



Commentary on Newsweek. Published March 1, 2021, Near-Death Experiences Can Transform a Person in Seconds Says Scientist, by Aristos Georgiou Science and Health Reporter

Benjamin Scherlag*

University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, USA

***Corresponding author:** Benjamin Scherlag, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA.

Received: 📅 March 07, 2024

Published: 📅 March 15, 2024

Commentary

Newsweek. Published March 1, 2021, Near-Death Experiences Can Transform a Person in Seconds Says Scientist by Aristos Georgiou Science and Health Reporter

People who come close to death often report remarkable experiences, that have long been dismissed by the medical profession.

Dr. Bruce Greyson, a specialist in psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences at the University of Virginia-and one of the world's leading experts on near-death experiences-has been studying these strange phenomena for more than four decades.

Newsweek spoke to Dr Greyson about his work and what people's reports of near-death experiences (NDEs) reveal about the nature of life, death and consciousness. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Dr Greyson: I study near-death experiences, which are profound experiences people have on the threshold of death-or when they are in fact pronounced dead-that includes things like leaving the physical body, going to some apparently other realms, having a life review, encountering other entities that they interpret as deceased loved ones or deities, feeling overwhelming peace and well-being, and eventually coming back to life or being told to come back to life, and then being forever changed afterwards.

Do we know how common these kinds of experiences are?

It's difficult to know, because a lot of people are not willing to talk about these experiences. But research in the U.S., the U.K. and various countries in Europe has generally suggested that they occur in about between 10 and 20 percent of people whose hearts stop, which amounts to about five percent of the general population.

Do people who have had NDEs experience profound changes in their lives afterwards?

Definitely. As a psychiatrist, this is the most fascinating aspect to me because I make my living trying to help people change their lives. That's very difficult to do. But here's this experience that in a few seconds, can totally transform someone's attitudes, values, beliefs, and behavior. They typically make people more spiritual if I can use that word. They make them more compassionate, more caring, more altruistic, and they become much less interested in physical things-in material goods, in power, prestige, fame, competition.

This does not go away with time. I've talked to people in their 90s, who had the experience as teenagers, and they say it's like it happened yesterday-that they've never been able to go back to their old life. This is often a comfort to them, but often it can be a problem as well. I've seen marriages break up because the spouse couldn't tolerate the change. I've seen career military people or policemen who could not tolerate the idea of hurting someone after their near-death experience change careers. I've seen cut-throat businessman who decided that competition was silly after a near-death experience change careers. And they typically go into helping professions-medical care, teaching social work, or clergy, something like that.

When I first heard about the effects of near-death experiences and people kept telling me that they're no longer afraid of dying, I started getting worried that NDEs would make people more suicidal. So, I actually did a study of patients who had made suicide attempts. And I compared those who had a near-death experience as a result of the attempt with those who didn't. And what we found

out was that those who had a near-death experience were much less suicidal than those who didn't have an NDE.

When I asked them why that was, they said that when you lose your fear of death, you also lose your fear of life. Because you're not afraid of losing everything, you're not afraid of taking chances and living life to the fullest. And it makes life much more meaningful, and much more fulfilling. They realize in the NDE that they're not actually individuals, but they're part of something much greater than themselves. So that the problems that they had, which are still there are no longer seen in the same perspective. And they see these problems not as something to run away from, but to try to learn from and grow from.

Near-Death Experience (NDE) as Therapy Benjamin Scherlag, PhD

Dear Dr Greyson,

I recently read your article in Newsweek on the transformative aspects of the Near-Death Experience (NDE) in numerous subjects. For many years I have been proposing to local state and federal officials among others, the development of a City of Refuge similar to that described in the Bible. In the event that two people have an unwitnessed fight in which one dies, the survivor would be confined to a type of prison city for protection from those who would seek revenge or would isolate that person from harming others. How would the almost always altruistic transformations of NDE individuals, as described by Dr Greyson, be connected to the major societal problem of crime and criminality particularly in dealing with criminals facing capital punishment or life in prison. The inner tier of the walled city would be inhabited with persons convicted of the worst crimes under the strict control of patrolling guards. They would be encouraged to live normal lives with facilities and responsibilities of regular citizens. But how could society go beyond such rehabilitative goals and achieve redemption of the souls of those individuals who have committed even the most heinous crimes?

A medically administered program based on the voluntary participation of the inmate would consist of administration of controlled death in order to induce the NDE and its transformative effects. A form of controlled death is practiced in hospital throughout

the world when patient with informed consent chose to have an implantable cardioverter defibrillator procedure. As part of that procedure, a terminal event is induced, that is fibrillation of the patient's heart, in order to determine the level of electrical shock that would be required to restart the heart.

In the case of the inmate, modifications of this procedure, e.g., the period of time during which the person is clinically dead could be instituted. Of course, the individual's narrative, when queried, after the procedure would be carefully evaluated by trained medical and psychological staff. Such determinations as to the eventual return to normal society would be made by different agencies. It should be noted that those inmates with appropriate responses would be eager to indemnify the families of the persons they murdered by the work they do within the City of Refuge. There is another important aspect to this proposal beyond the potential for the redemption of souls within whom the evil inclination has acted out but has now been brought under control. In the book, "The Unquiet Dead," by Edith Fiore, she discusses demonic possession as a dire problem that has not attracted enough attention of the medical and psychological community. What also has not been researched has been how and where these demonic spirits originate. Dr. Fiore, surmises that when some evil people die or are executed, they use free will to resist the natural sequence detailed in the NDE. Rather than facing the heavenly review panel, they choose to remain in the ambient environment seeking souls weakened by alcoholism or other debilitating depressive states in order to resume their evil in another's body. The acceptance of such a hypothesis would make the case against the death penalty and for the redemption protocol of controlled death chosen by remorseful evil souls. Would this new approach to crime and criminality, whose solution has eluded humankind since its beginning, now be addressed so as to at least be finally mitigated?

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

To Submit Your Article Click Here:

[Submit Article](#)

DOI: [10.32474/LOJMS.2024.06.000245](https://doi.org/10.32474/LOJMS.2024.06.000245)



Lupine Online Journal of Medical Sciences

Assets of Publishing with us

- Global archiving of articles
- Immediate, unrestricted online access
- Rigorous Peer Review Process
- Authors Retain Copyrights
- Unique DOI for all articles