

Your Natural Afterlife: the Non-Supernatural Alternative to Nothingness

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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 abbreviates a more comprehensive, in-depth, and scholarly paper [The Theory of a Natural Afterlife: A Newfound, Real Possibility for What Awaits Us at Death](#).

Keywords: *afterlife; natural afterlife; human mortality; death and dying; NDE; imperceptible death*

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*, 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:

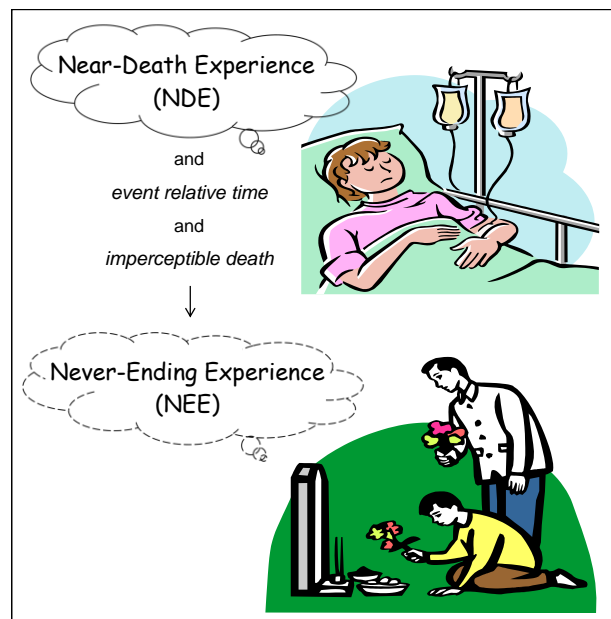
- You've now just died. You'll get no indication, like a "The End" or dark "NDE screen."
- Your NDE has ended. You'll never notice that nothing more happens in your NDE.
- You're now timelessly suspended in your NDE, while for others time is marching on. Is this happening just before or after you've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

The situation is like watching an extremely exhilarating movie and not knowing that you've unexpectedly, with no perceivable drowsiness, fallen asleep and for you the movie is paused, while in reality (that for others) it continues on. Until you wake up, you still believe you're captivated in that movie.

Understanding and Appreciation

The natural afterlife is hard to understand, 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 not knowing that your dreamlike NDE has ended, thus forever believing it hasn't, 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.

The NEE and Natural Afterlife



An NDE, our event relative time perception, and an imperceptible death result in an NEE and natural afterlife. Others know your NDE has ended but not you.. Instead, you are unknowingly suspended in an NEE.
Clip Art from Microsoft Office.com

But before such imagining can occur, perhaps it must be better justified. So, why will you never know that your NDE has ended? Because with near certainty you won't perceive your moment of death and its accompanying loss of consciousness (just as you don't perceive the moment you fall asleep). And why does your NDE then become everlasting? Because with an *imperceptible death* (as with falling asleep) your perception of time imperceptibly ends because perceived events (here NDE versus real events)—whose sequence defines our sense of time, i.e., our *event relative time*—imperceptibly cease. You perceive nothing more yet nothing less (certainly not nothingness). There's simply no next moment to replace your final NDE moment and nothing, no event, to signify to you that your NDE is over. The final NDE moment thus becomes your forever present moment. It embodies your NDE at a point in time and includes an expectation of future moments (as does any present moment) and your sense of self (as does any dream). *In your mind*, this forever present moment thus results in a 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 a never-ending anticipation of many more such moments to come. For some, this vision must replace the traditional vision of spending an eternity of human-like time in a time-perceptive, perfect world. Actually, such a world isn't logical since perfection implies no challenges, no free-will lest decisions be bad (even evil), and thus an eternity of boredom. Certainly, not perfect! A timeless afterlife on the other hand has no 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 will be heavenly, or that it's the only one possible. You may not have an NDE, in which case your

Books Claiming NDEs as Proof of Heaven



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

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 over-ridden 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 after-life 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 apparently never part of the discussion before being identified by a 2013 article⁹.
- It's a gift of nature (perhaps from God) resulting from our amazing ability to have a dreamlike NDE and perhaps our brain's propensity to induce one, our event relative perception of time, and our nearly certain imperceptible death.
- 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 difficulties in understanding and appreciating the natural afterlife also make explaining it difficult. You can find more detailed explanations and discussion in two additional articles^{9, 10} and in the paper referenced above in the abstract.¹¹ Also, a recent as yet unpublished paper [*The Theory of a Natural After-life Consciousness: The Psychological Basis for a Natural Afterlife*](#) provides more support for the natural afterlife as well as explanation.¹²

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

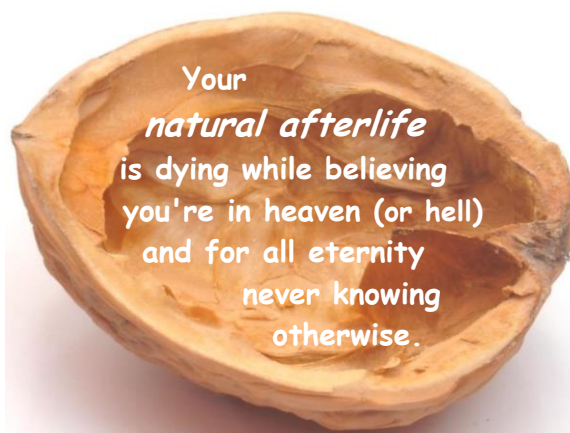
in Scientific American⁶

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. All but text, © Tsekhmister | [Dreamstime Stock Photos](#) & [Stock Free Images](#)

References

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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 paper provides a comprehensive, in-depth, and scholarly discourse on the natural afterlife, including a near proof of its existence. The paper can be accessed as originally published at <http://jcer.com/index.php/jci/article/view/618/632> (no sign-in required), or a version with minor revisions can be accessed at www.academia.edu by clicking on its title.
12. [The Theory of a Natural After-life Consciousness: The Psychological Basis for a Natural Afterlife](#), Bryon K. Ehlmann (academia.edu, 2017). This preprint paper generalizes the theory of a natural afterlife and gives it a stronger psychological basis. The article posits a non-supernatural, timeless and everlasting consciousness that survives death *in the mind of the dying person*. Its content can range from “near-nothingness to nirvana.”

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 may also provide the basis 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 at: [Your Natural Afterlife: the Non-Supernatural Alternative to Nothingness](#).