

# Dying Before you Die – Near Death Experiences, Consciousness and the Modern Book of the Dead

Sept 6-8, 2013

## Recommended Resources

### **Books:**

Life after Life, Raymond Moody (the primary text of the modern age on this topic, 1975).

Whole in One, David Lorimer (extends Moody's work)

The Modern Book of the Dead, Ptolemy Tompkins (we can write our book of wisdom now)

Science and the Near Death Experience and Science and the After Life Experience, Chris Carter (consciousness studies)

The Source Field Investigations, David Wilcock (his take on weird evidence of things we do not generally consider)

The Biology of Transcendence, A Blueprint of the Human Spirit, Joseph Chilton Pearce (the scientific evidence for transcendence), especially Chapter 7

In Heaven as on Earth, M Scott Peck

Meditations on the Tarot, (Arcanum 13), Anonymous

Proof of Heaven, Eben Alexander

Evidence of the Afterlife, the Science of Near Death Experiences, J. Long with Paul Perry (ebook)

Talking with Angels, Gitta Mallasz

Periodicals: Parabola

Films: "What Dreams May Come" (with Robin Williams); "Infinity: The Ultimate Trip" by Jay Weidner; "Astral City – A Spiritual Journey", Chico Xavier; "I AM" w/Tom Shadyac; "Defending Your Life" with Meryl Streep, "Cloud Atlas" Directed by Tom Tykwer, Andy Wachowski, Lana Wachowski

Websites: [www.nderf.org](http://www.nderf.org) – cross cultural research on NDE experiences

## Friday Night, Sept 6

The topic we are engaging in NDE's, our future experience and what does the definition of "world" really mean? The first material on NDEs began to arrive two, three decades ago and the topic is exponentially growing. This topic is very, very alive and people are engaged in it and we are going to have a lot of things to talk about.

We define life as biological life; we typically constrict life to this understanding, that we are biological beings. And yet, before and after biological life there is this other reality. We have biological life which we cling to, try to take it away from us and we will fight for it.

However, what precedes biological life and follows it is the question? Does death surround us or is our definition of death “bad”? Maybe, we define the situation in terms that diminish the reality. Here we are caught in the middle, we are in biological life but on either end of the spectrum is “death”...or is it?

To begin with, there are three great questions. The basic question is “do we/I survive biological death”? Related to this, is the question, “is my personal consciousness tied to my body/physical self”? What do we mean when we say “I”? A related question is “Is consciousness tied to the physical body or does it survive after biological life ends?” Does consciousness disappear when the body dies? There is huge amount of research being done and there is a wide span of views and beliefs ranging from the perspective that we are only biological beings to the idea that “we” survive after the end of biological life. Another way to frame the question is, “is biological life just one small segment of “life” as we understand it?”

And, there are related questions. If we do survive, what happens? Where is the journey going? What is the evolution of my being if “I” continue to exist in some form? Lots of questions arise around this train of thought: do I go on? If so, in what form? What is the nature of the journey? How should I start to think about that while I am still in this biological context?

The third question is “what is the purpose of being a biological being?” Why do we experience biological life to begin with if, in fact, it is bookended with a non-biological reality? This is a critical question...why this biological life? What is meaningful, what is one’s purpose, what is my destiny?

The way you answer these questions informs how you approach this material. As people of faith we have a belief in something beyond materialism. That does not mean we do not have questions.

Two sources are available to us; one of them is huge and looks across human experience for thousands of years if not tens of thousands of years. Answers are available to us from sacred traditions across generations, across cultures and religions, each one of these sources has tremendous treasuries of information. In the past we did not have access to this information, but we now have access through *Sophia Perennis*, perennial wisdom. Most of us have entered through one of its gates, the gate of Christianity. By the way, our tradition is pretty confused about the question and its answers. All traditions have great answers; a wonderful treasury is available to us.

In the last century, the other body of evidence is near death experiences. This evidence has arrived en masse because of modern medicine and technology that allows people to “die” but then return to tell their story. Science, which has tended to be materialistic; is having to deal with what is being related as individuals return to tell their story, as story which often undercuts the scientific, materialist view.

In essence, these two sources reinforce each other, the seeing of the mystics and knowledge of modern science, they are seeing the same reality although from different starting points.

Before we start, it is important to consider your basic stance on the idea of death. What words do you choose to describe what you believe at this point? How do you currently perceive death and what does/does not exist after biological life? Hand-out is given to the group asking questions identifying their current views/beliefs on death and “life after death”. In a group of 30 at the seminar, given a wide range of words, the primary word chosen was “curious”.

During the seminar, a conversation ensues about the lack of “hard evidence” about the idea of life-after-death. Is there sufficient evidence that would hold up in a court of law, is the evidence “beyond a reasonable doubt” or just circumstantial? The real questions are, “how much evidence do you want? How measurable does it need to be?” There is evidence, although not hard scientific “evidence”, there is sufficient evidence that would hold up in a court of law and meet the criteria of “beyond a reasonable doubt”.

The sole indisputable fact of those who experience an NDE is that it radically changes their lives. For those who have had this experience, their life is completely changed, they are never the same again, it is a most potent change agent. Dramatic physical, emotional and spiritual change occurs and even if the initial NDE experience is “negative” ultimately the result is a positive outcome. Even those who have a negative experience say that they return with a complete and positive change to their lives in time-space. Dreams too can be strange, but they do not have a life-changing effect. NDEs have a life-changing effect, this is undisputable.

The foundational book, Life after Life, by Raymond Moody (1975), is the beginning of “research” into this field. Up to this time the stories have been anecdotal, told by family, friends, and such.

