

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

# Mediumship Not a Near-Death Experience Aftereffect, Part 2

To the Editor:

In a previous Letter to the Editor (Atwater, 2019), I objected to using the term “medium” to describe an aftereffect of near-death states. This objection was meant for fellow researchers who might be considering the matter, not for experiencers themselves—especially any who might be having problems dealing with disincarnates. With 44 years of research in this field and authorship of 18 books and six children’s books related to or about near-death research, I have become convinced that seeing, hearing, being contacted by, and/or conversing with “those of other realities” is a typical aftereffect of near-death states for both adults and children—irrespective of how we as researchers may term it.

In their response to my Letter, Ryan Foster and Jan Holden (2019) reminded all of us, especially me, that dictionary.com (n.d.) defines a “medium” as “a person through whom the spirits of the dead are alleged to be able to contact the living.” It is my contention that using this dictionary definition of “medium” could hurt the reputation of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) and affect further near-death research in a negative manner. Already this term is causing stress and fear with experiencers, especially those in the Armed Forces, and with parents of child experiencers. These people hear the word “medium,” and they’re gone—even though IANDS has had excellent mediums speak during annual conferences about what happened to them and how they eventually benefitted from it.

I would like to suggest different terminology. For hundreds of years, maybe thousands, the term “sensitive” was used as a noun to describe one who could “pick up” and experience information, sounds, vibrations, and/or impulses from all around them. Such a person could also receive disembodied voices/visuals, and contacts from other dimensions. Existence to them could and often did possess its own energy field or aura: a sense that everything was conscious, alive, pulsating. This ability could be inborn or learned in a lifelong commitment toward manifesting spirituality in its truest form—usually through training in some type of “mystery school” or from the wise. The idea

that differing skills and abilities beyond what society considers “normal” could ever be classified according to types of “sensitivities” rarely received notice.

In my own work (Atwater, 2011, p. 95), staying true to time-honored traditions, I listed the expansions that typically occur after a near-death experience as *Faculty Extensions*, in this manner:

See/Sight	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —see without use of eyes; research term: clairvoyance <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —vision
Hear/Sound	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —hear without presence of sound; research term: clairaudience <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —music.
Feel/Touch	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —feel, or have an effect on an object, without touching; research term: psychokinesis <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —art
Taste/Flavor	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —flavor without use of tastebuds; research term: clairgustation <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —discernment
Smell/Scent	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —odor without use of nose; research term: clairolfaction <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —integrity
Sense/Intuition	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —aware without or in advance of recognition; research term: clairsentience <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —grace
Perceive/perception	<i>Psychic Extension</i> —apprehend without or in advance of physical stimuli; research term: precognition <i>Collective/Spiritual Extension</i> —knowing

By staying true to my actual research findings, I have been able to avoid what I sense is a “trap” of referring to every extension of a given faculty as another near-death experience (NDE) sensitivity. I prefer to

be more specific. In this manner, the aftereffects of near-death states can be better understood alongside what can later become the path to mediumship, or even what modern dictionaries classify as a “medium.”

Whether or not people agree with how I’ve handled the more amazing or puzzling aspects of near-death aftereffects and the reality of contact being living and dead, the many IANDS support groups across the US and in other countries make a huge difference with near-death experiencers who are now dealing with the varied aspects of what comes afterward—and do this peer to peer. Should counseling be sought, I recommend those therapists and psychologists who have had transpersonal training and are familiar with “transcendent” states. One group, specifically trained for those dealing with unusual or expanded states of consciousness, is American Center for the Integration of Spiritually Transformative Experiences (ACISTE). Seekers can make contact through their website at [www.aciste.org](http://www.aciste.org). On my own website at [www.pmhatwater.com](http://www.pmhatwater.com), Home Page, there is a section called “NDE Aftereffects.” I call it “first-aid” for experiencers. Seekers can go there for tips and inspiration. My book, *A Manual for Developing Humans* (Atwater, 2017), goes that “extra mile” for anyone who wants to develop a more expanded sense of consciousness and lifestyle.

I have attempted here to explain the difference between a sensitive (noun), the many sensitivities that can occur (verb), and what today is referred to as a medium (regarded as separate from mediumship). Although the term “medium” is used more today, I again remind the readers of this *Journal* that many members of the general public still panics when they hear that term. Should it ever become more widely used throughout the various IANDS groups, we could find ourselves involved with having to explain the why of this to the media, as well as to puzzled, perhaps frightened experiencers, who do not understand the difference between modern dictionaries and new abilities (not all of them welcome) that suddenly pop up after an NDE.

## References

- Atwater, P. M. H. (2011). *Near-death experiences, the rest of the story: What they teach us about living and dying and our true purpose*. Hampton Roads.
- Atwater, P. M. H. (2017). *A manual for developing humans*. Rainbow Bridge Books.
- Atwater, P. M. H. (2019). Mediumship not a near-death experience aftereffect [Letter to the editor]. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 37, 56–58. <https://doi.org/10.17514/JNDS-2019-37-1-p56-58>.
- dictionary.com (n.d.). “Psychic” vs. “medium”: Are these synonyms? Retrieved

October 17, 2020, from [https://www.dictionary.com/e/psychic-vs-medium/?itm\\_source=parsely-api](https://www.dictionary.com/e/psychic-vs-medium/?itm_source=parsely-api)

Foster, R. D., & Holden, J. M. (2019). Response to “Mediumship not a near-death experience aftereffect” [Letter to the editor]. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 37, 59–62. <https://doi.org/10.17514/JNDS-2019-37-1-p59-62>.

P. M. H. Atwater, LHD  
[pmh@pmhatwater.com](mailto:pmh@pmhatwater.com)