

Near-Death Experiences

Elucidating the True Nature of Reality

Robert G. Mays, BSc
Suzanne B. Mays, AA, CMP
www.selfconsciousmind.com

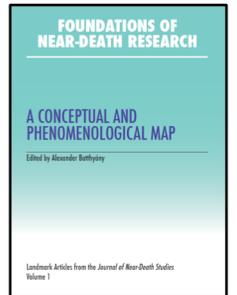
2018 IANDS Conference, Bellevue, Washington
August 30, 2018

A New Scientific Method: Rationale

- **Bruce Greyson (1989). *Can science explain the Near-Death Experience?***
 - **New scientific methods needed to account for NDEs – that incorporates *all* sources of knowledge including direct experience of the mystical**
 - **Problem: NDE elements are invisible to independent observation**
 - **Now at a new inflection point—science evolves new methods and new paradigms** (Kuhn, 1970, section XII)
- **NDEs have consistent, well-defined characteristic elements**
 - **Vivid, hyperreal experiences**
 - **Memory of the experience is indelible; NDEs are experienced as real, not imagined**
 - **NDEs appear to have a common proximate cause, many different antecedent conditions** (Mays & Mays, 2015)
 - **Veridical information – from physical realm *and* the supersensible, transmateral realm**
- **When taken individually, NDEs appear “subjective”; when considered collectively, they become the consistent observations of a common, objective reality**
 - **At 4%–5% of worldwide population, more than 330 million people have experienced an NDE** (Knoblauch, et al., 2001).
 - **Given the high prevalence and the common, objective nature of NDEr observations, NDEs are empirical facts in the world**
- **Therefore, taking NDEr accounts as objectively real is justified; they provide valid data for scientific study**



Bruce Greyson



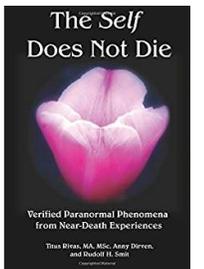
JNDS Anthology
Volume 1

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A New Scientific Method: Sources & Principles ...

Primary sources are NDE accounts

- **Standards are needed: Which data to consider? Who is a reliable source? How can the accounts be validated?**
 - Tibetan Buddhist philosophy: study of *extremely hidden phenomena*
 - The only method is to rely on the *first-person testimony* of people who have experienced the phenomenon. Person must be reliable, credible.
- **Our criteria for using NDE data as *valid* for scientific study**
 - Multiple NDE accounts of the same specific phenomenon
 - If possible, additional witnesses to the phenomenon
 - If possible, corroboration by a credible third party of information received in the NDE
- **Any theory resulting from the use of NDE data:**
 - Needs to have greater explanatory power compared to physicalist theories
 - Needs to provide testable hypotheses
 - To be *complete*, the theory should explain *all* aspects of NDEs

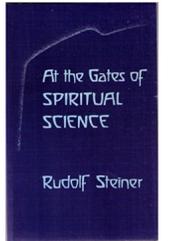


The Self Does Not Die

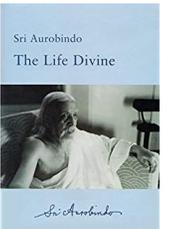
A New Scientific Method: Sources & Principles

Secondary sources come from initiates/seers

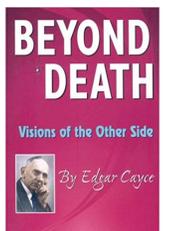
- **Criteria for selection (e.g., Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo, Edgar Cayce)**
 - **Apparent clairvoyance and other higher sense faculties that resulted in expansive, all-encompassing knowledge of inner and outer realities**
 - **Indications consistent with NDE content**
 - **Consistent with indications from other seers, both Eastern & Western**
 - **History of credible investigation of supersensible realms, from their own experience, and practical application of their insights**
 - **As teachers, have provided a path of inner training for others to develop these faculties**
 - **Their indications provide a framework for interpreting the nature of reality**



Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925)



Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950)



Edgar Cayce (1877–1945)

