

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

An in-depth look at the near-death phenomenon

March 2005



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.](#)).



Free Ebook of P.M.H. Atwater's NDE Contribution: For more information about Dr. Atwater's contribution to near-death studies, download Dr. Atwater's press kit in PDF format. You will need the Adobe PDF Reader installed on your computer to read the file. If you don't have the Reader, download it by pressing the Adobe Reader icon provided on the right.



The Sacred Journey Caribbean Cruise: Please don't forget, the dates for The Sacred Journey Cruise my husband Terry and myself are hosting this September have changed. They are now from **September 18 to the 26th**. September 19th is my 68th birthday and I will be premiering my newest book on the cruise. Lots of reason to celebrate. To learn more about the our Sacred Journey Cruise, access my website at [www.pmhatwater.com](#), or call Van Guard Tours at 1-800-624-7718. Their website is [www.cruisevanguard.com](#). Today is not too early to sign up. See you in September!



New Book: Near-Death Experiences: There is a new book coming out this year about near-death experiences - for children! Look for it. Here's the info - Title of Book, *Near-Death Experiences*; Name of Book Series, *The Unexplained*; Author, Michael Martin; Consultant, Linda A. Jacquin (she had her first near-death experience in childhood); Age Group for Book, Third to Sixth Grade; Publishers - Capstone Press, 151 Good Council Drive, P. O. Box 669, Mankato, MN 56002. Let's get this book in schools!



Denise Mendenhall's NDE: The story of Denise Mendenhall and her childhood near-death experience (she is now a teen) will appear soon in [Seventeen Magazine](#). It is covered in the section of the magazine on "Faith." Denise's story is on my website in the section called NDE Cases. [Her Dad](#) said she is now working on her own book about what

happened to her. NO OTHER CHILD EXPERIENCER HAS DONE THIS! I know her book will be very important. I'll let you know when it's out.



Request for volunteers who have seen an apparition: Many of you have witnessed apparitions of various kinds. I know you have because you have contacted me about them. Please contact Irene Blinston about what you saw. She is now doing research about apparitions for her degree and she needs more volunteers. To find out if you qualify, access her website at [www.blinston.com](#) or call her at (650) 387-2294. Research like this is important. Please participate. Thanks, PMH



QUESTION: I am a 54-year old male and suffered a near fatal air crash when I was 25. During the incident, the helicopter of which I was a crew-member was caught in a downdraught as we flew over a cliff. The aircraft was thrown down the escarpment and dropped almost

1,800 feet in 4-5 seconds before regaining flight, missing the ground by approximately 100 feet. During this ordeal, I had the sensation of slow motion thinking where my whole life and loved ones in it went through my thought processes. At the end, I knew death was imminent yet instead of panic there was a complete acceptance of what was about to occur and a complete peacefulness. The only sense I was aware of was as if I saw the blade going around above me. The peace I felt was as if I had already passed over. Is there a hidden message that I cannot fathom in this experience? -- Tony



PMH Atwater's reply: First of all, let me say that it is common for an individual in a life-threatening situation, child or adult, to have an out-of-body experience and/or find his or herself engaged in a life review. You never mentioned an out-of-body experience, but you did a life review.

Because these two elements occur with such frequency to people, they have been trivialized by scientific and medical investigators as a mere artifact of the brain, not to be taken seriously. What we find in near-death research, however, is that people out-of-body see things impossible for them to see and come back to report things that can be verified by third-party witnesses. Hardly an artifact, these experiences are so real, what is observed in them is so accurate, that they alone challenge how we define "human" and what humans are capable of doing.