Resuscitation even 20 or 30 years ago was not what it is today. Today, 40% of the population is resuscitated from clinical death when there is no breath, no heart rate, and no “measurable” brain activity. This would not have been possible in the past. Approximately, 8M Americans report having had a NDE. There are now various research institutions that are looking at this multi-culturally, multi linguistically and the experience/evidence is consistent cross-culturally.

Back to the bottom line, you cannot dispute this; those who have a NDE are changed. One might suggest that what NDE’s cause is what we might call “enlightenment”, creating “little buddhas” e.g., “I woke up”. This leads one to becoming awake, a transcendental experience. The idea is conveyed in the New Testament, the Greek word *photismos* (“to be filled with light”) is used in II Corinthians 4:4 and 4:6. It gives the individual a bigger context for their lives; they now act out the details of their life in the view of the big picture, not in “the weeds”. In biological life, it is easy to get lost in the weeds and not see the cosmic whole. To be lost in the weeds is being “blind”, asleep, a kind of death. What is called near death produces living, not dying.

The people for whom this is most dramatic, is those who were “asleep”, not spiritually engaged. For those who have started on the spiritual path, it is more like filling in the details.

The unanimous testimony through mystical experiences or NDEs is that we are not alone in the Universe, we are returning to that Source, biological life is a temporary experience in the middle of the journey but this experience is in capital letters ~~ NECESSARY. Life in space-time as a biological being is a dualistic experience and yet living “awake” is “wisdom”. But if you live biological life “asleep”; it is called “ignorance”.

We can have our own NDE experience without crossing the biological line. As the great sacred traditions suggest, we can die before we die. We can live in the Light of eternity now, this is called the “Modern Book of the Dead”. The great Egyptian and Tibetan books of the dead are about how to LIVE life in the here and now, AND in light of the big picture. To see the two worlds, to hold them together is to see the space-time world passing as well simultaneously awakening occurring.

Poem by Rumi, **This Green-Winged Longing**.

*This world is two gardens, and both are so beautiful.*

*This world is a street where a funeral is passing.*

*Let us rise up together and leave “this world”.*

*The way water does, bowing down itself to the ocean,*

*From gardens to the gardener,*

*From grieving to the wedding feast.*

*We tremble like leaves about to let go.*

*There’s no avoiding pain, or feeling exiled, or the taste of dust.*

*But also we have a green-winged longing  
for the sweetness of the Friend.*

*These forms are evidence of what cannot be shown.*

*Here’s how it is to go into that: rain that’s been leaking  
into the house decides to use the downspout.*

*The bent bowstring straining at our throats  
releases and becomes the arrow!*

*Mice quivering in fear of the housecat suddenly  
change to half-grown lion cubs, afraid of nothing.*

*So let's begin the journey home,  
with love and compassion for guides,  
and grace protecting. Let your soul turn  
into an empty mirror that passionately wants  
to reflect Joseph (Jesus). Hand him your present.*

*Now let silence speak, and as that  
gift begins, we'll start out.*

*-- Version by Coleman Barks (from a translation by John Moyne) "Say I Am You"  
Maypop, 1994*

How did Rumi know this so deeply? He lost his whole world when the Mongol hordes destroyed his homeland and secondly when he lost his master, Shams. His life was filled with death but he was also connected to the Source and filled with joy and wonder. He himself he did not always know where his poetry came from.

Now, in the modern world, we have scientific evidence but we are still going..."really"? This new evidence is a byproduct of modern medicine and technology, telling the story that science does not want to believe.

Review of recommended materials: see above list.

Most traditions have processes to experience the transcendent. This is in addition to chemically-induced experiences. Huston Smith makes a case that chemically induced states modify the filters through which we normally live in time-space. This allows consciousness to be experienced in a different way. Being open to experiencing consciousness in a different way is the key to this occurring.

The question is, "is consciousness created by the body, or does the biology create consciousness?" They are related and interrelated, but can one exist without the other?

As the ego dies, consciousness becomes more clear and prevalent. This can be accomplished through an NDE or through a willingness to let go of the self. Why is this important? The why of "why we are here in space-time?" needs to be discerned. If Truth is a whole, if everything belongs, then what is the meaning of this?

## Elements in the Experience of Near-Death

### The Common Experience

*A man is dying and, as he reaches the point of greatest physical distress, he hears himself pronounced dead by his doctor. After this he suddenly finds himself outside of his own physical body, but still in the immediate physical environment, and he sees his own body from a distance, as though he is a spectator. He watches the resuscitation attempt from this unusual vantage point and is in a state of emotional upheaval.*

*After a while, he collects himself and becomes more accustomed to his odd condition. He notices that he still has a "body," but one of a very different nature and with very different powers from the physical body he has left behind. Soon other things begin to happen. He begins to hear an uncomfortable noise, a loud ringing or buzzing, and at the same time feels himself moving very rapidly through a long dark tunnel. At the end of the tunnel there is light. Others are there to meet and to help him. He glimpses the spirits of relatives and friends who have already died, and a loving warm spirit of a kind he has never encountered before--a being of light--appears before him. This being asks him questions to make him evaluate his life and helps him along by showing him a panoramic, instantaneous playback of the major events of his life. At some point he finds himself approaching some sort of barrier or border, apparently representing the limit between earthly life and the next life. Yet, he finds that he must go back to the earth, that the time for his death has not yet come. At this point he resists, for by now he is taken up with his experiences in the afterlife and does not want to return. He is overwhelmed by intense feelings of joy, love and peace. Despite his attitude, though, he reunites with his physical body and lives.*

*Later when he tries to tell others he has trouble doing so. In the first place, he can find no human words adequate to describe these unearthly episodes. He also finds that other scoff, so he stops telling other people. Still, the experience affects his life profoundly, especially his view about death and its relationship to life.*