The Transcendent Realm Hypothesis: Proposal & Evidence

- The Transcendent Realm hypothesis proposes:
 - Reality consists of the physical realm *plus* a more fundamental Transcendent Realm.
 - The physical realm is coextensive with and *dependent* on the Transcendent Realm.
- NDErs report hyperreal experiences in two *realms*:
 - The physical realm and a supersensible, transmaterial realm
 - NDErs frequently describe a transition between the two realms
- “Transcendent” here implies surpassing usual limits:
 - Perceptions beyond the range of usual perception, i.e., “supersensible”
 - Free from the constraints of the material world
- In both realms, NDErs report obtaining veridical information – impossible through ordinary physical means
- In both realms, NDErs report encounters with deceased persons and “spiritual” beings
- In the Transcendent Realm, NDErs report experiencing:
 - Unconditional love and interconnectedness,
 - Memories of life events and visions of the future (that are later verified),
 - Access to limitless knowledge and wisdom, and a sense of life purpose and meaning

The Transcendent Realm Hypothesis: Methodology

The fundamental elements of physical reality:

- Space
- Time
- Matter & fundamental physical forces
- Consciousness – caused by brain processes or is a fundamental property of matter

To develop our Transcendent Realm hypothesis:

- Space – examine the quality of NDEr perceptions in the physical realm
- Time – examine phenomena of the NDE life review, life preview, and timelessness
- Matter – examine interactions with the NDEr’s nonmaterial body and physical matter (e.g., passing through solid walls)
- Consciousness – examine:
 - Individuated nonmaterial beings (deceased relatives and friends, “spiritual” beings)
 - Telepathic/mind-to-mind communication
 - The sense of a “higher Self”

NDE Phenomena Regarding Space ...

- **Researchers**

- **Ken Ring & Sharon Cooper (1997, 1999) “transcendental awareness,” “mindsight,” “omnidirectional awareness”**
- **Jean-Pierre Jourdan (2000, 2001, 2011) “global perception,” “360° spherical perception,” “perception by transparency”**
- **Robert Brumblay (2003) “hyperdimensional perception”**

- **Archetypal accounts: veridical perceptions of the physical realm but greatly enhanced**

- I could see at an angle of 360°, I could see in front and behind, I could see underneath, from far, I could see up close and also transparently. I remember seeing a stick of lipstick in one of the nurses’ pockets. ... I could see, all at once, a green plaque with white letters saying “Manufacture of arms of Saint Etienne.” The plaque was under the edge of the operating table, covered up by the sheet I was lying on. I could see with multiple axes of vision, from many places at once. ... I wanted to go through the wall, I don’t know why. I realized that it was not resisting me, and I went through it. I saw what was on the other side: a huge garden, a bicycle garage... . (Jourdan, 2000, 2001, 2011).
- I could see everything. And I do mean everything! ... 360 degree spherical vision. And not just spherical. Detailed! I could see every single hair and the follicle out of which it grew on the head of the nurse standing beside the stretcher. At the time I knew exactly how many hairs there were to look at. (Ring & Cooper, 1999, p. 162).

