Lynne McTaggart is the architect of the Intention Experiments, a kind of mass meditation that links people around the world to focus their energy on bringing healing to a specific place or group of people. Her studies, undertaken in cooperation with international scientists and universities, are so far the largest mind-over-matter demonstrations ever done. She also initiated what she calls Power of Eight groups, which do similar work but with fewer people. The results are striking—not only for the intended recipients, but also for the senders themselves, thanks to a surprisingly strong rebound effect. Here, McTaggart talks with Unity Magazine editor Katy Koontz about this work and what it reveals concerning the elemental nature of humankind.
KATY KOONTZ: What inspired you to start the Intention Experiments?

LYNNE MCTAGGART: I’ve been fascinated by the nature of consciousness since the mid-’90s, trying to understand things like spiritual healing, where you can send a thought to someone else (even if you’re thousands of miles away) and that person gets better. The skeptical journalist in me wanted to know how that worked and how far we could take it. I also wanted to see what happened if lots of people were thinking the same thought at the same time.

I’d met all these scientists while researching my books, and I had lots of readers around the world. I thought if I just put them all together, I’d have the biggest laboratory on the planet. So curiosity was what started it all. I actually didn’t expect it to work that well.

KK: Really?

LM: I thought we would get only tiny effects. But to date, we’ve run 35 Intention Experiments, and 31 of them have shown measurable, positive, mostly significant effects. There’s no drug that has that kind of consistent track record.

KK: What happened with the four that didn’t work?

LM: In most cases, it was a technical flaw. Once a lab assistant inadvertently put jars of water next to an electromagnetic field, which seemed to nullify the effect. Our website froze during two experiments. In the fourth case, our intention was too general—we weren’t saying that we wanted something to change.

KK: So the result is only as good as the way you set the intention.

LM: Absolutely. You’ve got to be specific—that’s probably the most important thing. People will say, “My intention is for world peace,” or “My intention is to be rich,” but that’s actually not what they want. They might want to change jobs, have more time for their family, or pursue a hobby, and they think, Well, if I’m rich I get to choose. I teach that if you want world peace, start with a specific place, and say when and how you want it to be more peaceful. If you want more time, then intend for that. Don’t intend to win the lottery. Intend for what you need or for what you really want.

KK: After all, you can win only $5 in the lottery.

LM: Exactly. Most of the studies I’ve seen, and certainly the ones we’ve carried out, demonstrate that being specific is really important.

KK: How do your Intention Experiments compare to prayer?

LM: They all start with a thought. The Law of Attraction says what you think about most of the time is what you’re going to attract. Essentially, I’m saying the same thing about intention, but in a different way: You’re intending all the time, not just when you get into a quiet state and consciously send out your intention to the world.

We each have an average of 70,000 thoughts a day, and if most of those thoughts are negative, that’s what we are beaming out to the universe all the time. So we have to watch all the mindless chatter and random judgments going through our heads: I hate my hair today, or My bum looks big in this, or even She’s such a loudmouth—I can’t stand listening to her. All of that negativity, collectively, is an intention, and if you don’t learn
to shift it, the negativity essentially becomes your life’s intention.

**KK:** So even stray thoughts collectively have an effect.

**LM:** Absolutely. They have a huge effect on your life. Essentially, we are the information we’re sending out to the world in our thoughts 24/7.

**KK:** Are group intentions more effective than individual intentions?

**LM:** Intention definitely works when done individually, but I have seen an enormous amplification with both small and large groups. The summer before the pandemic, for example, I was speaking to a group of about 600, and as I usually do at the end, I asked them to divide into groups of eight. Then I instructed them to send an intention to a member of their group having a health challenge. One group chose a woman named Maiya who was in a motorized wheelchair, paralyzed from the neck down.

After the intention when I asked who wanted to share, Maiya’s group urged her to talk. So Maiya slowly looked around, got up on her feet, and then stood there and told her story. When somebody tried to help her, she said, “I don’t need help anymore.” We were all in tears. It was absolutely amazing. I still am stunned by the power of this.

But here’s what was so interesting about Maiya. She said the amount of love people were sending her was overwhelming. She thought, *I don’t need all of this,* so she sent some to a relative with cancer. At that moment, she said it felt as if the wheels of her wheelchair were going down into the floor while she was simultaneously being raised up. She knew she was healed in that moment.

**KK:** You’ve also set up many nonlocal intention groups.

**LM:** Yes. In my Masterclasses, I have hundreds of people gather together in groups of eight, meeting online. I also have an intention of the week that I send out via email, with people all over the world joining together at a particular time to have an intention for one person.

**KK:** What’s behind the success of these intention groups?

**LM:** Intention is most powerful when people enter into a state of oneness with the world. Participants often talk about a blinding epiphany when suddenly everything makes sense, and they feel this big heart opening. They sense they’re in an altered state, which jibes with the brain studies we’ve seen.