(Adapted from Raymond Moody, **Life After Life**)

**Ineffability:** Many people have remarked to the effect that there are no words adequate to express what they are trying to say, "*They just don't make adjectives and superlatives to describe this.*"

*Now, there is a real problem for me as I'm trying to tell you this, because all the words I know are three-dimensional. As I was going through this, I kept thinking, "Well, when I was taking geometry, they always told me there were only three dimensions, and I always just accepted that. But they were wrong. There are more." And, of course, our world--the one we're living in now--is three-dimensional, but the next one definitely isn't. And that's why it's so hard to tell you this. I have to describe it to you in words that are three-dimensional. That's as close as I can get to it, but it's not really adequate. I can't really give you a complete picture.*

**Hearing the News:** Numerous people tell of hearing their doctor or others pronounce them dead.

*I was in the hospital, but they didn't know what was wrong with me....First, they tested this drug they were going to use on my arm....I arrested on them. I heard the radiologist who was working on me go over to the telephone, and I heard very clearly as he dialed it. I heard him say, "Dr. James, I've killed your patient, Mrs. Martin." And I knew I wasn't dead. I tried to move or to let them know, but I couldn't. When they were trying to resuscitate me, I could hear them telling how many c.c.'s of something to give me.*

**Feelings of Peace and Quiet:** People describe extremely pleasant sensations during the early stages of their experience.

*At the point of injury (head) there was a momentary flash of pain, but then all the pain vanished. I had the feeling of floating in a dark space. The day was bitterly cold, yet while I was in that blackness all I felt was warmth and the most extreme comfort I have every experienced....I remember thinking, "I must be dead."*

**Out of the Body:** We identify ourselves with our physical bodies, but a dying person often has an overwhelming surprise when they find themselves looking upon their own physical body from a point outside of it, as though they were a spectator.

*I became very seriously ill, and the doctor put me in the hospital. This one morning a solid gray mist gathered around me, and I left my body. I had floating sensation as I felt myself get out of my body, and I looked back and I could see myself on the bed below and there was not fear.*

**The Noise:** Various unusual auditory sensations are often reported to occur in near-death experience sometimes unpleasant like a buzzing, and sometimes beautiful and full of music.

*I would hear what seemed to be bells tingling, a long way off, as if drifting through the wind. They sounded like Japanese wind bells....That was the only sound I could hear at times.*

**The Dark Tunnel:** People often, along with the noise, have the sensation of being pulled very rapidly through a dark space or tunnel of some kind.

*There was a feeling of utter peace and quiet, and no fear at all, and I found myself in a tunnel--a tunnel of concentric circles. shortly after that, I saw a TV program called The Time Tunnel, where people go back in time through this spiraling tunnel. Well, that's the closest thing to it that I can think of.*

**Meeting Others:** Many folk relate how while they were dying they became aware of the presence of other spiritual beings who were there to ease them through their transition into death.

*When I was giving birth to a child the delivery was very difficult and...the doctor gave me up and told my relatives that I was dying. However I was quite alert through the whole thing, and even as I heard him saying this...I realized that all these people were there, almost in multitudes it seems, hovering around the ceiling of the room. They were all people I had known in my past life, but who had passed on before. I recognized my grandmother and a girl I had known when I was in school...It seems that I mainly saw their faces and...they all seemed pleased. It was a very happy occasion and I felt that they had come to protect or to guide me. It was almost as if I were coming home, and they were there to greet or to welcome me.*

**The Being of Light:** The most common element in the accounts and one which has the most profound effect upon individuals is the encounter with an indescribable brilliance which is a "Being of Light" to which they are deeply attracted.

*I got up and walked into the hall to get a drink...I became very weak and fell down and*

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*began to feel a sort of drifting...(and to hear beautiful music)...and up into this pure crystal clear light, and illuminating white light. It was beautiful and so bright, so radiant, but didn't hurt my eyes. It's not any kind of light you can describe on earth. I didn't actually see a person in this light, and yet it has a special identity, it definitely does. It is a light of perfect understanding and perfect love. The thought came to my mind, "Lovest thou me?" This was not exactly in the form of a question, but I guess the connotation of what the light said was, "If you do love me, go back and complete what you began in your life." And all during this time, I felt as though I were surrounded by an overwhelming love and compassion.*

**The Review:** After the initial appearance of the Being of Light, his probing questions are the prelude to a period of startling intensity during which the being presents to the person a panoramic review of his or her life.

*When the light appeared, the first thing he said to me was, "What do you have to show me that you've done with your life?", or something to this effect. And that's when the flashbacks started. I thought, "Gee, what is going on?", because, all of a sudden, I was back early in my childhood, and from then on, it was like I was walking from the time of my very early life, on through each year of my life, right up to the present.*

**The Border:** Some people experience a limit or border which they must not cross if they are to go back and continue their life on this earth.

*I died from cardiac arrest, and, as I did, I suddenly found myself in a rolling field. It was beautiful, and everything was an intense green--a color unlike anything on earth. There was light--beautiful, uplifting light--all around me. I looked ahead of me, across the field, and I saw a fence. I started moving towards the fence, and I saw a man on the other side of it, moving towards it as if to meet me. I wanted to reach him, but I felt myself being drawn back, irresistibly. As I did, I saw him, too, turn around and go back in the other direction, away from the fence.*

Compiled by Lynn C. Bauman, 1992

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### Further Developments in Understanding the Afterlife