- Brumblay, R. J. (2003). Hyperdimensional Perspectives in Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 21(4), 201-221.
- Jourdan, J.-P. (2000). Just an Extra Dimension ... *Les Cahiers scientifique de IANDS-France*, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.iands-france.org/SRC/PDF/justextra.pdf>.
- Jourdan, J.-P. (2001). Les Dimensions de la Conscience. *Les Cahiers scientifique de IANDS-France*, 7. Retrieved from [http://dr.jp.jourdan.pagesperso-orange.fr/Les Dimensions de la Conscience.pdf](http://dr.jp.jourdan.pagesperso-orange.fr/Les%20Dimensions%20de%20la%20Conscience.pdf)
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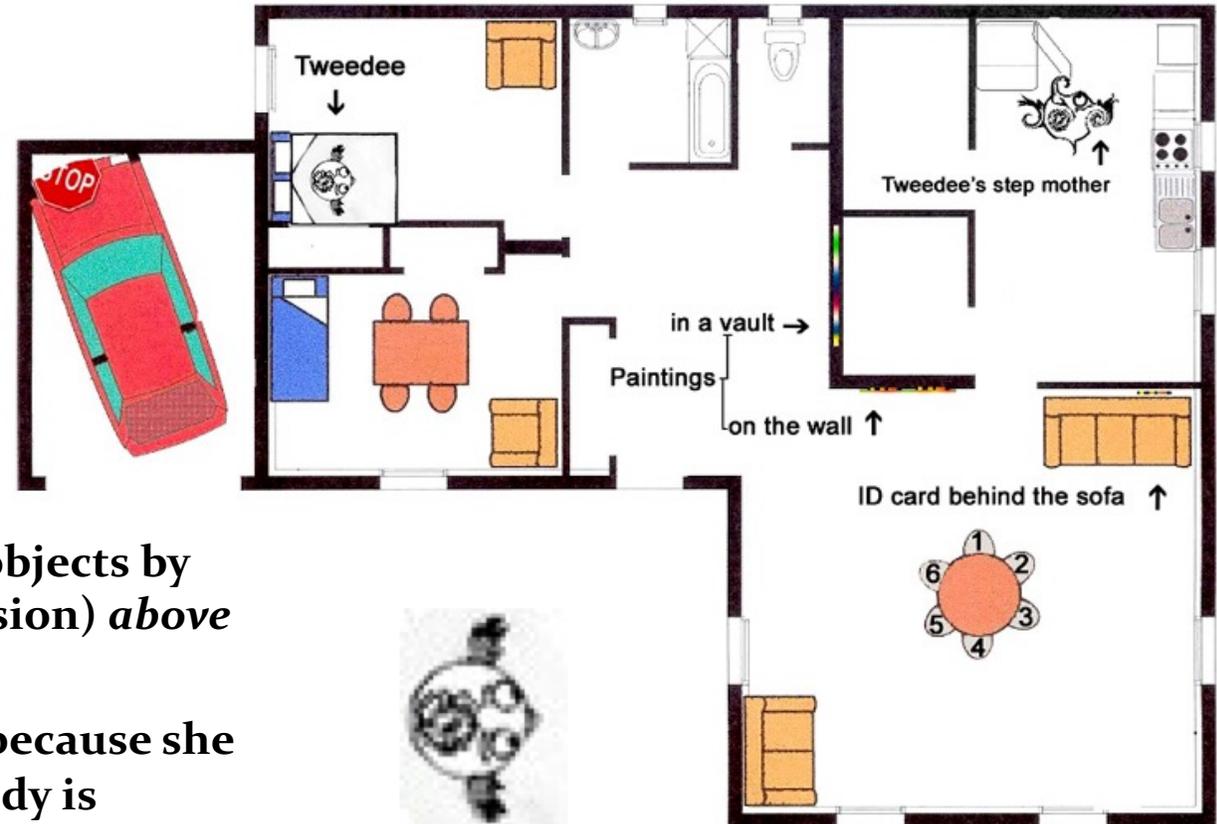
NDE Phenomena Regarding Space ...

Perceptual features

- **Global perception** – I noticed, we see everything from all sides simultaneously! I could see everywhere. (Jourdan, 2011).
- **360° spherical perception** – I had a 360° spherical-like vision. (Jourdan, 2011).
- **Perception “from everywhere”**
 - Although my eyes were closed, I could suddenly see everything—the whole room and myself in it—and I couldn’t tell where I was seeing from! ... I seemed to be seeing everything from everywhere. ... There seemed to be no observer separate from what was seen. There was simply awareness. (Ring & Cooper, 1999, p. 161).
- **Perception by transparency**
 - When I woke up I was above my body. I was aware of all the people who had been called into the room to help and what they were thinking. I also found myself able to see my mother on the other side of the wall in the waiting room. ... At that time I could also see other people in other nearby rooms, all separated from the x-ray area by [lead-lined] walls. ... I still could tell that the walls were there, but I could see the other people in the other rooms. (Brumblay, 2003).
- **Zoom / instantaneous displacement**
 - What must also be understood is that it works like a zoom and a displacement all at once. When we take an interest in something, it’s as if we zoomed in. It is the displacement and perception occurring simultaneously which allows this to happen. (Jourdan, 2011).
 - My displacements were subject to my will with instantaneous effect. Instant zooming of my vision, without any displacement on my part. (Jourdan, 2011).

