

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

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

June 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:** What exactly is a NDE?



**P.M.H. Atwater's answer:** There is no consensus among researchers as to exactly what a near-death experience is (NDE), much to the regret of the medical community which prefers "proven" definitions and details that can be measured in the manner they are used to.

International Association For Near-Death Studies ([IANDS](#)) has recently stepped into the fray and offered the following: "The Near-Death Experience (NDE) has been defined as a lucid experience with perceived consciousness apart from the body, occurring at the time of actual or

threatened imminent death." They note that "10 - 33% of those people facing a life-threatening event will have such an experience, and often they regard it as the most important event of their lives. Initially, they may have difficulty finding words to express the experience. Sensitivity by caregivers at this stage can be very important."



I address this situation and its ramifications extensively in Chapter One of my book [The Complete Idiot's Guide to Near-Death Experiences](#). Allow me to quote a few paragraphs from that Chapter:

"Near-death states can occur when an individual brushes death, almost dies, or is pronounced clinically dead, yet later revives or is resuscitated. Typically, near-death experiencers register neither pulse nor breath for an average of 5 to 15 minutes. It's not unusual, at least in the work I have done, to hear of those who were dead for over

a hour. Regardless of how long the experiences last, though, near-death episodes are significant in that they remain lucid and coherent in the experiencer's mind over time.

"These experiences happen to anyone at any age, including newborns and infants. [U.S. New & World Report's March 1997](#) poll estimated that 15 million Americans have had a near-death experience, or roughly one-third of those who are at death's door. But this survey only addresses adult experiencers. In his groundbreaking study of child experiencers done in the late 1980's, [Melvin Morse, M.D.](#), author of [Closer to the Light](#), estimates that among children close to death, around 70 percent have had a near-death experience.



"Near-death experiences can range in content from an [out-of-body experience](#) to being in the presence of God. They imply that there may be life after death because of the imagery encountered and the accuracy of details that often could not have been known by the experiencer in advance."

A word of caution is due here: "near-death-like" experiences can occur without perceived or actual physical death involved. I have a special chapter on this type in most of the books I have written, as it is valid and must be considered when discussing near-death states. Also, whenever you speak of the near-death experience (regardless of what type) you need also to include the [after-effects](#). It is the pattern of physiological and

psychological aftereffects that validate the reality and import of the experience. Because of this, I now refer to near-death states as the "near-death phenomenon" (rather than "experience"). That way, both the experience and the aftereffects receive equal consideration, as they should.



**QUESTION:** Do you think there will ever be proof of life after death? -- *anonymous*



**P.M.H. Atwater's answer:** I doubt it. Irrespective of how amazing or evidential the proof is, there will always be some group or organization or authority figure who will refute that conclusion. And they need to, else the premise which undergirds society as we know it would be overturned or disappear. Some may think that would be a good thing, and, in a way it would be; yet, when you consider how much is vested in "keeping things the way they are," you begin to fathom how upsetting, instead of helpful, such proof could be. You need only recall what happened when Galileo was able to prove that the Earth revolved around the Sun, instead of vice versa, to appreciate what I am implying.

Many blessings,  
P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D.  
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"We cannot keep the life on the earth real, 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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Last modified: May 14, 2005



### 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

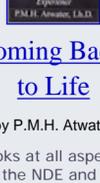
This is the "encyclopedia" of the NDE and the most complete book done in the field of NDE studies.



#### [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.

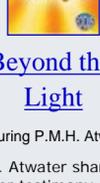


#### [Children of the New Millennium](#)

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.

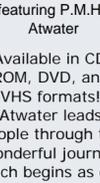
### Videos by PMH Atwater



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

featuring P.M.H. Atwater

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

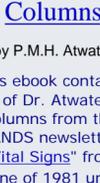


#### [As You Die](#)

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.