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ENHANCED ABILITIES AFTER AN NDE:
TRANSFORMATION AND SELF-DECEPTION

by P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D.

During the early eighties, when I was writing a column called "Coming Back" for *Vital Signs*, I was contacted by the then editor and told: "If you keep talking about experiencers becoming more psychic afterward, I will not only cancel your column but I will see to it you never present at an IANDS conference."

When the near-death community found out that my first book, *Coming Back to Life* was about to be published by Dodd, Mead & Co., I was openly and publicly condemned and ridiculed. The more I spoke of expanded and enhanced abilities as typical of the aftereffects, the more vigorously I was opposed.

When I was elected to the Board of IANDS, I was the only person before or since who was required to sign a document promising that as a Board member, I would never mention nor discuss my own enhanced abilities or the fact that I gave readings using Goddess Runes. That these runes were part of my transformation and moneys earned used to pay for my research, made no difference.

Ladies and gentlemen, please look at the theme of the 2009 conference. It reads "Transformed in the Light: Helping Humanity through Enhanced Abilities Following NDEs." This is a monumental! It has taken nearly 30 years to highlight

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what has always been so obvious – *the near-death experience expands and enhances whatever exists as potential within the experiencer.*

It is true that during the early days of near-death research, it was necessary to emphasize that which could be established scientifically. Professionals were very careful about how they presented and framed their material and meanings given. Someone like me, who was seen at first as little more than a free-wheeling upstart with a big imagination, could not and dared not be tolerated. After all, who had ever heard of police investigative techniques, anyway (the protocol I use).

These “good ole days” are over. All of us (well, most of us) have done much more work, matured in our research methodologies, and pretty much have forgiven each other for “unprofessional” behavior. I bare no rancor over the past. We have learned and moved on. And we’re here today, admitting at last, that the once feared opening of Pandora’s Box. . . was actually a good thing.

Please hear what Jenny has to say. She’s a child experiencer now grown. “I felt different from others because of my psychic abilities. For example, how do you explain to others how you know the undisclosed details of a murder that happened in a location far from where you live? For many years I kept my psychic abilities to myself. Knowing that I could help others but not knowing how to go about it, caused me to feel a great deal of guilt.”

What do we mean, really, when we speak of enhanced abilities? Are we indicating that all experiencers become psychics? Or mediums? Or out-of-body travelers? Or, spooky people who can read clouds in a crystal ball?

Since the majority of near-death experiencers claim that their episode was,

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for the most part, a spiritual experience, let's take a moment to review what the Christian Bible has to say about such transformations. Acts 2 describes the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, as conferring "special gifts" to those who are ready. These gifts include the ability to speak in tongues, hear sounds from heaven, feel the rushing of wind, see visions, dream dreams, prophesy, behold the wonders of heaven, and recognize signs in the earth. First Corinthians 12, further explains what happens to those transformed in spirit. They possess new abilities afterward: wisdom, knowledge, faith, the ability to heal, work miracles, discern spirits, speak in diverse tongues, prophesy. In fact, all religious and spiritual traditions say in essence the same thing: after one is transformed, "gifts" come. These are the same "gifts" you and I would term either "paranormal" or "extra-sensory."

Near-death aftereffects follow the same basic behavior-track of one who has undergone a spiritual transformation. Afterward, the experiencer feels new or at least different, and begins to display "gifts" in the sense of new or enhanced or additional abilities.

In sessions held with experiencers since I began my work in 1978, here are some of the enhancements I found to be typical of the aftereffects: surfacing of latent talents, coming back smarter and with a thirst to know even more, having more patience and generosity of spirit, feeling more loving yet ready and willing to work for changes in the community at large and within families, possessing a type of guidance ever present along with vivid dreams and visions, becoming much more accurate with intuitive and psychic skills, often knowing the future (at least to a degree), displaying a charisma that puts people and animals at ease, exhibiting a

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keen sense of knowing and understanding, becoming wiser than before along with a dedication toward compassionate service, displaying creative and innovative talents and skills, losing a sense of limitation or intolerance, embracing the spiritual and otherworldly realities, healing abilities both of self and others, embracing Oneness.

