



VITAL SIGNS

Vital Signs is published by the International Association for Near-Death Studies, Inc. (IANDS).

EDITOR

Susan Amsden, BSc

LAYOUT/DESIGN

Maryann Sperry, BAEd, BBA

IANDS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Jan Holden, EdD, LPC-S, ACMHP

Vice President: Martin Tanner, JD, ADRM

Secretary: Janet Melcher, PhD, LISW-S

Treasurer: Robert Mays, BSc

Board Members

Deborah Conner, MA

Daniel Endy, BSCE

Angela Harris, BAEd

Debbie James, MSN, RN, CCRN-K

Evan Mecham, MA

Maryann Sperry, BAEd, BBA

Angela Willson-Quayle, PhD

Submissions

Submissions to *Vital Signs* are welcome. Please submit materials to vs@iands.org. Please use Word format for attached documents. All submissions are subject to *Vital Signs* editorial review and approval processes.

white

Suggestions & Feedback

We welcome your questions, comments, or suggestions. Your opinion matters!

IANDS

2741 Campus Walk Avenue

Building 500

Durham, NC 27705

919.383.7940 | vs@iands.org | www.iands.org



Founded in 1981, the International Association for Near-Death Studies, Inc. (IANDS) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. The organization is dedicated to encouraging scientific research, education, and support regarding the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual nature and ramifications of near-death and related experiences. IANDS associates comprise a broad audience from around the world, including experiencers; researchers; medical, mental, social, and religious/spiritual healthcare professionals; educators; and the general public. For more information, or to become an IANDS member, visit <https://iands.org>.

Copyright © IANDS 2023 | All rights reserved. | International Association for Near-Death Studies, Inc.

President’s Message	3
Welcome New Board Member	3
Conference Workshops	4-9
PMH Atwater Book Review: <i>The Girl Who Saw Heaven</i>	10
Videos on IANDS YouTube Channel	11
Ken Prather’s NDE	12-13
William Guggenheim III Legacy	14-15
Conference Movie Premiere: <i>The Architecture of Death</i>	15
IANDS Conference in Washington, DC	16

Cover Image:

White Light, painting by Raymond Kinman,
Woodcarver and Disney Artist

WoodcarverGuru.com

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/RaymondKinman/>

Used by permission





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Inspirational IANDS Conferences

Some years ago, a few of my master's students attended an IANDS conference. My Counseling Program at the University of North Texas is world-renown for preparing play therapists—counselors who work with children ages 2-10 years old using their natural language of play as the counseling medium. These students both were specializing in play therapy and had taken my course, Transpersonal Perspective in Counseling, in which we study near-death and related experiences.

I remember clearly that a few days into the conference, we were talking informally, and they shared an observation. They said essentially, “You would think that when counseling professionals who are dedicated to children’s wellbeing congregate for a conference, their shared devotion to kiddos would cause them to feel a sense of connectedness and camaraderie. But interestingly, that has not been our experience. Instead, it’s here at IANDS that, for the

first time at a professional conference, we’ve felt a bond between attendees. There’s a shared sense of energy that’s palpable. We’re so enjoying the sense of community here.”

Their observation has stuck with me all these years. Indeed, it has been my experience at every IANDS conference that no matter how large the in-person attendance, a shared sense of good will and special connection pervades the group. After each conference, I feel energized and renewed.

Of course, some of you reading this message will, for one reason or another, be unable to attend this year’s conference in person. But if you can come “in the flesh,” I highly recommend you do. I agree with my former students: As a source of connection, inspiration, and regeneration, there’s nothing like being at an IANDS conference!

Janice Miner Holden, EdD, LPC-S, ACMHP

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER - Deborah Conner, MA



Since 2019, Deborah has served as an International Integration Coach, blogger, speaker, workshop facilitator, and founder of The Wisdom of us. Deborah is a certified coach whose specialty is helping clients process spiritually transformative experiences (STEs) that challenge a person’s worldview. Clients struggling with the aftereffects of a near-death, out-of-body, psychedelic, shared death, or other anomalous experience find a safe, knowledgeable, and accepting space to make sense of their experience and move forward with their lives.

With 20+ years of executive leadership in non-profit organizations and an MA in Philanthropy and Development, Deborah has served in health, sport, social services, and environmental sectors. Since the age of 13, Deborah has had many OBEs and an NDE. Currently volunteering as a research assistant with the Shared Crossing Research Initiative, Deborah finds the work of expanded consciousness fascinating. She is also a Reiki practitioner. Deborah resides in Nova Scotia, Canada, with her husband Daryl and their dog, Tyche. When not spending time with family, she enjoys kayaking, gardening, and political thrillers.

Over the years, IANDS has provided Deborah with an opportunity to connect, network and commune with other experiencers in a very welcoming, safe and informed manner. She feels compelled to carry on the exceptional efforts of previous IANDS leaders who have graciously created a welcoming community for all people. Her role as an IANDS board member will be as the Development Chair; putting in place a sustainable fundraising plan for the organization, which will allow IANDS to expand and grow into the future.

WORKSHOPS



Rebecca Austill-Clausen, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA

Reiki Level I Certificate-Provided Training WS (6 hrs) Discover Your Natural Healing Energy and Enhance After-Death Communication

Wednesday 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
(\$125 /\$150 separate registration required)

Rebecca has been using Reiki for 27 years. She has taught thousands of medical professionals and all others the joys of Reiki healing. Reiki can be learned on one day. Experience one-to-one healing sessions as you receive and share Reiki with multiple partners. Learn to give Reiki to yourself, family, friends, clients, colleagues, animals, and even plants. Reiki's unconditional LOVE facilitates communication with those living in the afterlife. Reiki has been taught at every in-person American Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference since 2015. Becky is thrilled to provide Reiki training at IANDS's Annual Conference for the third time. Access your self-healing abilities at this highly effective experiential workshop.

