

What Happens When People Taste the Afterlife in Near-Death Experiences?

Have you ever had a near-death experience (NDE)? The sort where you physically died and found yourself “somewhere else,” no longer inhabiting your dead body?

If you did, you may have had a taste of the afterlife—and may have been fortunate enough to recall this fact. You can probably also still vividly recall details of your experience, and it may well have changed for the better your whole approach to life, people and priorities.

On the other hand, you may have returned from this experience confused, disoriented and even disbelieved by family and friends. Your life afterward may have crashed around you.

Either way, it is really important for you to know what happened to you, not just what happened to your body while you were absent from it, but to the real you that left it during your NDE.

As for those of us who have never had such an experience—by listening and analyzing the accounts of NDErs, we can benefit from knowing what we might anticipate when we die, which for most people is a one-time experience.

Working from hundreds of descriptions, both ancient and modern, here is my updated sequence for a “classic” NDE, which commonly includes some or all of the adventures below—although a variety of others may also occur:

1. The spirit may leave the body when near-death occurs and the body can be observed lying below—termed an out-of-body experience or OBE. Pain and fear cease immediately.

2. The spirit may wander about the earth—temporarily earth-bound. Most, however, leave quickly to enter nearby spirit dimensions.
3. The closest spirit dimension would appear to be the void. Some step into the void without experiencing a tunnel, but a short tunnel may deliver the NDEr to a particular section of the void—for example, to a place where a specific experience awaits them.
4. Most spirits travel across the Void through a variety of long tunnels that lead to a diversity of afterlife venues. Guides, such as angels or dead relatives, may accompany and guide them along the tunnel, or even “fly” them more directly outside of it to their destinations.
5. There is usually a “dazzlingly bright light at the end of the tunnel,” or in the distance, toward which the NDEr is strongly attracted.
6. The NDEr finds himself/herself in a pastoral or garden idyll—termed in Scripture, Paradise. An unfortunate smaller number of NDErs find themselves in an unpleasant prison environment instead.
7. A welcoming committee in Paradise, generally comprising pre-deceased family members also in spirit bodies, including ancestors, greets the newcomer. Besides family members, deceased friends may also be present, and/ or other spirit beings such as angels. Some ancestors may only be identified later when searching old family photograph albums.
8. At some stage, the NDEr meets a being of light who emanates love, peace and security—in which they bask. The vast majority of NDErs (even those previously atheists) identify this impressive Being as Creator, God, God the Father or Jesus Christ. An interview, interaction and familiarization process takes place.
9. The NDEr is often shown a life review for personal assessment, and to help guide their future priorities on return to earth.
10. The NDEr is told that he or she will have to return to

Earth, as there is more for them to do there.

11. The return is usually quick and returnees suddenly find themselves back in their own bodies.
12. Many returnees believe they need to love others in a new way, and to tell others of their experiences, as typified by an example described by Professor Bruce Greyson—where, after his NDE, a truck driver “awoke with an intense passion for helping others, and a desire to talk about his experience, much to the dismay of his embarrassed wife.”

Perhaps the most impacting step is the life review, during which many NDErs describe being shown their lives in great detail. I remember questioning Bob Bosworth about his NDE following a car accident in the 1970s. Bob, the son of the famous evangelist Fred Francis “F.F.” Bosworth, had spent his life as a Christian missionary dedicated to serving the needs of others, working mainly with the poor in Africa. He died in the accident and experienced a classic NDE. He told me that his life review had made him uncomfortable. “Details of my ministry passed before my eyes, and I saw weaknesses and things I should have done differently. I was not being judged,” he quickly assured me, “I was being led into self-evaluation. God’s Judgment Day is not yet.” Bob assured me his life and ministry had been impacted positively by his NDE. He died in 2009, serving God and his fellow man to the last through World Outreach and other ministries.

Others who have returned have repeated Bob’s assertion, “God’s Judgment Day is not yet.” For example, Howard Storm—, a confused erstwhile atheist whose NDE began with unpleasant experiences, had many questions he asked of spirit beings he encountered during it. Afterwards he concluded: “God will ultimately judge every individual. And God will allow people to be dragged into darkness with like-minded creatures. I have told you, from my personal experience, what goes on in there.”

Scripture confirms in several places that Judgement lies ahead

on a particular day that God has appointed, as yet unknown to us. One verse, Acts 17:31a, reads: "For he has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed."

This article is an excerpt from Living Beyond: Making Sense of Near Death Experiences by Ivan Rudolph. Copyright 2015 by Ivan Rudolph.