

We Live Forever

THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT DEATH

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When I Died

"When I hear somebody sigh, 'Life is hard,' I am always tempted to ask, 'Compared to what?'"—Sydney J. Harris

I didn't recognize death when I died the first time.

One minute I was standing in front of the toilet staring at a somewhat whitish-looking sac I had just passed. Blood was splattering everywhere while a pain like a hot poker pierced my heart, clamped my gut, and loosed a scream I could not identify as mine. The next minute I was bobbing along the underside of the ceiling, drawn to the light fixture with a bright, switched-on bulb inside. Like a moth to a flame, I would bump that bulb again and again before I paused long enough to look around. The bloody body on the floor meant nothing to me, except for the difference in space relations. Suddenly, it was a long way down to the toilet, sink, and bathtub. How did that happen? How could the ceiling be scarcely an eyelash away?

Never was there darkness. All my faculties were alert, height-



ened. Pain vanished. As I began to question what might be going on, “blobs” formed in the air around me. I didn’t know what else to call these strange shapes. They were dark gray, misshapen things that looked like ink blots, but fully dimensional and buoyant. In nothing flat, the air was full of them. I heard an audible “snap,” then felt myself jerked back into my body like an overstretched rubber band when it’s suddenly released, entering through the top of my head where my “soft spot” had been as a baby and feeling myself shrink in size so that I would once again fit the confines of my physical form. A strong pulling sensation ensured that I made it all the way back in. Back to the pain. Back to the mess.

That’s how my three deaths started—with a miscarriage and a doctor who paid no attention to the symptoms I presented when I collapsed in his office after being barely able to drive the five blocks from my home to his door. Without reading my chart and shaking with laughter that I could be taken advantage of so easily by a man I hardly knew (I was raped), he gave me an injection in my right thigh to stop the hemorrhage and sent me home. The instant I hobbled across my threshold the bleeding stopped but both legs began to hurt, especially the right. In too much pain to think straight, I headed for the bed, propped up my legs with pillows, and went to sleep. Natalie shook me awake the next morning, saying she had called my boss and reported me ill. Both girls left for school; Kelly was long gone—attending a cruise school aboard a square-rigger in the Atlantic Ocean.

I did recognize death the second time.

The specialist who later examined me fixed the cause as a large blood clot that had dislodged in a vein in my right thigh along with the worst case of phlebitis he had ever heard of, let alone seen. He kept saying, “There’s no way you can be alive.” I could not respond. He scribbled out a prescription and sent me home to recover, stating that in his opinion the worst was over and that I should take the drug every four hours around the clock for seven days but remain in bed, legs propped up. The pharmacist warned that I had better eat before each dose or I’d get really sick. No refills were possible; the medicine was labeled “dangerous.”

As I followed the doctor’s instructions, I couldn’t disconnect from

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what had occurred: my long crawl across the length of the ranch-style rental we lived in to reach the only phone we had, a wall phone in the kitchen, so that I could call for help; and the pain in my right leg that was excruciatingly cruel and unrelenting, accompanied by a red-hot lump growing out from the side of my right thigh. With my own fists I smashed that lump so it would go away and leave me alone. But I couldn't have done a worse thing. The lump, as it turned out, was a large blood clot and it burst. I sealed my fate by such foolishness. I died.

Death is a curious thing when you know at the time that you are dying. You gain an astonishing perspective if you are willing to "step aside" as a personality and assume the role of observer. This I did. Here's what followed.

I simultaneously saw and experienced my body as it lay supine, face up, on the dining-room floor, barely three feet from the phone cord—so near. As I lay there, I witnessed myself in spirit form begin to lift. The "pain waves" fascinated me. I mean, as I lifted and floated free from my physical body, I passed through a span of distance, maybe six inches or more, where the pain I felt inside my body was physically manifesting as vibrational waves outside my body. These waves looked for all the world like the mirage you see on a hot summer's day when you're walking on pavement. You think you're seeing a shimmer of water, but what you're really seeing is an illusion created by reflected heat. The pain was severe while I was passing through the waves, but once I floated free of them, presto, no pain. Another illusion.

I floated up to the light fixture, but this time the bulb was not on. I remember laughing about the light fixture, that at least it was different from the one two days before. While I took stock of my situation, I noted how superbright everything was and how much better my faculties worked. I had full mobility, yet I wasn't really free. My physical body had to be totally, utterly dead before I could leave. Don't ask me how I knew that; I just did. So I floated back down to the body on the floor and hovered, studying the body shell I had once inhabited for any hint, any twitch, heave, or nuance that life remained. Nothing. Just to be certain, I lingered a while. Still nothing. When I was satisfied that my body was dead, I yelped for joy.

You cannot compare the concerns that are present on this side of death's curtain with what is encountered on "the other side." At cross-over, priorities and awarenesses switch.

