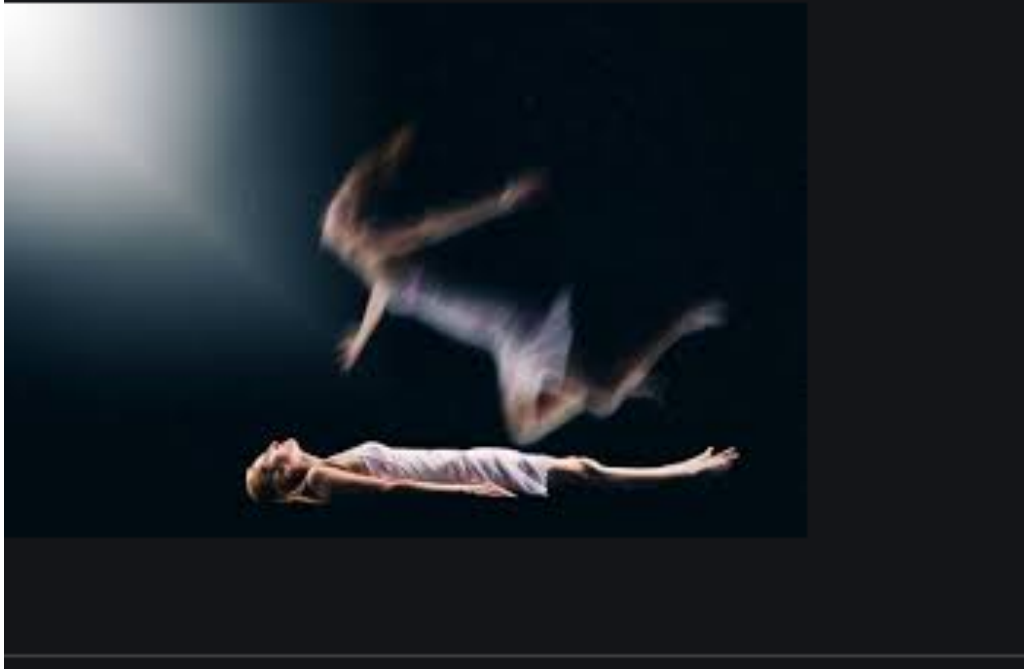


Near Death Experiences

Glenn Magelssen



Over the last thirty to forty years there has been increased interest in the events surrounding a near death experience. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and Raymond A. Moody Jr. began interviewing people with this experience and soon realized the shared stories had many similarities. There was a striking pattern to the experiences of the individuals, but the number of people interviewed was small. More recently, Jefferey Long has interviewed more than 1300 persons. Each interview did not necessarily contain all the pattern elements, but each interview did fit within the different pattern elements. I'll describe and present examples of these. An example of one of the events that is contained in the pattern and experienced by more than 50% of those interviewed is one called "an out of body happening". In this case the dying person describes leaving his/her body and is able to look at the dying body at a distance. The person is able to watch how the doctors and nurses are working to try to bring life back. When the person returns to the body and is able to talk to the doctors and nurses, the person is able to describe accurately what they were doing when trying to bring the person back to life. We will take a short look at possible explanations for the behavioral pattern.

BIO

Glenn Magelssen has a PhD in Astrophysics from the University of Colorado. His scientific research has included solar physics, laser and ion beam fusion, neutral nets, code development and stockpile stewardship. He has studied theology most of his life and taken a four year course called EFM from the University of the South on Old and New Testament, Christian history and Christian Theology. He is a Stephan minister, is a member of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and is on The Self Help board. He has given Faith and Science talks on cosmology, genetics and evolution. He became interested in near death experiences while a freshman in college. He will describe that experience, an experience that still puzzles him.

Outline

1. My Story
2. The patterns seen in most of the near death experiences recorded
3. Examples of NDE experiences read
4. Research being done to address the near death experience pattern
5. References

My Story

When I was a freshman in college while taking a “Bone-Head” English course I was allowed to do some creative writing. what I will describe is a story I wrote at that time. The elements of the story are outlined below.

