

Letters To The Editor

Counseling After a Near-Death Experience

To the Editor:

I strongly disagree with Joseph Geraci's statements that "the NDE is not a human experience" and that "the most difficult adjustment [for a near-death experiencer] is being human again" (1987, p. 28).

The phenomenon of an NDE is the experience of a reality or dimension not previously known, or possibly only known about. However, the NDEr is not someone different, greater, or even lesser during the NDE. Research has shown that the NDE expands and raises the consciousness of NDErs; it changes their perception and understanding of reality and of themselves (Moody, 1975; Kelsey, 1982; Greyson and Flynn, 1984). Yet they are, in their constitutional nature and essence, still human *during* and *after* their NDEs.

Every experience a person has registers, at some level, upon the human psyche or soul, whether in or out of the physical body. It is through the psyche that we experience reality or realities. Now this experience of reality varies. The psyche of a 6-month-old infant perceives, experiences, and relates to reality differently than that of a 35-year-old adult. But the infant and adult are human in their constitutional nature, and always will be. As research has shown, at no point during the NDE do NDErs lose awareness of who they are. Their identity going into the experience is not lost afterwards. This is quite different in the case of psychosis or multiple personality disorder.

It is not a question of how a professional counselor, therapist, or anyone else can help an NDEr "be human again." It is a question of how they can help the human NDEr live in this reality or dimension again without giving up or losing the effects of the reality encountered during the NDE.

I fully empathize with Geraci's experience of the NDEr being "subjected to mere curiosity by some and to dissection by others" (1987, p. 28). It is a shame that the majority of the medical and scientific communities still approach the NDE this way. What NDErs do have is