Near-death aftereffects sound almost too good to be true, until you consider the down side of depression and confused states that often follow, the high divorce rate of between 75 to 77%, family alienation which can occur, and the challenge of physiological changes. One's behavior and attitudes aren't the only things that change, so does one's body. In my work I was able to recognize what I suspect are shifts in brain structure and function, nervous and digestive systems, and skin sensitivity. *It is not easy to bring to earth the gifts of heaven. The good news we seek to convey can get lost in the translation.*

It is no exaggeration to state that "a sense of mission" tends to power whatever comes next. The vast majority of near-death experiencers return from death's door not only with a desire to heal and help, but with an almost overwhelming knowingness, sometimes specific, that they have a job to do and they better get busy and do it. An outcry of utter frustration from many is: they have no idea what their job or mission is. Praying about it, following guidance from dreams and visions, being led by the synchronicity of fortuous meetings and discoveries, can be so encouraging and so satisfying, it is as if the fabled "mission" is met and accomplished irregardless of one's knowing or "plans." We get there. We really do – with *patience* the final "winner."

I've said this before. I'm saying it again: the path of the average near-
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death experiencer duplicates or mimics the path of a spiritual probationer ready to advance a Higher Will. We *must* admit this, even researchers and scientists. If we do not, we will fail to understand the real motivation of these journeyers or the depths of their disappointment or frustration if they are unable to fulfill what they perceive as a goal. They truly wish to leave the earth a better place than when they came.

Experiencers stand apart from modern-day society because of this, and are quite capable of walking out of lucrative jobs and financial security, even walking out on long-term relationships or the coziness of family, to pursue what drives them. This can result in a sense of isolation and withdrawal, or, a fierce determination to succeed in spite of obstacles – either way exposing one to the possibility of self-deception. It is so easy to think we know more than we do, are wiser than we really are, or will recognize friend from foe, supporter from cheat, just because we possess the psychic ability “to know.” We can trick ourselves by listening to our egos instead of true guidance. We may think we return from near-death states transformed, more honest and sincere, but in thinking that we fail to catch that the phenomenon expands and enhances whatever potential existed beforehand. This means that the negative can be enhanced, as well as the positive.

Doesn't happen often, but it does happen. Here are a few examples:

- An experiencer exaggerates what happened to get more attention.
- An experiencer phonies supposed guidance to impress followers.
- Another one pushes others aside to obtain more television time.
- Still others “take over” by using healing gifts as a means of control.

In a sincere desire to “save others,” or even just to help, an experiencer can trip over their own motives and create a situation far different from what they had in mind.

Take the case of Hung Hsiu-ch’uan, a peasant farmer’s son, who, in 1837 died and was revived. While on “the other side,” he joined his “elder brother” in searching out and slaying legions of evil demons in accordance with God’s Will. Six years later, Hung came across a Christian missionary pamphlet. He used what he read in that pamphlet to substantiate his conviction that his near-death experience was real, and that he, as the younger brother of Jesus Christ and God’s Divine Representative, was ready and willing to overthrow the forces of evil in China (which he saw as the Manchus and Confucianism). With the help of converts to his cause, he established the God Worshippers Society, a puritanical and absolutist group that quickly swelled to the ranks of a revolutionary army. Numerous power struggles later, Hung declared war against the Manchus and, with the help of other reactionaries, launched a civil uprising – the bloodiest in all history – which lasted 14 years and cost the lives of twenty million people. Hung changed his name to T’ien Wang, established the Heavenly Dynesty, and became King. The movie, “The Last Emperor,” is about his grandson.

Currently, in Africa, we have the case of Pastor Daniel Ekechukwu. He was driving his old Mercedes down a steep road when his brakes failed. The smashup left him near death from a brain injury. A rescue team pronounced him dead and left his corpse with a mortician who administered chemicals to prevent decay. The next day his wife insisted that his body be taken to the church where a visiting

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evangelist was holding a dedication ceremony. He was put in a coffin and taken to a room beneath the stage where the evangelist stood. The coffin lid was removed. As the evangelist "fired up," Pastor Daniel's body began to twitch. Camera crews there for the dedication rushed downstairs and filmed the dead man as he returned to life. I have seen this film and can say it is genuine and so is the otherworldly experience the Pastor related as soon as he recovered enough to speak. Today, however, he has come under the "guidance" of the evangelist, who is using the Pastor's story to advance his own work and the religion he represents. What Pastor Daniel originally said has since grown in details and "biblical religious zeal" to the point where millions of people have become followers, praising his name. Although not on the same scale as what happened with the peasant farmer's son in China, this modern case is still subject for serious study and concern.

Self-deception is a tricky thing. Seldom ever recognized by the experienter involved, even the most dedicated and sincere can deceive themselves. I doubt that any experienter has been able to avoid this. I know I haven't. That's why I double-check my motives from time to time, and appreciate blunt voices that insist I stop and look again.

