

# Q and A with P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D. (Hon.)

## An in-depth look at the near-death phenomenon

September 2003

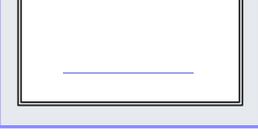


In this new section of the newsletter, Dr. P.M.H. Atwater will answer questions submitted to her from subscribers to this free newsletter. If you have a question that you would like her to answer, just email your question to [webmaster@near-death.com](mailto:webmaster@near-death.com) for consideration.



Dr. P.M.H. Atwater's next book, entitled [The New Children and Near-Death Experiences](#), will be released on December of 2003. You can order your copy now through Amazon.

Dr. Ken Ring had this to say about her book: "This book is the richest, most probing, and most comprehensive available of NDEs in children."



### Books by PMH Atwater



#### [We Live Forever: The Real Truth About Death](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

Based on Atwater's 25 years of research, personal stories, and her own NDE in 1977



#### [The New Children and Near-Death Experiences](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

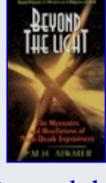
An expansion of Atwater's original book "Children of the New Millennium" taking it to another level.



#### [The Complete Idiot's Guide to Near-Death Experiences](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

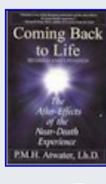
This is the "encyclopedia" of the NDE and the most complete book done in the field of NDE studies.



#### [Beyond the Light](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

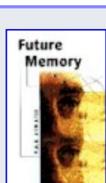
An in-depth study of the NDEs of over 3,000 adult experiencers.



#### [Coming Back to Life](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

Looks at all aspects of the NDE and its aftereffects including possible changes in the brain.



#### [Future Memory](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

Deals with the transformation of consciousness and what that might portend to future memory.

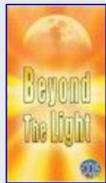


#### [Children of the New Millennium](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

An in-depth study of child NDEs and how these children compare to the new children being born today.

### Videos by PMH Atwater



#### [Beyond the Light](#)

featuring P.M.H. Atwater

Dr. Atwater shares her testimony of three life-changing NDEs with host Mary Lou McCall.



#### [As You Die](#)

featuring P.M.H. Atwater

Available in CD-ROM, DVD, and VHS formats! Atwater leads people through the wonderful journey which begins as one lays hovering between life and death, then leads them away from any fear and despair towards a peace and unconquerable hope, knowing that as we die ... we live forever!

### Ebook by PMH Atwater



#### [A Book of Columns](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater

This eBook contains all of Dr. Atwater's columns from the IANDS newsletter "Vital Signs" from June of 1981 until 2004. Proceeds go to support IANDS and its mission.

### QUESTION: What is the difference between the soul and the spirit?

-- Jerome



**P.M.H. Atwater's answer:** The answer to this question depends entirely on who you ask. Different religious traditions, different spiritual leaders, all seem to have their own special way of delineating soul and spirit. What I can share with you is the majority view from near-death experiencers, which, interestingly enough, matches what I have seen myself while on The Other Side of death.

Soul: appears to be our essence, our core, that part of us still connected to God, still perfect and in that perfection still knowing and powerful. Many claim that we are linked or held to our soul by a [silver cord](#), an umbilical cord of sorts, that enables a continuous channel to exist between the two - the individual and his or her soul. Some call the soul the Higher Self, or Greater Me, or Self (with a capital "S"). Soul is divinity, that part of us that is One With God, now and always.

And the soul is huge - too big and too powerful to inhabit any one body. Remember, almost invariably, when near-death experiencers return to their body they report having to shrink to fit back in. Once they are out of their body, they are much larger and far more capable than while in it. . . faculties are sharper, the mind function more expansive and multi-dimensional in its scope, capable of 360-degree, instantaneous vision / sound / smell / action / response.

