

Your Natural Afterlife: the Non-Supernatural Alternative to Nothingness

Bryon K. Ehlmann

This overview of the natural afterlife gives a scientifically plausible, logically consistent answer to “Where is heaven?” and may change forever how you view death. It summarizes two, more comprehensive, in-depth, and scholarly articles: [The Theory of a Natural Afterlife: A Newfound, Real Possibility for What Awaits Us at Death](#) and an even more profound article, [The Theory of a Natural Eternal Consciousness: The Psychological Basis for a Natural Afterlife](#).

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Introduction

You’re dying having what will be called your near-death experience (NDE) should you recover. Within this very intense, “even more real than real”¹ dreamlike experience (or dream)*, you believe you’re in heaven. You’re overcome by marvelous feelings of wonder, love, and contentment and excited about such a glorious eternity. With death, this is your *never-ending experience (NEE)* and *natural afterlife*. At least, so posits the *theory of a natural afterlife*.

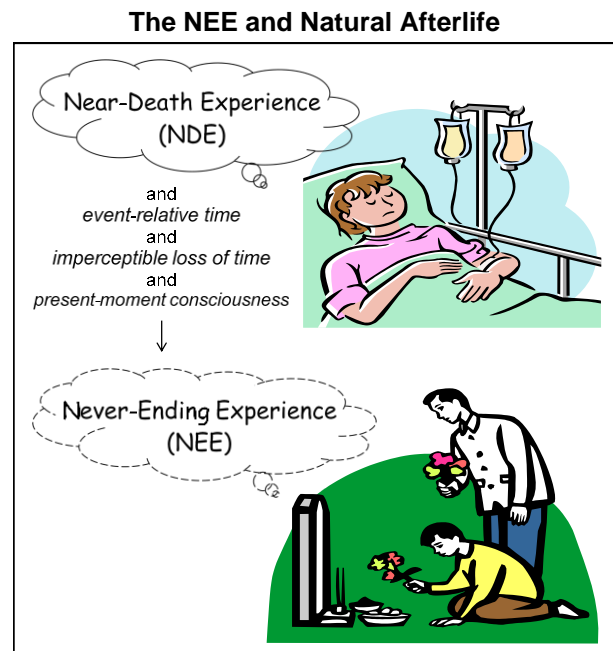
But how is such a natural afterlife, based on an NDE, possible when presumably any dreamlike experience ends with death and a non-functioning brain? Ironically, it’s possible not because some supernatural consciousness continues after death but because with death, when mortal material-based consciousness ends, you will *not* perceive and so will never know the following:

- You’ve now just died. You’ll get no indication, like a “The End” or a dark “NDE screen.”
- Your NDE has ended. You’ll never notice that nothing more happens in your NDE.
- You’re now timelessly suspended in your NDE, while for others time is marching on. Is this happening just before or after you’ve died? You can’t tell. *Relative to you*, death is irrelevant and your NDE is essentially your NEE.

It’s like watching an extremely exciting movie and not knowing that you’ve unexpectedly, with no perceived drowsiness, fallen asleep. For you the movie is paused, while in reality (that for others), it continues on. Until you wake up, you still believe you’re watching that movie.

Understanding and Appreciation

The natural afterlife is hard to grasp, even harder to appreciate. To grasp it, you must be able to imagine what it’s like to never wake up from a dream, something you’ve never experienced. You must imagine never knowing that your dreamlike NDE has ended, thus forever “believing” it has not, despite knowing now that it will. And, you must imagine an eternity rushing by in what for you is an everlasting, yet unknowingly final NDE moment and thus NEE.



An NDE, an event relative time, the imperceptible loss of time, and a present moment consciousness result upon death in an NEE and natural afterlife. Others know your NDE has ended, but you do not.

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But more precisely how can your NDE become an NEE? First, given we can perceive time only by perceiving events—i.e., our *event-relative time*—with death and the resultant end of NDE events, you enter a timeless state (just like with falling asleep and the end of awake events). Second, given we can never perceive such loss of time—i.e., our *imperceptible loss of time*—you're unaware that NDE events have ended when you've died (just like you're unaware that awake events have ended when you've fallen asleep). And finally, given our conscious awareness occurs one discrete, present conscious moment at a time and we can only become aware of something within these moments—i.e., our *present-moment consciousness*—nothing will ever change your unawareness that the final, present moment of your final NDE event was final because with the forever timelessness of death no perceived event will ever provide another present moment. Thus your final NDE moment becomes *in your mind* your forever present moment. It embodies your NDE at a point in time including an expectation of future moments (as does any present moment) and your sense of self (as does any dream). This forever moment, along with the timelessness that ensues, is your timeless NEE and natural afterlife as depicted in the above figure.