1. Person in the middle of a lake in dire need
2. A spiral staircase that the person climbs appears above the person
3. Person meets Matthew, a human-like person but made of thousands of diamonds
4. Comes to a room with familiar objects from present and past
5. Sees a tunnel with a hint of light at the end
6. Follows tunnel as the light gets brighter and bigger
7. Reaches end of tunnel and is surrounded by bright light
8. Moves even closer to light but experiences a barrier that he can't pass
9. person is back in the water

Near Death Experiences

This is certainly a difficult area that suggests many different questions about our understanding of death and aspects of the human experience that are very puzzling and seem outside what a scientist would consider rational. Nevertheless near death experiences have a unique and consistent pattern that suggest many different issues. Here is a list of the common and consistent patterns:

1. Out of body sensation. The person sees his own body and the people and things about the body from a distance and is able to describe the place and people after coming back to life.
2. A strangeness associated with time. Some feel that time is greatly speeded up and others that there isn't a sense of time at all.
3. Isolation feeling. Being able to see all the people and events around you but unable to communicate with them. You are not seen or heard and cannot communicate through touch. Total isolation
4. Sense of darkness giving way to light. This darkness is experienced in many different ways. One of the common experiences is being in a tunnel
5. Brilliant light. This is described as being brighter than anything they have ever experienced. It doesn't hurt the eyes and there is no sense of heat. There is a feeling of warmth and love associated with the light.
6. There is a complete review of your life history. For some this includes just the high points, but for others it seems to include everything going back to when they were children. This is remembered long after the death experience.
7. There are questions about what one has done during life and what you liked to do with your life, for example what would you like to learn
8. There are visions, encounters with people you loved but are no longer alive
9. You experience a barrier, something that lets you know that you need to go back to your body.

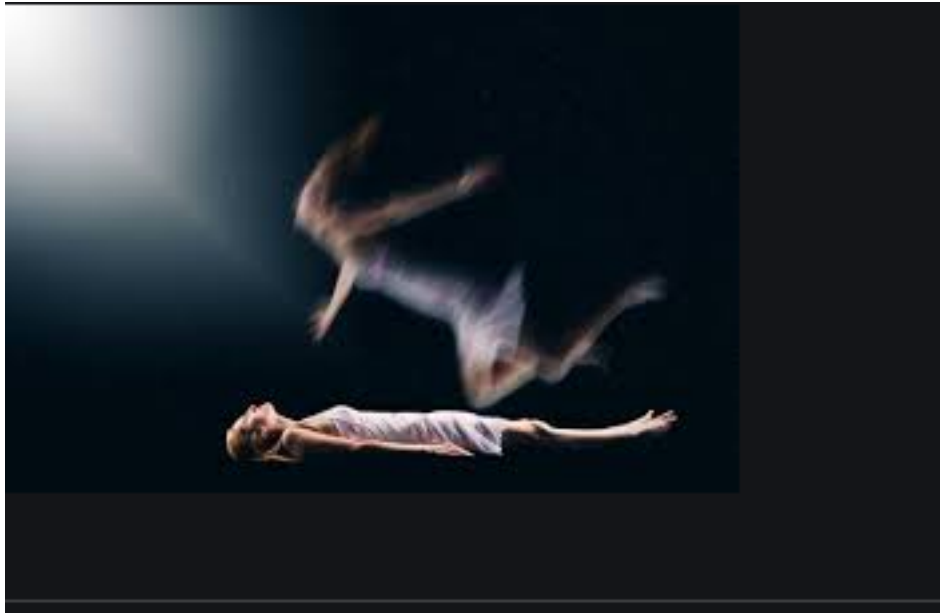
The tunnel



The Light



Out of body experience



Relatives



Near Death Experience of a 9 year old child that changed the life of Melvin Morse, M.D. From his book titled "Closer to The Light"

To Be Read By Someone Participating

Katie remembered nothing about the drowning itself. Her memory was of darkness and the feeling that she was so heavy she couldn't move. Then a tunnel opened and through the tunnel came "Elizabeth".

Elizabeth was "tall and nice" with bright, golden hair. She accompanied Katie up the tunnel, where she saw her late grandfather and met several other people. Among "new friends" were two young boys - "souls waiting to be born" - named Andy and Mark, who played with her and introduced her to many people.

At one point in the voyage, Katie was given a glimpse of her home. She was allowed to wander throughout the house, watching her brothers and sisters play with their toys in their rooms. One of her brothers was playing with a GI Joe, pushing him around in the room in a jeep. One of her sisters was combing the hair of a Barbie doll and singing a popular rock song. She drifted into the kitchen and watched her mother preparing a meal of roast chicken and rice. Then she looked into the living room and saw her father sitting on the couch staring quietly ahead. She assumed he was worrying about her in the hospital.

Later, when Katie mentioned this to her parents, she shocked them with her vivid details about the clothing they were wearing, their positions in the house, even the food her mother was cooking.