The soul is featureless and sexless and consists of a type of light. Some see the soul as having a somewhat human form; others see it as more of a globe or sphere, pulsating or radiating with energy. Where it says in the Christian Bible that we are made in the image of God, the majority view amongst near-death experiencers is, that is absolutely right, the real us, our full / complete / total Self, our soul self, really is like God - in shape, mass, energy functioning, potential, and creativity. We are Co-Creators with the Creator, made in that image and likeness, enjoyed by our very existence to discover our identity and live according to our discovery, to be all that we can be, to honor the gift of life, to uphold our part in A Greater Plan.



In psychological circles and in cases of multiple personalities existent within a single body, it was found that always there is one central source, one particular personality-being that was all-knowing and all loving, and would often assist the professional in his or her therapy with the patient. This central, organizing core came to be known as the "Inner Self Helper." All of the professionals that I have spoken with who have dealt with multiple personality syndrome sense or think that the Inner Self Helper is the same thing as the soul - our central place / source / force / core. I teach a shamanic-style guided visualization that enables an individual to find and to recognize their Holy of Holies, their Center where the True Self resides. This goes for everyone; we all have

that conduit, that channel, that "launch-pad," that place from which we touch the "Hand of God" in the sense of how we are affected once we align and/or merge with our soul. (The shamanic-style guided visualization I teach can soon be purchased over my website as an addition to my forthcoming book, GODDESS RUNES. Check [my website](#) in late September for "Goddess Runes: The Adventure Begins." This is a one-hour audio presentation, available in either audio cassette or CD format. The visualization is on Track Two.)

I truly believe that soul discovery is the over-riding reason or purpose behind spiritual development. . . so we, in this lifetime, can be more mindful of who we really are and can align our will with God's Will. When this occurs, we can merge more and more with the power of our own soul. You see this in cases of near-death experiences and deathbed visions, NOT that there is a split-off at death (the personality self sluffing off with the body or as an egoic being having some sort of existence by itself - as some researchers claim); but, rather, that at death the soul and the ego (personality) merge into each other and become one again. It's like at birth, a "finger" of the soul drops down into the body, to properly animate it so the ego personality can develop and grow. It's the ego that seems to "feed" the soul, in the sense of what can be learned, experienced, given, and received during a lifetime. It is the soul that seems to be the major "player" in the outworking of God's Greater Plan. To use an analogy, we humans are like worker bees, the soul that guiding intelligence which keeps us on track, and God that which provides the environment and the power source in which we can not only learn and grow - but transcend that which seems to limit us, so we can "awaken" to a higher reality and a grander view. We can then realize there really is no separation, no distinction of three in one, but One - All in One. You could look at this situation yet another way: One Mind, many thinkers.

No matter how you regard the soul, it is awesome, simply awesome, when you see it, when you're there and you see your own soul. I saw mine and I was stunned at its beauty and its power and the love it possessed. Most near-death experiencers feel the same way.



Spirit: Appears to be as an invisible emissary of the divine, like the stirring within and around us of a "breath," a zephyr of fresh air and clear thought, an essence. Some use "spirit" to depict a disincarnate (one who has passed on) or any manner of invisible spirit beings - those beings or thought-forms or airy residue made of a gaseous, filmy substance, a vapor-like ectoplasm. I talk about this living breath, this airy substance, this helpful and ever present guidance system ever at our disposal, at length in my book that will be published March 2004 from the [A.R.E. Press](#). The book is called [We Live Forever: The Real Truth About Death](#). Here are some excerpts from the book that should be helpful to you in coming to terms with the reality of "spirit" and what it might be.

Many adult experiencers of near-death states claimed that during their expansion it seemed as though the whole universe and all of Creation were breathing - episode/contraction. To them, "breathing" came to represent the stirring of God's Thought as it reverberated throughout an ever-expanding field of conscious awareness, what we would call "Creation," and sustaining as it did the "stage" where our dramas, our roles, our endeavors, our dreams of who we are, are arranged and played out. Comments child experiencers gave during sessions I had with them included this offering: "Spirit is everywhere, like air, and it breathes, but not like our nose does. That means everything breathes. I do. You do. So does God. God's Breath is what keeps the universe alive."