To appreciate such a timeless afterlife, you must be able to not only envision but value being left at death in a static, dreamlike yet intensely real-like and emotional state of mind enjoying an everlasting, ideally heavenly moment, heightened by an anticipation of many such moments to come. For some, this vision must replace the vision of spending an eternity of human-like time in a time-perceiving, perfect world. Actually, such a world isn't logical because perfection implies no challenges, no free will lest decisions be bad (even evil), and thus an eternity of boredom. Surely, not perfect! A timeless afterlife, on the other hand, has no such inconsistencies as one can logically experience a relativistic forever, perfect moment—in reality, the optimal heaven.

Significance

The natural afterlife differs from the supernatural afterlife or a nothingness** that for centuries were considered the only possibilities for what one experiences after death. For example, the natural afterlife wasn't considered by the authors of many bestselling books each claiming, based on a personal NDE, that a supernatural consciousness survives death—e.g., [Proof of Heaven](#) by Dr. Eben Alexander (Simon & Schuster, 2013). Nor was it considered by the authors of many scientific articles each claiming that NDEs provide no evidence of an afterlife since they're induced by the natural physiology of the brain shutting down—e.g., [The Death of "Near Death": Even If Heaven Is Real, You Aren't Seeing It](#) by Kyle Hill (Scientific American, Dec. 3, 2012). Actually, NDEs, while providing no *proof* of an afterlife, provide *evidence* for the natural afterlife as does the science attempting to explain them.

Evidence for the natural afterlife, however, doesn't guarantee that *you* will have one, that it

Books Claiming NDEs as Proof of Heaven



NDEs provide no proof of heaven but do provide evidence for the natural afterlife.

will be heavenly, or that it's the only one possible. You may not have an NDE, in which case your afterlife may be similar to your before-life. Or, your NEE may be of a perfectly marvelous day on the beach, which for you may be the ideal heaven. Or, unfortunately, your NEE may be a hellish nightmare. Up to 15% of NDEs are such by one estimate.⁸ Also, your NEE could be overridden by a supernatural afterlife at death or sometime thereafter. The theory of a natural afterlife doesn't preclude this.

It merely defines a new, very plausible afterlife alternative, whose possibility can impact how one views death (and thus life), which is its main significance.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, your natural afterlife could simply be described as dying while believing you're in heaven (or hell) and for all eternity never knowing otherwise.

The following features make this afterlife extraordinary.

- It's supported by science—i.e., requires no supernatural beliefs.
- Its aspects are logically consistent.
- It was never part of the discussion before being first identified in a 2013 article⁹.
- It's a gift of nature (perhaps from God) resulting from our amazing ability to have dreams and dreamlike NDEs, perhaps our brain's propensity to induce the NDE, and our psychological nature regarding time perception and conscious awareness.
- It can be seen as acceptable to both theists and atheists and doesn't preclude a supernatural afterlife if some type of associated consciousness continues or arises sometime after death.
- Its content is mysteriously produced and personalized, either by nature or by a God as you may choose to believe.

The timeless and relativistic aspects of the natural afterlife that make it difficult to understand and appreciate also make it difficult to explain. If you've found my explanation in this overview inadequate, you can find more explanation with more detail and discussion in two additional articles^{9,10} as well as three more comprehensive, scholarly articles.^{11,12,13}

Popular Science Articles on NDEs

Science on the Brink of Death

by SAM HARRIS²

Peace of Mind: Near-Death Experiences Now Found to Have Scientific Explanations

in Scientific American³

Has science explained life after death?

in HowStuffWorks⁴

[FYI: WHAT CAUSES NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCES?](#) in POPSCI⁵

