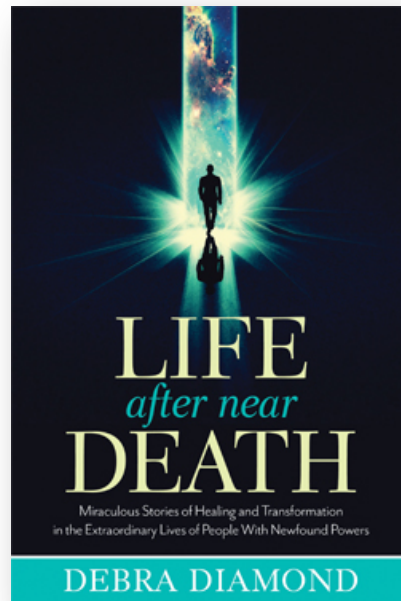


# ARTICLE

## Secrets of the Near Death Experience

By Debra Diamond  
(1030 words)



**W**hat's a near-death experience? A delusion? A neurochemical imbalance? The aftermath of anesthesia on a dying brain?

Raymond Moody coined the term “near-death experience” in his groundbreaking book *Life After Life*, in which he outlined nine elements of the experience, including a life review, an out-of-body experience, encounters with deceased loved ones and a decision to return to one’s body. Bruce Greyson, a professor at the University of Virginia, expanded the list to encompass 16 elements, including a sudden insight, experiencing scenes from the future and coming to a point of no return.

According to most NDE literature, common elements include an out-of-body experience, a feeling of peace with the universe and a connection with a brilliant white light.

Regardless of the common elements, a lack of consensus of a single definition of the near-death experience still remains, and many of the terms used to describe this experience are imprecise. Entire lifetimes can be reviewed, deceased beings met and gifts given all within seconds or minutes of earth time. The emotional intensity of an NDE is unlike any other experience a person can encounter on earth. Yet so much about the NDE remains unknown.

Most people think you have to “die” and then “come back” to have an NDE. You don’t need to be declared clinically dead to experience an NDE although many near-death experiences are the result of accidents, heart attacks and similar events that are often, but not always, fatal.

Furthermore, it’s not necessary to experience all of Moody’s nine elements, or even more than a handful to have a near-death experience. According to ACISTE (American Center for the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences) and IANDS (the International Association of Near-Death Experiencers), the key is not how many elements you experience, but

rather, that you return *permanently transformed*, unable to return to your former life.

## The Scientific View of NDEs

What does the scientific community have to say about near-death experiences? Are NDEs a transformative experience or are they a result of hyperventilation or the byproduct of anesthesia?

Science continues to greet the matter of the NDE, indeed psi, (all matters parapsychological or psychic) with a healthy dose of skepticism. According to current scientific thinking, the near-death state is a delusion caused by hypoxia (reduced oxygen) in the brain, resulting in hallucinations. Experts believe the brain shuts down within 20 to 30 seconds after the heart stops beating and once that happens, it's not possible to be aware of anything. Current thought claims there is no basis for the belief that we survive physical death.

Yet, even as science expresses skepticism, more and more experiencers are stepping forward, with testimonials on Youtube and personal appearances on "Dr. Oz," Oprah and "The Today Show." No question, NDEs have grabbed hold of the public's awareness.

Yet, despite this increased awareness, one important aspect of the NDE, perhaps the most important, has been largely ignored. NDE after-effects.

## What Are NDE After-Effects?

NDE after-effects are permanent transformations which are even less well understood than the NDE itself. These after-effects have not been widely researched and in our nomenclature, are often regarded as modern day miracles. NDE after-effects are disturbing and disruptive and remain with the experiencer far after the NDE is over. Not every experiencer has the same after-effects. Just as each NDE is unique, each set of after-effects is unique.

Some experiencers return to life with traits completely foreign to them, supernatural gifts, such as enhanced cognition and unconventional sensory abilities. Some of these are expressed as compulsions. Many after-effects have no outlet for expression on earth, such as enhanced chemical sensitivity or the ability to know what complete strangers are thinking or feeling. NDE after-effects have consequences in many realms, from cognitive and physiological to social and psychological.

While all of the after-effects are fascinating, the cognitive and physiological aspects, which are irrefutable and demonstrable, have not been closely examined and call for greater probing.

## Cognitive and Physiological After-Effects

Cognitive and physiological after-effects not only manifest as unusual talents and abilities. They may become obsessions which completely take over an experiencer's life. To be clear, what I am referring to is not a simple matter of banging out a few keys on a piano or occasionally picking up a paint brush to dash off a watercolor. Experiencers become totally focused on their newfound abilities, often to the exclusion of everything and everyone else. Experiencers cannot turn off their flow of inspiration. It interferes with their lives and their day-to-day existence. They are unable to live in the same way they did prior to their experience. A greater force—the power beyond the physical—has taken over. It can be exhausting and unrelenting.

Cognitive after-effects include a newfound aptitude for poetry, musical and artistic talents, mathematical abilities, knowledge of sacred geometry. Experiencers are transformed into artists, writers, musicians and mathematicians following their NDEs.

Physiological after-effects are even more bizarre. Enhanced hearing, improved vision, burgeoning IQ, robust athletic ability, spontaneous healing. Some after-effects are truly frightening and can be dangerous, such as increased electrical sensitivity. These after-effects should not to be regarded as a panacea or the long sought after answer for a stalled life. Know this: *NDE after-effects come with a hefty price tag. They are the silver lining in a very dark cloud.*

NDE after-effects are mostly an interference, intrusions that may require a complete re-ordering of one's life. They may require old habits, jobs, and lifestyles to be jettisoned in favor of unbidden abilities which are not always adaptable into practical, everyday living.

Near-death after-effects don't discriminate. Individuals with near-death after-effects vary widely in age, location, socioeconomic status, religion and professional background. They include men, women and children. Diverse as they are, these individuals share a transformation—one that has been for many of them, as complex, mystifying, and entangled as the near-death experience itself.

Understanding near-death after-effects can help us to arrive at a deeper understanding of the essential energetic nature of the Universe, reality and consciousness, to shed light on what all our lives are about. Because the NDE is important beyond the experience of the individuals who have them.



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