

The Fun of Dying

Find out what really
happens next!

Roberta Grimes

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Nonfiction

The Fun of Dying — Find Out What Really Happens Next!

The Fun of Staying in Touch

The Fun of Growing Forever (2017)

Fiction

My Thomas

Rich and Famous

Letter from Freedom

Letter from Money

Letter from Wonder

This book is gratefully dedicated
to each of the thousands of unsung scholars
whose wonderful work made it possible.

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Foreword

Victor Zammit, Ph.D.

As an attorney who has spent the last twenty-five years investigating the afterlife, I can honestly tell you that everything Roberta Grimes has included in this book is absolutely supported by the evidence gathered by researchers over the last one hundred and fifty years.

We know that there is one thing that is absolutely certain in life. And that is, inevitably, we all have to cross over to the afterlife. The fact that you picked up this book shows you have a curiosity that you would like to be satisfied.

You are very fortunate, because this book, written simply and in plain English, gives you reliable and factual information which will be of enormous help to you personally — and to your loved ones. It gives you all the information you need to know about dying, and more importantly, what happens after we die.

Here you can find detailed answers to life's big questions. What does it feel like to die? Who will be there to meet us? Will we still have a solid body? Where will we live? How will we spend our time? Can we get messages back to our loved ones? Will we be reunited with them?

If you are grieving the loss of a loved one or a much-loved pet, or if you are letting fear of death stop you from living life to the full, this book is for you. Roberta tells me how she constantly gets letters from grateful readers who say that reading the book has enriched their lives.

The writer is uniquely qualified for her task. As an historian, she has the skills and expertise to pull together information from a huge variety of sources. As an attorney, she has the ability to evaluate the evidence and the credibility of witnesses. As someone who has had profound spiritual experiences, she has no agenda except to share the truth of her own experiences and her research.

Roberta also has the courage to 'tell it like it is' when it comes to the controversial area of religion. She was able to absorb the spiritual teachings of Jesus as part of her college religion major. However, as she explains in Appendix III of the book, while Jesus's words are convincingly consistent with afterlife evidence, a lot of what religions and mainstream Christianity teach is not. For example, we do not stay underground until the last judgment. There is no eternal hell. It doesn't matter if you did not go to church or ever accepted Jesus as your personal saviour. What really counts on crossing over, she says, is being spiritual — unselfishly helping others, just as Jesus taught.

And yes, she does point out in chapter nine, there are some people for whom dying is not fun. Those who have closed minds about the afterlife, who are unduly afraid of hell and judgment and refuse to go with those who come to greet them, and those who are unable to forgive themselves may all run into difficulties. This leads her to a wonderful chapter on 'living so that your dying can be the most fun,' which she sums up as learning to love and learning to forgive.

Some people reading this book may wonder why skeptical scientists have so little to say about what happens when we die. As an experienced afterlife researcher and expert in the admissibility of evidence, I can assure you that these scientists are simply unaware of the evidence. They have not read, as Roberta and I (and hundreds of other scientists and afterlife investigators) have read, the huge number of volumes of afterlife research materials.

The author's research in this work is accepted by those who are experts in the paranormal and the afterlife. As Roberta points out herself, what is really so convincing when you start to study the different areas of afterlife evidence is that it is all so consistent. So, you can be absolutely confident that the valuable information in this book is beyond any doubt whatsoever.

There is much interesting information in this book to help those searching for the meaning of life on earth — and the hereafter. Roberta Grimes has some very important information to share that I guarantee will be of enormous benefit to you, the reader, and to those you share it with in the future.

Victor Zammit, Ph.D., is a retired attorney, an important afterlife researcher, and co-author with Wendy Zammit of both *A Lawyer Presents the Evidence for the Afterlife* (2013) and a popular free weekly newsletter, *The Friday Afterlife Report*. Go to VictorZammit.com for more information and to request the newsletter.

