



Profound Positive Impacts of Near-Death Experiences

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Introduction & Background

What is a near death experience?

Dr. Raymond A. Moody coined the term “near-death experience” in 1975 as an umbrella term to describe the sensations experienced by a person in an altered state of consciousness, on the threshold of death. Medically speaking, the affected individual could have or may have been pronounced clinically dead, but they have been revived back to life, and are able to recount details of their experience.

What happens during a near-death experience?

After interviewing 150 individuals who had undergone a near-death experience, Moody found that near-death accounts often parallel each other closely. He constructed a “model” that outlines the typical stages of a near-death experience, including:

- A feeling of great physical distress at the time death is pronounced
- The hearing of loud ringing or buzzing noises
- A sensation of traveling through a long, dark tunnel
- The perception of viewing one’s body from a distance
- A meeting with the spirits of previously deceased loved ones
- The encounter of a “Being of Light”
- Confrontation with a barrier that permanently separates life and death

Perceptions of Death & the Afterlife

The consensus among those who have undergone a near-death experience is that death is a surprisingly **peaceful and pleasurable** experience. Individuals describe the overwhelming feelings of peace and acceptance that are conveyed to them upon reaching the afterlife. While the existence of “heaven” is controversial, most agree that the afterlife is blissful. Some even express hesitancy to return to earthly life when given the opportunity, as in the afterlife, sight is restored to the blind and bodily deficiencies are healed. Overall, most individuals seem to develop an understanding of death as positive and even beautiful following their experience, and this new perspective translates into drastic changes in their views on death, life, and more.

IMPACTS

Decreased Fear of Death

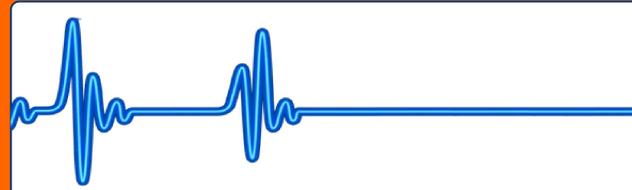
The most common result of a near-death experience is a **significantly reduced fear of death**, as the unknown (what comes after life), is now not only known, but is even desirable to some affected individuals. Those who have undergone a near-death experience no longer “doubt the survival of bodily death” and realize that the afterlife is not “merely an abstract possibility” but a known destination (Moody 92).

New Attitudes

Those who undergo near-death experiences commonly become more **reflective, philosophical, and morally upright** following their experience. They gain increased capacities for love, knowledge, spirituality, and philanthropy, as well as a greater appreciation for life and a greater sense of life purpose. These shifts in personality may result in visible life developments, such as the cultivation or termination of relationships and new directions in employment.

Lasting Motivation

A childhood near-death experience may leave an individual with a hope or **motivation** that guides him or her throughout the rest of his or her life. For example, in one particular case a WWII veteran claimed that his childhood near-death experience ultimately helped him to persevere through the war, as he was able to rest in the hope of his “reunion” with God that he felt sure would someday come.



Increased Spirituality

The seeing, hearing, or sensing of the famous “**Being of Light**” is a core element to more than 50% of near-death experiences. Spiritual individuals and Christians in particular believe this light is an angel, Jesus Christ, or God, and the majority of individuals report that regardless of their spirituality, this Being radiates love and warmth. Most credit their encounter with this Being as the source of their inspiration to incorporate **more spirituality** into their lives, and higher levels of spirituality may lead the development of a more gracious attitude, compassion, higher self-esteem, optimism, self-actualism, and the ability to savor life experiences.

Decreased Suicidal Ideations

Near-death experiences have transformative impacts on individuals in proving that suicide is not the answer. Suicide survivors in which the victim underwent a near-death experience are **less likely to suffer from subsequent suicidal ideation and more likely to object to suicide**. This view reversal may stem from an increased sense of purpose, a deepened spiritual focus, greater levels of self-actualization, or other insights gained during the experience.

Better Physical Health

Those who come close to death *without* a near-death experience commonly report adverse physical “symptoms” such as insomnia and frightening dreams, while those who did have a near death experience report **low levels of psychological distress**.

Summary & Conclusions

Near-death experiences have **tremendous life impacts** on those who undergo them, as the intense sensations experienced and time spent in the afterlife are not soon forgotten. A brush with death often results in a reduced fear of death, as well as the development of new positive attitudes, including a heightened interest in philanthropy and a greater sense of life purpose. Near-death experiences typically feature the famous “light” or “Being of Light,” which goes on to inform the development of more spirituality in people’s lives, and increased spirituality comes with several benefits of its own. The advantageous nature of near-death experiences is observed in the case of childhood experiences and the ways that they continuously “motivate” individuals throughout their lives, and also in the case of suicide in which near-death experiences discourage individuals from taking their own lives. Unfortunately for those who come close to death *without* a near-death experience, higher levels of anxiety and psychological distress have been observed, while those who have near-death experiences lead happier and healthier lives. Near-death experiences leave individuals not only with a captivating story to tell, but with the inspiration to lead new a new life altogether.



References

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