In my own case, my newfound freedom was so glorious, so wonderful, I felt as if I had just been released from a prison term and was at last free to be my complete, authentic self. No more ego personality. No more paying bills or putting up with downtown traffic or counting calories or scrubbing toilets or pleasing my boss or trying to rebuild my life after the failure of a twenty-year marriage. I loved my children, but even they no longer mattered. In the joyous freedom of NOW, where I found myself, all that existed was the truth of my God-created self. I was a soul, and I was on my way "home," and I was filled with ecstasy. Then, from a place that seemed to be above my dining-room ceiling, there appeared a brilliance beyond brilliant, another world in another dimension into which I merged.

I saw and experienced many things while in this place, among them revelations about the power of thought. For example, the gray blobs I had witnessed before I now realized were *raw thought substances*, unshapen because they lacked the focus I could have provided. I discovered that thoughts really are *things*, that thinking a thought produces the energy and the substance needed for it to exist by itself. Even though most thoughts are short-lived, those we put effort into, focus on, or think intensely about become the "climate" or atmosphere we live in. What surprised me was how exact this is: that every thought we think, every emotion we feel, and every deed we do affects those around us whether we are aware of it or not; additionally, the earth, air, water, plants, and animals. We can ignore how powerful thoughts can be or pretend it isn't so and blindly stumble through our lives feeling as if we're either victim or victor or simply a "good enough person." Or we can awaken to the power we have and the responsibility that comes with that power. (I've learned since discovering this to say or think "Cancel/Reject" to "erase" thoughts, words, and feelings I don't mean or have expressed by mistake. I have also learned to face straightaway any "errors" I committed.) Taking charge of your life means just that, on all levels of being—physical, mental, emotional, spiritual.

I was reunited with my loved ones who had died before me, including a grandfather who had passed away soon after his own children were born, and I saw Jesus. Words are insufficient for me to describe the happiness I felt being back with my Elder Brother, hugging Him, dancing with Him, laughing with Him. How could I have ever forgotten His message of love and forgiveness? Asking myself that question triggered my life review. For me, it was a total reliving of every aspect of ever having been alive, and it was overwhelming. I was ashamed of some things, pleased with others. Remembering the teachings of Jesus, I affirmed and knew that I was forgiven for past mistakes and chose to return to my physical body and reactivate it. I was inspired to do a better job with the life I once had. Ever so gently, I floated back on a "carpet" of twinkling light.

When I said I couldn't disconnect from this incident, I mean just that. After receiving the medical care I needed, there I was, back in physical form again, wearing a body that was lying on the sofa, taking drugs, and eating and taking more drugs and stuffing in more food, my daughters coming and going, and all I could do was replay in my mind what had happened as if it were still happening. I wasn't fully back from the experience, and I didn't care.

Life blurred after that. My right leg refused to support weight once I could stand. Pain was constant. My brain no longer worked as it used to, yet somehow I managed to remain employed. Doctors were useless. Drugs only made matters worse. The man who impregnated me came back into my life and asked for my forgiveness. I did forgive him, and then I requested a few moments of his time as I desperately needed someone to listen to my story of what I had encountered on "the other side" of death. I needed to talk. He refused to listen, slamming the door as he left.

I died again. I know that the emotional blow of being refused was at the core of death number three. But how do you measure that? My body shut down; nothing responded. Since I knew that "the other side" was better than this one, I resolved to go there—to stay. Living in the earth plane, as far as I was concerned at that moment, wasn't worth the bother.

This time, after my body fell away and all functions ceased, I floated as a spirit straight up through the ceiling, observing each molecule of matter—ceiling/floor/roof—as I passed by. This was enormously fun! I had no previous concept that ceiling tile, insulation, wood beams, and metal supports were so remarkable in the arrangement of their particles, forms, and construction. It's as if I suddenly had 360-degree, X-ray vision, and I could see everything all at once, inside and outside. After I slipped past the roof, I sped away into the night sky, unburdened, feeling forever free.

Far in the distance a slit opened up in the sky. The slit looked like a "lip of light." I was drawn to it and sucked in by a force field that seemed to emanate from within its contours. At last, I was where I wanted to be: *inside* bliss. What I beheld, though, when I surveyed this light-filled world left me stunned.

Before me loomed two gigantic, impossibly huge masses spinning at great speed and looking exactly like tornadoes. One was inverted over the other, creating an hourglass shape, but where the spouts should have touched there were instead piercing rays of pure, raw power shooting out in all directions. The top cyclone spun clockwise, the bottom counterclockwise, yet there was the presence of *three* directions in the spin of each. Their sides were somewhat bulgy considering the tremendous rate of speed evidenced by the spinning.