INTRODUCTION

“I believe that I have cosmic religious feelings. I never could grasp how one could satisfy these feelings by praying to limited objects. The tree outside is life, a statue is dead. The whole of nature is life, and life, as I observe it, rejects a God resembling man.” – Albert Einstein, winner of the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics

“I find it as difficult to understand a scientist who does not acknowledge the presence of a superior rationality behind the existence of the universe as it is to comprehend a theologian who would deny the advances of science.” – Wernher von Braun, German-American rocket scientist

“Multiplicity is only apparent, in truth, there is only one mind....” – Erwin Schrodinger, winner of the 1933 Nobel Prize in Physics

“Quantum physics thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe.” – Erwin Schrodinger, winner of the 1933 Nobel Prize in Physics

“Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these.” – Jesus (John 14:12)

I had an experience of light at the age of eight and spent the next half-century figuring it out. I tell you this only to explain why I have lived my life obsessed with death. It has been an odd hobby, but a thrilling one. By studying death, eventually I was able to explain my experience of light, but that turned out to be a side-adventure. In the process of reading hundreds of books, many of them long out of print, I came to understand the death process and its aftermath well enough to write a travelogue. I learned how death happens, how it feels, what comes next, and so much more about how reality works that I am more obsessed with death now than I ever was.

I didn't set out to write this whole book. What I wanted to write was Chapters 6 through 8, set in large print and illustrated, something to give to dying people to help ease their fears and better prepare them for what is life's most enjoyable adventure. I soon found, though, that to write for the dying and make it even remotely believable, I had to tackle the rest of this book.

It's a big story! Nearly two centuries of detailed and consistent evidence makes it easy to piece together how death happens and why, for most of us, it is the best time of our lives. Not only is the evidence consistent with quantum physics and many religions, but it makes sense. When suddenly I understood that, the realization felt like curing cancer, achieving world peace, and discovering the meaning of life all at once. Knowing the truth about death changes everything.

Although others have undertaken similar research and reached more or less the same conclusions, there are reasons why so few have written about the death event. Evidence is widely available, but it isn't easy to pull together. And to talk about dying with authority is to set oneself against those two modern bastions, mainstream science and mainstream religion, which long ago carved up all truth between them and thereby have shut out any facts that neither of them wants to own.

Then too, there is the credentials problem. I am an attorney by profession, so I am a hobbyist and not a careerist, and there are many professional scholars who could have done a better job of writing this book. The problem is, however, that nearly all researchers have chosen some tiny, compelling part of what is an enormous picture and made a career of it, each of them trying to gain some attention without drawing ridicule. After all, if you have academic credentials and if near-death experiences or past-life memories or the accuracy of mediums or the zero-point field is your area, then what you hope for is recognition. What you never want is scorn.

Sadly, though, scorn is what these researchers earn, and there are some good reasons for that which you will shortly understand. But knowing that even this field's greatest scholars have been ignored by the scientific community, I have not attempted here to make a scientific case. Instead, I am making my case to you, and using to make it the general tools that you use in your daily life and work: reason, deduction, and common sense. I am not writing for scientists. I only note

in passing that for scientific gatekeepers to continue to enforce atheism as a fundamental dogma is as counterproductive now as it once was for scientists stuck in Catholic orthodoxy to insist against evidence that the earth was flat. Truth cannot be suppressed forever, so the academic dam is certain to break. And when it does, the revelations soon to follow about who and what and where we are will change all humanity for the better.

It isn't only scientific oxen that we will be goading here, but some religious folks will be incensed. I am sorry about that. If you prefer to believe whatever it is that your own religion teaches, all I ask is that you be open-minded whenever your own death starts to happen. As you will see, one way to give yourself unnecessary grief is to insist on a certain kind of afterlife. But otherwise, the good news is that the afterlife is not a guessing-game. Catholics and Baptists both get into heaven. And Jews and Buddhists. And everybody else.

I have tried to pare the results of decades of research into a book so brief and so easy to read that most people will enjoy it. I have avoided footnotes because most of what is said here is supported by so many sources that to cite just a few seemed problematic. Then too, most of my research was done long before it occurred to me to write a book. So instead of presenting footnotes, I have assembled a pair of study guides in Appendices I and II so you can learn these truths for yourself. You will find there some of my favorite books, and many of them contain bibliographies, so if you wind up sharing my interest, you can spend the rest of your life reading.

The first chapter of this book surveys the available afterlife evidence and tackles some of the problems that are inherent in doing this research. Chapters 2–5 tie the afterlife evidence to the reality that we think we see, since for many of us the evidence seems too far-fetched unless we understand how it might fit with what we know. Chapters 6–9 discuss the dying process and what happens to us soon after death, so if you don't share my difficulty with believing what you cannot see, then feel free to go right to Chapter 6.

