

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

An in-depth look at the near-death phenomenon

April 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 investigatory 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.](#)).

ANNOUNCEMENT: Jeffrey N. Howard of Wichita State University is currently researching the rate of spontaneous remission of afflictions for those reviving from a near-death experience, as compared to the general population. His intent is to seek out near-death experiencers who have suddenly and miraculously been "healed" or "lost their symptoms/afflictions" afterward (conditions such as cancer, mental illness, physical defects, drug addiction, tumors, and so forth). This is extremely important! Please participate in his study if this applies to you! Contact Jeffrey at Wichita State University, Department of Psychology, Jabara Hall, Wichita, KS: 67260 (316) 978-3170. He has two e-mail addresses: jnhoward@wichita.edu and jazjef@hotmail.com.



QUESTION: I had all the beautiful usual 'symptoms' and the continuing absolute awareness of 'truth,' but I also had one I've never seen retold. When I was back in my body after the emergency Caesarean, in which I stopped breathing for 45 minutes and was stone cold gone, when I came back, for weeks my body felt like someone had draped a heavy skeleton over me. I was hunched over with the weight of it and had to learn to move with it again. I shuffled rather than walked, turned like a robot rather than a human. Every joint was soooooo hard to manipulate and it seemed like such a complicated process. To get a wrist to move in order to work fingers was such a conscious effort and they creaked and grated, bone against bone, very unpleasant but not painful. It was like my mind was processing the movement of bone, sinew, tissue, muscle, joints - literally as if someone had draped a body over me and I had to figure out how to work it, like a puppeteer being inside a mannequin. It felt very cumbersome and very unevolved. My initial delight years after when I discovered other people had experienced the tunnel and the light of pure love, has always niggled that no one else seems to report this dysfunction of the body and soul on rejoining. It's funny, even though I had had a Caesarean, it didn't seem to be that area that grated. Moving a finger was a slightly comical process. My story is, of course, much bigger, but I wonder if you've ever heard of this strange misfit approach on reintegration? -- *Jenny*



PMH Atwater's reply: I had to laugh at your description of reintegration. Please don't misunderstand me. I mean no disrespect, but I dealt with something similar after two of my three near-death experiences. Yes, I have heard of this before with others, many times in fact, but not told in quite the same manner that you did - of a skeleton draped over you, the weight, the discomfort. You are the first to use such an analogy.

Let me say, though, that it is not unusual for an experiencer to feel "out of sorts" or somehow alienated from his or her physical body upon re-entry and afterwards. If you've read my story, you'll remember that during each of my three episodes, I had the distinct sense and knowing that I had to shrink in order to fit back into the physical, that I was larger outside my body than inside it. Once back inside, my body felt different to me. It felt somehow "foreign." (My story is in [Chapter Two of Coming Back to Life](#), and it is on my website.)

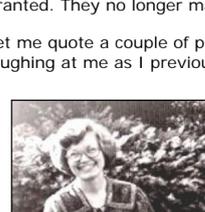
Once someone has been out-of-body, whether during yoga, stress of some kind, meditation, a spiritual experience, or during a near-death episode, the physical body seems at variance to what you now recognize as your higher, finer abode of existence. You come back knowing you are not your body, that your body neither defines you, contains you, limits you, or identifies you. On one level it's easy to say you are not your body. That statement has an esoteric, mystical ring to it - something high and holy. Yet on another level, feeling the difference, being out and then coming back in - having a basis of comparison unknown to you before - can be very disconcerting or frightening or confusing or perhaps an angry thing. It is not always a positive experience. Depends on the person.



For people like yourself, Jenny, it can simply be a cumbersome necessity, a relearning. If you go out far enough and experience the depths of other realms and dimensions of spirit, coming back into your body can be like an insult or a blow. If you're out far enough, you may not recognize the feel and fit of your body once back. It may be so foreign to you, that you literally have to get "reacquainted." You can also return too quickly and become disoriented. It is possible on re-entry, that you don't get all the way back in and have to readjust your energy and your awareness and even the "fit." You'll have to decide what resonates to you as an explanation. Seems to me that you so identified with the spirit world while there, that you could no longer relate to the physical world on re-entry.

Some of the things I went through while reacquainting myself with the earth world after my near-death experiences, and relearning how to live here, are in the book *Future Memory*. I had a dicens of a time with breathing, getting my body to work properly, and making sense out of mundane routines and habits I had once taken for granted. They no longer made any sense to me.

Let me quote a couple of paragraphs from pages 118/119. You'll probably wind up laughing at me as I previously laughed at you.



"My physical body and all my physical movements slowed tremendously, like a forty-five rpm record being played at thirty-three-and-a-third. This meant I could no longer walk, talk, or move in a normal manner but I could think and hear at remarkable speeds, and I could see as if my vision were multi-angled. I experienced myself as superhuman while, physically, I appeared subhuman.

"To illustrate how absurd this was, let me describe what it was like to converse with people. I could see every minute motion in an individual's brain/mind assembly as it interacted to select words, then send those words through nerve channels until the result issued forth from his or her mouth. The size and shape

of those words were plainly visible as thought-forms when each made an arc over to me, gliding along a 'bridge' composed of the force from that individual's breath, saliva, and mental intent. These thought-forms entered my body as vibratory waves while registering in my ears as sound, then each moved through nerve channels into my own brain/mind assembly, where sparks and pulsations selected a response. And that response tracked back through the nerves to my mouth for projection, so it too could arc over, speeding along on a similar 'bridge' to the person I was conversing with. Needless to say, a short conversation took forever. The process could be compared to several people attempting steady dialogue from opposite ends of an echo chamber. Driving, stepping up or down, lifting a knife to cut a potato, turning a dial, trying to squeeze toothpaste from a tube, tying shoe laces - each and every physical task required ridiculous lengths of time to perform."



