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Three Transformational Experiences— Part 1
Advertising Opportunity
While you were gone—



Seattle IANDS
Kimberly Clark Sharp, MSW, President
Lee Campbell, Vice-President
June Eguchi, Treasurer
Greg Wilson, Coordinator

Seattle IANDS—International Association for Near-Death Studies

Three Transformational Experiences!

Dave

Part 1

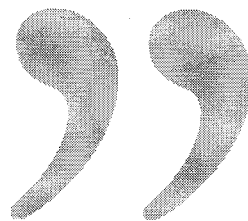
This is Part 1 of Dave Bennett's lengthy and excellent description of what he learned and applied to his own life from his near-death experience, as well as from the other spiritually transforming experiences Dave will share in Part II. In some ways this narrative has advantages over a pure near-death account because it focuses so much on the changes and growth that can follow, and which we can all bring into our lives. Minor editing changes have been made. Please save this issue so that you can combine it with the next one.

In this lifetime, I have had three very transformative experiences. The first was a near-death experience, (NDE) that I'd rather call a "new life" experience. Before my near-death, I was a very brash young man who liked to challenge everything. I would put my life on the line for the thrill of adventure. I think at that stage of my life, I was an adrenalin junkie. My philosophy as a young adult was rather simple: enjoy life, learn how to survive and cut your swath in life to get where you want to be. At that point in life, it served me well. I became chief engineer on a research vessel and a commercial deep-sea diver. While in that job we had an accident at sea where I drowned.

As you probably have heard from others who have died and returned, I went into the Light. There, in the Light, I was met by others and it felt like coming home. I experienced a love and acceptance like I had never felt before. While I was



**Acceptance,
Tolerance
and an
Understanding of
my truth.**



in the presence of these light beings, I experienced a life review. This was not just a review of what I had done in my life. I also experienced how my actions had affected and influenced other people and further, how their feelings and emotions were connected to my own actions. It is hard to explain the intensities and details of the life review, let alone to explain how it felt to experience this review without judgment. I experienced feelings of growth and evolvment while I underwent this review. The review continued, and I started seeing things that were unfamiliar to me, things that I had not yet lived or experienced. The group around me was very supportive through this, although there seemed to be more of them by this time. Even with their support, it was still disorienting. At that time I was told that this was not my time and that I still had purpose in my life. I realized then that I was seeing parts of my future. I also realized that I had to return back to my physical body, a process that was more painful than the actual experience of drowning. Somehow I was given the strength to accept this which is what enabled me to return. This was physically painful, emotionally draining and mentally staggering. It was a bit of a miracle as to how I was revived, which only proved to me again that I was meant to experience more of this life.

After I came back, I stayed

connected with the Light for three straight days. Part of me was in a state of shock feeling the actual pain in my body, and another part was in the Light with an awareness of life around me and the physical healing of my body.

During those three days I realized that I was given three incredible gifts. The first gift was **acceptance**. I now knew who I was and could accept that I had faults and strengths. I no longer needed to beat myself up over failures. Instead, I could learn and accept and make myself a better human being. I realized that I am in the perfect place at all times.

The second gift was **tolerance**. This was very new to me. As I said, I liked to cut my swath through life. Suddenly, I now had a way of respecting and recognizing others' beliefs or practices. I could now see that others on their life paths were experiencing what they needed to for their own growth. Tolerance allowed me to allow them to walk their paths.

The third gift was an **understanding of my truth**. I was given a way to know when I was experiencing my truth, when I felt my heart sing in a way that was similar to the love I experienced when I was in the light.

I understood now how my life could touch others without knowing it.

The three days after my near death were the most powerful. It was not just the physical shock. Even more it was the spiritual shock of knowing my truth. Those three days I lived with my heart wide open. I mean by this that feeling you experience when in the presence of unconditional love, when you come Home, which is now present in your heart, and your heart feels as though it has expanded beyond the physical body and is in touch with everything. Because of my human side, facing my own truth for the first time was very emotional and painful because I had to truly face myself. I had to face my faults and my strengths honestly and clearly. That is when I came to recognize that everyone has his or her own truth, and it is very different from factual truth.