Rebecca is an Occupational Therapist, Fellow of the American OT Association, and Reiki Master. She teaches Reiki at national conferences and universities, along with teaching after-death communication both in-person and online. Becky had a profound spiritually transformative experience and shared death experience when she discovered the ability to communicate with her deceased brother even though she initially had no psychic or spiritual awareness. She has initiated five private practices including one that grew to a staff of 350 therapists. Becky is the Healing Coordinator at IANDS conferences and is honored to serve on the Ethics Committee. Her award-winning book Change Maker, How My Brother's Death Woke Up My Life will be available at the IANDS bookstore.

Rev. Peter Panagore, MDiv

Head: Mystical Experiences and NDEs: Exploring the Characteristics - Session One

Wednesday 10:00 am - 12:00 pm (we suggest also attending Session Two)
(\$40 separate registration required)

Did you know that half of the human population has had mystical experiences, including NDEs? Join us for an exploration of the four defining characteristics of mystical experiences—ineffable, noetic, transient, and passive—and how they relate to NDEs. Our speaker, Peter Panagore, will draw upon the wisdom of ancient mystics and modern scholars to help you better understand yourself and your experiences. Don't miss this opportunity to delve into the psychology and vitalism of mysticism and deepen your understanding of NDEs.

Rev. Peter Panagore, MDiv

Heart: Discover the Power of Kriya Yoga and Centering Practice - Session Two

Wednesday 3:00 - 5:00 pm (we suggest also attending Session One)
(\$40 separate registration required)

Join us for an enlightening session on the power of Kriya Yoga and centering practice. Our speaker, Peter Panagore, who has personally put Kriya and Centering to the test and found them to be effective, will guide you through the disciplined effort, self-reflection, devotion, and surrender

that form the core of Kriya Yoga and centering meditation. Learn how to tap into the Energy Itself, using breath control, muscle utilization, mental focus, and emotional attunement to bring peace to your inner world and daily life. Experience the Energy for yourself, and don't miss this opportunity to discover the power of Kriya Yoga and elevate your spiritual journey to the next level.

Peter Panagore, MDiv, author of the best-selling book, Heaven Is Beautiful: How Dying Taught Me That Death Is Just the Beginning, experienced two transformative near-death encounters. Following a BA in English Literature, he changed careers from architecture to theology and completed a Master of Divinity at Yale University, specializing in the Classics of Western Mysticism. For more than two decades, Panagore served progressive New England churches. His first book, Two Minutes for God, a best-seller in Maine and now available worldwide, was based on his 15 years as an NBC-TV writer for a daily Maine and New Hampshire broadcast viewed annually by 30 million people. He currently hosts "Not Church: Mysticism, No Doctrine, No Dogma, No Bravo Sierra" on his YouTube channel, offers spiritual counseling through Zoom, and teaches meditation and yoga to a global community.

**Emilie Thomas, MA, LMFT,
and Sky Waterpeace, MA**

Brainwave Magic That Unleashes Your Superpowers

Thursday 1:30 - 3:45 pm
(\$40 separate registration required)



In this two-hour interactive workshop developed by the Monroe Institute, Emilie Thomas and Sky Waterpeace will introduce participants to the power of the Institute's sound technology and its ability to aid them in attaining and holding expanded states of awareness beyond our physical waking reality. Not only will the leaders explain the technology that facilitates such explorations, identifying several states that have been replicated by researchers at the Monroe Institute, but attendees will also have the opportunity to explore such expanded states for themselves through the use of Monroe Sound Science during the workshop. This experiential introduction to developing awareness beyond our physical bodies, performed with consciousness and intention, can serve to follow Institute founder Robert Monroe's advice: "Don't believe what I say—go and find out for yourself."



Emilie Thomas, MA, LMFT, is a certified Outreach Trainer and Guest Trainer at the Monroe Institute in Virginia. Having explored the endless dimensions of human consciousness through various types of meditation since she was a child, Emilie learned early on that death is a passage and not an end. In her preliminary training to become a licensed psychotherapist in California, Emilie served as a hospital chaplain, where she had the opportunity of midwifing patients' transitions—a privilege that eventually extended into her personal life as well with her own loved ones. Emilie now has a transpersonal psychotherapy practice in Virginia where she practices relationship centered therapy, focusing on finding meaning, connection, and purpose for our sojourns in this life.

Sky Pelletier Waterpeace, MA, is a mathematician and former hyper-rational atheist who had two NDEs several years apart. The first one occurred at age 20 in which he experienced a vivid NDE while a pedestrian in a car crash. This experience led ultimately to a complete transformation of his understanding of reality and of the nature of his true self. One result of this understanding has been the elimination of conscious fear of death, along with a willingness to pursue what he believes to be the right path for this human lifetime without fear of judgment. Sky believes this pursuit conveys great freedom in life and earnestly desires to share this experience of freedom with others.

WORKSHOPS



Jeff Janssen, MS

10 Life-Changing Lessons from Heaven

Thursday 4:00 - 6:15 pm

(\$40 separate registration required)

What important lessons do near-death experiences (NDEs) have in common and how can those life-changing lessons inspire us to loving action in our daily lives whether we've had an NDE or not? In this inspiring and interactive workshop, Jeff synthesizes and shares the main messages of 5,000 NDE accounts into 10 practical and powerful lessons we can use to live our lives more lovingly, fully, and fearlessly here on Earth.

