

I have yet to find that this additional downloading of extra material changes the original scenario. The near-death experience that occurred remains the near-death experience that was reported. Once the individual accepts what happened and arrives at some sense of meaning as to the various issues and implications involved for him or her personally, the narration tends to take on a structure that holds lifelong. This does not preclude the downloading process, nor remembering more later, especially if the individual is a child experiencer.

The Conundrum of the Child Experiencer

In my research with children who had experienced a near-death experience, more than half regretted that it ever happened to them, once they were older. They explained that the incident complicated their life in ways that made growing up a challenge. The majority spoke of being put down or ridiculed by parents, siblings, and friends when they tried to share their story, to the point that they “set it aside” or “tucked it away.” Because of this, many did not really deal with their experience or try to integrate it to any extent until they were in their 20s or 30s, some even later. Memory, then, tended to surface in tiers: what could be useful in childhood, what applied to relationships as they grew, what made a difference as an adult, and what spoke to their heart of hearts in quiet moments of reflection and longing. About a third of the child experiencers in my research were clear about what they experienced and immediately appeared wiser than their years, more mature. The other two-thirds delved into the depths of their memories in steps, especially if their episode happened during birth trauma. Once what was tucked away “burst forth,” they appeared to me as if awakened to a truth they had always known but had somehow forgotten.

This delay in remembering, whether it came in steps or in a sudden “burst,” can seem like an embellishment to someone not familiar with the near-death phenomenon and what is typical of experiencers. This fact concerns me, since some professionals jump to conclusions or do incomplete research. For example, a recent paper published in *New England Journal of Medicine* about electrical stimulation of the brain that induced the appearance of a person outside the body named this illusion an “out-of-body experience,” when all the scientists did was induce autoscopy or the *döppelgänger* effect of projecting one’s image beyond one’s body, which is a feature of shamanistic training