- New Developments for Raymond Moody (**Reflections on Life After Life**, 1977)
  1. A New Vision of Knowledge: *Several people have told me that during their encounters with "death," they got brief glimpses of an entire separate realm of existence in which all knowledge—whether of past, present, or future—seemed to co-exist in a sort of timeless state.*
  2. Cities of Light: *I have now talked with numerous individuals who tell with remarkable consistency of catching glimpses of other realms of being which might well be termed "heavenly." It is interesting to me that in several of these accounts a single phrase—"a city of light"—occurs.*
  3. A Realm of Bewildered Spirits: *Several people have reported to me that at some point they glimpsed other beings who seemed to be "trapped" in an apparently most unfortunate state of existence. Those who described seeing these confused beings are in agreement on several points. First, they state that these beings seemed to be, in effect, unable to surrender their attachments to the physical world. One man recounted that the spirits he saw apparently "couldn't progress on the other side because their God is still living here." That is, they seemed bound to some particular object, person, or habit. Secondly, all have remarked that these beings appeared "dulled," that their consciousness seemed somehow limited in contrast with that of others. Thirdly, they say it appeared that these "dulled spirits" were to be there only until they solved whatever problem or difficulty was keeping them in that perplexed state.*
  4. Supernatural Rescues: *In several accounts I have collected, persons say that they had near-death experiences through which they were saved from physical death by the interposition of some spiritual agent or being. In each case, the person involved found himself (knowingly or unknowingly) in a potentially fatal accident or set of circumstances from which it was beyond his own powers to escape. He may even have given up and prepared himself to die. However, at this point a voice or a light manifested itself and rescued him from the brink of death. Persons undergoing this related that afterward their lives were changed, that they came to feel they were saved from death for a purpose.*
- David Lorimer's work in Revisioning the Life-Review Process: See handout.

### Imaging the Afterlife

- Materialist
- Monotheistic
- Reincarnation
- Metempsychosis
- Transmigration
- Spiritual Evolution Through the Realms

## Saturday Morning, Sept 7

Surveyed the multiple experiences of near death experiences within the group, either personal or second hand, no one had experienced an NDE although many had known someone who had. These are repeatable experiences based on reports from individuals as to “what” survives leading to several questions. Does my consciousness survive the body? What is the evolution of consciousness as it proceeds through the process? What is the purpose of being here in the body, with self-awareness?

There are also out of body experiences, the experience of the mystics of “dying before you die”, and nearing death experiences. There are many interactions of consciousness not in a “normal state” and many of us have experienced these. There are also experiences in being with someone as they pass from biological life to the next reality. There are changes of consciousness that suggests that consciousness is not a single “thing” but a range of awareness, reality and understanding. But, there is a problem with language that can adequately describe the experience(s).

Another aspect is that for some there is the realization that this reality of time space is not worth the physical or psychological pain being experienced. Often people who are in the process of dying may want to let go because of the suffering in the biological body.

General sharing of several examples of anecdotal evidence from various individuals who were “dying”. What we are hearing is two lines combined into one being ~~ a biological line that experiences clinical death and yet, simultaneously, self-awareness/consciousness that is separated from the physical self. Consciousness and biological life parallel each other and at “death” separate, the consciousness goes “somewhere” but when a person is resuscitated consciousness returns to the biological state at some point. An intervention occurs (resuscitation) and biological life continues because modern technology has reconstituted the biological state. After rejoining, a story can be told about what happened to both the biological self and one’s consciousness. What Raymond Moody did was begin to collect the evidence, categorize and summarize the stories of “those who had died”.

What we are tracking is consciousness separated from the physical form. There is a consistency across experiences and a limited span of variation of experiences. About 10 experiences can be tracked consistently across near death accounts; these are true cross culturally and are repeatable. NDEs may include all or only some of the following, the order in which they occur may vary, but these experiences are consistently experienced. The elements include:

1. *Ineffability* –Language is too limited to explain what is happening, language is a problem. This “new” reality is more than three dimensional and there is no way to describe it. Our language is also dualistic but reality is unified, it is not linear, so what happens is hard to adequately convey through language. You do not hear confusion

from those who have experienced and NDE, their relating is very clear, what you do hear is surprise.

An example might be as if you were living in a “flat land”, a two dimensional world, but have an “experience” of a three dimensional reality. Consider living in a “flat land” with only awareness of vertical and horizontal dimensions and a ball runs by. There is no way to describe this effectively...only a circle would be experienced...not a ball. This is an analogy of this concept. It cannot be described or related. Or, it is like trying to describe blue and green to someone who is color blind. There is no way to describe something for which you have no frame of reference.

2. *Hearing the News* – Consciousness continues although it has already separated from the biological body. This consciousness receives information but not through the “normal” senses of hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, etc. There is a beginning of an expansion of consciousness.
3. *Feelings of Peace and Quiet* – Although the dying process may be very painful and troubling, very quickly the fear, anxiety and pain are quickly replaced as the consciousness begins to separate from the physical self and experiences peace, expansiveness, a sense of well-being. The experience moves beyond the sensory self, consciousness enters a place of safety and comfort. This is the initial, liminal state in the process; in the vast majority of cases it is comforting.
4. *Out of the Body* – If this proceeds further, consciousness becomes aware that the person is no longer “in their body”. This becomes the basis of scientific proof. There are floating sensations, ability to “see” the body from a different perspective as well as the ability to be aware of events and conversations that are not collocated with the biological body. There are incidences of reports of consciousness hearing/seeing things and conversations in other parts of the hospital. These reports can be collaborated with family, friends, medical staff who were not in the room of the “dying person”.

Interestingly, some people have these experiences without having neared death, so we have the ability to become aware of this different “reality” without having died. Are we in fact experiencing the Consciousness with a capital “C” in a small “c” way? In other words, is our consciousness really are own?

5. *The Noise* – Hearing awareness of a new “vibration”, testimony to the beginnings of beauty. Described differently as bells, chimes, tinkling, clanking, and music (as best we can describe it with the language and the experience we have).