I am convinced that all near-death experiencers need a little extra help from time to time from someone who is objective and unafraid to speak up. They also need instruction via classes, workshops, and books to refine their new skills and abilities. Whatever is given, no matter how pure or amazing, can still be improved. Prayer alone is not enough. For those willing to improve themselves and what they have to offer the world around them, results can be astounding.

There are those who have literally changed the course of human events. Several researchers suspect that religion itself evolved from near-death experiencers sharing their stories with others. Dr. Raymond Moody believes that the phenomenon itself is the primary factor in stimulating the growth of culture throughout the ages. He bases his finding on the fact that the entire tradition of intellectualism in the West can be traced back to 16 men, among them such scholars as Pythagoras, Democritus, Socrates, and Aristotle, and that eight of the 16 had experienced a near-death or out-of-body state. Records exist, says Moody, that indicate all 16 used a single near-death experience as a central model in their formation of the concepts for matter, reason, and truth.

I took one week off in the writing of *The New Children and Near-Death Experiences* (Bear & Co., 2003), with list in hand of how to recognize child experiencers once grown, to camp out at a library (yes, people like me still use libraries). My goal was to search out notables in history to see how many could have had an experience as a child. Either I was possessed of library luck, or I'm on to something. I say this because everyone I had time to research, fit the criteria.

The notables I found who in some way changed history are:

Abraham Lincoln

Albert Einstein

Mozart

Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (whom I now believe is the real Shakespeare – refer to Appendix V in my book, *Future Memory*)

Queen Elizabeth I

Winston Churchill

Black Elk (a Lakota Sioux)

Walter Russell

Valerie Hunt (who electronically objectified the aura of light around people)

Not everyone makes a significant contribution to the march of history, but numerous experiencers can and do make a special difference for many with their programs and ideas. A few of these people are:

Linda Redford, who, guided by God's Message during her NDE and with her daughter's help, developed the Adawee Teachings, a grade-school program that teaches children how to honor themselves and their world. Already tested, and quite successfully, in school classrooms.

Ken Prather, who, against all odds, turned a brutal beating and a broken back into the compassion necessary to operate a hospice and counseling facility, that regularly hosts children's teaching-tours, and opportunities to bring more joy in people's lives.

Caroline Sutherland, who survived a serious accident, returned with the ability to "see" the underlying causes of illness. Since 1995, she has worked with more than 70,000 people both in clinical and private sessions, and has developed a line of angel dolls to help children cope with the changes in their lives.

Gary Simmons, who was told by the voice in his NDE, "You are the one to bring peace to the world." He is now the Director of Peacemaking Services for the Association of Unity Churches International, and wrote the book *The I of the Storm: Embracing Conflict, Creating Peace*. He gives workshops throughout the world on integral leadership and peacemaking.

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Lynnclaire Dennis, who, after dying in a hot-air balloon that went too high, developed what is called the “Mereon Principles” – a model of ethical social architecture. The spun off, “Team Play,” offers a way for businesses, corporations, and educational systems to increase results and benefits in a sustainable manner.

Rev. Carol Parrish-Harra, who, following guidance from her near-death state, established the intentional community of Sparrow Hawk Village in Oklahoma, the Light of Christ Community Church – and – Sancta Sophia Seminary, a modern-day “mystery school” offering fully accredited degrees in an atmosphere of the sacred.

The transformed are busy transforming whatever they are guided to do. Some of our projects are small ones; some seem larger than we can bear. Some of us find the funding we need; others live in poverty and have no idea where the next meal is coming from – still the faith is kept. Many, directed to the healing arts, are now opening up centers or planning to. Just as many are re-entering the business and professional worlds as change-makers who focus on sustainability.

Important projects. Simple ones. Yet the greatest project of all is the transformation of self. We come back new and different, yes (some more than others). Still, those changes are only initial to what comes next. Don’t kid yourself. It takes years to not only integrate your experience, but to recognize who and what you have become. Starry-eyed experiencers, hocking their books in one hand while threatening to sue anyone who contradicts them on the other, are hardly balanced – let alone honest. Experiencers swayed by guidance that insists they have tattoos inked up their arms are most likely locked into the lower or more

negative levels of spirit. Just because an angel is talking to you, doesn't mean the advice you receive is worth having. So you can manifest matter out of air – what good is it? In the East they call this *maya*, illusion, and they warn: all on the spiritual path must learn to discern the difference between what is real and what isn't, what uplifts and what controls, what empowers and what imprisons.

It's not just the difference between positive/negative.

More subtle, harder to recognize – it's the difference between desire and peace.

There is no question that you, all of us, as near-death experiencers, come to manifest various expansions and enhancements after our episode.

The question is: what are you going to do about it?

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