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

January 2004

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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 I think, this all began in November, but wortamed considerably early in the year and ended in August. Throughout this period, I was pregnant. My husband and I had decided that we would not take the chemo of my baby son and my mother. I raced at God.

Then, amazingly, I began to feel a very powerful ability, to sense what people were saying or doing when I wasn't in the same room. Soon after I felt a totally compelling urge to search spirituality. This was something I had never 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 a transportation company, I started to think about a psychology, and my goal is to help others. I told my husband that I would help people with my gift of love. He, Everyone that I glowed, and people are attracted to me, as well as animals.

Last week I went to a bookstore in my bathroom. I, everything about my work, and a black spider made its way across my floor, then stayed perfectly still. I talked softly to it, and it went back to touch. I touched it. 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? – Debra

P.M.H. Atwater's answer: Your question, Debra, is so important, I've decided to carry your entire e-mail. Thank you for giving me permission to do this.

According to most mystical and spiritual traditions, what you went through and are continuing to experience is called an "awakening" – an awakening to the reality of spirit, the reality of other worlds and other ways of living that are better and more satisfying than what you experienced previously. That need, that hunger for something more in life, a greater reality, is instilled in all of us. It is part of our core being and is the key component to why food, sex, gifts, power plays, accomplishments, relationships, fail to provide that sense of completeness we seek. True satisfaction, true peace, cannot be found in such endeavors.

And therein lies the rub.

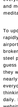
When things don't go right, when we feel victimized, hurt, betrayed, confused, depressed, angry, or at odds with the world, we are separated from spirit and the way it works, against ourselves or others. Sooner or later, though, a moment comes when we relax or let go or are worn down or frustrated enough that our state of mind alters. Once this occurs, awakenings pop up. Seldom dramatic but always something special, awakenings are moments when our perception expands. We see more, hear more, feel more, sense more. We become fully alive. We feel loved and loving – if only for a brief period of time. The spiritual truth of life "visits" us and we suddenly "know" things that once seemed beyond our knowing. Our hearts expands, as well, to embrace all creatures, all beings, all life. An awakening is a shift of perception that introduces you to a greater reality and a better way of living.

Awakenings are experiences of enlightenment in the sense that an "opening" has occurred – you have slipped through an invisible portal of the mind and heart and discovered sunnrhinedal, the existence of spirit.

Back in the sixties and early seventies I was very active exploring altered states of consciousness and psychic phenomena. This led me to attend and facilitate a very profit metaphysical corporation called "Inner Forum" (which was later run by a Board of Directors). Every month I produced and facilitated over 20 of these experiments, demonstrations, gatherings of varied types – sometimes even twice a month. These activities involved hundreds of participants, eventually thousands. I never did do anything "small" or half hearted. I wanted to know more about life, about human beings and what we are capable of doing. Always, what was presented was done in a non-judgmental, 360-degree-holism, as all sides of any given question or possibility could be examined and explored. Those were heady times.

Once I began my research of the near-death phenomenon, I had this previous work to draw on. I could compare near-death events with awakenings and the process of enlightenment. I could compare "before" with "after"... what was common; what was different. This tiont of information proved to be invaluable. And it is what enabled me to recognize that the afterwhile and the lives individuals were affected by them were very similar, sometimes virtually the same, from any type of transformative experience that occurred-spiritual-religious-that unlive sense of belonging to a greater reality filled with truth and love and joy. I just didn't matter how it happened. What mattered was – that it happened! To be healthy and whole, we need to open up to the spiritual.

I no longer consider the near-death phenomenon to be a separate or unique anomaly, but, rather, one of many types of the larger genre called "transformations of consciousness."



I suspect that the reason many near-death experiences are so challenged by the afterwhile is because of how the incident occurs – suddenly and to a population that is unprepared, uninformed, uninterested, and mostly unwilling. Transformations that happen to those who are spiritually prepared, where some sense of choice is present, are often easier to handle and adjust to. Consider, too, that near-death cases come from people of any age – including babies, toddlers, even preborn. And, that such cases often are medically monitored in a hospital setting and can later be studied scientifically. The near-death phenomenon, then, because its afterefects are so similar to the transformative process, offers the modern world a way to examine the mystical realm of spirit, objective holism – searching for evidence, some kind of proof that spirit even exists, that we as human beings might indeed be capable of abilities and awareness beyond what science has decreed.

The spiritual will not be denied. It is an integral part of what constitutes our humanhood. We consist of and operate through four levels or modes of existence: physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Irrespective of belief, ours or anyone else's, there is a God, an Allness, Ismess, or Oneness, The Source of All Being, that undergirds and empowers Creation.

This One Mind, this Intelligence, does not behave or operate as we do, but in larger more expansive manners. As has oft been said, "What we consider a tragedy, The Master considers a butterfly." Spirit, the Spirit aspect of your experience, your anger at losing a son and a mother, your sense of feeling betrayed and cheated, yet, suddenly, and without any choice or decision on your part, feeling more loving and charitable, more open, grateful, as if you had awakened from the "sleepfulness" of living life unfulfilled and unknowing. You are now more alive and vital, more responsive, happier.

Learn everything you can about how to manage and control your new psychic abilities, so they will have a positive and enriching effect on your life. Learn everything you can about spirituality and the mystical components to a healthy and more satisfying way of living. Such study will lead you to the power of meditation and prayer, and the grace of forgiveness and love.