Some of the sounds reported are similar to those being heard around the world recently without any understood origin.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/30/strange-sounds-heard\\_n\\_3845343.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/30/strange-sounds-heard_n_3845343.html)

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2110523/Whats-causing-mysterious-sounds-coming-sky-loud-set-car-alarms.html>

6. *The Dark Tunnel* – Almost a universal experience which is often accompanied by the “noise” experience. The “self” moves through a tunnel but experiences no fear, only peace and quiet. Maybe the process of transition is “birth canal-like” whether we are coming into biological form or leaving the biological body. There is sensation, darkness, movement, vibration, a passageway to another “reality”, moving through a restrictive environment into a wider expanse.
  
7. *Meeting Others* - One is welcomed into the next state by those who have gone before somewhat like arriving at the airport, being welcomed, made to feel at home. This is a fairly universal experience. Almost always, if the “self” meets a child who predeceased them, they see them as an adult. If they see an elder, they see them at a full beautiful state. Finally, they do not necessarily meet the people they expected to see as if certain people were chosen to greet them. They appear in a form that is recognizable and communication is telepathic. This is not fear based, there is a generosity of spirit. In our tradition, we might consider the stories of Yeshua coming to see the disciples and being recognized... or not. There are stories of the deceased coming to visit the person(s) left behind. JB Philips describes his friend CS Lewis coming to see him upon his death, healthy and ruddy with one sentence of advice to the depressed Philips, “J.B., it’s not as hard as you think.”
  
8. *The Being of Light* – Regardless who is retelling their experience, however it is described, this is the “God” experience. This transcendent experience, this unconditional Love, this Presence awaits us, and we discover we have always been held by Presence. The basis is Unconditional Love, not judgment. We have set up the image of judgment, but this has nothing to do with this Being. The Being provides space where clarity can begin. This is what is at the heart of the Universe, this stands at the beating heart of Everything. It is personal, transcendent, non- judgmental, it is light-filled and expansive.
 

Discussion of the Christian tradition that much of our atonement theology is based on Pauline teachings not the teachings of Yeshua. Those returning from the Light refute the view of a judging, punishing, angry God.
  
9. *The Review* – In meeting the Light, one is asked what s/he has to show for their biological life. Consciously we remember very little of our lives, we have forgotten most of our life. We are in essence, given our life back. We are not in possession of our life, life is precious, it is woven into a vast tapestry and to us in time-space huge amounts of the canvas are blank, it is useless to us. The review allows us to open “up the files” with the full acceptance of the Being of Light. This suggests that our brain may not be the “file” for memories, evidence suggests that memory is “in the cloud,” and that consciousness exists beyond the physical self. There is non-judgmental judgment by the Light; the review is made in love, in compassion, in full acceptance. The life review can go forwards, backwards or all at once.

10. *The Border* – The “deceased” moves to a “border land” where a decision is made... to move forward or return to the biological body. There is a liminal space that must be crossed, if intervention occurs one may return to the biological body. Maybe the Over Soul that oversees the destiny of each soul influences this outcome. It appears there are choices on the Other Side whether to return to time-space/biological life or to move forward. If consciousness chooses to return, biological life is restored.

There are several elements that also seem to come up and were recorded later in Moody’s research. These include:

11. *A New Vision of Knowledge* - Individuals return with knowledge, wisdom that they did not have before.
12. *Cities of Light* – “Humanity” lives in communities, cities of light, tribal groupings of a sort on the other side. Consciousness comes into contact with these communities.
13. *A Realm of Bewildered Spirits*- In the process, one may come into contact with “souls” that are in limbo (as described by the Greeks, and in Latin as purgatory) or maybe even a hellish state. It is clear that there is work to do in this state of being, like a heavenly “rehab”. In the film, “What Dreams May Come”, this is pictured.
14. *Supernatural Rescues* – A supernatural rescuer, an “angel”, may intervene. There are reports of miraculous rescues occurring that seems weird, but yet the “soul” feels guarded and guided. This does not mean one is rescued from all pain but there is an encounter with the Divine in a special way in strategic moments. This appears to be part of this experience.

Is it really a better “deal” to retain biological life? What does one do with this information or experience? There is freedom in choice. There is enough evidence that “something is going on” and then the question is what do we do with it?

In the Gospel of Thomas, in Native American traditions, there is something called “celestial earth.” There is thought to be an “earth” that transcends space-time. We have a form of earth which is shadowed in a different “frequency,” it might be known as “paradise”. Across various spiritual traditions this is alluded to, such as *hurqualia* in the Sufi tradition which means “the mirror of the limbo state”. What is interesting, Eben Alexander goes through this same space. Also, consider a reading from the Lakota tradition of this state, (*Recitations Invocations*, page 181) that creation losses its “little dreams” and awakens. This vision comes out of the Ghost Dance of the late 1800s. This Truth is touching the Universe as it really is. We are destined to touch and taste this “shadow” world even though we often feel as if we are in “the valley of the shadow of death”.

What is the role of consciousness, is it what we think it is, should we play with it, what is its meaning, can we break through this space-time to reach this awareness naturally? There are some who have experienced this “reality” through use of chemical means, opening filters to understanding. Yet, can we develop a natural way of opening the filters? The answer is yes, we can break past our filters without the use of filters. We enter this territory all the time.

There is evidence in both science and in our experience, both exploratory and anecdotal of higher consciousness e.g. that consciousness exists independent of the biological self.

There is a split on where consciousness originates. There is a group that the brain **generates** consciousness (much of the scientific community) OR the other perspective is that the brain is a **receiver** of consciousness. There is scientific evidence that consciousness exists outside the physical body. As humanity evolves, our ability to receive finer levels of consciousness has become more refined. An example is a radio....it can tune in, tune out different frequencies... but it is in no way as complex as the human biological mechanism.