The same can be said for life reviews. Most people, like you do Tony, point out that their thought processes slow down considerably before their life "passes before their eyes." There are some, however, who say just the opposite - that their thoughts speed up until it seems as if everything happens in a flash of a second, decades of activity, an entire life passing by in no time at all. I used to be a meditation teacher way back in the sixties (dates me, doesn't it?), and one of the conundrums I noticed is that a person could achieve zen states (where everything merges into oneness) either at the lowest possible

brain wave function OR THE HIGHEST! Either way. You don't hear that said from other meditation teachers. I don't know why, for it is true. So, in my meditation classes, I quickly switched techniques whereby I would teach how to lower brain waves as well as how to speed them up. My students benefited most by using both techniques. And so did I. Still do, for that matter. There's something about extremely slow and extremely fast brain states that produces incredible ecstasy and enlightened thinking. Both directions of speed.



With that, allow me to tackle your specific question - about hidden agendas. From as near as I can tell you had what is called the "Initial Near-Death Experience" and it is a valid and often a life-changing experience, every bit as important as the more lengthy and complicated scenarios. That makes it purposeful. In that sense, at least, it does indeed have meaning for you and is well-worth further pondering as to what you may have gained from it, what it might tell you about your life and how you were living it, what message you can glean from it. I refer you to my book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Near-Death Experiences" (now out-of-print and available only from my website and soon to be available from the [IANDS website](#), as well). I recommend this book as it goes in-

depth about the four types of episodes I have been able to identify and the various elements near-death experiences contain. "Beyond the Light" and "The New Children and Near-Death Experiences" have this type of material in them as well. One of the cases I presented in the Idiot's book is almost identical to yours, and, yes, it did change the man's life - quite considerably. He was able to see in his life review how some of his behavior was hurting others. This surprised him and made him more considerate and aware.

We know from not only research with near-death experiences, but from deathbed visions and from various other types of questioning, that there is no pain at the moment of death. Most report a sense of peace, great peace, and an understanding that they are "stepping forward" from the container or temple that once housed them (the physical body) and moving on into spirit realms they recognize as "Home" or at least a continuation of life elsewhere. Children especially talk about this great peace and homecoming. It's that kind of peace you experienced.



To explore a hidden agenda in your case, though, you really do need to go "back there" in consciousness and see again what you saw then. What does it mean to you? Do you recognize anything in particular, anything that catches your attention, that you may want to explore? Compare before and after thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors. Use a seven year spread: seven years before the event and seven years after (if that amount of time has passed). If you do this in a prayerful state of mind or before you go to bed at night, you will begin to make connections - if only in your dreams. It may even become clear to you while the incident with the helicopter ever

occurred - or what you can gain from the experience of a near-miss. As you explore, you may find yourself sifting through layers of thought, like peeling an onion, always another layer, always another way to consider the event, until at last you come to that moment when you just let go and let God. I really recommend doing that. It's like we need to work things out, expend the effort, and then release, totally release the whole thing. Usually, at that moment of release or shortly afterward, ideas pop in, revelations, visions, wisdoms. These are what you listen to.

I hope this answer helps. Thank you for writing.

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

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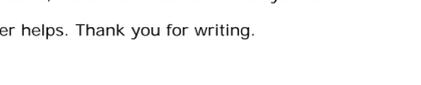
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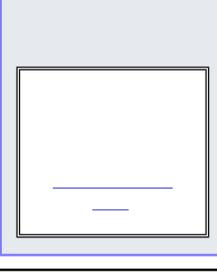
"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or attachments or relationships. What we can keep is our memories and our feelings of what we have integrated into our heart of hearts from the experience of being here, plus the love we have shared with others."

- 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

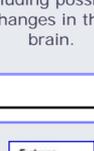
An in-depth study of the NDEs of over 3,000 adult experiencers.



[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 future portend to future memory.

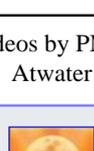


[Children of the New Millennium](#)

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.

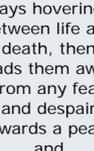


[As You Die](#)

featuring P.M.H. Atwater

Available in CD-ROM, DVD, and VHS formats! Atwater leads people through the wonderful journey 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.