

# Getting Comfortable With Near-Death Experiences



## My Unimaginable Journey: A Physician's Near-Death Experience

by Jean Renee Hausheer, MD

**I was forever changed by this experience. I was thrilled to have felt the wonder and beauty of the amazing love-light source that awaits us beyond the darkness here on earth. The transition and the Source are quite peaceful, natural, inviting, and comforting.**



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**D**uring the summer of 1977, at age 20, I experienced an extraordinary and transcendent event. I have come to understand that it is best described as a “near-death experience (NDE).” The insights of my brush with death altered my understanding of the meaning and purpose of life, forever extinguished my fear of death, and confirmed the ineffable wonder and joy of an afterlife.

The series of articles on near-death experiences in *Missouri Medicine* address an important topic that has been sadly neglected in the medical literature and, for the most part, ignored by medical schools and the physicians they train. Accordingly I have chosen to go public and share my NDE with the *Missouri Medicine* readership.

### The Events That Lead To My Near Death Experience

My family and most of our friends love open water. Many glorious summers involved sun-drenched days and cool starry nights at Lake Pomme de Terre. Activities included swimming, fishing, water-skiing, and racing over the glassine green water in our powerboats.

Summer was always a wonderful break from the rigor and stress of academics. In 1975, upon graduation from Truman High School, at the age of 17, I had entered the six year program at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Medicine. Academics were rigorous and physically demanding. We went to school eleven months per year for six consecutive years. The first two years’ basic sciences dominated the curriculum. Clinical rotations started the third year. Although I was robust and vigorous, my parents carefully monitored my physical and emotional health mindful of my young age and the stress that my studies and clinical work created.

Their concerns seemed justified in the summer of 1977 when, at the lake with my family, I developed what seemed to be a rather ordinary upper respiratory infection. My physician father (obstetrics-gynecology) had me rest and use a decongestant for my runny nose.

On a Saturday, two weeks after the onset of my ‘cold,’ I returned to UMKC to take an all-day standardized multiple-choice exam. Our entire class took these tests quarterly. In the first hour, unexpectedly and unexplainably, I developed very troubling intermittent double vision. With considerable difficulty, I completed the exam by shutting one eye then the other. By the time I completed the test, the diplopia was constant and bilateral ptosis was evolving. I called my father to report my difficulty. He was sufficiently alarmed to send me directly to an emergency room. Dad met me at the Independence Sanitarium Hospital (now renamed Independence Regional Hospital). Meanwhile he arranged for a stat neurological consultation. My mother developed multiple sclerosis at the age of 36. My father and I both wondered if this could be the first manifestation of MS in me at age 20.

I drove to the hospital with one eye closed, where I was examined by a hastily assembled team of physicians. They decided to admit me. I was developing additional neurological deficits including severe bilateral upper lid ptosis. This situation continued to progress over the next several days with a descending paralysis. My physicians narrowed the diagnosis to two possibilities: a Jacksonian variant of Guillain–Barre Syndrome or myasthenia gravis.

As the paralysis advanced, I developed severe respiratory distress as part of the descending paralysis. Breathing became an exhaustive activity. Because of this dire situation I was sent to the pulmonary department

for testing. They performed a physostigmine challenge. Unfortunately, the amount I received was an overdose of medication. Precipitously I was in iatrogenic acute respiratory failure.

**My Near Death Experience**

I just quickly slipped away as if in a dream. The last thing I heard was the therapist calling ‘code blue.’ Immediately prior to departing my body I recall telling her I just couldn’t breathe anymore; it was just too hard and difficult.

