

**Q and A with P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D. (Hon.)**  
**An in-depth look at the near-death phenomenon**

**August 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.

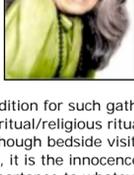


Dr. P.M.H. Atwater's next book, entitled [The New Children and Near-Death Experiences](#), will be released on December of 2003. You can order your copy now through Amazon.

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."



**QUESTION:** We often hear of how terminally ill children are a spiritual inspiration to their families, friends, and even their communities. Upon reading some of their stories, they most often seem to have a great maturity and sense of self (a self-created personality), which is partly why people are drawn to them. Typically, what is their purpose (and place) in the afterlife realms, as well as during their very short time on earth? I know that it is probably different for each person, but, in general? Are some of them spirit guides? Thank you for reading this -- *Adam*



**P.M.H. Atwater's answer:** Adam, you asked a complicated question no one can really answer, not even psychics and mediums - for there is always more to the story of our lives than anyone can know. But, there is a long and respected tradition in mystical teachings that addresses this. From this treasure of knowledge and from my own research and "witnessing" on the other side of death's door, I can offer you some ideas and suggestions you may want to consider.

It has oft been said that terminally ill children can see through "the veils" of the spirit world. For this reason, people would gather at their bedside when death was near to hear anything they might say. The tradition for such gatherings is part of every culture known to have existed that recorded their spiritual/religious rituals. In many areas of our world, people still do this - even modern folk. Although bedside visitations and visions are equally common with teenagers and adults about to die, it is the innocence of children, their lack of worldly exposure and knowledge, that lends importance to whatever they might say. "Out-of-the-mouth-of-the-innocent" catches us, any one of us, and we listen....intently.....with our heart, not our head. There is no other source of information from the realms of spirit that is as pure, we are told, and, for that matter as true. (It is also true that anyone who "returns to life" from a sudden, impactful, transformation of consciousness, especially near-death states, and regardless of age, go through this "return to innocence," this touch-in with the purity of true wisdom, and remain there until they begin to readjust to the earth plane.)

A dying child's incredible maturity is unique. Perhaps it is because of what the child witnesses, senses, or hears "from beyond" before he or she dies, that is the cause of this. But, maybe, there's another way to view this. Consider the following:



(1) An unusual number of children today are being born with handicaps and terminal illnesses that complicate their lives greatly and cause much pain. Yet they behave and talk as if they chose their health problem as a soul, so they could come to earth to help others by providing them with opportunities to serve and learn to be more forgiving and loving through the act of service, or by being exposed to the inspiration they could receive. These kids were born with a mature perspective that flowered early and they died as if an "angel" to those lucky enough to hear what they had to say. Thanks to our new technologies, many of these children are writing books, composing poetry, and, in general, getting their message out to the masses in ways unimaginable just five years ago.

(2) Newborns, infants, and toddlers who undergo near-death states imprint, I believe, with otherworldly realities and go through long periods of confusion and/or curiosity about why where they are doesn't match "where they were." These particular children simply grow up abstracting, are highly intelligent and intuitive, and just "know" life is different than what they are forced to learn about in school or are told by their parents. Be sure to pre-order my book "The New Children and Near-Death Experiences" due out this December from Inner Traditions. I dwell at length about this puzzle and even more startling findings in the book.

(3) Esoteric traditions tell us what near-death experiencers of any age are now confirming - that all children, in every culture and country, can see the invisible. They can see and hear spirit beings, disincarnates, angels, guides, demons, monsters, all manner of "invisible" things, as a soul, so they could come to earth to help others by providing them with opportunities to serve and learn to be more forgiving and loving through the act of service, or by being exposed to the inspiration they could receive. These kids were born with a mature perspective that flowered early and they died as if an "angel" to those lucky enough to hear what they had to say. Thanks to our new technologies, many of these children are writing books, composing poetry, and, in general, getting their message out to the masses in ways unimaginable just five years ago.



(4) What impresses me, however, is the extent to which the dying of any age can and oft times do merge into their own soul as they cast aside the physical body in death. This merging, this becoming more of what we really are, a soul, is one of the higher goals of any spiritual calling or religious ritual. It's what undergirds the practice of prayer and meditation. It's a large part of what makes the sacred, sacred. Our goal, as near as I can tell, is to link more with that perfect part of us, that Higher Self, True Self, that is still connected to God in the sense that it never separated from The Godhead, and to do this while alive and actively engaged with our fellows. As we become more spiritual in our lives, make better choices, are more responsible and caring and loving, we open ourselves to the energy of the soul - its reality and its power - and its goal of carrying out God's Greater Plan. The soul, our soul, encourages us to become more of what we really are in the truer sense, divine beings here to learn, grow, discover, experience, and transform

- so what we project (who we think we are) matches more closely with our true identity (what we really are). Again and again, near-death experiencers, when describing their scenario, actually depict that mergence, and they certainly talk long and lovingly about their true self, their true identity, their soul. At the deathbed, merging into our soul, joining with the divine, becomes primary.

There is the clear sense, when you spend as much time as I have at the edge of death (either as an experiencer, witness, or researcher), that "the way of things" is quite different than what most of us were taught or have come to believe. Time has no meaning to the soul; only to us as human beings. So the idea of a child coming here for a short time and then leaving has a very different connotation. The soul is ongoing, eternal. For the soul to choose or be guided to take on form in the earth plane seems never to address a single lifetime, or what we earthly folks consider "the new kid on the block." The soul's reasons appear to be much broader and bigger than that, formed around a purpose or goal. If this is true, and I feel it is, then we all must pay more attention to those near-death experiencers, and others like them, who tell us that they chose to be born and that they chose their genes, their parents, and the major events that would occur in their life - so that they could accomplish a specific goal or mission.



Few of us have any memory of anything so lofty, and as children we haven't yet the language skills we need to say anything meaningful. By the time we've reached kindergarten, most of our memory of the realities beyond the earth plane, are gone. Thus begins the challenge of first being taught to follow your head and then later on learning it is our heart that is the truer guide. When asked about our "mission," the job we each have come to earth to accomplish (why we are here), most kids in my research of child experiencers of near-death states said something like: "Well, if you just ask God to help you and say your prayers, you'll be shown what to do. God has a job for us. We don't have to know what it is. We just have to trust and follow our heart. That's 'cause our heart knows more than our head does."

Are some children spirit guides or angels in disguise? I know a lot of people who would give you a resounding yes to that question. I rather suspect that anyone who inspires you, lifts your spirit, and speaks directly to your heart, is indeed an angel. That means we all have the capacity to become angels, once we "awaken" to that greater truth of our divine nature - and then act accordingly.

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)

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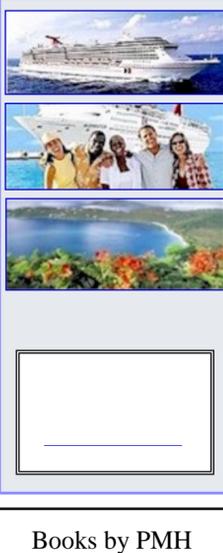
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"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or attachments or relationships. What we can keep is our memories and our feelings of what we have integrated into our heart of hearts from the experience of being here, plus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

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**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 a 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.