The evidence is growing that the brain does not generate consciousness but is the receiver of consciousness.

Consciousness is a field, it has pre-existed us; the brain allows us to pick up on the field. There are multiple frequencies, multiple “stations”, the brain functions as the filter. The brain acts as a filter, filtering out the “stations” or “information” that needs tuned out so that we can function. Our filters exist so that we can function in space-time, in the material world.

*Field theory of consciousness* ~~ Let us imagine that consciousness exists and permeates the Universe and we are created to pick up on this consciousness. The narrative that we tell ourselves interprets how we will perceive the field – is our story too small, too restrictive? Similarly, animals pick up different frequencies than humans (Rupert Sheldrake, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QsPWitQovM>) because their filter is different. In quantum mechanics, computers jump electrons across space and if you are feeling bad about your computer it knows!!??

Since consciousness permeates the Universe, then the narrative we tell frames how we understand the reality we perceive. An example is someone who suffers with Parkinson’s, where the “reality” becomes narrower and the filter more restrictive. There is “static” in the line which further restricts the frame of reference and the story becomes distorted.

What NDE tells us that we need to broaden our storyline that we no longer need to live with the story line we are used to, we become aware we can broaden our frame of reference, open our filtering system. If we close down the filter of experience we will not have clear and complete information. Mystical experiences broaden our filter.

Judgment is also a filter, limiting how we see things, and yet it creates the reality we perceive.

Where is the English language retained? The dictionary? Our brain? English is actually a “field” we have access to it, but it is not contained anywhere. Who knows where English is? But it is

not set in stone, it changes over time and English exists beyond the individual. This is an analogy for a “field”.

*Holographic theory of consciousness* ~~ Each part contains the whole, but the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It is a live and active field but it is a sum of its parts. An example of this is a bee hive, there are individual bees with individual consciousness but the “hive consciousness”; the collective of bee consciousness, the sum is greater than its parts. But the hive consciousness can do things individual bees cannot do. An example is when the hive decides to swarm. Collectively the hive chooses a new location for a hive. So, consciousness is larger than the individual. Humanity is just the same, we keep busy, but we do not realize that we are part of a higher, community consciousness.

Science has relegated consciousness to the egoic individual, but what if, in fact, it is communal? 100<sup>th</sup> monkey is an example.

## Saturday Afternoon, Sept 7

“Hive mind” is larger than the sum of its parts. We are individuals but we are in a bigger space, but we resonate with it. We go in and out of this “hive experience” over and over again. This sense of community that we experience is an example of experiencing something more than our own individuality. We recognize it, we feel it. What is this? When we tasted it and touch it we know it.

Quote from a **Biology of Transcendence, A Blueprint of the Human Spirit**, by Joseph Chilton Pearce, (page 74), “Our hearts participate in electromagnetic fields within fields nested within hierarchies that are holographic. The whole existing within any part and all functioning as an integrated dynamic. The most suggestive evidence for this coherence of the organism is our discovery in 1992 that all living organisms are liquid crystalline.”

From the explorations of consciousness, there is a field that we pick up on, there is a field in which consciousness exists and we pick up on this. The field has coherence, resonance, and there is also entanglement (where separate entities that once they engage each other are forever entangled and interconnected) and there some kind of liquid crystalline although the concept of fractals might be better. Everything is in dynamic relationship to the whole, the part carries the whole, the whole carries all the parts but the total is greater than the sum of the parts.

Now is there any proof that this is true? There has been a lot of interesting exploration on the brain, on the mind, that shows that the individual mind is picking up on something “bigger”. The savant syndrome, we have examples of this, and it can be tested and it is repeatable. The average IQ of these individuals is 25. By this definition, these individuals cannot be taught or trained but they can be amazingly accurate in specific areas because they are tapping into the field (geographical, automotive, mathematical savants). For example, an automotive savant who could neither feed nor dress himself but when taken to a mall parking lot could name every make and model of car as well as the year produced, where it was manufactured, etc. This person can replicate this information by pulling it from the field. A mathematical savant

who cannot add 2+2 on paper or understand the concept of a number, could with a checkerboard with 64 squares, asked how many grains of rice at the final square to go from the top to the bottom calculate the number of grains of rice n come up with the answer to a complex number of 1,800,000,000,000,000,000,000. A geographical savant can list names of rivers, mountains, bodies of water but lived in a grey walled institution. This information being received is originating outside the brain, this is proof that consciousness is beyond the brain. (This is in Chapter 4 of the aforementioned text).

The proof exists; we just do not know what to do with it! We do not tap it all the time because if we did we would be unable to function in space-time. So to allow us to function, the filters are pretty closed down but it does not mean we do not experience the higher mind, the hive mind. Part of our problem is lag time between old and new paradigms, things are moving quickly forward but we are still operating out of the old paradigm. Maybe we can learn to trust this reality, this “hive mind” instead of discrediting it in our lives and tapping into it when needed and appropriate.

A little background on his general story and then multiple readings from *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon’s Journey into the Afterlife* (2012) by Eben Alexander. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eben\\_Alexander\\_%28author%29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eben_Alexander_%28author%29)). Eben Alexander’s story is overlaid across geographical understanding of the afterworld and its levels (see handout below, page 17). Not everything on this geography is in our normal vocabulary. Our normal state in space-time is shifted according to this material moving left to right, we move laterally, from “biological life” to the “after life”. In moving into the afterlife, one may or may not go through all the gates (into light/into darkness/life reviews, etc.). The afterlife experience consists of multiple levels: the underworld, celestial earth/paradise/intermediate realm, to the Core/alpha and beta source. His experience moves him to the right hand side to “heaven” and interestingly enough, his “map” parallels the sacred maps of the afterworld in other traditions (although he uses his own vocabulary).