I saw, as if from above and apart, like watching a television drama, emergency resuscitation efforts frantically start over my body laying on the floor. I

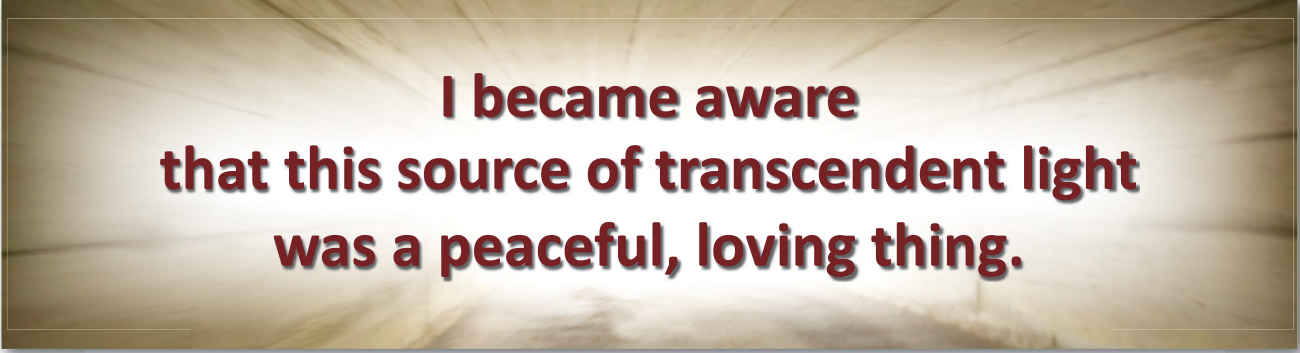
viewed the frenetic activities around my dying body with detached interest. My essence, my soul, my consciousness, my being, my spirit - whatever the non-corporeal quintessence of being should be called - was at peace and serene. Now I had no need for a physical body. Matter and gravity were no longer barriers to movement. Ahead emerged a wondrous, brilliant ball of the unimaginably whitest light from which emanated perfect love and peacefulness. Despite its infinite luminosity, the light was pleasing and caused my eyes no discomfort or photophobia.

As I departed, there was never recognition that what lay below was my dying body. It was not a part of me and the surrounding medical drama was not my concern. It seemed natural to disregard, and rapidly, leave the limp form behind.

This radiant ball of loving light initially appeared at a distance and rapidly surrounded my soul during my journey. The light sourced from a beautiful central ball-like brilliance that far exceeded that of diamonds. I became aware that this source of transcendent light was a peaceful, living, loving thing. From it originated the most tremendous transference of pure love and



The author Jean Renee Hausheer, MD and her father Herman J. Hausheer, MD upon her graduation from University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine in 1981. Dr. Hausheer’s near-death experience occurred in 1977 while she was a medical student.



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acceptance, far beyond human imagination. Very naturally and effortlessly, I was drawn to this living ball of loving light. As I moved towards the light the quicker it surrounded and insinuated itself within my soul. The love source and my soul merged within the light. We become one and the same.

Twice during this rapidly occurring experience, I realized my earthly body was dying and the loving light field was my soul's destination. Being only 20 years old, each time I thought about dying young, I could only think of one word: "No." As quickly as I would think this to myself, the movement to the light would halt like being suspended mid-thought. During each of these two 'episodes of choice' there was a sharp contrast between this ball of living, loving light and the darkness from where I came on earth. The decision of whether to return to my life on earth or move towards and into the light was very difficult for me. It fascinated me that I felt I was being provided choice.

This living ball of light that emanated amazing amounts of the purest love totally surrounded me. Who I am and who this source of light was became one and the same. It was a welcoming home, as if the loving light source was now whole again, and so was I. Analogous to merging two mists into one. The darkness from where I originated and its unpleasant feelings were totally gone. The second time I said, "No," I felt that I was being given a choice to proceed on or to return back to the darkness here on earth. The process halted again on the second decision point I was provided. A voice spoke to me. The voice wasn't male or female, was audible and came from within this amazing living ball of lighted love. The voice surrounded me. The voice said directly to me, "Don't worry. It's not your time yet. Return!"