After almost suffering a widowmaker heart attack at the young age of 42, author Jeff Janssen sought answers to Life's Biggest Questions such as: who am I, why are we here, and what happens to us when we die? After studying over 5,000 NDEs, Jeff synthesized their findings into the 10 Life-Changing Lessons from Heaven so he and others could benefit from their profound wisdom. Because learning about the NDE life review had such a profound impact on his life, he then wrote Your Life's Ripple Effect. Jeff has also written a book for those grieving the loss of loved ones called Comforting Truths from Heaven and one for kids who have lost a loved one called What You'll Learn in Heaven.

Brian D. Smith, BSc

Illuminating New Paths: Harnessing Positive Intelligence to Maximize NDE Lessons and Minimize Grief

Friday 1:30 - 3:45 pm

(\$40 separate registration required)



Dive into this transformative workshop designed to empower you to manage grief and integrate profound insights from near-death experiences (NDEs). Learn how Positive Intelligence can help you combat internal saboteurs and amplify your inner sage, enhancing resilience and grace in the face of life's challenges. This workshop bridges the transformative wisdom of NDEs and the empowering tools of Positive Intelligence. Join Brian for this unique journey and emerge equipped with practical strategies for turning life's deepest trials into personal growth and enlightenment opportunities.

Brian Smith is a certified life coach, grief guide, and small business consultant. Brian's mission is to help others by sharing lessons he has learned from decades of experience and study. Brian began this work shortly after the untimely passing of his 15-year-old daughter Shayna in the summer of 2015. Brian overcame a fear of death prior to Shayna's passing and believes that he and Shayna are on a mission together to help others heal and overcome fear. Brian is on the boards of the SoulPhone Foundation and Helping Parents Heal. Brian is the author of Grief 2 Growth: Planted. Not Buried and he is the host of the Grief 2 Growth podcast.

View CONFERENCE SCHEDULE here:

(schedule subject to change)

<https://conference.iands.org/2023-schedule>

Sarina Baptista, AA

The Divine Feminine Love Experience

Friday 4:00 - 6:15 pm
(\$40 separate registration required)



Experience Universal, unconditional love and healing through the Divine Feminine and the power of the Crystalline Grid. In this workshop, we will discuss our connection to the Divine Feminine and the Universe via the heart center. We will learn ways to enhance this connection through the Crystalline symbol activation, guided visualization, and meditations. We will also meet our multidimensional guides and healers and experience this multidimensional energy healing. You will receive tools for daily heart connection and healing at the highest frequency!

Sarina Baptista is an award-winning author, international speaker, spiritual teacher, and evidential psychic medium. Her book, My View from Heaven, is a 2019 COVR Visionary Awards Bronze Recipient in the Iconic Book category and a 2021 Speak Up Talk Radio Firebird Book Award Winner in three categories. She was a featured speaker for the "Life, Death, and Beyond" International Conference in Crete, Greece, and is a visiting medium at Lily Dale, NY, during their summer program. Sarina has presented at IANDS conferences and has created many training programs, including spiritual mentoring, workshops, and retreats. She discovered her gifts through her own tragedy: the passing of her seven-year-old son in March 2007. She learned that her son did not really die. Rather, he was still very close, and he led her to her incredible gifts.

William Peters, MA, MEd, MFT, and Monica Williams, MD

Explore the Shared Crossing Spectrum of End-of-Life Experiences: What They Are and How You (and Your Patients) May Experience Them

Saturday 1:30 - 3:45 pm
(\$40 separate registration required)



Join William Peters, the world's leading expert on shared crossing experiences, and Monica Williams, MD, the Medical Director of the Shared Crossing Research Initiative, in exploring the mystical and transformative power of spiritual end-of-life experiences in a dynamic experiential workshop. Peters and Williams will present video case studies and actual patient encounters and will engage participants in exploring their own personal and/or professional end-of-life experiences. Participants will learn how to identify and manifest these transformative experiences in their personal and professional experiences.

William Peters, MA, MEd, MFT, is a psychotherapist and the founder of the Shared Crossing Project whose mission is to positively transform relationships to death and dying through education and raising awareness about extraordinary end-of-life experiences (shared crossings) and their healing benefits. William is a global leader in shared death studies and end-of-life phenomenon. He teaches methods to facilitate the shared death experience and to assist experiencers in meaningfully integrating their experiences. His work is informed by his two NDEs and a variety of shared crossings. William's book, entitled At Heaven's Door: What Shared Journeys to the Afterlife Teach About Dying Well and Living Better, is published by Simon & Schuster.

WORKSHOPS

Monica Williams, MD is a board-certified emergency physician who is on staff at one of the largest emergency departments in the nation, Huntsville Hospital, where she is also the Medical Director for Advanced Care Planning and End of Life Education Programs. Dr. Monica is a passionate author and keynote speaker whose focus is empowering patients and families in critical and end-of-life decision-making. Her book, It's OK to Die and companion website are tools devoted to transforming the end of life into a time of peace, closure, and healing. Dr. Monica has lectured from Princeton to LA, and her work has appeared in the New York Times, the Health Around the Web Column, and the Washington Post. She has appeared on the Emmy Award winning TV show The Doctors, and her work has been adopted by UCLA's Center for Integrative Oncology. William Peters and Dr. Monica are, respectively, the principal investigator and medical director for the Shared Crossing Research Initiative which collects and studies shared crossings. Their works have been published in the American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine and the Omega – Journal of Death Studies.