With these three gifts my new life started. I began to change. I didn't view anything the same way anymore. I started to work on myself. Growing up in Arizona, as a young man, I had gained an understanding of the Native American natural way. I tended to follow their path of observation while working on myself. Some of my greatest growth would come during times of communing with nature. My spiritual side now communicated by giving me information that I had no way of knowing. At first I didn't trust this knowledge, so I would test it. I would argue with this new awakened spiritual side of myself until over time I grew to trust and depend upon it.

Stay tuned for the next issue...Part 2

Each month NDE stories are sent free, via e-mail, to IANDS members. We recommend you join at—www.iands.org—or at

IANDS
2741 Campus Walk Ave, Bldg. 500
Durham, NC 27705-8878

or call (919) 383-7940

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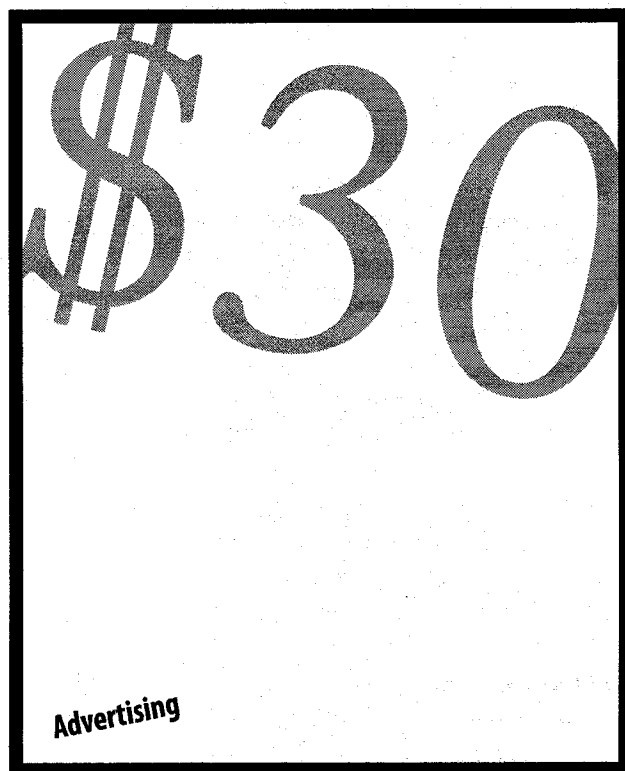
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- 1) Full page insert provided by customer = \$100
- 2) Business card size = \$25
- 3) 1/3 column x 2" = \$20
- 4) 1/3 column x 4" \$30
- 4) Memorials: additional sizes available, pricing varies. (see newsletter for various "box" insertions)

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Business cards can be submitted; a. as a jpeg by scanning or b. you can digitally photo it (close-up) and save as jpeg.



While you were gone—

March 2008

John Borchering shared his near-death experience, which occurred when John died of suffocation near the ocean. God appeared to John, but he didn't realize this at first, because as God was talking to him all he noticed was that God looked somewhat like himself! Then he noticed that God was using some of his own vocabulary and his speaking style as He talked to him. Then, just before God explained to him what his future life could be like, depending on choices he made, he noticed that when he looked into God's face what he now was seeing was glimpses of his friends, and then all who he knew. And then he could see the world of Nature in that face. Is God inside us or outside us? Or is it an either/or? This was certainly one of the great questions raised when John talked about his NDE.

April 2008

Bill Vandebush described his near-death experience, while stationed in Vietnam, when his squad was accidentally bombed by our own planes. Leaving the field of battle, the sounds of war disappeared as Bill journeyed into a spiritual realm. There he met his grandfather who appeared to him as a ball of energy, but whom he was able to recognize by his energy. It was a larger ball of light that spoke with authority to Bill that his time of death had not yet arrived and that he needed to return. Bill came back to a body that was bleeding profusely. And he also came back with his personality profoundly changed, loving humanity in a way he never had experienced before. This was the start of Bill's amazing journey of healing and recovery.

May 2008

Laura Bastrom shared the NDE she experienced while in the mountains of Arizona in 2006. What Laura encountered while near death was not anything I've heard of before. In fact, she has succeeded in finding only one other artistic representation of this, years after her experience, in a book describing Sacred Visions. As years went by and Laura continued to explore the meaning of her out-of-body encounter, she found a similar account in the book of Ezekiel. My opinion after listening to Laura is that her journey has given her an opportunity to interact with and gaze upon some of the spiritual realities behind Judaism.