See, Jenny? You're not the only one who was challenged to relearn how to "wear your body" after having been beyond all sense of physicality and then returning. I'll bet any number of people reading this communication can relay similar stories, as well.

Many blessings,
P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D., Ph.D.
www.cinemind.com/atwater & www.pmhatwater.com

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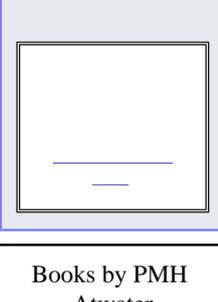
"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or attachments or relationships. What we can keep is our memories and our feelings of what we have integrated into our heart of hearts from the experience of being here, plus the love we have shared with others."

- Dr. P.M.H. Atwater

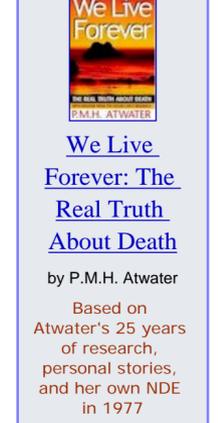
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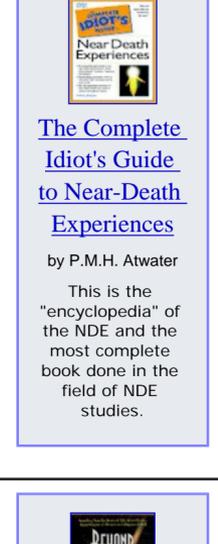
[We Live Forever: The Real Truth About Death](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater
Based on Atwater's 25 years of research, personal stories, and her own NDE in 1977



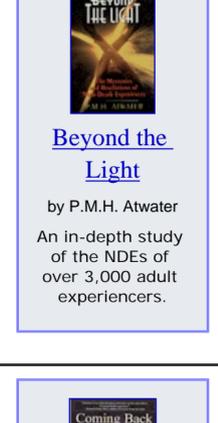
[The New Children and Near-Death Experiences](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater
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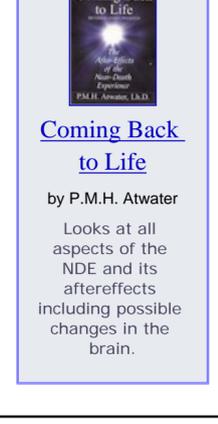
[The Complete Idiot's Guide to Near-Death Experiences](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater
This is the "encyclopedia" of the NDE and the most complete book done in the field of NDE studies.



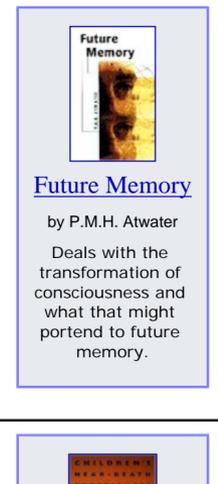
[Beyond the Light](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater
An in-depth study of the NDEs of over 3,000 adult experiencers.



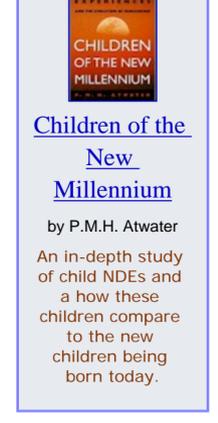
[Coming Back to Life](#)

by P.M.H. Atwater
Looks at all aspects of the NDE and its aftereffects including possible changes in the brain.



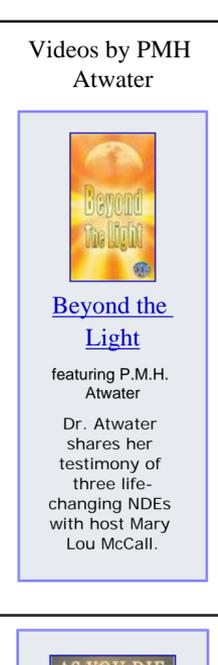
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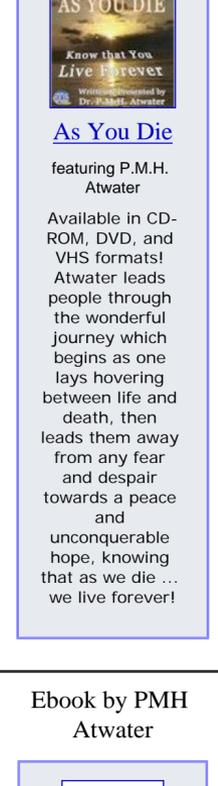
[Children of the New Millennium](#)

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.



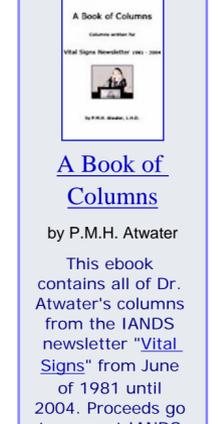
[Beyond the Light](#)

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



[As You Die](#)

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[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.