Eben Alexander, MD, and Karen Newell

Cultivating Purpose and Co-Creating an Ideal World With Love

Saturday 4:00 - 6:15 pm (\$70 separate registration required)



Near-death experiencers speak of the amazing force of love at the heart of the spiritual realm. Other related phenomena such as end-of-life dreams and visions, after death communication, and terminal lucidity verify that love is the fundamental glue that binds us all together. Learning to harness this love in our daily lives is key to living a fuller life individually and ultimately changing the world for the better. Using specialized brainwave entrainment audio recordings, we can learn to bypass the thinking mind and get more in touch with the love that connects us with the heart of the universe. Living with this understanding is a conducive pathway to achieving spiritual growth. If spiritual growth is the ultimate aim in life, then it becomes imperative for each of us to help create peaceful and functioning communities that support an individual's pursuit of spiritual life. Regular spiritual practices and actions help all other aspects of life to naturally fall into place.

Eben Alexander, MD, was an academic neurosurgeon for over 25 years, including 15 years at the Brigham & Women's Hospital, Children's Hospital, and Harvard Medical School in Boston. In 2008, during a week-long coma from an inexplicable brain infection, he experienced a transcendental near-death experience (NDE) that completely transformed his worldview. A pioneering scientist and modern thought leader in the emerging science that acknowledges the primacy of consciousness in the universe, he is the author of the New York Times #1 bestseller Proof of Heaven, The Map of Heaven, and Living in a Mindful Universe. <http://ebenalexander.com>

Karen Newell is an author and specialist in personal development with a diverse body of work that rests upon the foundation of heart-centered consciousness. As an innovator in the emerging field of brainwave entrainment audio meditation, Karen empowers others in their journeys of self-discovery by demonstrating how to connect to inner guidance, achieve inspiration, improve wellness, and develop intuition. She is co-founder of Sacred Acoustics and is co-author with Eben Alexander III, MD, of Living in a Mindful Universe. www.sacredacoustics.com

Rev. Sue Frederick

Sacred Numerology as a Portal to Your Soul's Purpose and Your Departed Loved Ones

Sunday 10:30 am - 12:45 pm (\$40 separate registration required)



Experience the profound wisdom of Rev. Sue Frederick's unique teachings on Sacred Numerology. She'll guide you through a process of using numbers to reveal your soul's purpose and open the pathway to connecting with your departed. Rev. Sue, an ordained Unity minister, intuitive coach, Master Numerologist, and Soul Regression Therapist, has used numerology and spiritual practice to guide clients and connect to departed loved ones for more than 30 years. Join us in discovering how Sacred Numerology can guide you in so many helpful ways

Reverend Sue Frederick, ordained Unity Minister, lifelong intuitive, Past Life and Between Lives Soul Regression Therapist, and Master Numerologist, is the author of Through a Divine Lens: Practices to Quiet Your Ego and Align With Your Soul, Bridges to Heaven: True Stories of Loved Ones on the Other Side, I See Your Soul Mate, and I See Your Dream Job. As an intuitive coach and spiritual guide, she's helped thousands of people realign with their soul's purpose and connect to departed loved ones for healing conversations. Her work has been featured in the New York Times, CNN.com, and Real Simple, Yoga Journal, Natural Health, and Complete Woman magazines. <http://www.SueFrederick.com>

Roland L. Walters, BS

Energy Cascade of Healing Light

Sunday 1:30 - 3:45 pm (\$40 separate registration required)



Immerse yourself in the healing power of Light and Love. Join Roland Walters, a multifaceted spiritual counselor, for a transformative group energy session. The Energy Cascade consists of four rounds of increasing levels of the healing energy of Divine Light and Love. Here, you can experience the connection with one another and the Divine. Through the power of healing, you may embrace a more mindful and loving way of seeing yourself and others. Take advantage of this unique chance to come together as one to experience the healing energy of Love through the power of "I AM."

Roland L. Walters, founder of In The Healing Light, is a spiritual guide and compassionate counselor whose mission is to support individuals connecting to the Oneness of Divine Love, helping them create a more conscious, loving, and fulfilled lifestyle. With a shamanic background, Roland incorporates his expertise in Light energy to offer transformative services, including energy healing and spiritual counseling. What sets Roland's work apart is the safe space he creates, where free from expectations, a genuine openness allows for the authentic exchange of healing energy. Roland firmly believes this profound transformation uncovers the limitless potential of an awakened spirit. Roland, a graduate of NC State University, has shared his NDE story on several podcasts and is featured in In Just One Afternoon: Listening Into the Hearts of Men by Marilyn Shannon.

Book Review

THE GIRL WHO SAW HEAVEN: A Fateful Tornado and a Journey of Faith by Lisa Reburn and Alex Tresniowski

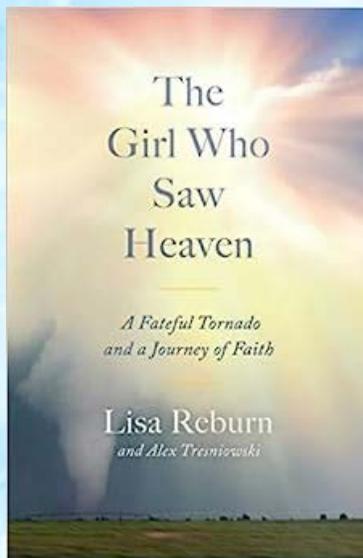
...the story of Ari Hallmark, a tornado, what it took, and what it left

You haven't read a story like this, because there isn't any.

