

# Near-Death Experiences:

Is this what happens  
when we die?

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US FIND OUT



THE INTERNATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION FOR  
NEAR-DEATH STUDIES

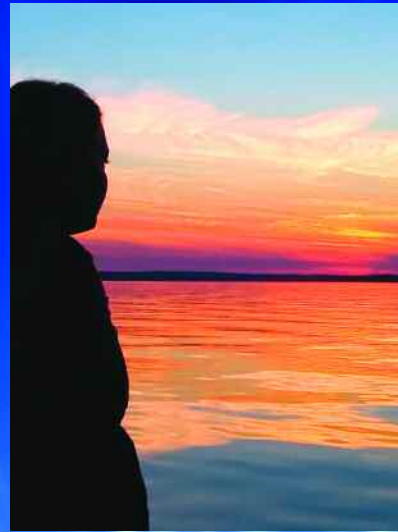
THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE FOR RESEARCH  
ON NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

# The Near-Death Experience

A near-death experience (NDE) is a profound phenomenon, typically occurring when a person is clinically dead, facing death, experiencing an illness, or under physical or emotional trauma.

We now have thousands of documented cases of NDEs which challenge some basic assumptions of mainstream psychology, medicine, and philosophy. For example, many near-death experiencers (NDErs) are able to report accurately events that occurred around their body when they had no detectable brain activity or heartbeat. Some NDErs return with knowledge previously unknown to them that is later verified as accurate. Unlike dreams and hallucinations, NDEs have a consistent internal structure, and cross-culturally they reflect universal elements. And finally, the aftereffects are enduring and life-altering to a much greater extent than for those who experience similar health crises without an NDE.

These observations from the growing body of research data are further supported by studies of resuscitated patients in hospital settings, where detailed medical records are available, indicating that the NDE cannot be explained by physiological or pharmacological causes. This phenomenon has the potential to radically affect every aspect of life, from moment-to-moment personal decisions to far-reaching public policies.



*Research studies have shown that approximately 10% of patients who experience cardiac arrest in hospital settings report an NDE.*

## What is an NDE?

Each NDE is unique, but they reflect many common features. Although a small percentage of NDEs include frightening or distressing aspects, the great majority contain beautiful, loving, and insightful elements which include one or more common motifs:

- a sense of profound peace and well-being;
- a perception of one's body from an outside (and usually above) position, sometimes observing medical resuscitation efforts;
- a rapid movement toward and/or sudden immersion in a powerful light;
- an intense feeling of unconditional love;
- a life review in which one relives one's actions and feels the emotional impact on others;
- an immersion in a spiritual realm or world;
- an encounter with spiritual beings, and/or a joyful reunion with deceased loved ones;
- a flood of knowledge about one's life and the nature of the universe;
- a decision by oneself or others to return to one's body.

NDErs often struggle to find adequate words to describe their experience. They commonly say it is the most profound of their lives and, unlike a dream, "more real than real." They almost always report a complete loss of the fear of death and often feel deeply changed in their attitudes toward life, work, and relationships, believing that the essential purpose of human life is to develop our capacity to love. Although they adjust to these personal transformations, they often have difficulty finding others in whom they can confide their experience. They, their caregivers, and others close to them usually feel in great need of information and support.

Others have reported similar experiences and aftereffects that occur outside the context of a health-related crisis. These "near-death-like experiences" (NDLEs) can happen during the profound peace of meditation, while in deep emotional distress or at the deathbed vigil of a loved one. These experiences are also a focus of interest for IANDS researchers.



## The International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS)

### IANDS' Mission

*To build global understanding of near-death and near-death-like experiences through research, education, and support.*

Founded in 1981, the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) is the only international organization dedicated to encouraging scientific research and education on the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual nature and ramifications of near-death experiences. IANDS disseminates research on NDEs and similar experiences to a broad audience including scientists, medical professionals, religious thinkers, and the general public. This new information about the nature of consciousness, while a challenge to the current scientific model, has far-reaching implications. IANDS remains dedicated to its mission of promoting research, exploration, and debate in this field.

The organization has expanded to include an international network of more than 50 local interest groups; a quarterly publication of the peer-reviewed *Journal of Near-Death Studies*; a quarterly newsletter *Vital Signs*; regularly scheduled conferences; and a website that disseminates a wide array of informational, networking, and research services.

IANDS is committed to supporting near-death experiencers (NDErs) and people close to them. Through local interest groups, an annual retreat, our publications, website, and conferences, we reassure NDErs that their experience is a normal, valid, and common phenomenon. We assist these experiencers, their families, their caregivers, and others who personally and professionally interact with them to better understand these experiences.

IANDS also uses NDE-based knowledge to help people facing death, to prevent suicide, to ease grief, and to discover greater meaning and purpose in life.



*Science Magazine stated that understanding the basis of consciousness is the second highest*



# The Vision of IANDS



We envision a future in which the study of near-death experiences is established and integrated into all relevant scientific, academic, healthcare, and spiritual/religious communities.



We envision a future in which all near-death experiencers are accepted, respected, and supported by their healthcare providers, families, co-workers, and the public at large as they integrate the experiences into their lives.



We envision a future in which people from all walks of life, religions, and cultures will look at near-death experiences as a potential source of meaning and inspiration for a better world.



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IANDS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service in the United States.