Finally, Elizabeth - who seemed to be a guardian angel to Katie - took her to meet the Heavenly Father and Jesus. The Heavenly Father asked if she wanted to go home. Katie cried. She said she wanted to stay with him. Then Jesus asked her if she wanted to see her mother again. "Yes" she replied. Then she awoke.



Susan Sprake

Whether in the body or out of the body, God knows. (2 Cor. 12:4)

I particularly like this expression by Paul when he was whisked up to the third heaven, a very quick and sudden transport from the physical to the spiritual destination.

People who recount their New Death Experience reference such a quick transport from the physical state, that is common to us all, to a very different dimension indeed.

Many people are caution about sharing such sacred encounters with the spiritual world, whether it be encounters with angels or seeing heavenly realities, for as they begin to tell their stories to others they are often mocked and ridiculed by unbelievers and Biblically illiterate Christians. Having and telling sacred God encounters, dreams or visions are deeply, deeply personal. As Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 12:4, he “heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for a man to utter” or in our common vernacular, I was not worthy to see or hear what I saw and heard and by golly will not misrepresent what I can share.

That is how I felt for years after having my first NDE. Yes first, another followed 33 years later after numerous visions, encounters and out of body experiences. My soul always wanted to share these encounters with others, and have sparingly over the years with people I felt I could trust to receive the story without judgement.

So what happened to me so many years ago? Having finished my undergrad studies while in Germany, I was packed and ready to go to Frankfurt the next day to catch my plane to the US. I had been accepted to law school, had saved a little money and was ready for this next stage in my life. I had sold my apartment, all my furniture and packed and shipped my precious books and things to a mutual friend in San Francisco who had agreed to meet me and provide me with a place to stay upon arrival. I had not been back to the States in seven years – but I was excited and ready.

My life in Heidelberg over those seven years had been transformative and filled with travel and wonderful experiences. Unfortunately, my ‘ex-boyfriend’ was not so thrilled with my departure, even though we had broken off our relationship some months past. That evening he began arguing with me and throwing insults that were escalating. To stop the escalation, I went and laid down on the bed and became very still and very quiet. I must have laid there for some time, as I recall he came to check on me at least once or twice. I laid very still. Partially in fear and partially in a protective cocoon of sorts.

What happened next changed my life. Suddenly, I was whisked up and out of my body at such a speed that my thoughts could not catch up with what I was experiencing. At one moment I was seeing my body become further and further below and distant from me and at the next moment I am looking up at a great, bright light. I was quickly traveling up through a tunnel toward the light. I looked around and the tunnel had level after level, floor after floor encircling the tunnel heading toward the light. I could see in the distant levels, people walking as in a line upward toward the light. In a very distant and indistinct space very near the light, or even part of the light, there seemed to be a little bridge of sorts that seemed to be engulfed by the light.

I looked down and saw my body very far away on the bed and was instantaneously terrified. Boom, I was back in the body. To say I was unnerved would be an understatement of a lifetime. I laid there for another moment and then quickly got up, went to the restroom and splashed water on my face. I was shook to my core. I sat on the edge of the tub for a while to try and center myself.

Finally, I rejoined my boyfriend who was watching TV and needless to say, I was never the same again. I have pondered that first experience for many years. Not until after law school and out in the world in a new chapter of my life did I hear for the first time, Near Death Experience, etc. I was amazed that others had had such experiences and yet super happy that people were talking about them.

Many sacred experiences, and out of body moments, have happened since that day in August 1980 and I am deeply grateful and joyful for them.

#2.



A completely different Near Death Experience occurred on Easter Sunday, April 2013. That Easter was similar to many before it with the preparation of Easter baskets, hiding chocolate eggs around the house, going to church, reading the lessons for the day, nervous as the acolytes that I had trained rang the bells and swung the thuribul full of essence during the church service and now back at home busy preparing the final touches of Easter dinner as my guest had all arrived.

So normal in fact that I was testing the potatoes au gratin. I was blowing on one of the slices when bam, it was thrust down my throat and began blocking my airway. I immediately went to my room a few steps away and tried to cough it out. No luck. I made my way over to my son, who was college age, and pointed to my throat and indicated that I was choking. He got the message and within another second I had collapsed in his arms and while he was trying to hold me and administer the Heimlich maneuver. I was unconscious. I have been told by my son and my dear Jewish friend from work and others that were there that for the next many, many minutes they tried multiple methods to get that sucker (potato slice) dislodged from my throat. Apparently, there were some pretty forceful hits to my body in that effort. A lot of activity was happening trying to get that potato out, calling an ambulance, and finally laying me down in the hall, unconscious and unresponsive.