Huge tornadoes tore into areas around Arab, a small town about 70 miles north of Birmingham, Alabama. . . first on April 14 and again on April 27, 2011. Called a "super outbreak," these EF4 and EF5 monsters crashed through more than half the States. Hundreds died—among them Ari's parents plus three other members of her family. She was sucked up into the same tornado that took her family, but spit back out fields away.

For six-year-old Ari, this nightmare actually began in the Fall of 2010. She dreamed that her parents would die when a tornado hit and she would be left alone. She would sob uncontrollably—at home, at church, even at school. Nothing could stop these dreams, month after month. She had to be with her parents, afraid to leave them. She was assured repeatedly that her parents were fine and all was well. Then Ari would hear that voice again: "Ari, you need to prepare yourself. Soon, you will be alone."

Following the tornado, Ari's injuries were frightening. She suffered a frontal skull fracture, acute dental trauma, two compressed vertebrae, and spinal subluxation—the misalignment of parts of her spine. It took 40 surgical staples to seal up her head wound. What Ari talked about, though, were those stairs to Heaven she had walked—until a door closed and she could go no further. She talked about Heaven as one might talk about an interesting field trip. Her storytelling was plain and simple, even when talking about her angel and the big staircase and the roads that seemed paved with gold. Ari would occasionally get wide-eyed when she talked about the "humongous clouds of light" and how big the doors of Heaven



are. She never spoke of her parents, her family, as dead. "They're not dead," she would state. "They're just someplace else." Over and over again she would say, "I want people who've lost someone they love to know where their families are."

Ari's parents died without a will. This omission created huge problems for the grandmother who took care of her. Other relatives tried to intervene in court. She almost lost her home, everything in it including her parent's belongings, her own things, and small dogs. The psychologist who helped her handle grief became the one who, with assistance, discovered that court-appointed "guardians" were stealing from her and for years. Justice won. Her grandmother adopted her.

Throughout this legal nightmare, Ari's only desire was to tell people about heaven. She managed to give a few talks and then, with crayons, to write a small book. I have a copy of her original work, including drawings of her trip through the tornado and the stairway to Heaven. A reporter asked me to help him understand how the children in the area spoke of "butterflies" who saved them from the tornadoes. I apprised him that the very young never use "angel" unless they have heard the term before; Ari attended church and knew about angels

Ari has now given many talks about the stairway to Heaven, what she saw, and what she learned. This book, as a special treat, has a large section of color photos, including of the family in Kenya she helped with money she received from her talks. What Ari went through, and what she has given to all of us as a result, is monumental. Treat yourself. Buy the book and smile.

--PMH Atwater, LHD

Great presentations from our *Explore the Extraordinary* podcast and previous IANDS conferences:

<https://www.youtube.com/@IANDSvideos>



EXPLORE THE EXTRAORDINARY PODCAST with Betty Guadagno

EPISODE 17
DEAD FOR 45 MINUTES!

Featuring
Vinney Todd Tolman

<https://youtu.be/qypdCrhIT5U>



EPISODE 18

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES SAVED MY LIFE!!

EXPLORE THE EXTRAORDINARY PODCAST with Betty Guadagno

Featuring
Loretta Taylor

<https://youtu.be/5tJcKBTokxl>



What is a Kundalini Awakening?

Nancy Clasby

https://youtu.be/SINU_V5PSr8



Living Between Realms as a Young Child

Karen Michelle

<https://youtu.be/8Kkmd6-T7ac>



The Near-Death Experience of a Hardcore Atheist

Louisa Peck

<https://youtu.be/DNA2wbUFVi0>



SPANISH W/ ENGLISH SUBS

The Unexpected Perception of Luismi Domínguez During his NDE

Luismi Dominguez

https://youtu.be/Ng_Z0HfG_UE

KEN PRATHER'S NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES

Edited by Jan Holden, EdD

Kenneth Wayne Prather, of Fort Wayne Indiana, was a long-time friend of IANDS who transitioned on May 19, 2023 at age 74 years. In his memory, we reprise his description of his two near-death experiences (NDEs), excerpted from his testimony during an IANDS Group Leaders' Conference call on August 20, 2013.

Ken's first NDE occurred in 1958 when he was nine years old. For concurrent rheumatic fever, the flu, and pneumonia, his doctor gave him a shot and sent him home. There, he had an allergic reaction and left his body. For 13 years, he was unable to talk about his experience. Then, at age 22, he finally told his parents, including a description of the clothing of the minister who was standing at the end of Ken's bed while Ken was out-of-body. Ken said that upon hearing this, "My dad dropped his can of beer on the floor!" Afterwards,

Many miracles and gifts came that I could never explain. I never actually wondered why they were happening. I never questioned. Unfortunately, I was still pretty well grounded to the earthly plane, and so I started living life and not really thinking that much more about it.

Then 30 years later one day in 1988, Ken was walking home from the grocery store when five men—strangers—assaulted him. One hit him on the head with a baseball bat, and Ken lost physical consciousness and did not feel the rest of the beating because he was suddenly out-of-body.

I opened up my eyes—what I thought were my eyes. I could see [that] my body, which I thought was my body, wasn't really my body. It just kind of looked like it. Then in the distance I saw three beings walking towards me in this beautiful, beautiful venue that I was in. Words are almost indescribable with it. The beings started taking form. I felt a warmth, a joy, and a happiness that I hadn't felt for years and years and years. All of a sudden as they got closer, I could see it was my mom and my dad [both of whom had passed]. They came and talked to me. They said that I could not stay, and I knew I couldn't. For some reason, I just knew I wasn't staying. They said, "You have work to do."