Faster than my journey to the ball of living, loving

light, I suddenly awoke on a respirator in the intensive care unit at the Independence Hospital. I could see and hear all these people busy scurrying around trying to save me. I could hear them talking about how they noticed I was waking up. They were concerned that I would need emergent cardio-pulmonary resuscitation again. Of course I now had first-hand information; I knew I was going to survive. The voice had powerful lasting meaning and finalized my continued earthly existence.

Once I got my hands on pen and paper, I wrote out an explanation to my father of my near-death experience. I told him that I knew I was going to be fine and my life was no longer in danger from this illness. I now knew my purpose here on earth was yet to unfold. Now was not my time to die. My father observed how happy I looked. There was no wiping the smile off my face. I was at total peace.

I spent the next month in intensive care working hard to recover from this post-viral Jacksonian variant of Guillain-Barre syndrome. It took me a year to recover, including relearning how to walk and build strength and endurance back to normal. Over time my diplopia cleared. In spite of doubts about my ability to return to medical school, I was able to graduate with my class in spite of missing many classes.

### **How This Near-Death Experience Has Changed My Life**

I was forever changed by this experience. I was thrilled to have felt the wonder and beauty of the amazing love-light source that awaits us beyond life here on earth. I believe and choose to call this love-light source God. I will never again fear death for myself or others.

I've thought a lot, but talked little, about my NDE experience over the years. I share with you this conclusion. In the act of dying we are offered the opportunity of accepting and joining the ineffable light of pure and unconditional love. I've heard people concerned about the death of loved ones who didn't have a relationship with God. They fear their loved one traveled to eternal darkness. Because of what I experienced, my view differs on this topic. At the time of transition from 'here to there,' I was allowed to choose to be one with this peaceful loving ball of amazing light. At the time, I was a Christian, and had a building and growing relationship with God, but was still a greenhorn novice by all means.

October 10, 1993, I was privileged to suddenly and unexpectedly be at the bedside of my dying father, as he experienced an evolving myocardial infarction and severe cardiogenic shock. His face indicated immense pain and fear (probably worried about leaving our mom more than anything else). He was fighting for his life. I told him I loved him and would always take care of mom for him. I said I would miss him very much. While his ailing heart was still beating, his face changed to an expression of total peace and comfort. That's when I knew his essence had transitioned away from his body. I looked upward, waved good-bye, blew a kiss and told him again I loved him. The medical staff took his 'living' body with a beating heart to the cardiac cath lab where they later pronounced him dead. I knew differently. I sensed and knew exactly when his spirit left his body.

I have been with a number of other family members and patients at the time of their deaths. I have seen their faces suddenly become peaceful with all pain and anguish gone. I know what they are experiencing. I know fully where they are traveling. I've been inclined to look up and wave goodbye to them. I am certain they'll choose to be one with the peaceful loving ball of light.

### The Unfolding of My Purpose in Life

I am profoundly grateful I was given an opportunity to return to this earthly existence. My life is full and



Dr. Hausheer is grateful for the opportunity to return to life on earth after her near-death experience. She is shown with husband Jim Meyer and their family.

rich with many blessings. I went on to internship and ophthalmology residency at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine in Rochester Minnesota. I returned to Kansas City where I practiced from 1986 through 2011. I'm a healthy, happy 57-year-old practicing ophthalmologist. I have two amazing children and four stepchildren, each happily married to wonderful people. My husband Jim Meyer and I are the blessed as grandparents of five grandsons and one granddaughter. My near death experience allowed me to feel, see, and experience the profound joy when our soul post-death becomes one with the source of all love, peace, and light.

It is indeed an amazing journey to restoration with God the Father, who is the source of all light, love, and peace. Walls and ceilings have no boundaries to us beyond earth. Our bodies are not necessary beyond earth and are irrelevant after death. Our spiritual essence while here on earth is what really matters. Nevertheless, we should take good care of our assigned bodies in our earthly journey. As physicians we serve in a noble profession working to maintain or restore physical and mental health to our patients.

I look forward to again meeting God the Father and my earthly father someday. What a wonderful reunion this will be.

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