

The Wisdom of Near Death Experiences

by Penny Sartori.

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As it says on the back cover, this book might enable people to discover what a brush with death can teach us about how to live. Looking beyond the science of near death experiences, Dr. Sartori shows us through anecdotal evidence, case studies and documented research that those who have experienced an NDE have much insight to give us on the way in which we live, and can empower us to have more fulfilled and meaningful lives.

This is a beautiful book. Don't be put off by the lurid purple and pink cover. It consists of Penny's research that she spent many years doing as an intensive care nurse in hospital and she has combined it with beautiful writing about her personal journey through many years of studying NDE's.

The chapter headings include the near death experience, the after effects of the NDE, childhood and NDE's, the cultural variations of the NDE, end of life experiences and after death communication, proposed physiological and psychological explanations for the NDE, a five year prospective study of NDE's, a brief history of the medicalization of death, implications for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of NDEs, followed by a conclusion and an epilogue. There are plenty of notes, references and an index.

As Dr. Sartori writes on page xx, 'I do not profess to know all of the answers. All I am doing is presenting experiences described to me and I hope I'm able to convey some of what I have learned from the patients and from my work as a nurse From my doctoral research, I encourage everyone who reads this book to have an open mind. And I hope you too will be inspired to embark on your own journey and discover more about this great mystery that we call death.'

The Californian doctor, Dr. Rajiv Parti describes a fascinating NDE, which has both negative and positive aspects to it on pages 21 and 22. We learn, on pages 94 - 97 of empathic or shared death experiences, and, a little further on, it is reported that many people have visions of those who have died before them, of relatives who are waiting to receive them. There is some overlap in the chapters on five year perspective study of NDE's and proposed physiological and psychological explanations for the NDE. What we learn throughout the book is that Dr. Sartori is discovering and learning and being educated herself. Towards the end of the book, on page 167, we learn of Professor Kenneth Ring's Omega Project. In this he took a control group of people, who were studying NDE's but who had not experienced them, and found that to a lesser degree, they reported similar changes to those who have experienced them; that is they became more self-accepting, more appreciative of life, more compassionate, more spiritually aware, sometimes more psychically aware, they had a heightened concern for the environment and they became less materialistic.

On page 166, we learn of psychotherapist J. M. MacDonagh, who found that suicidal thoughts and intent were reduced when his clients were introduced to NDE accounts and when they were encouraged to conduct their own research by looking up NDE websites. What I have particularly enjoyed in reviewing this book is Penny Sartori's personal interactions: her descriptions of how she has received accounts from and bonded to intensive care patients, their deaths and the effect that the research has had on her personality. The

entire book is in beautifully written English. This book comes across as a combination of left and right brain thinking and is all the better for being so. I commend it heartily to anyone who seeks reassurance about death and its consequences. I would say to anybody that this would be money well spent.

Neil Broadbent (Director of the Sozein Trust)