More comment on NDEs

Julia, this corresponds to what I have just been reading- Nothing Better Than Death by Kevin Williams. He has a Christian background and though  his thought has been quite changed by his research on NDEs he, as many others do, still brings in the old story themes to explain and interpret what he is seeing. The old payback, conditions theology. It ruins the brilliance of unconditional love. Despite this there are many good insights and experiences recounted in this book.

Overall, this is a good illustration of how persistent the themes of the old story are in human consciousness and how they shape the perspectives of many including those having these NDEs.

Williams starts out and maintains a strong emphasis on the centrality and primacy of love. He even notes, in places, the unconditional nature of divine love. But then he includes varied NDEs that show another picture with conditions, special benefits and stages and levels for the more advanced. Requirements, payback and so on. This stuff is so deeply ingrained in us. And I sense a darkening every time I read it. A disappointment, an uncomfortableness.

We just don’t get the scandal of Jesus. Bob pointed to this in the JBA Scandal series. It is the most brilliant insight into love. It is the core light of divinity. It is scandalous and offensive and shocking and unnatural. So we react just as the older brother did in the Prodigal story. And just as the vineyard workers did in that parable. I worked all day hard and did what was right, so surely common sense and common conventional justice means that I should get a higher position, a higher level of reward, special favours and treatment. Those who ‘wasted’ their lives should get less, some lower level, some lower position, less benefits and reward, less attention. Some sort of payback.

But then with the Jesus tradition in mind and this scandalous generosity and love, this unconditional love, imagine a better reality without levels dividing people,  without punishment and payback and ‘just’ consequences. With real unconditional love and freedom for all. Real equality. If we can imagine such and our spirits tug us to see this, then the reality must be infinitely better than the best unconditional love that we can imagine. Karen Armstrong’s incomprehensible God leads me to such conclusions. Divine love is far better than the best we can even begin to imagine. So I reject all this darkness even from those who claim they saw it in the beyond. They are just projecting their own payback darkness onto something infinitely better.

Williams even makes these comments about the experiences he recounts- “We create our own surroundings by the thoughts we think”. Yes, we do. Minds don’t automatically change on the death transition, there is still learning, insights to be made, growth, development and progress to come. Life is always dynamic and rising ever more.

So I go with the brighter NDE experiences as getting closer to truth about love and God. That is what Jesus held onto despite the darkness all around him- darkness of human minds seeing dark things. He saw a great light and he knew what the brilliance of that light was. And he held fast to that, centering fiercely on it. It kept him going through all the darkness preached by so called greater sages around him, including John the Baptist. So even with many claiming NDEs, just like Paul, I challenge their NDEs if they fall short of presenting the brilliant light and love that some do, the light of unconditional, scandalous, shocking love and generosity.

Jesus appeared to have gotten it. And this may be the thing that is the breakthrough insight that shakes to the very core all this dark mythology that reinforces violence and lovelessness among humanity. I sense we still have work to do to finish our missions here, to get this story clear and share it with others. My thing throughout life, and I have just been getting more clarity on it as I have been reading this NDE research this past year, is to encourage others, to say it will be all right. I have always felt this way. Not perfectly consistently every moment, but in moments that matter in life, in the crunch. To reassure others not to fear or worry, things will work out, it will get better. So maybe this is my mission through this new story. To give hope.

And I affirm Bob’s last day wish. I would hope people around me would laugh and party and play. And I hope to  have some good jokes ready for that time. Grave humour type jokes. Like the famous artist who said, “Either this wall paper goes or I do”, and then he breathed his last. The wallpaper won. Ha. Laughing in the very face of death. The old monster is toothless.

Bill, I feel with you on this, most of us have struggled with this sense of not being good enough. Imperfection. High standards. Unworthiness.

Unconditional love brings such light and hope to alleviate this sense of lacking and not being good enough. So when I read these comments about love at our very core, that we are all beings that are most essentially light and love, something inside resonates profoundly. What a basis for a new view of humanity, for a new human psychology, a new basis of self-acceptance or self-affirmation. Not the old sinful self theology we were brought up in. Taught to hate our very essence as evil, something to be rejected.

And it appears that people are met just where they are in their thinking- if it is Christian, then they see Jesus in terms of traditional Christian beliefs. There appears to be no sudden coercion or overwhelming of the human person. Just slow and gradual persuasion.