NDE Phenomena Regarding Space: Interpretation

- With an NDE in Flatland, Tweedee is propelled from two dimensions into a higher dimension, with expanded abilities
 - Instead of seeing things only edge-on, he can see the whole scene at once and each object from all directions at once.
 - He can see *inside* objects (e.g., the vault and inside his own body); he can zoom in to any detail and move out to see the whole scene.
 - He can move “through” the walls and other solid objects by “floating” in the higher dimension (the 3rd dimension) *above* them.
 - Tweedee’s step mother can’t see him out-of-body because she can’t see into the “above” dimension. His NDEr body is transparent in the 2D realm.



Tweedee's physical body

(from Jourdan, 2011)

NDE Phenomena Regarding Space: A Fifth Dimension

Tweedee's experiences moving to a "higher" dimension during his NDE correspond well to the NDEr's experiences in their NDE in the physical realm

- By extending the 2-dimensional case to 3 dimensions, we can postulate that there is an *extra dimension* to physical reality
- Physical reality has three spatial dimensions; with the additional dimension of time, we speak of physical reality as having *four* dimensions.
- The expanded perceptual and movement abilities reported by NDErs can be explained by the NDEr being in a higher, *fifth dimension*.

What are the 5-dimensional analogs of Tweedee's 3-dimensional abilities

- Tweedee "above" Flatland has global perception of all of the 2-dimensional world → NDEr has simultaneous omnidirectional awareness of all of the physical surroundings
- Tweedee sees "inside" objects → NDEr sees *through* objects
- Tweedee floats "above" walls, defying the physical laws governing Flatland → NDEr moves *through* walls, defying physical laws
- Tweedee can zoom instantly from place to place in Flatland → NDEr can zoom instantly across physical distances by thought alone
- Tweedee can look away from Flatland and explore all of the "above" realm → NDEr can access transcendent regions through a transition out of the physical realm (e.g., a tunnel)

NDE Phenomena Regarding Space: Implications

Implications of a fifth dimension

- The postulated fifth dimension explains the NDEr's reports of enhanced perception:
 - Global 360° perception
 - Perception from everywhere
 - Perception by transparency
 - Zoom and displacement
 - Moving through walls and solid objects
 - The invisibility of out-of-body entities to ordinary sight
- The enhancement of perceptual abilities probably accounts for the near-universal description that NDE perceptions are *hyperreal*—"realer than real"
- The postulated fifth dimension subsumes all of physical reality and includes all of the unlimited transcendent, nonmaterial reality
- Physical laws are not immutable

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time ..

Life review phenomenon – Archetypal accounts

- Into that room along with His radiant presence ... entered every single episode of my entire life. Everything that had ever happened to me was simply there, in full view, contemporary and current, all seemingly taking place at that moment. ... On all sides of us was ... a kind of enormous mural—except that the figures on it were three dimensional, moving and speaking. And many of these figures seemed to be me. (Ritchie & Sherrill, 1978, pp. 49–50)
- [During the Vietnam War, Dannion Brinkley blew up a hotel building, killing 50 innocent people.] I felt the stark horror that all of those people felt as they realized their lives were being snuffed out. I experienced the pain their families felt when they discovered that they had lost loved ones in such a tragic way. In many cases I even felt the loss their absence would make to future generations. (Brinkley, 1994, p. 22).
- I saw my life intricately woven into everything I'd known so far. My experience was like a single thread woven through the huge and complexly colorful images of an infinite tapestry. All the other threads and colors represented my relationships, including every life I'd touched. ... Every single encounter was woven together to create the fabric that was the sum of my life up to this point. (Moorjani, p. 68)
- Because of the love and understanding radiating from the being of light, I found the courage to see for myself ... what in my actions had caused him [the being of light] pain. And for most of the episodes ... the being offered me an alternative way to act; not what I *should* have done ... but what I *could* have done—an open invitation that made me feel completely free to accept or not to accept his suggestions. (Ring, 1998, p. 157).

- Brinkley, D. (1994). *Saved by the Light: The true story of a man who died twice and the profound revelations he received*. New York: Harper.
- Moorjani, A. (2012). *Dying to be Me: My journey from cancer, to near death, to true healing*. New York: Hay House.
- Ring, K. (1998). *Lessons from the Light: What we can learn from the near-death experience*. Needham, MA: Moment Point Press.
- Ritchie, G. G., and Sherrill, E. (1978). *Return from tomorrow*. Waco, TX: Chosen Books.