Why a Near-Death Experience Isn't Proof of Heaven

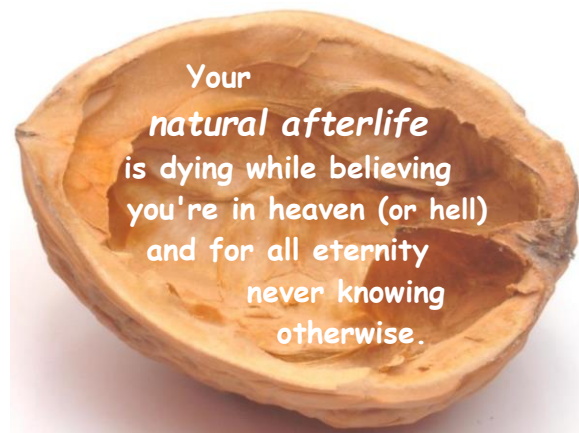
in Scientific American⁶

Not Dead Experiences (NDEs)

in THE HUFFINGTON POST⁷

The science that refutes the claim that NDEs provide proof of a supernatural afterlife provides evidence of the brain's propensity to create a natural one.

In a Nutshell



A simple description of your natural afterlife.
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References

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2. [Sam Harris, 11/11/2012](#)
3. [Charles Q. Choi, 9/12/2011](#)
4. [Josh Clark, 10/23/2007](#)
5. [Colin Lecher, 10/10/2012](#)
6. [Michael Shermer, 4/13/2013](#)
7. [Victor Stenger, 10/11/2012](#)
8. [Consciousness: an Introduction, Susan J. Blackmore \(Oxford University Press, 2004\), p. 362.](#)
9. [Perhaps Heaven Is Your Never-Ending Dream and Natural Afterlife](#), Bryon Ehlmann (HubPages, 2013). This is the first article ever written on the theory of a natural afterlife. It gives a more religious and philosophical perspective on the theory, arguing for its plausibility both philosophically and scientifically.
10. [The Heaven of Your Natural Afterlife: a More Revealing Look](#), Bryon Ehlmann (HubPages, 2013). This article attempts to better explain the natural afterlife and argues for the desirability of the heaven that it makes possible. The article also discusses a religious “add-on” to the theory.
11. Ehlmann, B.K. (2016). [The Theory of a Natural Afterlife: A Newfound, Real Possibility for What Awaits Us at Death](#). *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research (JCER)*. 7(11) 931–950. This article provides a comprehensive, in-depth, and scholarly discourse on the natural afterlife, including a *near* “proof” (later made real ¹²) of its existence. The article can be accessed as originally published at <http://jcer.com/index.php/jcj/article/view/618/632> or a postprint version with some revisions is available at ResearchGate.net by clicking on its title and at academia.edu.
12. Ehlmann, B.K. (2020). [The Theory of a Natural Eternal Consciousness: The Psychological Basis for a Natural Afterlife](#). *Journal of Mind and Behavior (JMB)*. 41(1) 53–80. This article generalizes the theory of a natural afterlife, giving it a stronger scientific basis. The article posits a timeless *natural eternal consciousness (NEC)* that *in the mind of the dying person* survives death. The NEC experience can range from near-nothingness to a natural afterlife. In deducing the NEC based on empirical truths, the article “proves” the theory of a natural afterlife. A postprint version of the article is available at ResearchGate.net (by clicking on its title) and at academia.edu.
13. Ehlmann, B.K. (2020). [Death's New Reality: Challenging Orthodoxy and Dealing With Our End-of-Life Illusion of Immortality](#). This article discusses the challenges in getting people to understand, accept, deal with, and appreciate the NEC theory and its significance and potential impact on philosophy and religion. I offer my views on how the NEC and natural afterlife may be seen as compatible (or not) with the afterlife teachings of some of the major world religions. A preprint version of the article is available at ResearchGate.net (by clicking on its title) and at academia.edu.

Notes

- * - Here NDEs are not differentiated from end-of-life dreams as only the dreamlike aspects and intense reality of NDEs are relevant to the theory of a natural afterlife. In fact, in older versions of this article, what here is called a never-ending experience (NEE) was called a never-ending dream (NED). Indeed, end-of-life dreams can also provide the basis and content for the natural afterlife.
- ** - A “nothingness” without consciousness is actually illogical. See [Why Something vs. Nothing and the Essentialness of Consciousness](#) (HubPages, 2014).
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- An earlier version of this article entitled [“The Theory of a Natural Afterlife: An Overview”](#) has been published by invitation, January 2017, in the *Scientific God Journal*, 8(1) 104-109.
- An HTML version of this article is available on HubPages by clicking: [Your Natural Afterlife: the Non-Supernatural Alternative to Nothingness](#).