

Near-Death Experiences  
Dr. Raymond E. Moody, Jr., PMH Atwater & Carl G. Jung  
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“To experience death without actually dying, to be able to visit the realm of the dead and return and to be able to communicate with the world of spirits with no help needed from a shaman or religious person - NDEs have aided in the spiritual growth of our culture tremendously.”

I wrote the above statement after completing my PhD work on NDEs with Dr. Raymond Moody, Jr., a consultant on my PhD committee. What I didn't realize then was that most people who experience a ND return with a more loving attitude, wanting to make their life better, no fear of dying and special talents that they did not have before their experience.

“Raymond Moody discovered and investigated what he terms Near Death Experiences (NDEs). His popular book entitled, *Life after Life*, (1975), opened whole new chapters in the field of parapsychology, the psychology of death and the scientific search for answers regarding death and survival.

These additions to the field of parapsychology reflected an overall adjustment of attitude and a new tolerance within both science and human culture for new ideas about the survival of death. Death and survival were finally moving beyond their purely religious connotations into mainstream science. Science could no longer escape or ignore the question of death, which had now come back in verifiable incidents, to haunt it.” (Beichler, James E., PhD, 2003, p. 43).

A NDE is one type of a spiritual experience and is a profound subjective event experienced by persons who come close to death or who are believed dead as a result of serious injury or illness and, the, unexpectedly recover or who confront a potentially fatal situation and escape uninjured.

Dr. Raymond Moody, Jr. – Creator of Term NDE

Dr. Moody learned about NDEs from studying and teaching about the ancient Greek philosophers' views on NDEs and other phenomena related to the prospect of life after death. After his university classes, students would come up to him and say, “Dr. Moody I had one of those NDEs when I was in a car accident. Dr. Moody my mother had a NDE when she had a heart operation.” And, of course, none of them had ever told anybody. Other medical doctors would send their patients down to see “Raymond – who was interested in those kinds of things” that they did not understand.

My most favorite book about a NDE was told by George G. Ritchie, Jr., MD entitled *My Life after Dying* (1991). This happened in 1943 when he was 20 years old, was serving in the US Army and was pronounced dead. (Dr. Ritchie eventually became a psychiatrist so this is an excellent book for therapists.) He describes being in a bar seeing civilians and service personnel having a good time drinking. He could see “other beings” that couldn't pick up a drink. Their hands went right through the glasses which frustrated them terribly.

When one of the humans would pass out from drinking these “other beings” would compete to see which one could enter the body of the passed-out human in order to feel drunk in their body. This showed him that addiction just didn’t stop when someone dies. (This seems to me to be a good reason to become sober now before one goes over to the other side.) Dr. Ritchie also describes the different realms a Christ-like figure showed him. He was one of the first people who Dr. Moody interviewed in beginning his research.

The characteristics, of which not all are experienced in every NDE, given in 1975 by Dr. Moody are:

- Detachment from physical body;
- Peace, contentment and a feeling of unconditional love;
- Passing through a dark tunnel;
- Seeing a brilliant light or divine being;
- Seeing loved ones who have died;
- A review of one’s entire life;
- Profound lessons about life and universal laws; and

Sometimes a choice or force to return to life to live in a new way that is congruent with what one has been taught (Moody, 1975, pp. 10-70). Dr. Moody is sometimes called the “father” of the NDE.

Because of the fact that the normal and expected reactions to a NDE are anger, depression and problems with interpersonal relationships, Moody has stated that there is a need for a new profession of therapy and therapists that is beyond the profession of medicine to aide in the understanding and meaning of NDEs and other spiritual experiences. Like William James, the Father of American Psychology, who reported on religious experiences but never had one, Dr. Moody also has never experienced a NDE.

### PMH Atwater – Early Researcher

If Dr. Moody is the father of NDEs, PMH Atwater, one of the original researchers of NDEs, might be considered the “mother.” She has written over ten books on her findings having begun her work in 1978. She states in her *The BIG BOOK of NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES (2007)* “not only our faculties expand once we leave our bodies in what appears to be death, so do our consciousness, our mind and our sense of self” (p. 382).

PMH Atwater experienced three NDEs in 1977, which she describes in her book *I Died Three Times in 1977 – The Complete Story*. The original version of this book is still available over her website at [www.pmhatwater.com](http://www.pmhatwater.com). Some of her comments regarding her NDEs are:

“You don’t always know you are dead when you die...

My body was not me. I was me...

I was a sprinkle of pure consciousness...

Everything that ever was, is or will be was there, yet there was nothing at all...