June 2008

At the June meeting we showed two of the best documentaries ever made about the near-death experience. We also listened to a near-death experiencer who appeared in one of the films.

The first documentary was "The Near-Death Experience" bonus feature from the DVD "White Noise 2." It featured Seattle IANDS and a number of our attendees, it was a beautiful examination of the phenomena and it's after effects—with a big shout-out to us!

The second film about the near-death experience was "The Day I Died," a polished documentary by the BBC. Made a few years ago, the film was composed of interviews of NDErs from around the world. Not only were the multiple NDE accounts compelling, but the DVD featured doctors and scientists voicing their willingness to consider a spiritual explanation for the NDE.

Sharing his near-death experience was one of the NDEr's who was extensively filmed for "The Day I Died," Gordon Allen. A businessman with great wealth before his NDE, Gordon was explicitly told during his NDE that he was not given his gifts and talents merely to accumulate wealth. And when he returned to his body, Gordon found that his entire financial empire was taken away from him. We listened to how he coped with this reversal of fortune and how his NDE has oriented him to his current service to the poor.



Seattle IANDS—Meetings

When: 1st Saturday of Every Month

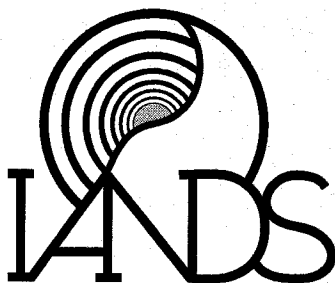
Where: Catholic Community Service Center, SE Corner 23rd & Yesler, 2300 E. Yesler Way, Seattle, WA

Time: 1-4 pm

www.seattleiands.org

Inside this issue:

Three Transformational Experiences—
Parts 2 & Part 3
Linda Andersson, Counseling
Advertising Opportunities



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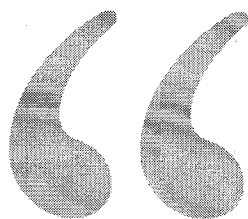
Three Transformational Experiences!

Dave

Parts 2 and 3

This is a continuation, with minor editing changes, of Dave Bennett's description of learnings gained from three spiritually transforming experiences. In Part 1 Dave shared how his near-death experience from drowning, when he was a deep-sea diver, led him into Light and a feeling of coming home. Without judgment he intensely re-experienced portions of his life, becoming aware of how his actions had affected others. He also saw glimpses of his life to come. Back in his body, Dave became aware of three gifts the NDE had given him: (1) an understanding of the truth of who he really was, seeing clearly all his faults and strengths, (2) an acceptance of that, especially his faults and failures, that it was all okay, (3) a tolerance of others, that what they were experiencing was what they needed to experience for their growth. Dave also felt his heart unconditionally reaching out and loving everything. He began a new life. This included communing with nature and listening to his newly awakened spiritual awareness.

I continued to work, play and live my life with my new-found truths until about ten years later. I went on a spiritual retreat back in Arizona, where I had grown up as a teenager. My agenda was to hike some of the old trails and enjoy myself. I figured I had



**We just need
to stop,
listen and
be open to
God's light
and love.**



come a long way with my three gifts and I thought I was doing very well. The first day of the retreat the whole group was to meet for morning meditation. I went off, away from the others, to meditate in a little grotto that I knew of. My intention was just to meditate for calmness, relaxation and centering. Little did I know.

The Spirit and the Light of my near death overcame me, and I began reliving my near-death experience over and over again. But this time it was much different. This time Spirit was now talking directly to me, not just projecting thoughts and information. I had never tried to return to the Light or to open my heart since that original experience ten years before. That was something I had packaged up and put far back in my memory. When I first had my NDE my human self could not accept that connection with a universal all knowing God/Goddess, All That Is. Now I realized that this con-

nection was something I had repressed. I came out of the meditation and I was again in that space with my heart wide open, unconditionally loving everything. I lived half in the Light – half in the physical world for three more days. All that time I kept reliving the original experience again and again.