Then another being came up beside them, but this being had four legs . . . my pet Newfoundland dog named Bear-Bear, who I laid on the veterinary counter with 10 years earlier that I helped him crossover and held his head in my arms. He jumped on me to let me know that animals have souls and spirits, too, and animal souls cross over to the other side. He actually put his paws on my shoulders and gave me a hug. That was a beautiful moment. Those beings then left.

I was approached by three more beings who told

me that they were going to take me to somewhere really beautiful! "Where?" "Follow us and you'll see." They said, "We only have to think about it," and we were there. This I call the Garden of Creation. Everywhere I could see in every direction—up, down, left, and right—was filled with the most beautiful fluorescent sparkling flowers that I've ever seen in my life. Out of every flower was a ray of light going out to the universe, and this was the Garden of Creation where the birth of souls were sent out to the universe to do their homework assignment. I wondered to myself why things that I was seeing were looking like things that

I had seen back on the earthly plane. They had no materialistic or physical touch to them that they looked like. Just as I thought of this question, one of the beings turned back and, without saying a word, informed me, "Because we come to you in forms and shapes to make your transition easier, so you will not be confused or scared." So that all made sense to me.

Then I was taken to another area which looked like a large library, and I was met by what I called the Teachers of Light because their light was extremely powerful and their wisdom was extremely wise. They downloaded so much into me. I was able to bring a lot of it back but also not able to bring a lot of it back. I was learning things that I never even knew existed.

The very last venue that I ended up in was a venue of amazing light. It was the most beautiful loving and giving light that I've ever seen or been in in my life. This light saturated my soul, embraced my soul, and made a home in my soul. It was at that time I was told that I was being downloaded with a light and I was to go back to the earthly plane with this light. They said that I was in the Source of Creation itself. I was humbled. I was touched, but I wasn't quite sure why I was going back with what they called the light. And I was told then that when I got back, that's when the real lessons would start coming to me. That's when everything, all the puzzle pieces, would start falling into place.

Following the assault, Ken was in total organ shutdown with 15 inches of fractured back. After 32 days on life support, he regained consciousness, and his doctor told him,

"We need to operate on you immediately." I just looked up at him, and my three adult children were there. I said, "Oh, well, and what if you don't operate? I know that's a real dumb question." He said, "Well, . . . if we don't operate, you're going to die." [My daughter later told me], "Dad, all you did was you started laughing." I said, "Die? I don't even know what that means.



So, what if you do operate?" He said, "Well, I'm not going to lie to you. It's a very serious operation. We've got a 50-50 chance of losing you on the operating table." I said, "Just do it. It's meant to be."

Ken then underwent a 13-hour surgery to repair his back and spent three years rehabilitating in a nursing home where he learned to walk with a cane.

It was at the nursing home that the amazing gifts continued to come. That's when I started opening those gifts and devouring everything that came to me. I kept wondering why I was supposed to bring this light back with me. While I was in the nursing home and at that time wheelchair bound, I could not walk. I would wheel up to people's doors, stop my wheelchair (I wouldn't even know who was in the rooms), wheel into their room, and roll right up next to their bed. I could feel their soul go right through mine. Literally send a wave of electricity right through me. I knew at that very moment, their soul was getting ready to cross over and make their transition. If they were anxious, I would hold their hands. They would then go to sleep. I found myself going into people's rooms like this all the time and coming out and talking to the nurses and doctors. I said, "You know that person in there is probably getting ready to cross over; it might be a day, or it may be an hour." I got to the point where the families were actually coming to my room and asked me to come to their loved one's room, and I would sit with their loved one.

I had nine roommates in the nursing home for three years, and five of my roommates passed away right in a room with me. I was with every one of them when they crossed over. Hospice found out about this (we had the largest freestanding hospice in northern Indiana). They came to me one day and asked, "How would you like to become a hospice counselor for us, volunteer?" I said, "Sure." They said, "We heard about what's happening here, and we're curious." I said, "Well, so am I. I'm still learning all these messages and gifts." So, I became a volunteer grief and transition counselor with hospice here in Fort Wayne, and I've been with them 15 years [at the time of Ken's talk]. It's amazing the people that I've sat with that I have given what you call "previews." I've sat with people, held their hands, and asked them literally if they would like to take a journey with me. We go to the other side, we see the previews of coming attractions, and we come back.

Ken also told how, once he was well enough, each week he and his roommate, Frank, would take Frank's Chinese Shar-Pei, Brutus, around to all 151 of the nursing home residents—an informal animal-assisted therapy. One snow-storming January night, Frank lay dying of lung cancer, aided by morphine. Frank's son, who lived 10 miles

away, was taking care of Brutus. Suddenly, around 2:00 AM, Brutus appeared at the back door of the nursing facility, with icicles hanging from his jaws. Although he had always previously been brought to the facility in a van, this evening around 6:00 PM he got under the fence and walked 10 miles in eight hours. Once in Ken and Frank's room,

Brutus jumped down on the floor and went over to get up on Frank's bed, looked at him, and then looked like he kissed Frank. He jumped back down, came over to me [Ken], and sat right in front of me. I looked at him right in his beautiful brown eyes, and I said, "I want to thank you for helping Brutus come along and showing him the way. I can take him from here." That's when a light, a very dim light went through the room and out the window. The next day, the local TV station found out about [Brutus's appearance], and they sent a reporter and photographer out there. By another miracle, Frank woke up the next day and had no pain. So he got to do an interview with Brutus on his lap to a bunch of TV reporters. They were on TV that night, and the story was all about Brutus the miracle dog. There were many, many more [miraculous occurrences].