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time ...

Features of the life review

- **Simultaneous presentation of all events generally in a 360° panorama / tableau**
 - Events may be displayed forward from birth to the present or backward
- **Every episode of one's life: focusing on one's interactions with others**
 - Displays the details of one's emotions and actions, and the effects on others
 - One is observing the event as if looking down on one's earlier self from an out-of-body position
- **Every event shown is hyperreal, with perception from "everywhere," zoom / displacement perception**
 - Same type of enhanced perception as the NDEr's out-of-body perception of the physical realm—further supports the idea that NDEs are objectively real events, in both realms
 - I relived every exact thought and attitude; even the air temperature and things I couldn't have possibly measured when I was eight years old. For example, ... in the life review, I could have counted the mosquitoes [that were in the area]. Everything was more accurate than could possibly be perceived in the reality of the original event. (Farr, 1993, p. 30).

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time ...

Features of the life review ...

- Generally one is in the presence of a loving being, frequently described as a Being of Light
 - There is no judgment except by oneself, no condemnation
 - The loving being feels disappointment and pain from our misdeeds
- Ripple effect of one's actions to others in widening circles and through generations
- Vast, intricate tapestry of human relationships—every life that one has touched, showing one's interconnectedness with everything
- One is shown how one *could have acted*, without condemnation or coercion—implying human free will
- The purpose of life is Love—an activity that can be expressed only in relationship to other living beings

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time ...

Life preview phenomenon

• Visions of one's personal future

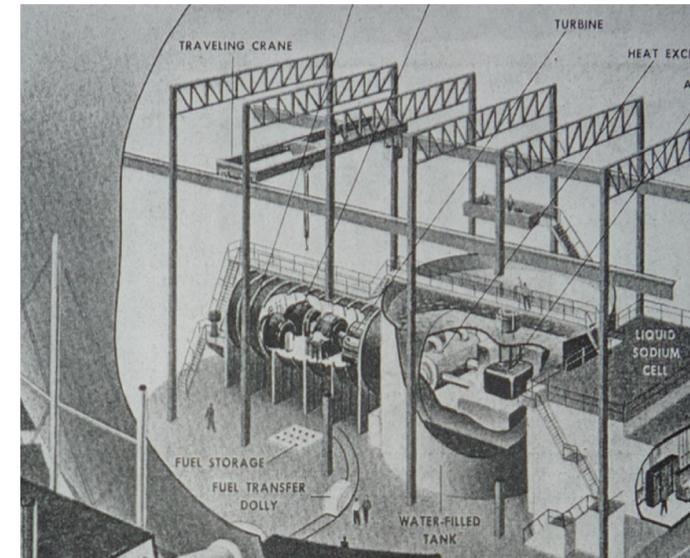
- Two predictions from NDE at age 10 in 1941: 1. *You will be married at age twenty-eight.* ... This did indeed happen, even though at [my] twenty-eighth birthday I had yet to meet the person that I was to marry. 2. *You will have two children and live in the house that you see.* ... This “memory” suddenly became present one day in 1968, when I was sitting in the chair, reading a book, and happened to glance over at the children. ... I realized that *this* was the “memory” from 1941! (Ring, 1984, pp. 186–187).
- And in a flash I saw the rest of my life. I could see a large part of my future life: taking care of my children; my wife's illness; everything that would happen to me ... I wrote down all the things I saw back then; over the years I've been able to check them all off. (van Lommel, 2010, p. 38).

• Visions of future world events

- In his NDE in 1943, George Ritchie walked over a catwalk through the intricate fittings of a huge sphere-shaped building. In December 1952, he read an article in *Life* that showed a drawing of the plans for a spherical building to develop a nuclear submarine engine. He had stood inside this building, *finished and operating*, nine years earlier in a heavenly realm. (Ritchie & Sherrill, 1978, pp. 71, 119–120).
- Numerous visions of the Kennedy assassination, the 9/11 attacks, natural disasters.

• Further features of the life preview

- **The memory of a future event is frequently suppressed; it may come back in a dream just prior to the event's occurrence or is remembered only when the event occurs.**
- **Predictions that fail to materialize may be due to the free-will choices of individuals that change the trajectory of the events.**



Life magazine, December 1952
Detail of the structures within the sphere.