There is precedence for what modern-day near-death experiencers report. That precedence can be found, oddly enough, in the historical concept behind the evolution of certain word meanings from various cultures, particularly as relates to the word *spirit*.

Originally *spirit* meant *essence* or *breath*. Yet, all three words have been used interchangeably as if they each referred to the same thing. This makes a tremendous difference concept-wise with interpretations of meaning. For instance, when we say we're being *spiritual*, the inference is that we have chosen to live in "the fullness of breath's essence." When we speak of *spirituality*, we are actually describing "the source from whence the pureness of breath comes." *Spirit realms*, if we continue further with this line of thinking, exist as "source places of pure essence," while *spirit beings* become "visitors or emissaries from source places of pure essence."

See what happens? If you regard *spirit* in light of its original meaning, everything alters: our view of ourselves, our beliefs and emotions, the breath we breathe, and reality itself.

It intrigues me to reinterpret *Holy Spirit* in this manner. Numerous Biblical scholars have and they have come up with: "The Breath of God Breathing." When I discovered this it triggered all kinds of memories and associations for me. Mainly because, during my near-death experiences, I had the distinct sensation that the universe and everything therein was alive and breathing, and that breath was what moved the creative fire, and that which existed in-between the motion of God's Breath - the Center-point of Truth - ever hidden, yet ever exposed.

But there's more. Native peoples the world over emphasize verbs over nouns in their speech, placing the emphasis on relationship rather than on object. If you keep this in mind, the various Native American names for Deity or God actually translate to something like "Thinks Breath Creates" or "Dwells Above Great Breathing." Our notion that tribal terms for *God* always mean "The Great Spirit" bypasses entirely the truth these people seek to convey. To a native speaker, *God* is a verb that denotes the relationship between the essence of breath (Sourcing) and the act of breathing (connecting with Sourcing). Accordingly, then, all kingdoms and all worlds spiral around the same "great breathing."



The link then between spirit and breath and essence weaves together into one fabric the tapestry we call *existence*, a tapestry we can better appreciate if we reduce its scope to the basic function of. . . breathing in, breathing out.

Do that. Take a deep breath right now.

Notice that a deep breath calms your nerves and perks up your brain. It's not just the added oxygen we take into our lungs that does that, but the circulation of that oxygen. Breath movement is the most common criterion we have for determining aliveness, perhaps on The Other Side as well.

Have you ever noticed that the air is alive. The air hears you, watches you, guardians who do this. But the air, this mixture of substances we live in, this environment that cradles us and holds us close and puts up with how we pollute it and abuse it, is so alive that it shimmers and pulsates. We breathe it, exist within it, and learn (if we're wise) to recognize its movements and signals and moods.

Spirit is what permeates air, it is what enables life to move. It is what we live in, God's Breath, but more than that, The Breath of God Breathing. It is an active force, movement, ever ready to respond, ever ready to assist. Enjoy that sense of spirit, that aliveness that caresses you and cares about you, and knows you.

Oh, by the way, I turn 66 on September 19th. I enjoy birthdays and invite all of you to have a big laugh when September 19th rolls around. Envision me laughing with you. What a wonderful gift that will be . . . all of us enjoying ourselves and opening up to - spirit!

Many blessings,  
P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D.  
[www.cinemind.com/atwater](http://www.cinemind.com/atwater) & [www.pmhatwater.com](http://www.pmhatwater.com)

### Contact P.M.H. Atwater

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"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or attachments or relationships. What we can keep is our memories and our feelings of what we have integrated into our heart of hearts from the experience of being here, plus the love we have shared with others." - Dr. P.M.H. Atwater.

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