My life review was not a review; it was a reliving of every thought, of every word, of every deed, plus the effect of each thought, word and deed on everyone...

Thoughts really are things. They are powerful. Thoughts are pre-matter itself for they have substance and mass and thus can be shaped into form at will... (pg. 9)." On p. 53, she states, "Death, then, couldn't end life. It only changed the scenery and turned life's script around." She was guided in a vision to legally change her name to three initials, which she states has proved helpful in her work.

She also describes being aware of a *Presence* in her last NDE. The *Presence* spoke to her and she states that every cell in her and every speck of Creation bowed to this voice (p. 76). As I read this, I couldn't help thinking of my life in my dysfunctional family and how relieved I was by my parent's *presence* however inconsistent and inadequate their nurturing was. I look forward to feeling *The Presence* when it is my turn to go to the other side.

### Carl G. Jung – Psychologist and ND Experimenter

In 1944, at seventy years of age, Jung broke his foot and was confined to bed rest. This resulted in blood clots, which led to a heart attack and a NDE (which was then called a *vision*). Jung had an Out of Body Experience (OBE) where he saw a temple that he was about to enter when his doctor appeared and told him he needed to return to earth. As is typical in a NDE, he did not want to return from this state and was depressed for weeks afterwards. One can read about this NDE in his biography, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*" (Jung, 1989, pp. 293-296).

Jung felt the NDE was the most profound experience of his entire life, which sparked creativity and a fruitful period of work. He put aside any need of having to look good, be famous or applauded and from that point on he experienced his life as a temporary resident in his body. He also spoke about death as being a goal of life (Moretti, 2004).

### Therapists re NDEs in your clients.

About one-third of the adults who face death, nearly die or who are later resuscitated have a NDE. You are seeing these people in your office. Whether they tell you about their experience or not many times depends on what they believe your reaction will be. A classic problem people have after a NDE is that they are often unable to make their family or friends understand the experience no less how much of an impact it had on them.

For those therapists who would like clinical training on NDEs and other spiritual transforming experiences, please go to [aciste.org](http://aciste.org). This is the American Center for the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences (ACISTE), a relatively new organization that provides training programs for therapists.

### Statistics on NDE's

Ruud van Wees, MA, from Bredevoort, The Netherlands, gave the statistics recently that 23 million people had a 'verge-of-death' or 'temporary death' experience, of which 8 million people also went through a 'mystical encounter' (p. 472, (JNDAE7 29 (4) (2011)). Dean Radin in his book *The Conscious Universe: Scientific Evidence for PSI Phenomena* (1997) stated that

this human experience of the *real* “supports the concept of a deeply interconnected ‘conscious universe,’ not merely as a psychological coping mechanism, but as reality” (p. 293).

Physician Jeffrey Long (Long & Perry, 2011) surveyed 613 NDErs online and found that 95.8% believed that their NDEs were ‘definitely real’ (Perry, 2011, p. 476). Intensification of all aspects of the mind from being aware, thinking, feeling, having sensations and very clear perceptions is an outstanding characteristic of a NDE which gives people a greatly expanded view of their consciousness.

### Carl Jung’s NDE/Vision

After his *vision* or *NDE*, Carl Jung stated he felt that he authored many of his principal works and he was no longer afraid to lose his professional reputation by discussing or writing about psychic phenomenon. (This fear for professionals still holds today). His work seemed to take on a life of its own and his thoughts flowed. There was also an acceptance of his life as it had been as he felt that all of it had been needed; the so-called “mistakes” were as necessary as much as what was labeled positive.

### Dr. Eben Alexander

Many people return from their NDE knowing they are to have better relationships in their life whatever that means to them. Many others return with gifts such as mental telepathy, talking to spirits, automatic writing, etc. A now famous NDE was described in *Newsweek* magazine, October 15, 2012 issue, about Dr. Eben Alexander, a Harvard trained neurosurgeon who found himself in a coma. He experienced things he never thought possible in his journey to the afterlife. He describes his 2008 NDE in his book, *Proof of Heaven* (2012). He states that the universe he experienced in his coma was the same one that both Einstein and Jesus were speaking of in their very different ways.

He also received a message from a young, beautiful woman, “You are loved and cherished, dearly, forever. You have nothing to fear. There is nothing you can do wrong.” It seems as I read this that he felt the *Presence* PMH Atwater explained in her NDE. I am often reminded that we are put on this earth to learn. And the pain that we experience here often opens us up to another dimension. If you have experienced a NDE, a spiritual experience or anything “weird” and have not told anyone, please find an appropriate person to tell. The validation of this experience or experiences will eventually greatly enhance your life.