

Preparation of a position statement on near-death experiences

Post by “Martin” of July 5, 2019 at 10:09 AM

Near-death experiences are often misrepresented as evidence for an afterlife or even an omnipotent and omnipresent god (e.g. <https://www.yahoo.com/news/woman-die...-161046083.html>).

They are the closest to evidence believers in an afterlife might have. So, it is important to nix the validity of the interpretation of near-death experiences as such evidence.

I remember one article with a simple explanation by a medical researcher who attributed the symptoms to lack of oxygen in the brain. It seems I did not save that article because the phenomenon itself is not of much interest for me.

We should have an easy to find position statement with a summary of and references to the research.

That position statement could be the outcome of collaborative effort in this thread. If there is not much input, I would contribute to this thread from time to time to eventually create the position statement even though the topic is far outside my field of expertise.

Post by “Joshua” of July 5, 2019 at 10:45 AM

That's an excellent idea, Martin! Having consumed a good bit of Eastern spiritual literature after college, I would note that Near-Death experiences, like "memories" of "past lives", are totally dependent on the cultural upbringing of the subject.

When Hindus have near-death experiences, they NEVER see Jesus of Nazareth. When Christian's have them, they NEVER see Krishna or Buddha or their next reincarnation.

What this tells me is that the neuro-chemistry of their brain is throwing up incomprehensible outputs that involve deep emotion, and the subject plugs that scattered noise into an existing cognitive framework (i.e. religion).

There was one case in America recently where the subject was a child and the father shamelessly profited off his imaginative deliriums. When he he came into adolescence, he

renounced the fraud and apologized (although he did not renounce Christianity). The publishers were forced to pull the book from shelves. His name was Alex Malarkey for those curious.

Post by “Cassius” of July 5, 2019 at 4:09 PM

I completely agree with the suggestion and also Joshua's comments. We don't spend as much time on the nothingness of death as we should. We are surrounded by either fundamentalist Christianity or new-age spiritualism to the point where it seems most everyone lives their life as if this were only the opening act of an eternal life.

I know in my own case that the knowledge of my own mortality is a key motivator for me to get things done rather than procrastinate, and I bet many people are like that.

So yes it's a great idea to use this thread to create links to relevant material, and at the end of the process come up with a position statement.

Position statements in general I think are very good idea, even if we don't designate them for any particular purpose. The process of forming them helps us articulate them in our own minds, and having them available makes it much easier to introduce to new people what "we" are all about.