Following Ken's recuperation, he started two programs: one in which the Ft. Wayne Children's Zoo volunteers took zoo animals to visit sick children at the Children's Hospital, and another called A Day Away in which terminally or chronically ill children had a day in which one of their wishes comes true. He also continued serving as a hospice counselor and led three meditation groups—all while coping with ankylosing spondylitis, a disease involving extreme chronic pain.

Ken concluded his testimonial with a reflection on his life and his understanding of the meaning of human existence.

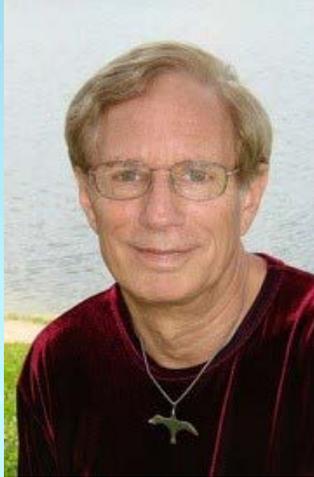
I called [my assaulters] "gentlemen" because my personal feelings are that we're all put down here on this earthly plane to follow a path. I got off of my path, and I got put back on. I also realize that everything I went through the three years of rehab . . . in a nursing home, that was a wonderful part of my homework assignment. Everything we go through is a homework assignment. [On the other side] I was shown the planes of knowledge . . . I was shown there is no hell . . . I was shown [thousands] of planes where we . . . graduate to a plane depending on how we live our life here on Earth.

Surely, as a result of how he used his life, Ken has graduated at least a plane or two. His light here on Earth will be sorely missed. For more information about Ken (1949-2023), see his obituary: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/fort-wayne/name/kenneth-prather-obituary?id=52019680>.

WILLIAM GUGGENHEIM, III (1939-2023) LEGACY

Quoted material excerpted and edited by Jan Holden, EdD, from a publication of Eternea.org by IANDS co-founder, John Audette

“Sadly, at age 84, Bill Guggenheim died suddenly and unexpectedly of natural causes on May 19, 2023 at his long-time home in Longwood, Florida. Bill was a pioneer in the field of after-death communication (ADC) experiences. He is considered by many to be the ‘father of ADC research’ based on his ground-breaking ‘ADC Project’ from 1988-1995. For it, he and his ex-wife, Judy Guggenheim, collected over 3,300 firsthand ADC accounts and interviewed over 2,000 people in the US and Canada.



The ADC Project resulted in a best-selling book entitled *Hello From Heaven!* Published originally in 1995, it featured an in-depth study of 353 ADC cases. Now critically acclaimed as a classic work, *Hello From Heaven!* has helped hundreds of thousands of people all over the world to heal their grief over the loss of a loved one. Generously, Bill made it a practice to send out copies of his book free of charge to newly bereaved individuals, especially parents who had lost young children. It has also become a staple in many libraries.”

The following excerpt from *Hello From Heaven!* relates one of Bill’s experiences that inspired him to do the study and write the book. Although he did not identify the voice he heard as a deceased loved one, the voice definitely came from a source outside himself—which also characterizes ADC.

It was a damp gray Sunday afternoon in March 1980, and Judy and I had just finished having a conversation in the living room in the front of our house. As we got up to leave the room, I distinctly heard a voice in my head calmly say, “Go outside and check the swimming pool.” Though I didn’t feel any sense of urgency, I was definitely puzzled by hearing this voice and receiving such a strange message.

So I walked back to the family room and looked out through the sliding glass door. Our pool was separated from the house by a 15-foot patio, and I noticed that the gate in the wrought iron safety fence was open. But this wasn’t unusual because our two older sons used the pool area as a shortcut to the backyard and sometimes forgot to close the gate.

I walked across the patio to latch the gate, and as I did, I glanced casually at the pool. Suddenly,

my heart froze and everything seemed to happen in slow motion. There in the middle of the deep end I saw our youngest son, Jonathan! He was less than two years old and didn’t know how to swim.

I ran to the side of the pool and saw our little boy floating face up about an inch or two under the water! He was very still and his eyes were wide open.

I screamed, “Judy!” as I jumped into the water feet first. Rebounding off the bottom and kicking my legs furiously, I came up under Jonathan and pushed him toward the side of the pool. Judy had heard my terrified scream and came running. Frantically. I struggled to keep his head above water until she grabbed his arms and pulled him from the pool.

Jonathan immediately began crying and shivering as he coughed up a little water. Miraculously, he was fine. We were probably more frightened than he was as we wrapped him in a big towel and held him in our arms.

Shortly afterwards, we learned that Jonathan had gone outside through a bathroom door that opened onto the patio from the far side of the house, for it too had been accidentally left open. When I told Judy about my experience, we realized our little boy must have slipped into the pool only moments before the voice alerted me.

We were immensely grateful we had been given this crucial message because it enabled us to save our youngest son from drowning. And it had spared us the incredible grief that bereaved parents must endure. (pp. 13–14)

Eight years later, having attended presentations and heard first-hand stories of ADC, Bill heard that now-familiar voice again, this time saying, “Do your own research and write your own book. This is your spiritual work to do.” We now know how faithfully he proceeded to heed that voice.

“A native of Long Island, New York City, and New Jersey, Bill did not always embrace the belief that life continues after death. During his first 35 years, he regarded himself as an agnostic, choosing to see life through the lens of ‘rational materialism.’ During this time, Bill was a stockbroker and a securities analyst on Wall Street. He had no interest in spiritual matters. He compared human bodies to flashlight batteries: ‘When the juice runs out, you throw

the battery away. When you're dead, you're dead.'

