



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Shamans, Visions and Ghosts: Exploring spiritual and Religious Experiences

Prof Bettina E. Schmidt

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

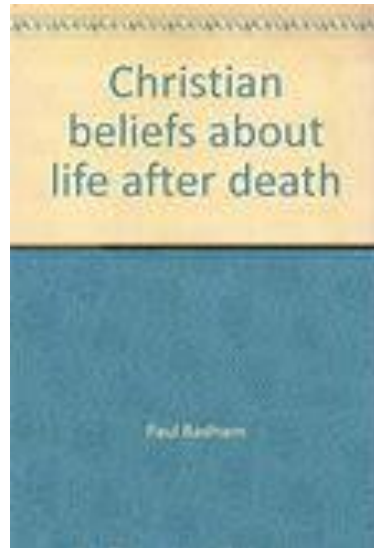


www.uwtsd.ac.uk

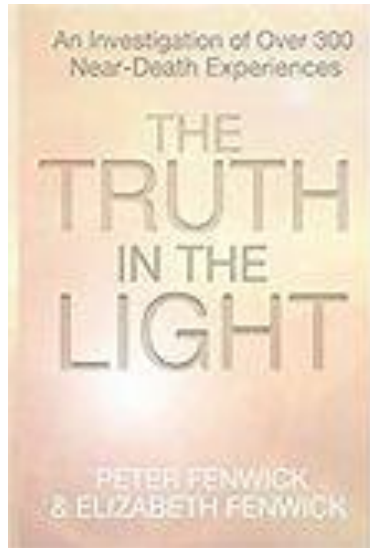
Near Death Experience

- Sub-category of religious and spiritual experience
- Refers to an experience when someone was close to death or experienced a short-time medical death
- Research by Paul Badham, Penny Satori, Peter Fenwick and others

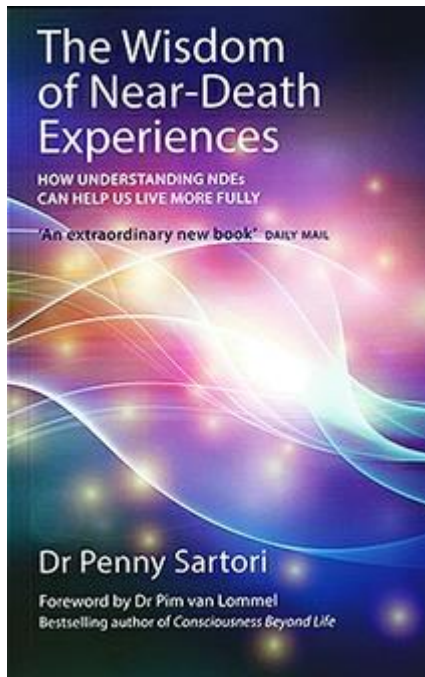
Paul Badham



Peter Fenwick



Penny Sartori



Dr Penny Sartori



Near-Death
Experience
Expert

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Experiences close to Death

- Deathbed visions / end of life experiences
- Empathic / shared death experiences
- Control over the time of death
- Terminal Lucidity
- After death communications (ADCs)
- Near-Death Experiences (NDEs)

Near Death Experiences

- Most widely researched spiritually transformative experiences
- Occur unexpectedly
- Accelerated phase of the dying process
- Access a deep altered state of consciousness
- Transcendental
- Often gain information not detectable by the senses

Components of NDE

- Hearing the news of being near death
- Life review
- Out of body experience
- Tunnel and light experience
- Feelings of peace and calm
- Beautiful gardens

(cont)

- Meeting deceased relatives or friends
- Meeting a “Being” of light
- Telepathic communication
- Barrier or point of no return
- Coming back
- Transformation

Distressing experiences

- Appr. 14% NDEs are frightening
- Categorised by Bush & Greyson (1992) as:
 - 1) Prototypical NDE interpreted as frightening
 - 2) The void experience
 - 3) Hellish

Impact of NDR on people

- No fear of death
- More tolerant of others / altruistic
- More loving / compassionate
- No longer materialistic
- Status no longer of importance
- Become more spiritual
- Feelings of interconnectivity (life review)

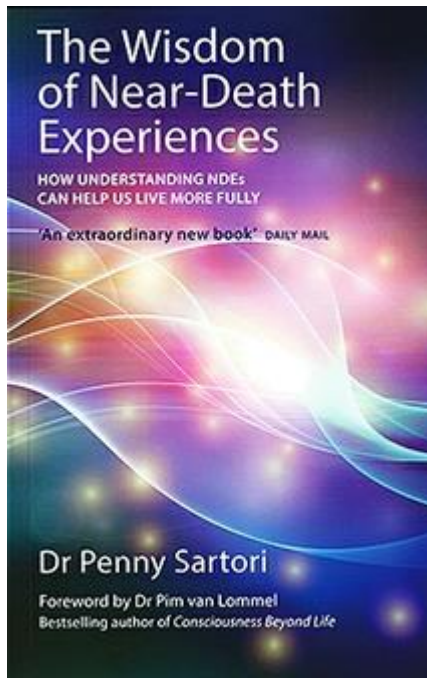
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- Electrical sensitivity
- Become more psychic
- Healing ability
- Huge psychological boost
- High divorce rate
- Acquisition of impossible knowledge

Verification?

- Many cases are reported anecdotally
- Is there a way to check on their reports?
- -> research by Peter Fenwick, neuropsychologist, and Penny Sartori, who worked as a nurse before embarking on PhD on NDE (supervised by Paul Badham)

Penny Satori (2008)



- A Five Year Prospective Study of Near-Death Experiences in a Welsh Intensive Therapy Unit (2008)
- <http://www.drpenneysartori.com/>

- Aim of the study:
 - What is the frequency of NDEs / OBEs?
 - Are NDEs the same as hallucinations?
 - Is the NDE due to:
 - drugs administered?
 - anoxia?
 - hypercarbia?

Can OBE be verified?

- Symbols / pictures on monitors
- Could only be viewed from out of body perspective
- Above head height
- Brightly coloured
- Concealed behind ridges

Frequency of NDE

- 15 NDEs during the five year data collection
- 2 of these were distressing
- Patient 10 remarkable and unique case
- 2 end of life experiences

Case study

- 60-year-old male, emergency surgery
- During unconsciousness reported:
- OBE – accurately reported the actions of the doctor, nurse and physiotherapist
- Meeting deceased relatives and Jesus-like figure
- Healing of a congenital abnormality

Findings (based on Satori)

- Not due to the drugs
- Not due to abnormal blood levels
- NDEs are under-reported
- NDEs are not wishful thinking
- NDEs are different to hallucinations

Conclusions (based on Sartori)

- Current science cannot explain NDEs
- Research is showing that NDEs can no longer be explained away
- To ignore NDEs is detrimental to future patient care
- Science must be revised and expanded
- Future prospective research on a large scale is paramount to further the understanding of NDEs, consciousness, death and LIFE