During Intention Experiments and with Power of Eight groups, the parietal lobes of the brain—the parts that help us navigate through space and tell us what’s us and what’s not us—dial down very quickly. It’s the same with the right frontal lobe, which is involved in worry, doubt, and negativity. Those brainwave signatures are almost identical to ones University of Pennsylvania researchers recorded in Buddhist monks during ecstatic prayer or in Sufi masters while chanting.

They’re very different from the brainwave signatures involved in meditation, which was a big surprise. We initially thought they’d be similar. But meditation is an attempt to still the mind, while intention requires a highly focused mind. What people in intention groups describe is essentially a mystical state, what *A Course in Miracles* calls “the holy instant.” They feel the self has dissolved and they’re part of the unified field. We’re always part of the One, of course, but they actually experience it during this time.

**KK:** We’re always there, whether we perceive it or not, right?

**LM:** That’s right. Your subatomic particles are always doing a little dance with everyone else’s all over the world, yet what we perceive is that we’re all separate beings.

**KK:** You also talk about the senders experiencing healing, not just the receivers. Is that because we truly are all one?

**LM:** Yes, senders often have some form of healing or have something amazing happen in their lives at a time when they were stuck. When people start getting off of themselves and intending for someone else, a shift occurs for them. Altruism is central in this. Anything you do for anybody else, while desiring nothing in return, helps you to create a longer, healthier, happier life. Even when people who are ill help other people with the same illness, they get better faster. It’s part of our need for connection, for community. We as human beings have a strong need to give, unlike what we’re told about who we are.

**KK:** Can you describe some of your work using Intention Experiments to help foster peace?

**LM:** In 2011, we did an experiment to honor the 10th anniversary of 9/11. We had Arabs from all over the Gulf States take part, as well as a Western audience, setting an intention to lower violence in the two provinces in southern Afghanistan experiencing the greatest level of fighting and hostility. A NATO general told me afterward that they observed the
The greatest drop in enemy-initiated firepower that they had seen through the whole Gulf War. Now, many things can cause that. We can’t claim it was definitely us, but I’ve run about seven or eight of these peace Intention Experiments so far, and every single time, we’ve seen a lowering of violence or a cessation of battle.

But the more interesting experience was what happened with the senders. We had the Arabs and Americans connected on my Facebook page, and they started messaging each other. They were saying things like, “Your god is my god,” and “You’re my brother from the other side.” They started forgiving each other. It was amazing.

**KK:** You’ve done this on a bigger scale, too, haven’t you?

**LM:** Yes. In 2018 we did a peace Intention Experiment for Jerusalem, which was experiencing an upsurge in violence, where we put cameras in conference rooms in eight Arab cities in Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, and so on, as well as one camera in an auditorium filled with Israeli Jews. I also simultaneously broadcast the experiment worldwide on my YouTube channel. After the experiment, the people in the conference rooms were able to talk to the others at the different locations using the cameras. The Arabs started saying to the Israelis, “You know, my god is your god,” and the Israelis were saying things back like, “We love you, sister. It’s a time of peace. We are one.” This is remarkable because Arabs and Israelis have been brought up to hate each other. One of the Arab women told me she’d never actually seen an Israeli before this experience and was told growing up that Israelis had horns—and yet here they were sending love to each other. It was remarkable.

**KK:** Even if there was no effect on the target, it sounds as if it would be worth it for the participants.

**LM:** The power of these experiments to heal people’s hearts is enormous. We see a huge ripple effect. People’s lives change. They get along better with their families, bosses, and coworkers. They make up with estranged loved ones. About 40 percent say, “I’m more in love with everybody I come in contact with now.”

**KK:** What groups do you want to bring together next?

**LM:** I’m working with several organizations such as Uplift Connect and EarthWalk to plan some Intention Experiments that I hope will help heal polarization, including between Republicans and Democrats.

**KK:** Do the peace Intention Experiments work because they actually promote unity, or because they make people more aware we really are already one?

**LM:** Unity already exists, and it gets revealed to us in these Intention Experiments. Oneness is our natural state of being, and the Intention Experiments and the Power of Eight groups give us an opportunity to experience it. It’s a gateway into what we already are.

**KK:** Do you ever worry that people intentions for us?

**LM:** I’ve seen a few studies where people tried to block somebody else’s negative thoughts. One worked and one didn’t, so they’re inconclusive. But to me, the bigger question is this: If we are all one, why would you want to put yourself in a psychic bubble to protect yourself from others? There are much better ways to protect yourself. For example, sending positive intention to the person who is trying to harm you is very powerful, as is listening to why they believe what they do. Really listening usually takes all the venom out of their anger, polarization, and hate. It can also be helpful to hold on to the sense of who you really are as well as what you were born for. Used together, simple techniques like these can be very effective in keeping you protected.