Based on his diligent research and his own firsthand experiences, he came to the abiding conclusion that 'life and love are eternal' and that death is merely a transition to a higher realm of continued existence. His long-time personalized automobile license tag beautifully and succinctly summed up his firm conviction about life's purpose: BE LOVE.

Bill was a kind, compassionate and philanthropic soul, supporting several worthy causes and helping others out of pure altruism. He often sent books, CDs, and DVDs as gifts to spread the gospel of peace and love, always endeavoring to lift spiritual awareness. He once described himself as 'a lay minister,' and indeed he was, planting many fertile seeds during a lifetime of selfless service."

IANDS president Jan Holden tells this anecdote. For her then-doctoral-student's dissertation, now-Dr. Jenny Streit-Horn conducted a systematic review of all published research studies on ADC. The earliest she found was in the late 1800s; the last shortly before her study published in 2010 (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc84284/m1/1/>): 35 studies in all involving a total of over 50,000 people from around the world—and including Bill and Judy's study. After Jenny finished and published her ADC Fact Sheet (<https://coe.unt.edu/sites/default/files/adc-7.pdf>), Jan said to her one day, "Jenny, you have read

everything ever published up to now on ADC. If someone came up to you and asked, 'Of all the material out there on ADC, if I were to read just one source, what one source would you recommend?', how would you respond?" Jenny hesitated only a moment before replying confidently, "Hello From Heaven!" After everything she'd read, she considered this book the single best source to provide an overview of ADC. Jenny's response is a huge endorsement for a book that will live on as an enduring legacy to Bill: his undying gift to humanity.

Bill was a friend to IANDS. He had attended many IANDS conferences where he sometimes made presentations and offered workshops. Jan Holden noted that annually at holiday time, he sent a greeting card and life update message. She is one of many people who, with nostalgia, will note its absence in future holiday seasons.

"Despite knowing what we know about the afterlife, the death of Bill Guggenheim is a mind-numbing loss. His voice, his character, and his generous spirit will be sorely missed."

Learn more about Bill and his work with ADCs at:

<http://www.billguggenheim.com/>

IANDS wishes to thank John Audette of Eternea Foundation (<https://eternea.org/>) for giving us permission to publish an edited version of his tribute to Bill.

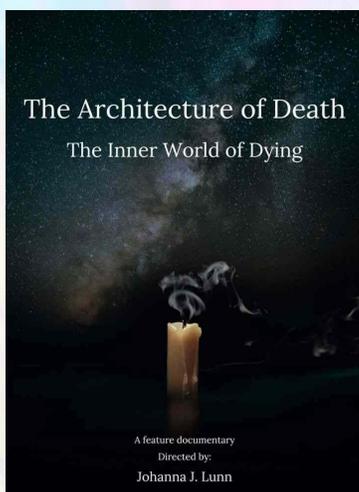
IANDS CONFERENCE MOVIE PREMIERE

The Architecture of Death is currently scheduled to premiere on the Friday evening of the conference weekend, followed by a live Q & A with Johanna Lunn, MFA, William Peters, MA, MEd, MFT, and Maggie Callanan, RN

The Architecture of Death, the third documentary film in the *When You Die Trilogy*, explores the physical aspect of dying, as well as the unseen felt experiences that can occur, including the changing roles within a family; the potential to heal old wounds; deathbed visions or dreams; messages to loved ones from the dying or recently passed; and a host of other phenomena. Professionals who have spent their careers at the bedside share extraordinary stories as Director Johanna Lunn takes viewers by the hand to explore what death might look like.

Experts featured: Anthony Bossis, PhD; Sue Brayne, MA; Ann Marie Chiasson, MD; Peter Fenwick, MD; Andrew Holecek, DDS; Rev. David Maginley, MDiv; Julie McFadden, RN; Paige Moorehouse, MD; William Peters, MA, MEd, MFT; Penny Sartori, PhD; and Jill Shock, MA.

Director's Note on the *When You Die Trilogy*: Over a two-and-a-half-year period, starting when I was 19, three very significant deaths entered my life that completely cracked my world apart. Because people were afraid of death and didn't know what to say to someone in grief, I felt deeply alone and pushed aside. Talking about death was really taboo at that time. Grief and grieving were swept under the carpet. Although it was a long and difficult journey for me, on reflection and with the advantage of time passing, I realize now how hard it must be for the dying when the people who love them most are afraid to talk with them.



IANDS

Bruce Greyson, MD



Eben Alexander, MD
& Karen Newell



2023 CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, DC

Aug 30 - Sep 3



Bob Coppes, PhD



Jeffrey Mishlove, PhD

**INSPIRED TO
LOVING ACTION:**

The Transformative Power of

NEAR-DEATH and RELATED EXPERIENCES



Brian D. Smith, BSc



Christian Sundberg, BA



Rebecca Austill-Clausen,
MS, OTR/L, FAOTA, Reiki Master



Jeffrey Long, MD



PMH Atwater, LHD



William Peters,
MA, MEd, MFT



Kimberly Clark Sharp,
MSW, LICSW



Vinney Todd Tolman



Norma Edwards, D.Div



Curtis Childs, BA

SPEAKERS • WORKSHOPS • PANELS • MUSIC & MEDITATION

- **Near-Death Experiences** • **Out-of-Body Journeys**
- **After-Death Communications** • **Pre-Birth Memories**
- **Spiritually Transformative Experiences** • **Soul Purpose**
- **Messages from the Other Side** • **Sacred Geometry**