

# Letters to the Editor

## More on Kenneth Ring's "Swan Song"

To the Editor:

I have read with amusement the banter between Kenneth Ring and various correspondents concerning his supposed retirement from research. Ring's impact on the field of near-death studies precludes and transcends any retirement on his part. His work continues to inspire and challenge virtually everyone in the field, from Buddhist parapsychologist Susan Blackmore to mainstream medical scientists such as German psychiatrist Michael Schroeter-Kunhardt or myself, to reductionistic psychoanalysts such as Russell Noyes or Stuart Twemlow. Few articles on near-death experiences do not reference his work. Virtually every month I receive a phone call from a graduate student stating, "I am working on a research project and Dr. Ring suggested I call you."

In contrast to Vincent Luciani, I would be intensely interested in any book written by Ring. I have read *The Omega Project* (Ring, 1992) three times and have learned something each time. The insights I gained from reading that book have served as the basis for most of my own theoretical insights into death-related visions and their implications for consciousness research. Once we recognize that dying experiences are only one element of a wide range of healthy and unhealthy mental dissociative processes, we suddenly understand the links between dying experiences and the experiences of those in spiritual crises as diverse as child abuse or multiple personality disorder. This insight is one of the most powerful understandings useful in helping healthcare professionals to use spiritual visions to empower the dying and heal the grief of the living.

Luciani (1995) has challenged me to report conclusive evidence in support of his contention that every person who has survived a near-death experience receives a spiritual mandate of some sort. I sympathize with his desire to control the outcome of scientific studies and produce conclusions that conform to his world view. Unfortunately, near-death studies are clearly paradigm-shattering and challenge our preconceived spiritual and intellectual world views. The