To update you on my progress in dealing with a broken left wrist, I am healing rapidly - which is amazing my doctor and therapist. I fell at the Pittsburgh airport October 27th trying to catch my flight (I missed it). My left wrist was broken in a complicated way that necessitated surgery and the insertion of a steel plate. Surgery on November 7th - I (Dr. Bud) 3 hours to recovery. I guess they had trouble "bringing me back." There were many other injuries, but they were minor to the break. One week after the surgery I could grasp my cup nearly full use of all fingers, and could move my arm in a fashion that surprised everyone. What accounts for this? As you know, I'm a firm believer in positive thinking, and that incredible organ blanket I have that I wrapped my arm in daily. If you want to know more about organic blankets, be certain to visit my website and specifically that section in The Marketplace that talks about them and how to have one made for you.

AGGENDUM: On October 27, 2003, while hurrying to catch her connecting flight at the Pittsburgh Airport, PMH took a nasty fall. She broke her left wrist, dislocated the hand from the arm, injured her wrist, and sustained numerous other injuries. It wasn't until November 7th that surgery could be performed and a steel plate inserted. According to the hand surgeon, Dr. Michael Bud, "This was a complicated break, the kind I seldom see or hear about." The surgery lasted two hours but it took doctors three hours to bring her back from the anesthesia.

Steff, the webmaster for her website, literally took over for awhile, as PMH was unable to do much in the way of e-mail or writing, prayer sessions or readings, travel or talk shows. Almost everything ground to a halt. As of December 15th, six weeks after the surgery, more x-rays were taken. The result: full, complete healing of the bone, straight alignment between hand and arm, no evidence (other than the steel plate) that the bone was ever broken!!!!!!!! PMH is back in business. Yes, there's more healing to do, range of motion to restore, and the challenge with her teeth, but all in all what we have here is a miracle!

The doctor kept saying, "This is extraordinary, unbelievable, perfect. You see rapid healing like this with children and young people but I have never seen a woman who is 66 years old. Extraordinary!" To say PMH is elated would be an understatement.

PMH Atwater: To all of you out there who have sent me cards, I say, thank you, thank you! I am living proof of the power of prayer. Prayer works miracles, maybe not our way but always for our good. To all of those who have sent me the highest good of all concerned. Please keep those prayers going. On January 7th I find out about my teeth. My gentlemen, who was also injured the same day I was and who is a Vietnam veteran, remarkably recovered, although his mother still suffers from the accident she was in. I know many are hurting now, not just in our country but in the world. I included a section in The Marketplace on Steve Anderson, a most incredible healer, and on the Orgone Blankets made by Philip Knopp (I used ours for pain control and it worked better than anything else I tried).

I wish in my update that I recently sent out, that I had mentioned the three Writers Workshops I had recently attended and how they were led and guided by Dr. Bud. Without the trust in our physician's ability, I would not have had the patients. He is the one who saved my life in 1977 when I died three times, and he has since been every at my side, as he put it, "Keeping your ass from falling enough to get your work done." Bill is the finest healer I have ever met, and I feel privileged to know him. The other two are holistic/spiritual healers, also among the best I have ever known. They are: Ellen Louise Kahne and Steve Anderson. Ellen's work is in the Marketplace on her website. Steve is the best to let others know about. Steve is already in The Marketplace on my website. I hope Ellen will soon be, too.

People call what happened to me a miracle. And it was. Yet because of what happened to me I now have a different appreciation of miracles. Of miracles, a number of aspects were in place that led up to my healing. A lot of people were praying for me. I was in other prayer, my husband was in prayer, I was in prayer – even when I was in pain; the three healers I mentioned above were busy doing what they could. I had a wonderful surgeon and hand therapist; I exercised my arm and hand as often as I could each day; I had the support of a loving husband; and I ate right.

We all know aspects like these can lead to healing miracles. Still, something quite different from all of this is what I believe made healing possible in my case. I SLIPPED INTO JOY! Just that. I didn't decide anything, nor did I move in consciousness. I slipped, glided, really, into pure joy and I remained there and I'm still there. Almost immediately after impact, after blood spilled all over, after I screamed "Oh, No!" when I saw my deformed left hand and arm, almost immediately I slipped into a sense, a feeling, a reality of pure joy that simply took over. I became joy and joy became me. The pain spikes came. Sometimes I was almost delirious with the pain. Language escaped me. All I could say was simple disconnected words, when I could remember what things were called. There were moments when the thoughts came that I might lose the teeth that were injured, that I could never wear dentures or travel again or give talks again or share again or ... Still, there was that joy, sparkling all over my mind and in my eyes and up and down my body and in and out the injury and sometimes tickling my ears. There it was. ...joy! And it wouldn't leave me alone. I embraced the gift that was mine from the experience, what I could learn from it, but the joy. How can I describe that?

I knew, just knew, that at each and every moment all was well. It didn't matter if I was injured or deformed or would ever write again. I was absolutely okay and all was well. Each second I was exactly where I needed to be doing exactly what I needed to be doing. I was joy and joy was me, and there was laughter! Laughter! And everything I needed "appeared" or came to me or I was led to ask for it at the right time, the right way. There was Bill and Ellen and Steve and a host of others, and they were my angels and I am so grateful to know them and to have benefited from their loving care. Overlaying this, always, was that joy, and still is.

Time and space have altered for me now. I have always "been" joyful. Now I am joy. And in my joy I feel a sense of power I have never felt before. I am sharing this with you because you are my friends and because you are open to hearing about this experience. Maybe you, too, have experienced the same thing, or have an idea about it. In the sense of sharing, thank you for listening. And thank you for being the joy you are, what we all are. Maybe that's what God is ... JOY!

Happy Holidays to everyone. 2004 will be a tumultuous year for good or ill. Focus on joy and be surprised!

Merry blessings,
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"We cannot keep the life we have on the earth realm, not our possessions or our bodies, not our relationships or our jobs, not our ideas or our beliefs, not our feelings of what we have imagined 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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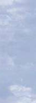

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by P.M.H. Atwater

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