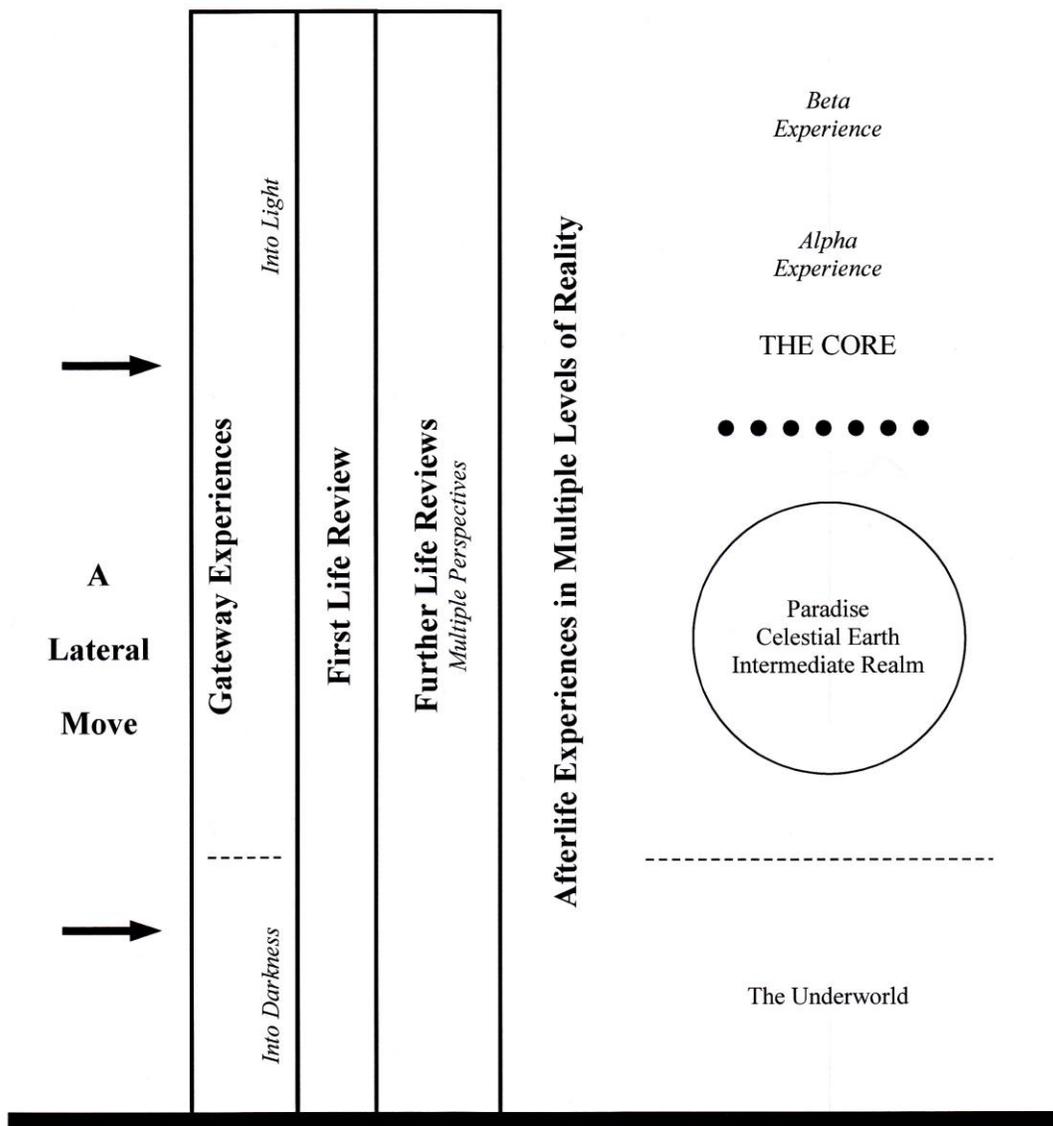
Review of the “geography developed throughout the book. In his recounting, he moves from the “worm’s eye view” (or the “underworld”), to a “heaven like” place (in the sense that it is physical replica but “ramped up” in terms of beauty, intensity and Presence). He encounters “beings” e.g., a woman (who he later finds this is his deceased sister) and angels and he moves through “paradise”. He moves forward into the Presence accompanied by light orbs with the presence of the woman who had met him in “paradise”. Presence knows him personally, when he reaches the Core, to the Source. He repeatedly returns to the worms’ eye view, periodically. As he moves through these levels he also has experiences of “evil” or negative energies.

He receives three primary messages from the divine Guide, the Message of Heaven:

- You are loved and cherished, forever.
- You have nothing to fear
- There is nothing you can do wrong.

The diagram below is a visual representation of Eben Alexander’s experience.

# Geographies of the Afterlife



*When Human Consciousness  
Transcends Space and Time*

There is a different way of knowing and understanding bypassing language but with an intensity and depth inaccessible on earth. There is no separation between the “self” and “Everything” else. The Source is so close, no distance exists between “God” and “self” and yet that loving “God” is separate but yet the same; it is palpable and more human than human. There is an inky darkness but filled to the brim with Light. There are multiple universes, and there are small elements of evil in all but not like in our reality. Without evil there is no free will. There are countless higher dimensions that can be experienced directly, but cannot be experienced from lower levels. Our reality is interconnected to these higher realities/worlds because all is interconnected.

Everything boils down to one sentence, YOU ARE LOVED. The fundamental insight is that Love starts at the Core but then descends back to paradise/celestial earth, back to the Underworld and back to material reality as we know it.