- Ring, K. (1984). *Heading Toward Omega: In search of the meaning of the near-death experience*. New York: William Morrow.
- Ritchie, G. G., and Sherrill, E. (1978). *Return from tomorrow*. Waco, TX: Chosen Books.
- van Lommel, P. (2010). *Consciousness Beyond Life: The science of the near-death experience*. New York: Harper-Collins.

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time ...

NDEs as timeless experiences

- **NDErs experience the episodes of the NDE as happening simultaneously, with the ability to shift focus from one episode to another**
 - Because Time and Space are multi-dimensional [in the NDE], I am also multi-dimensional. I am able to perceive from and within any and all of these [different episodes] simultaneously and with varying degrees of awareness as I choose to focus. (Sudman, 2012, pp. 13–14).
- **But the NDEr must narrate the experience in some chronological sequence, sometimes making mistakes**
 - Events that I placed before actually occurred afterwards when I asked for confirmation [after my NDE]. And vice versa. (Jourdan, 2011).

NDE Phenomena Regarding Time: Implications

- **Implies an exact, detailed recording of all events in the physical realm**
 - All actions, emotions, thoughts of a person and their effects on other people seem to be inscribed in a “Book of World Memory”
 - The record appears to be *built into the fabric of reality* in the transcendent realm
 - In esoteric traditions: the record is called the “Akashic Record” or “Book of Life”
 - The record appears as an intricate network or tapestry of interrelationships for events as they unfold through time in the physical realm
- **Implies free will in one’s actions: one is shown how one acted and how one *could have acted***
- **Implies that future events are laid out and even “rehearsed” well in advance of actual earthly events**
 - Each person has an overall life plan
 - But out of free will, one can choose differently from what was originally planned and the plan is adjusted based on one’s choices
 - [The Being of Light] also told me that the future was not necessarily cast in stone. “The flow of human events can be changed ...” (Brinkley, 1995, p. 16).
- **Implies that the 5th dimension is “outside of time”; the NDEr feels it is one’s True Home**
 - In esoteric traditions: within the spiritual world, one feels oneself to be an eternal spiritual being belonging to the cosmos

NDE Phenomena with Physical Matter

Interactions of physical processes with the NDEr's nonmaterial body

- **Interactions with physical light, sound waves and solid surfaces** (Mays & Mays, 2008)
- **Seeing through physical objects (perception by transparency, described earlier)**
- **Passing through solid walls, generally in an upward movement**
 - A sudden upward attraction seized me up, making me go through all the physical structures of the building, without the slightest difficulty, nor any jolt. (Jourdan, 2011).
- **Sense of resistance, change of density, swishing the NDEr's body**
 - Some NDErs report a slight resistance or change in density in passing through physical objects. (Mays & Mays, 2008).
 - Laszlo felt a “whirl” on his left out-of-body shoulder, like wafting smoke or fog, when a man, running up, passed through his shoulder to reach the car accident. (Personal communication, April 28, 2018).

NDE Phenomena with Physical Matter: Implications

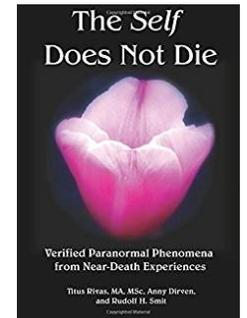
- Subtle interactions with physical forces—with light and the molecular structure of matter (e.g., air, solid surfaces, solid matter)
- NDErs in the 5th dimension easily pass through solid objects, sensing a slight resistance or a change of density
 - This implies a subtle *nonmaterial* interaction with physical matter, like passing one's hand through water
 - In turn, this implies a *new, subtle physical force* that manifests in material-to-transmaterial interactions (Newton's third law of motion)
 - This subtle physical force is probably involved in physical mind-to-brain interactions



NDEs and Consciousness: The Mind-Entity hypothesis ...