I floated at a height about midway in relation to the cyclones, while still faraway from them, suspended in total disbelief. The spectacle was enormous. As I stared at it, I came to recognize my former personality—self in the mid-upper-left section of the top cyclone. Even though my persona was hardly a speck in size, I could see quite clearly who I had once been, and superimposed over this version of me were all my past lives, all my future lives, and what had been my present life—all of it happening at the same time in the same space—simultaneously. Around me was everyone whom I had ever known and around them, everyone else; and the same thing was happening to each and all. I witnessed that the past/present/future were not separate sequences, but rather a multiple hologram interpenetrated by its own reflection (what happened in the top cyclone was duplicated in the bottom one—as above, so below).

The only physical movement anyone or anything made was contraction, or expansion. There was no up or down, right or left, forward or backward. There was only in and out, like breathing, as if the universe and all of creation were breathing—inhale/exhale, contraction/expansion, in/out, off/on, back and forth, motion and rest. Honestly I felt as if I were observing the wave pattern of a giant echo, and I began to question life and its meaning. Was existence really just a series of echoes upon itself, spiraling forever outward from some primeval explosion? A big bang?

As awesome as the sight was, I soon lost interest. I was tired of life and its living, and I was tired of searching for my role in the grander scheme of things. The middle, where the spouts should have touched but didn't, where that powerful, piercing energy was, where those shooting rays originated—that's where I wanted to be.

Instinctively, I knew that the middle was the centerpoint of creation, God's portal. As I moved toward it, I was engulfed by a force that I knew, *I absolutely knew*, was the presence of God. I have no words to describe what happened to me in that presence, except to say that the memory of it still causes me to weep. Instantaneously, I felt as if I knew all things. Yet even more was revealed about the inner workings of creation and consciousness, until it seemed as if I would surely burst from the sheer immensity of the knowledge pouring into me.

At that moment, I heard my son, Kelly. He had returned unexpectedly from Greece three days before and was at the Black Angus Bar that night, tossing a few drinks with his friends as he regaled them with stories of sailing aboard the *Captain Scott*. A year later he explained what happened next. According to Kelly, he had a mug of brew halfway to his lips when he jerked the glass away, jumped from his stool, and yelled, "My mother's in trouble! I have to go home and help my mother!" He ran from the bar and drove away. It was he who discovered my lifeless body in the living room.

To understand what he did next, you should know that John and I raised our children to question authority, search for their own truth, and always check internal guidance before seeking external aid. So, instead of scrambling for a phone, Kelly calmly centered himself within



that wellspring of wisdom deep inside himself (we can all access that core truth) and sought for higher guidance as to what he should do. He said he heard a voice and that voice told him: "Sit opposite the body and start talking. It doesn't matter what you say, just keep talking." He did that. And I "heard" him. His voice caused me to turn from where I was—not his words, but the love in his voice, unconditional love. I knew that that kind of love existed on "the other side," but I didn't know it could be expressed and experienced here, in the earth plane.

You realize that there are times when our children know more than we do. I came back to my body because I wanted to love as Kelly did, unconditionally. I was also infused with a sense of mission. I now knew I had a job to do and I knew what that job was. Much later, I consulted several physicians about the advisability of Kelly's action. They were unanimous in suspecting that had Kelly used the phone and then waited for medics, I would have been too far gone to be resuscitated. Since sound is the last faculty to leave at death, Kelly's voice was the quickest way to reach me and the most certain.

The way back to health was difficult. I had to relearn how to stand, walk, climb stairs, run, see properly, hear properly, tell the difference between left and right, and rebuild all my belief systems. Seven months later I suffered three relapses, one of them was adrenal failure. My blood pressure reading at the time was 60 over 60. I should have been on a slab.

No one could understand why I was getting worse instead of better until friends of mine, along with a doctor devoted to natural healing, all had the same inspiration: take her to some place new that will uplift her spirit. It was early November 1977 and the place selected was the Opera House in Seattle Center. I was medicated, laid in a van, and trucked up to Seattle, Washington, to attend "The Mind Miraculous Symposium." The first speaker "paid" for the trip. He was William Tiller, a physicist at Stanford University, and his topic was "The Eternal Now."

I don't remember much of what he said, except for the end of his talk. He announced that "the eternal now," where the past/present/future existed simultaneously, was a physical reality that could be charted via physics. He then projected on a huge screen that filled the entire



stage a diagram of what he thought “the eternal now” looked like. It was two massive tornadoes inverted over each other in an hourglass shape, and where the two spouts should have touched but didn’t, rays of power shot out in all directions. I jumped from my seat and rushed out of the auditorium, collapsing under a foyer light. I sobbed and sobbed. I wasn’t crazy after all. What I had seen was really, really real. From that moment on, my recovery was assured.

Today, I am no longer the same person I once was. How could I be?