

To the Editor:

I thoroughly enjoyed the latest issue of the Journal that featured an article by Keith Augustine with subsequent comments by near-death researchers. I have some additional comments as a near-death experimenter, a clinician, and former researcher in the field of near-death studies.

When I interviewed near-death experiencers back in the early days of the research in the late 1980s, I sometimes heard experiencers tell me about a collection of three books called *A Course in Miracles* (1975). They would say things like, "These books have come from the same place we've been," or, "This Course understands what we were shown and couldn't bring back."

Like other near-death experiencers, I would not look at any book that attempted to explain where I had been. I did not want anything to "muddy the waters" of my memory of the most profound moments of this lifetime. I resisted looking at *A Course in Miracles* until years later, when I found these books literally landing in my lap in a profound, though not paranormal, way. And I agree that the Course does come from where I had been and it does spell out what I learned in my life review but could not articulate back then. But now I can, because of the Course, and have co-authored a book (Whitfield, Whitfield, Jyoti, and Park, 2006) and have another one in process that are products of the psychology of *A Course in Miracles* and of my life review in my near-death experience 32 years ago.

In a nutshell, what I learned in my experience, specifically my life review, and what the Course teaches, is that the life review "is a final healing in which we separate out our holy thoughts from our insane thoughts, choosing to retain only the former" (Perry, 2007, p. 363). As the Course says:

You who believed that God's Last Judgment would condemn the world to hell along with you, accept this holy truth: God's Judgment is the gift of the Correction He bestowed on all your errors, freeing you from them, and all effects they ever seemed to have. (*A Course in Miracles*, 1975, *Workbook Part II*.10.3.1, cited in Perry, 2007, p. 363)

Of course, coming back here into this body with this mind, it was not that easy. I knew deep in my "soul" all that knowledge of "holy" thoughts and their differentiation from "insane" thoughts needed years and some good psychotherapy to percolate before I could start to awaken from the dream I was living in this life time.

I do not believe that any one group, scientific or otherwise, will ever come to definite conclusions about near-death experiences. But to clinicians who accept and use them to help their clients grow, and to NDErs like me whose path totally changed after the experience, this knowledge is the true fruit of the NDE. And it is the bottom line of what we have learned. *A Course in Miracles* validates over and over that we are dreaming our lives; that this whole physical plane is a dream; and that what you believe will happen, will happen – until we wake up and realize that heaven and hell are right here, right now. It is all what we choose to project.

To illustrate the above point, in 1988 I was a guest on the “Larry King Live” television show as an expert on the near-death experience (NDE). Without telling me, they brought in a neurologist from the University of Maryland who was a specialist in death and dying. He negated my experience and my research and, no matter how I tried to explain the aftereffects of an NDE and how promising they are for personal growth, he continued to be negative. During the last commercial, when our microphones were off, I leaned over and said to him, “When you die, you will see for yourself that these things do happen.” He answered, in a sad voice, “No, nothing good ever happens to me!”

So, what he believes will happen, will happen. And, for all the authors of all the articles evaluating the “scientific validity” of the NDE, I ask only one thing: Do not throw the baby out with the bath water! Believe that it changes people for the better, because it does.

References

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- Whitfield C., Whitfield B., Jyoti, and Park R. (2006). *The power of humility*. Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications.

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