- NDE phenomena strongly suggest that the “mind” is a separate part of the human being
 - Sense of separation – absence of pain and prior disabilities
 - Lucid, hyperreal perceptions and thoughts; vivid, indelible memory formation
 - Verified, accurate perceptions: “apparently nonphysical veridical perceptions” (AVPs)
 - Separate mind-entity is objectively real (several verified NDE cases)
- The mind-entity is the *seat of consciousness* of the person
 - All mental functions & capacities are in the mind
 - Out-of-body state: the mind operates independently of the brain and body
 - In-body state: the mind is united and coextensive with brain and body

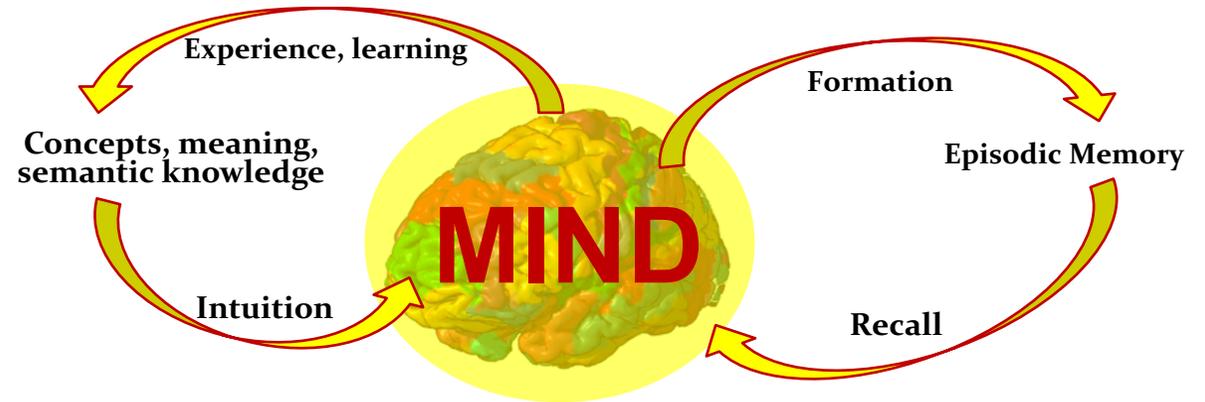


The Self Does Not Die

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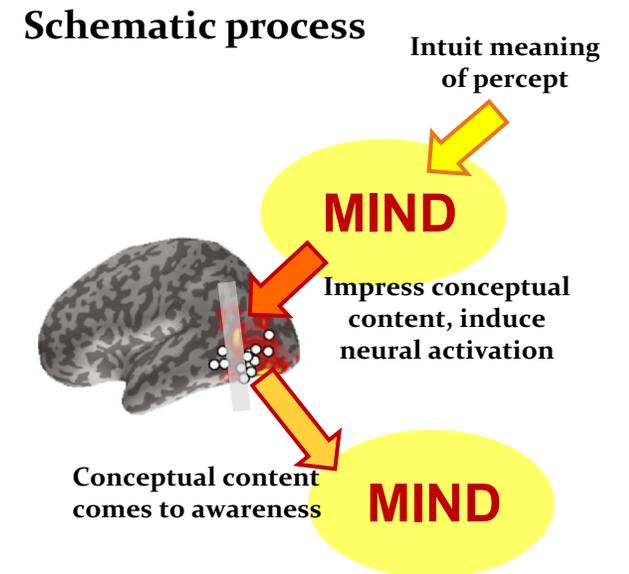
NDEs and Consciousness: The Mind-Entity hypothesis

- All conceptual content and memories reside in the mind, even in ordinary consciousness



- The Mind-Brain interface: from NDE phenomena and neuroscience evidence:

- The mind requires neural activation to become aware of its own mental content (Benjamin Libet, 2004)
- Therefore, the mind must first *impress* its conceptual content on the appropriate brain regions
- The neural activation in those regions acts as a *mirror* bringing the mind's conceptual content to consciousness



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NDEs and Consciousness: Further evidence

