide me

towards everything I needed to know.

I don't know how long I was out of my body because time seemed to be suspended but when I awoke on the bed I felt miraculously renewed. For the first time in months my muscles didn't ache and I didn't feel thirsty or on edge.

I was euphoric, like I'd just been reborn. Beside me I saw a huge pile of cocaine but I felt free of the cravings that had plagued my life for two years. I wasn't sure what had happened to me but I did know that a power much bigger than human existence was out there – and that the connection I'd made with

‘I realised I was dead, yet I was acutely aware of existing somewhere outside my body’

this spiritual power would help me get better.

The next minute, I found myself dialling a number on the telephone in my bedroom.

'What am I doing?' I thought. 'Where did I get this number from?'

'Just trust,' said a voice in my head.

Then there was another voice on the line. It was a film producer friend I hadn't seen since I'd left Johannesburg for Tokyo. We shared our stories of excess and breakdown. Like me, she'd lost herself in the world of drugs and had escaped to lead a more simple life. At the end of the call she said, 'By the way, how did you get my phone number? I'm ex-directory.'

This was proof to me that I hadn't just been hallucinating. Through my conversation with the angel, I'd been given the phone number of the one person I needed to talk to.

After that we met up once or twice a week to chat and she'd introduce me to people who could help me with my addictions. Sometimes I'd weaken and open a bottle of spirits or it was hard to fight the temptation of drugs. But every time I felt my will failing me, I'd come across a book or meet someone new who inspired me to continue my fight to clean up.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Eventually, I decided to see where this spiritual awakening would take me.

Six months after my angelic near-death experience, and at the age of 35, I had a dream to sell my house in South Africa and buy a health farm. Sitting in the solicitor's office waiting to sign documents to sell my house, I noticed that an old woman typing in a corner kept staring at me. She eventually came over and said: 'I have a message from spirit to say you're looking to buy a health farm. And you also have to work with Credo Mutwa.'

'Who's he?' I asked.

'He's the king of witch doctors, the most powerful shaman in South Africa. He lives in a mud hut in his tribal homeland in Bophuthatswana.'

But at the time there was



Clockwise from top left: a montage Susie created of herself during her spiritual journey and a picture of Credo Mutwa in his sacred space; the holistic healing team perform a reiki treatment at Susie's centre, Studio Psalm; the shop at Studio Psalm where you can buy natural remedies and beauty products; one of the waiting areas with a chaise longue to relax on



A goddess statue at Susie's holistic healing centre

a military coup happening in that region so I decided it wasn't safe to go.

A few months later, I saw a clairvoyant who told me my destiny was to be a spiritual teacher who'd travel the world. And she, too, said I must work with Credo Mutwa.

Finally, I understood I had to see this man that everyone was talking about. No sooner had I made this decision than I went to a spiritual gathering in Johannesburg and met Credo's secretary. She said she'd make an appointment for me to meet him but explained he was booked up for the next six months. However, when she told him my name, he managed to fit me in the next week.

I decided to brave the instability in Bophuthatswana and, after travelling a few hours across the South African bush, I reached Credo.

'You're late,' he said when he saw me.

'Only by 10 minutes,' I protested. 'I was in the middle of a homeland where there's a tribal war and a military coup going on but I finally found your hut.'

'No, you're six months late,' Credo said. 'I've been calling you for that time. Spirit has guided me.' And he showed me a drawing he'd done of me, which was spot on.

I was stunned and excited to be in this man's presence. He was the spiritual leader of the Zulu tribe and knew I was coming to see him.

Having no job at the time, easily living off my savings and selling my diamonds, cars and

art collection to make money, I was able to concentrate on my spiritual development. I spent a little over a year visiting Credo for a couple of days at a time every week. From his shamanic point of view, I began to get a completely different picture of our world.

THE AWAKENING

As I listened intently, Credo explained: 'The earth is alive and we're all connected. I'll teach you to honour that connection by working with the elements. I'll also show you how to work with totems and other methods to help guide and heal yourself and others.'

I grew to understand the mysteries of our existence and how to connect with spirit.

From then on, I knew my life's purpose was to heal people. I returned to the UK and began studying healing methods. I found crystals and reiki to be especially powerful. I was blown away by the spiritual energy drawn towards me when I was practising reiki. It was the same bliss I'd felt with my out-of-body near-death experience, and I realised this guiding force would always be with me.

I also started to find out about the amazing teachings of the world. I travelled all over to discover more, and trained with lamas (Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhist monks), Native American shamans in the USA and the enlightenment guru Sri Kalki Bhagavan in India. I was filled with a sense of

excitement and enthusiasm for my new path.

In 1999, after about seven years of intense study and practice, I began to work as a healer full-time at a clinic I set up in Windsor.

My first client was a 21-year-old woman called Shelley. Her face was grey and as she turned towards me, she explained how she had been on a morphine drip for six months in a neurosurgery unit with a suspected brain tumour. She'd been unable to eat for weeks and was constantly projectile vomiting. The

‘The spiritual energy drawn towards me as I practised reiki blew me away’

doctors had told her that surgery might leave her with brain damage.

Shelley said she had pulled out her tubes and left the hospital saying: 'You're not touching me. There has to be another way.' She also told me that she'd heard through word of mouth that I had a good reputation as a healer, and that's why she'd got in touch.

I was thrilled at the chance to help Shelley get through her pain. After eight intense sessions of reiki healing, she showed great

signs of improvement and, thankfully, she went on to make a full recovery. She is now a practising reiki master herself.

Later that same year, I went to America to set up a retreat in Mount Shasta, Northern California, where I even had some of the big action movie stars banging on my door for reiki healing, and their families too.

I did worry about the effect they would have on me. But this time I was unaffected by all the wealth and glamour surrounding me. I could see right through it and beyond, sensing that most people there were unhappy. They lacked the spiritual connection that I had been lucky enough to find in life.

In the four years I'd been making a name for myself as a healer in America, England kept calling me. I was born just outside Yeovil in Somerset, and now felt a great yearning to return to nearby Glastonbury.

So in 2003 I found a house on the edge of the Mendip Hills. Here I set up a spiritual retreat and started teaching my special method of healing, called Personal Spiritual Alchemy, or PSA Life Mastery, which I've been developing for many years. It's a method of spiritual awakening that takes you through seven levels until you reach awareness of your true self. It's ultimately about empowering people, giving them the tools to heal themselves and fulfil the destiny that's right for them. You can learn it in 21 days, and most people who've studied it go on to teach it to others.

Some of the people I've helped now work with me at the retreat and at the holistic healing centre I set up last year. I never had children of my own but there are seven people I think of as my family. They all live with me and are aged 25 to 83. We're not a cult, just a supportive unit. Like me all those years ago, they've been in some terrible situations, such as living on the streets as a child prostitute or having serious drug problems after being sexually abused. But since studying PSA, they've found ways to become the most amazing people, and now heal others.

At the age of 49, I know that all the bad stuff I went through in my thirties has made me the woman I am today. I've experienced suffering, pain and sadness, which helps me empathise with the people who come to me, their lives in pieces.

I've learned how to create peace within myself and others, through sharing my own experiences with them. It's much more interesting than buying a new car or worrying about whether I've put on weight or not. I think I'll always be watchful that I don't get sucked back into that lifestyle. I still have a drink when I fancy one but I don't really need it – or anything else – to make me feel good. I'm so grateful that an encounter with an angelic being gave me a second chance. And every day I'm thankful that I'm alive to share the knowledge with others. ■

• For more information on Susie and her work, visit www.psalifemastery.com