

Conversations with Bob

A Timeless, Entertaining Dialogue
for Living an Extraordinary Life

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I Must Be Dead

*"I fear one day I'll meet
God, he'll sneeze, and I
won't know what to say."*

- RONNIE SHAKES

In a matter of seconds, Bernie's journey upward stops, and the white light that had paralyzed him disappears. Still lying horizontally, he looks around to check out his surroundings. Sure enough, fluffy white clouds stretch as far as he can see.

"Well. I don't know what else I was expecting to see," he says as he's getting up. "It's so beautiful and peaceful." He worries momentarily about falling through the clouds, but his weight is somehow supported.

His attention is immediately drawn to a huge, solid oak door that hovers about six inches off the clouds. As he approaches it, he notices a small, handwritten sign that reads, "*Yes, that's right. You made it. Welcome, Bernie!*"

"That confirms it. I must be dead," he says. He cocks one eyebrow and looks at the door.

"But where the hell am I? Is this heaven? If so, what happened to the Pearly Gates?" Bernie mutters. "I guess budget cuts have no bounds."

Just as he's about to knock on the door, he hears a voice.

"Please wait a moment. I'm out to lunch. I will be with you shortly."

"Oh, isn't this just perfect," Bernie says. "All I did my entire life was wait for something to happen! Now even in death I have to wait! The least they can do is have a waiting room where I can sit and..."

Before he can say another word, Bernie finds himself sitting directly in front of the oak door in a plush, reclining easy chair and holding the latest edition of *AFTER-LIFE* Magazine.

Wow! I better be careful what I say around here, Bernie thinks.

He flips through the pages of the magazine, scanning a few articles. Apparently, Elvis was performing on Saturday, and looking over the “Who Wore It Best?” feature, Bernie decides it’s a tie between Mae West and Amy Winehouse.

He looks up when he hears the squeaky sounds of the big oak door opening. Feeling a little nervous, Bernie gets up from the chair and approaches. As he walks through the doorway, he is suddenly greeted by a grinning man who looks like a refugee from the 60s, with long hair tied in a ponytail, earrings in both ears, ripped jeans, worn-out sandals and a t-shirt that reads “HOOF ARTED.”

Bernie rolls his eyes. *Great,* he thinks. *If this is heaven, it isn’t exactly a highbrow joint.*

“Have you been waiting long?” the man asks.

“I’ve been waiting my whole life, pal,” says Bernie.

“You sound a tad upset.”

Bernie shrugs. “It’s personal.”

“It usually is.” The man extends his hand. “Allow me to introduce myself. I’m...”

Bernie raises his hand, interrupting. “When do I get to see the Magnificent One?”

“Who?” the man asks.

“You know, the Light, the Force, the Almighty, The Source Energy, Wonder Woman...The Supreme Being, The Alpha and Omega, Superman, The All-Knowing, All-Being Omniscient Presence...The Creator...of the mess on planet Earth! Listen pal, I want to talk to GOD! Or whatever they call him...or her...around here.”

"It makes no difference to me what you call the Big Kahuna. That's the name most people use here...*The Big Kahuna*."

Bernie scoffs. "Well, if it makes no *difference*, I'll just call The Kahuna...um... Bob, then."

The man seems thoughtful. He rubs his beard and stares into the distance.

"Bob's a nice name," he finally says. "Just so you know, The Kahuna is neither male nor female, but often appears in a guise or gender that is most relatable to an individual person."

"Whatever...well?" asks Bernie.

The man ignores him, thinking aloud. "Bob. Hmmm...It's short, unassuming. It's a verb, too, which is fun. What do you do when you're lost out at sea? Just, bob, man." He laughs at his little revelation.

Bernie is losing what little patience he has. "*Well? Where is he?*"

"Where is who?"

Bernie throws his hands in the air. "Bob! I want to talk to Bob!"

"Oh. Well then, go ahead. No one's stopping you. If you want some privacy, I'll be back in a few minutes."

The man turns to walk away.

"No, wait!" Bernie reaches to touch the man's shoulder and takes a deep breath. "Okay...Listen, pal. I want to talk to Bob, but I want to talk in person, face-to-face, in the flesh or whatever form he or she comes in. Do you understand?"

The man nods. "Ooooh... Okay." The man snaps his fingers. He and the door are gone, and Bernie is standing at the end of a very long, winding hallway where the floor is made of yellow bricks.

"You've got to be kidding me," Bernie mutters. "One minute I think I'm in heaven, now I'm in the *Land of Oz?*"