

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

An in-depth look at the near-death phenomenon

June 2004



P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D. (Hon.), is one of the original researchers in the field of near-death studies, having begun her work in 1978. She is one of the very few top NDE researchers who have actually had



a NDE. [Her website](#) is filled with very interesting NDE research information and articles of hers. Her contribution to near-death studies is considered to be one of the most important as her first two books, [Beyond the Light](#) and [Coming Back to Life](#), are deemed the Bibles of the near-death experience by researchers and a multitude of experiencers and enthusiasts. Using her firm understanding of police investigative techniques as a protocol, she has specialized in original fieldwork and research that also included sessions with significant others. Her findings are contained in six books (see right). Some of her findings have now been clinically verified. Her research is referenced in the distinguished Lancet medical journal, December 15, 2001 ([the landmark Dutch study by Pim van Lommel, M.D.](#)). For more information about Dr. Atwater's contribution to near-death research, [download her press kit here](#). On this page, Dr. Atwater answers questions submitted to her. >



QUESTION: I came across your web page recently and found it very interesting. Years ago I watched you on the Geraldo Show, and as a result bought your book, *Beyond the Light*.

In my lifetime, so far, I've experienced a few interesting events concerning the afterlife (the next realm), or things related. Years ago I had an interesting experience, not a near-death experience for me, but from a famous person who had just died.

The actor Michael Landon (Bonanza, Little House on the Prairie) was in a hospital in the Los Angeles area, and he had just passed away. I perceived his spirit (because I wasn't really seeing him in a physical sense) coming to me. He got very near and said, "Thanks for being such a great Fan." Then he moved toward the sun, then around it into the (outer) space behind it and kept going.

Years later my brother-in-law told me that two of his friends had the same experience at the time Mr. Landon passed away.

I hope this intrigues you. I have never mentioned this to anyone outside of my immediate circle of friends or relatives. I never knew where to go with such information. You are the first "celebrity" that I have given this to. - *George R. Zdravec*

PMH Atwater's reply: Thank you so much, George, for sharing your story and allowing me to reprint it. Michael Landon had quite a reputation for being a caring individual. Besides any short-comings he might have had (and we all have them), he loved his family and his children and was exceptionally kind to his fans. You can look back on his career and note that he appeared only in family fare, shows he could be proud of and allow his own children to see. I am not surprised that people in far flung places "saw" him leave this earth and "heard" him bid a fond farewell. He was a Catholic; his religion and the spiritual meant a great deal to him.



Many times I have witnessed friends and even those I barely knew, go out of their way to "buzz" by my home or office as they left this plane. Never have I been asleep when this occurred, nor in a relaxed state of mind. Quite the contrary, these brief encounters occur the most often to me when I am wide-awake, alert, and busy with my day's activities.

I consider such moments to be precious, a shift of sacred union where two souls can experience each other's essence before one shifts vibrations to another plane of existence. Although these incidents are normal and typical in my life, I never cease to be amazed and thrilled by them. It takes extra energy for the departing soul to do this. And I deeply respect and honor that effort. Truly, to witness the "flight of the dead" as they continue on in their journey back to the fullness of Light's Presence, our Source, is a special gift. - *PMH Atwater*



QUESTION: I finally found myself in your book, *Coming Back to Life*. I have not had a near-death experience, but nonetheless have an enlightenment story you might be interested in.

In 2000, I became sick and underwent a very taxing chemotherapy course. As far as a time line, this began in November, but worsened considerably early in the next year. I had always been a disappointed former Christian. I had been very angry with God for taking the lives of my baby son and my mother. I raved at God.

Then, amazingly, I began to have signs of psychic ability. I knew what people were saying or doing when I wasn't in the same room. Soon after I felt a totally compelling urge to search spiritually. This was something I had never felt or done before. I am still studying psychology, and I was getting my degree in science.

A non-spiritual person suddenly became different. I felt love for everyone. I began sending money to charities. Although I have a very good job as Manager of Operations for Amtrak, I went back to finish school in psychology, and my goal is to help others. I told my husband Michael that I would help those who could not pay for free. Everyone said that I glowed, and people are attracted to me, as well as animals.

Last week I faced a fear of spiders in my bathroom. I was reading myself for work, and a black spider made its way across my floor, then stayed perfectly still. I talked softly to it, and bent to touch it, stroking its back lightly. Then, the spider followed me everywhere I went until I had to leave for work.

I don't consider myself anything special at all, but I am a changed person. Is this possibly an enlightenment? Should you find the time I would appreciate your opinion. Many blessings to you, and I thank you for your work. - *Debra*

PMH Atwater's reply: Ah, I love the way God works. "Once said is God's fishhook," [Rev. Carol Parrish-Harra](#) once said. "You take a bite and then get reeled in." And that's exactly what happens to a lot of us when we brush with psychic phenomena and begin to experiment with psychic abilities.

That's how I got started on my spiritual path back in the sixties. I was working at top speed as a secretarial assistant to a department manager in a large firm, no breaks, hardly time for a quick lunch, every day, every month, every year, and this one year I had all three of my children in the hospital, one in twice, a husband who was never home to help, and I crashed. I mean I crashed -

had what the doctor called a "mild" nervous breakdown. During my "getting-well period" I met a woman who practiced automatic writing. What she did fascinated me. True to my nature, I would study her arm when she was writing, touch it, stick pins in it, do all kinds of experiments (with her permission), and finally satisfied myself that something or someone really had taken over the control of that arm. She wasn't doing the writing. No effort on her part at all. Finally I began to entertain the thought: "Well, if she can do it, maybe I can, too." That's all it took. In three days, I was a natural, words flowing out of my arm lickety-split, volumes of stuff, some of it hard to read, some of it quite plain. And I was predicting things, knowing things, talking about things in a manner that was accurate and amazing.