Life experiences make us “leak” Love...It is always present...children, babies, those we love, the beauty of creation...we feel this experience. This is the Core and Love is which holds everything together and not one soul on the planet has not experienced this. We are all in the arteries of that flow and that is his fundamental insight. It starts at the Core, leaks into Middle Earth, then to the world we live in, and then into the underworld. This Love binds us to each other and holds the Universe together. It is present no matter what.

If we go back to the concept of the individual bee, but when they are working they are working to a higher direction. If they separate from Hive Mind, they will die. The reason for hive collapse is due to the individual bees’ inability to connect to the Hive Mind.

At a human level, we have our own consciousness. But in the tradition, we also each have our own guide/higher state of itself/Over Soul/guardian angel/orb. And yet each of our individual guides are interconnected into something we could call the collective “All Soul”. And yet, there are many hives/all souls and above that is the Great Core. The All Soul gives birth to every entity below it and is what drives the universe; It is direct, personal and flows through the arteries of reality.

The paradigm/hierarchy might look like this:

**The All Soul** which holds all souls; this is Love (what we might call God) ➡

**Great Hive/Hive Mind/all souls/Son of Adam** (one might say that Yeshua channeled all souls/great hive). But when he used I AM statements he was speaking as the All Soul, the level above). ➡

**Over Soul/Orb/Guardian Angel/Twin/Guide** (a higher state of our own being that allows us access to the next level, the Great Hive, the level of “all souls”) ➡

**Individuals** (but will collapse without the larger guiding Self). One of the jobs of the individual is to collect the nectar to bring back to the larger Self, but we must be aware of the higher self/consciousness to be able to do this.

NDEs can awaken us to this Love, but Love is present all the time because it breaks through the filters, It is always leaking through.

So, what are we doing in space-time? This will take up a huge part of our next discussion. But before we do that we need the big picture... to what do we belong? Each bee/each person is acting on behalf of its Hive Mind/it's All Soul. It has its own intelligence but must have its Hive Mind/All Soul, all of humanity to function/survive.

### **Saturday evening viewing of "What Dreams May Come"**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPZpQsEFcKI>

### **Sunday a.m., September 9**

Morning spent processing the film from the night before. The heart of it is love, beauty and compassion although there may be aspects that are not true and which are residual from our tradition. Discussion of the group's general response to issues and possibilities as well as what we might be in agreement and things which we might be in deep disagreement.

- Finding yourself stuck in hell is to realize that you are not the Beloved, "hell" is a self-creation, a personal reality, it does not matter which realm it is in.
- It is about perception, where ever you are, we see reality through our own filtering system OR the way we see creates our reality
- The world here is not as amenable to our creative process but the next world is more open to our creative world.
- The life review was not about an external judgment but we are our own judge and jury, it is our own perception that convicts us.
- A surprise at the sense of caring by those from the "afterworld" for those in this "reality". Is it possible that there is a filter to keep us from experiencing the non-physical entities because we might get too "spooked" by them?
- There were strong undertones of Catholic dogma underlying much of the film. So, what about the issue of "suicide"? The "Hell" was much like Dante's images. Is hell forever? How do we reconcile eternal hell and Love as well as reincarnation? Hell is not seen as judgment but that it is "just the way it was".
- After death we do not look physically like we did before, but our essence remains the same.
- In the next reality we can become artists of the future, everything we see is our own creation anyway.
- It is possible to "violate" a rule to create one's own reality?
- Some were disturbed by the guilt that was threaded through film.

- Christy – Robin Williams – is a “Christ like” figure, descending into death/hell, willing to sacrifice himself for her.
- Our passing comments can have a major impact on others, e.g. the daughter taking on the image of the persona of an Asian woman, the son willing to go to hell through hell with his father.
- A major theme is of love as self-sacrifice.
- At the end of the film, he quit, self-sacrificed, surrendered, lost himself but then she woke up to his “drowning”, her love saved them.
- She had to choose to love, to come out of herself, to save him... and herself also.
- Interested in the soul mate idea, there seemed to be sharing of the attributes as one entity.

There is some information within the sacred traditions of how the realms of heaven/hell work. This may simply depict our own capacity to be creative, to work with the Creator and it may be that our ability to create is ramped up in the next world.

Wisdom is important because we are called to be creative in the next world, our work in the next world may be to empty “hell”, to make good out of evil. Wonder if the future suggests just like the children who had become advanced beings by the time the parents arrived...they were shape shifters...they did not demand they change. Maybe the children were symbols of higher order wisdom.

Our work in this realm is also empty hell, learning the basics, the law of cause and effect; we can only learn this by experience. It is not theoretical.

What about the issue of suicide?

- It is an unnatural end to a life path; it leads to an unfinished path.
- We have free will, we have a choice.
- Moody’s book suggests there are consequences to suicide and that one must return to finish unfinished business.
- What is the “gift”? Life? Free will? Love?

What is the responsibility to the deceased? What is their responsibility to us? But the “communion of saints” works across the barriers and boundaries.

Moving on to the second exercise for the day:

Article for review/discussion: “The Night I Died” from *Parabola*, Summer 2013. Tracy Cochran. What strikes us? What speaks to us? How does Spirit support us? Jacob Needleman suggests that the fabric of the Universe is radically responsive to us. Her first response was compassion, not anger, not fighting back. This is full of teaching, full of experience, but it is identified that this is part of all we are.

The next weekend will focus on the Lorimer book and the Modern Book of the Dead. There are aspects of the Lorimer book can be skimmed. The book was chosen because it is the phase past what Moody documented. The Modern Book of the Dead addresses building a way of dealing with this material in the here-and-now.