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**Subject:** Re: Smith NDE

I like this one.  I had that same realization, that I was at my core, love.  I believe this is how God sees us.   I've always had trouble with the fear that I was not good enough for God.  That's probably because I was the son of a military man with an authoritarian way.

Now after my NDE I know that simply isn't the case.   The spark of God dwells in us, and its that hope, that connection, that has pushed mankind forward in the darkest of moments, in spite of all oppression, that God has the final say in our lives.   Freedom is truly the gift of God, not some moment of kindness by political government.

That expansion of conscience beyond the sides of your head was such a heady experience for me.  My mind could think so clearly, so rapidly, and it seemed there was no question I could ask for which I would not receive an answer.    I only wish I could have remembered more of it after I got sent back.  But I reckon I remembered the important part.

I did not get to the part where she speaks of a garden, I was sent back before that.  That part seems to be very specific to the culture and upbringing of the person.  I've read stories of US Marines who were met by color guards on the other side...whatever is appropriate to the mind  of the person at the moment is what I think happens...as long as it calms them and reassures them that they are safe.

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     William Ferguson
Just a comment on Kevin Williams book Nothing Better Than Death. Its not a great read though it has some interesting comments here and there. Not the quality of a Ring or Lommel.

Williams starts with such promise: “The NDE reveals the true meaning of life and it is this: we are here to learn to love...learning to love is what life is all about...Love is the power holding all things in the universe together. Love is where we came from and love is where we will return. Love is the law of the universe”

Williams is a former fundamentalist pastor who has shifted to universalism. Admirable transition he’s made. But still a lot of the old theology in his comments- speaking of unconditional love in one sentence then a few sentences later of varied conditions. He notes Jesus’ gospel of unconditional love and Paul’s comment on love- that love keeps no record of wrongs but then he will note something later like repeated reincarnations are required to pay back karmic debts and receive karmic rewards. If we don’t overcome certain problems then we have to reincarnate until we do. We must pass the test called life and make the grade. This seems somewhat typical of Christian understanding- that love is unconditional yet this unconditional is embedded within a strong payback or conditions orientation. A theology of conditions, grades, earned levels, reap what you sow, and so on. Hard to square with the scandalous generosity noted in Jesus’ statements and stories (parables).

Where he offers some helpful insight is in regard to so-called negative or hellish NDEs. Here he argues that things appear to people according to what they need to see and this has to do with their belief systems.  People are met where they are in their understanding. Hence some see Jesus, some see Buddha or Lord Shiva. People are not rushed out of their beliefs until they are ready to abandon fantasies that are illusions. He says NDEs  happen in a manner that helps people learn. And the NDE, he says, may be just an initial phase of the death experience that is transitory and preparatory, where people face their illusions in order to teach them important lessons about themselves. Just as witnesses seeing the same thing come up with quite different testimonies.

So in hellish NDEs he argues these too are transitory as there is no hell but this is an illusion, a belief that people hold and that they need to be relieved of. He says, everyone is unique and everyone experiences the world in a way that is unique to anyone else in the universe. In a realm of mind people create their own reality. “What a person experiences can be attributed to many factors: the experiencer’s psychology, personal experiences, background and culture...at death people carry all their perspectives and religious biases with them. So he concludes any hellish afterlife experience is just temporary and serves to teach some experiencers something before they progress into the same love all others experience.

Some interesting comment here. And some interesting NDEs such as Joni Maggi’s. She felt the most overwhelming love that cannot be compared to anything here on earth. A welcome home. She realized “There is nothing worth worrying about. Not even death...it is like waking up, you let go of sleeping consciousness and find yourself in our recognized reality. It was an incredible feeling of peace to know there is no death”.

So Williams tries to wrap up somewhat positively what with all his conditions theology- “Life is God- the eternal consciousness dwelling in all things. All things are made of light- the energy that can neither be created or destroyed. This light is God. The source of all  things is love- the power holding everything together. This love is God...life, love and light are God. This definition includes everything. Such a definition also means the concept of God is totally unfathomable”.

The most important thing he has learned from his study of NDEs- “(there are varied aspects)...Love is one of them, and the most profound...love is what life is all about. Love is where we all came from. Love is where we will all eventually return. Learning and growing in love is why we are alive. Life is God. Love is God....All things come from love and all things are held together by love...everyone has a destiny to fulill and a mission to complete...The NDE reveals God to be of infinite love and mercy beyond human comprehension”