Then, one night, the message was: "You will soon die. I love you and I want you over here with me." Yikes. I remember the shock and the fear. I got up and spun around in my kitchen, where I was, and there on the counter where I had placed a fresh red rose in a vase only minutes before, was that same rose, dead, black, hanging. And I found my arm suddenly wrest from me and writing a message in the air: "What happened to the rose, will happen to you."

Double yikes. I called my friend and sobbed so much I could hardly speak. She calmed me down. The next week she arranged with my husband to take me on a little trip on a Sunday afternoon. Some trip! She had pre-arranged everything. We arrived at a house way out in the sticks where a group of people had gathered. One of them was my son's school teacher! Another was the Governor's assistant, a school principle, a real estate agent, and so forth. No slackers. The minute I walked in the door, these people could see right through me as if I were transparent. They knew everything, far more than my friend did. No secrets. No nonsense. When they heard my story about the automatic writing (and, yes, I had been saying a prayer of protection before each session), and what had happened with the rose and the threat of death, they had mercy on me. They revealed that they each had left their own homes that day to be with me and to help me. They did a 44-breath healing prayer ([Huna-style](#)). I felt a bolt of energy enter through both palms, up my arms, and permeate my entire body. It's like my eyes opened for the first time. I remember telling them: "I don't know who you are or what you do, but whatever it is, may I join your group? Who you are is what I want to be."



That was an [Edgar Cayce](#), "Search for God" [Study Group](#) - the beginning of my inner journey inward to the core of my being.

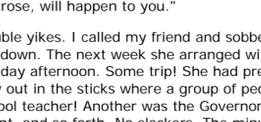
I tell you my little story because, in a way, it is somewhat like yours. You were angry at God and had suffered grievous loss. Then suddenly, without meaning to, other doors began to open for you and you found yourself softening, your energy accelerating, your interests opening up, other worlds becoming real to you, and you became a better person because of it - a more responsible, wiser, more knowing individual.

It doesn't matter how this happens. Our stories differ in that regard. What matters is that it happens - that wake up call, that awakening. You could call it enlightenment if you want, but I prefer to call it an awakening. I write about awakenings in all my books. They are that first step we take beyond the confines of our mind's belief systems and our culture's programming to encounter worlds without end and realms without number. We

discover that there is more to our world, more to ourselves, than we had previously known or had been taught.

Most near-death experiences are awakenings. Experiences like what you had was an awakening. That prayer circle of people waiting for me that Sunday afternoon prepared me for my awakening. Awakenings are so thrilling, so wondrous. Deep in our heart of hearts, whether the event that occurred was quiet or dramatic, we discover an energy, a pulse, a song of sound we had never been subject to before. Once that "door" is opened, there is no closing it. Sort of like that fishhook Rev. Parrish-Harra was talking about. We get "reeled right in," right to our Holy of Hollies, the core of our being, our sanctuary, the God of Our Being. Phew! That's an awesome moment. Do you think you would believe it if someone just walked up to you and in all sincerity said, "You are loved. You are love itself. You are so bright you are brighter than the brightest star." My goodness, you'd probably think that person was daft, or maybe drunk or on drugs. Going "Home" is like that - not "Home" as in death - but "Home" to the truth of our being. That special core inside of us all. That's what awakenings are, we awaken to Truth. We are love. We can love ourselves because that's what we're made of, Pure Love.

"Enlightenment" implies more, like being able to integrate what you learned from your awakening and use it everyday in your life and then getting "hit" with more and more and more. It's like a step-up in energy. There is not one big enlightenment, no matter how great (I don't know of many who could top what happened to Walter Russell during his time of enlightenment - 40 days in that incredible, intensely awesome Light. Get my book [The New Children and Near-Death Experiences](#) and read about Walter Russell). More happens upward. More steps. More opportunities to grow and learn and mature and ascend upwards on The Grand Spiral of Remembrance. Our enlightenment leads to more enlightenment.



There are so many ways this "door" can open for you, that I no longer regard the near-death experience as any type of anomaly, but rather part of that larger genre of transformations of consciousness - where we have an opportunity to awaken. What sets the near-death experience apart is that it can happen to anyone at any age anywhere, ready or not, and happens in the type of environment where science can get involved and study it. These types of experiences used to be regarded as mystical, intimate, unique. Now there are so many of them it's like "enlightenment for the modern age."

Don't hear me demeaning this, as that is not my intention. But do hear me alluding to numbers of occurrences - so many - millions of people - that it's as if God has taken the "grass roots" approach to reaching people. If churches can't do it, then "light-shows" will. The "light-show," that experience of God's Light, Holy Light, Universal Light, The One Light - whatever you want to call it doesn't matter. We get plugged in to a different, better socket of energy and we're never the same again.

Ah, isn't life fun? Just when we think we're having a pity-party, along comes Truth and we're uplifted. Yeah!

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

Contact P.M.H. Atwater

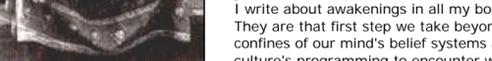
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"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or attachments or relationships. What we can keep is our memories and our feelings of what we have integrated into our heart of hearts from the experience of being here, plus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

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Last modified: May 14, 2005



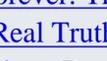
Books by PMH Atwater



[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

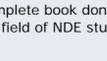
Looks at all aspects of the NDE and its aftereffects including possible changes in the brain.



[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 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.

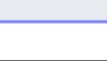


[As You Die](#)

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.