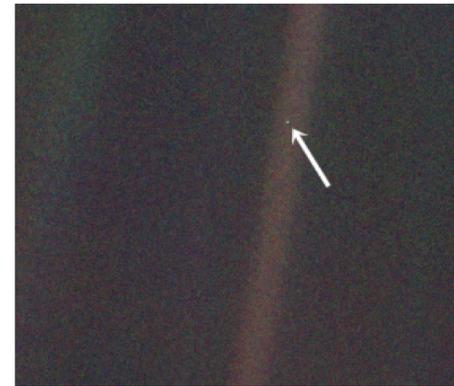
- **The *essential components* of the transcendent realm seem to consist of conscious, individuated *beings***
 - NDEr himself/herself and deceased loved ones
 - **Spiritual beings: guides, angels, religious figures, the Being of Light**
 - **Telepathic communication between beings: mind-to-mind, without speech; with veridical information communicated and later verified**
- **Perceptions of transcendent *objects* appear to be dependent on the observer's inner state of mind**
 - **Transcendent scenes appear to be influenced by the NDEr's expectations and inner state of mind**
 - **Appearances in NDEs seem to adjust to the observer** (e.g., Howard Storm, Mellen Thomas Benedict, May Eulitt)
 - I perceived the way [the assembled beings] looked according to what I preferred for my purposes. ... It was simpler to perceive them in a human form, wearing glowing white robes. (Sudman, 2012, p. 21).
 - **“Things” like buildings, trees, streams, flowers appear to be *thought-creations*: glowing with inner light**
 - Mind is the builder ... For thoughts are things... (Edgar Cayce, 1936, 906-3)
- **The perspective in the life review implies a higher aspect of one's Self than is experienced in ordinary consciousness**
 - We are more than our physical bodies and [our] limited minds. ... We are already that Whole Self, perfect, complete, and ever-changing though we may only be consciously aware of a small portion of ourselves. (Sudman, 2012, pp. 26–27).
 - **In esoteric traditions: the “higher Self,” one's eternal spiritual Self.**

Overall Picture of the Transcendent Realm ...

- The transcendent, “spiritual” realm is a higher dimension than the physical realm’s 3 dimensions + time
 - NDErs’ perceptions of the physical realm are of a *higher order*
 - The *essential elements* of this realm are conscious, nonmaterial beings: deceased human beings and other “spiritual” beings
 - Appearances (objects, scenery) in the transcendent realm are thought-creations, adjusting to the observer
- Relationship of the transcendent realm to the physical universe
 - The transcendent realm includes and contains all space, time and matter of the physical universe, and apparently exists “beyond” physical space
 - NDErs frequently experience a transition beyond the physical realm to the transcendent realm
 - Prayers on Earth are perceived by the NDEr in the transcendent realm as bubbles or sparkles of light rising from below
 - “Spiritual” beings from the transcendent realm appear in the physical realm in spirit visitations, deathbed visions, and after-death communications
 - The laws of the transcendent realm supersede physical laws
 - Accurate veridical perceptions at a distance from the physical body
 - Life reviews present details of life episodes far beyond the NDEr’s actual earthly experience
 - Life previews present precognitive visions later frequently verified as accurate
 - There is a new physical force of interaction between material objects and transmaterial entities
- Theories of consciousness that start from physical phenomena or are reasoned by analogy will not be productive

Overall Picture of the Transcendent Realm

- A bold new theory of reality requires testable hypotheses: e.g., veridical information from the life review
- The common message “It’s not your time. You must return. You have more to do in your life on Earth.”
 - Implies there is a plan and purpose for one’s life: things specifically to be learned, experienced and done
 - Implies that one’s purpose was set before birth and agreed to
 - Implies there are benevolent guiding transcendent beings present throughout one’s life
- The transcendent realm can be viewed as the ground of all existence
 - Complex tapestry of interrelationships, progressing through time in the physical realm, is recorded for all time, and is *built into the fabric* of the transcendent realm
 - Implies the centrality of earthly human experience
 - Carl Sagan derided “[our] delusion that we have some privileged position in the universe ... [where] our planet [is] a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark ... a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.” (Sagan, 1994, pp. 7-8).
 - *On the contrary, we are co-creators with God*: “You humans are truly the heroes,” a Being [of Light] told me, “... because you are doing something that no other spiritual beings have the courage to do. You have gone to earth to co-create with God.” (Brinkley, 1994, p. 57).
- The higher purpose of earthly life
 - Individual development
 - Evolution of humanity
 - Transformation of the Earth



Earth 3.7 billion miles away.
Photo Voyager 1, 1990.