This became my second transformational experience. This second experience left me knowing that I can connect with the Light at any time. I learned that we can ALL connect with the Light. It is a matter of allowing ourselves to listen and to quiet our minds. It also made me recognize that we are ALL a part of whatever we call God. We are all co-creators of our life's path and everything in our experience.

I needed those ten years of integration to be prepared for this second transformation, which forced me to face all this. These understandings caused me to change my life even more. Before I worked on myself to become a better human being. Now I had to walk my talk. I started what I now call my quiet ministry. Others began to come to me to seek help. Spirit often would communicate some aid or assistance, often in the form of a spiritual seed.

I think what people were drawn to was a change in the way that I expressed love and compassion. By being able to touch the Light, I was able to experience unconditional love. Because we are all human, our human self naturally puts conditions on our love. Whether it is the love for a girlfriend or a love for a snack, we have expectations. We expect love in return, or at least certain behaviors. Unconditional love doesn't work that way. By living your life without expectations of others, by unconditionally giving your love, you build a true compassion that others can feel and are drawn to. But it also can cause trouble. The human side often misunderstands unconditional love. The human side creates expectations. It caused me some troubles before I recognized this fact.

My third transformational experience surfaced in November 2000. In my life review, I was shown parts of my life that I had not yet lived. Dealing with cancer was one of those. I was diagnosed with stage IV lung and bone cancer that ate away bones in my spine,

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Business cards can be submitted; **a.** as a jpeg by scanning or **b.** you can digitally photo it (close-up) and save as jpeg.



which could cause my spine to collapse. I was told this was a very poor prognosis and it was time to get my affairs in order. This came at a time when I was dealing more with my human self than my spiritual self. Yet because of my ministry and experiences with the Light, acceptance of the cancer was immediate. It brought me back into my center and the balance of self and Spirit. It led me to insights on how to cope with a terminal illness. I gratefully received Spirit's communications concerning many ways of dealing with the physical pain, the handling of drug induced highs and lows and the mental aspects of healing. I was shown practices of visualization and meditation that could relieve physical pain and helped me to re-center when dealing with emotional anxieties and mood swings.

Spirit has indicated that this is my future path. I have been in remission for over 7 years now. I am to work with others who are terminally ill, who've had NDEs and am to further my life ministry. This third experience was not like the others where I was given specific gifts. This helped bring the gifts together with more balance and

clarity. It also acted as a confirmation that I am again in the perfect place on my path. I now know that it is time to communicate what I have experienced, learned, and how it can be used.

I think if I was to say what came through the strongest in these three life transforming experiences is that we all chose the path we are on for the potential of growth and evolution. We all have access to God's light and love. We just need to stop, listen and be open to it. Finally, we all have obstacles and experiences that we must overcome and learn from so that we can evolve and grow. God hasn't abandoned us when things seem tough. It is necessary to experience what we perceive as "good" and "bad" in order to grow. God's light and love is a part of each of us and we don't have to go searching for it. We just need to open up to it.

We are grateful to Dave Bennett for giving us permission to reprint his very meaningful Three Transformational Experiences. Those wishing to read the full account of David's near-death experience may want to visit his web site at HYPERLINK "<http://www.dharma-talks.com>". We'll see you in our next issue!

Each month NDE stories are sent free, via e-mail, to IANDS members. We recommend you join at—www.iands.org—or at

IANDS

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When: 1st Saturday of Every Month

Where: NEW temporary location—Seattle Unity Church, 200 – 8th Ave. N., Seattle, WA

Time: 1–4:30 pm

Find detailed directions at—www.seattleiands.org
— or call Seattle Unity Church at 206-622-8475

International Association for
Near-Death Studies

Seattle Friends of IANDES
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Seattle, WA 98124

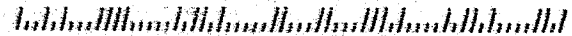
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If you have had a near-death experience and you would **be willing to share** it at an IANDES meeting or to write it up please phone or e-mail us!

How You Can Help Seattle IANDES

Seattle IANDES is a **volunteer** organization that has been established to help people learn how to process a near-death experience. No one is paid for the work they do and no one earns any money from Seattle IANDES.

This is a giving organization.

If you want to be part of this giving by supporting Seattle IANDES, please send your donation to:

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We welcome your suggestions and feedback. Thank you!