Well as for me, I was having a beautiful and joyful time flying up, over my beautiful blooming fruit tree in the front yard. I was in the spirit and very silly and playful. I was out of body. The light that surrounded me was more intense and brilliant than anything you can see while in the body. The light is filled with something that I still do not have adequate words to explain. There was not heat or distress from the light, just an engulfing presence, like scuba diving in the ocean. It is all around you, yet not you.

I was spell bound by the beautiful pink and white blooms on my fruit tree. As I looked down at them from above, enjoying their beauty, my eyes caught sight of my little dog, Pippy, in the back yard. She was starring at me and the more I looked at her the more she affixed her eyes on mine and did not let me go. Needless to say she was holding me with her eyes, intently.

I am not sure how long I was up there, time has very little meaning while in the spirit. Apparently, all kinds of things were going on in the house, in the hall. I looked in that direction once and it looked very dark and I saw nothing. No me, no people, no hall, just dark. My dear friend Steve who is mighty in the holy spirit was praying like a maniac during this time. He commanded the holy spirit to attend to me. In the heat of his demands, suddenly, I felt as though someone had hit me in the back with a baseball bat as the spirit rushed through my body, dislodged the pesky potato slice, sent it flying down the hall and in an instant I was back.

My eyes opened and I could make out that my son was pacing in the living room waiting and talking to the dispatch. Funny though, you can't see in the living room from the hall, but oh well. The front door was wide open and I could see down the street, but saw no ambulance. Within a few minutes, apparently the ambulance couldn't find the house, they did show up and began stomping down the hall toward me. I managed to sit up leaning against the wall while the young man checked me out. I refused to go to the hospital, as I was just fine. Super fine really. Very peaceful, very relaxed, blood oxygen level was normal, heart rate normal, cognitive just normal... rather freaked my guests out.

Being that it was Easter and by now the food was all ready, the EMTs left, I joined my guests at the table and my dear friend Mary served the meal. I had no desire to eat, but was just peacefully enjoying these beautiful people on such a blessed day...

Footnote: I asked each of the guests a few days later to recount what they had witnessed and done. I wanted to document their experience as well as my own. They all reassured me that no one had hit me with a baseball bat in my back.

For years I pondered about the spirit that rushed through me, and dislodged the potato, for I could see a face of sorts rushing through me, but could not discern or identify the face. One day about a year ago, it became clear to me it was my dear friend Steve's face and his spirit that rushed through me. Interesting.

My challenge to the scientists is please solve the mystery of how when I was in the spirit hovering above the blooming fruit tree my little dog Pippy could see me and I could see her. Seemingly in two different dimensions in intentional contact.

I offer these two encounters to the glory of God, his kingdom in heaven and on earth, and to Jesus the Holy Son of God, and to the Holy Spirit who must work a lot of overtime.

Scientific Attempts to Understand Near Death Experiences

DATA

Largest NDE study I'm aware of is by Jeffrey Long "The Science of Near Death Experiences"

1. Clinical research in cardiac arrest patients
 - a. 2001 Parnia study
 - b. Von Lommel's study
 - c. Awareness during Resuscitation (Aware) study
 - d. AWARE II
 - e. Meditation-Induced NDEs

Science?

2. Psychological explanations
 - a. Depersonalization model
 - b. Expectancy model
 - c. Dissociation model
 - d. Birth model
3. Physiological explanations
 - a. Neuroanatomical models
 - b. Neurochemical models
 - c. Multi-factorial models
 - d. Low oxygen levels (and G-LOC) models
 - e. Altered blood gas levels models

Comments and Questions

“As Human beings, one has been endowed with just enough intelligence to be able to see clearly how utterly inadequate that intelligence is when confronted with what exists”

What do we “really” understand about Humans?

What can and can not be learned from the Scientific Method?

During a NDE does the conscious separate from the brain?

A NDE significantly changes a person (well documented). Why?

Do animals connect to “out of body situations”?

Is a NDE a miracle?

What is a miracle?

Are you afraid of dying?

Why would one have a life review?

Does a NDE make some logical sense?

What determines whether a person comes back to life?

References

1. Raymond Moody. *Life after Life, The Light Beyond, and Reflections on Life after Life*
2. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross. *On Death and Dying and On Children and Death*
3. Mary C. Neal M.D., Rebecca, et al. *To Heaven and Back*
4. Melvin Morse, M.D. *Closer to the Light*
5. Jeffrey Long, M.D. with Paul Perry. *Evidence of the Afterlife*
6. Near-death experience *Wikipedia*
7. *And Many, Many others*