This book's title may have made you wince, but the word "fun" had to be there because variants of it are so often used by the dead to summarize their dying experiences and the places where they arrived. They don't speak of the afterlife in religious terms. Instead, in countless ways they tell us that, quite unexpectedly, being dead has turned out to be a whole lot of fun.

(I should add, though, that death by suicide is the opposite of fun. If you have opened this book because you are contemplating hastening your own demise, please skip ahead and read Chapter 9. Then figure out how to get back to living.)

It is time now — it is long past time — to talk about death as the adventure that it is. Learn the truth for yourself, and tell everyone you know. With 160,000 people dying daily, it is tragic that in the 21st century so many still die in ignorance and fear.

CHAPTER 1

Why Is the Truth About Death Not Common Knowledge?

“Misguided interpretations of quantum physics are a classic hallmark of pseudoscience . . . Authors with religious motives make shameless appeals to common sense. . . .” –
Opinion section editor of *New Scientist*, 28 February, 2009

“The measure of intelligence is the ability to change.”
– Albert Einstein, winner of the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics

“Science can have a purifying effect on religion, freeing it from beliefs of a pre-scientific age and helping us to a truer conception of God. At the same time, I am far from believing that science will ever give us the answers to all our questions.” – Nevill Francis Mott, winner of the 1977 Nobel Prize in Physics

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” – Jesus (Matthew 7:7-8)

Most of the facts are known about what happens when we die. But very few scientists work in this field, and those who do are ignored (or worse). So for most people, this universal trip still is as scary as sailing used to be when the flat earth had edges and the sea was full of dragons.

How is it possible that the truth about death has been so well hidden for so long? Two factors are involved, I think:

1. **Until this century, not enough information was widely enough available to allow us to achieve a reasonable understanding.** Many of the important facts have been known for a century or more. But until some recent breakthroughs filled in a few crucial gaps, it was hard to make sense of the whole picture.
2. **For the last two thousand years, nearly the history of civilization, people have chosen to divide human knowledge into two jealously competing camps, one material and one spiritual.** Since modern evidence tells us that the truth about reality lies somewhere between, we can expect that neither scientists nor clergymen will take the lead in doing afterlife research. Knowledge of what happens at death is going to be a grassroots breakthrough, spreading from person to person rather than coming down from experts.

Terminology

You will notice that throughout this book I refer to the end-of-life transition as “death,” and to people who have transitioned as “dead people.” I do this deliberately. In fact, the change that we call death is a passage as easy as a sneeze into a reality far happier and even more alive than this one is, so it is past time for us to stop being afraid to use the word. At worst, death is a brief illusion of separation from some of those we love; at best, it is a glorious new freedom. But it is not in any sense an ending. So let’s use the word. It is time to stop fearing it.

Religion vs. Science vs. Religion vs. Science

Let’s talk briefly about science and religion, not to dismiss them, but rather to understand why neither has taken the lead in this research. After all, as one physicist told me, whoever proves that there is life after death is going to win a Nobel Prize, so if there were anything to it, there would be scientists working on it now; and as one clergyman said to me firmly, there is no need to investigate the afterlife when the Lord Jesus Christ said it all. *Mainstream scientists believe that there is nothing after death to discover, while mainstream clergymen are sure that there is nothing more to know.*

Mainstream Science

Physics is the core science, on which the other scientific disciplines are based, and until about a hundred years ago, it made steady and impressive

progress. Then, early in the 20th century, physics more or less ran off the rails when its two fundamental concepts — Newtonian physics, which works on large objects; and quantum physics, which works at the subatomic level — were found to be incompatible. To vastly simplify what is a big problem, since both Newtonian and quantum physics are well-established theories in their own domains, physicists have spent the past century searching with an ever-increasing sense of frustration for a theory of physics that encompasses them both. But perhaps such a unified theory won't be found, because (as you will shortly see) the very matter and energy and time and space that physicists are trying to understand do not exist in most of reality. In a sense, you might say that they don't exist at all.

Many scientists believe in God, but mainstream science's dogmas and protocols have long been fundamentally atheistic. In that, modern science has become a belief-system not unlike a religion. Like other belief-systems, it has its gatekeepers in place to enforce its orthodoxies: its peer-reviewed journals, its university departments, its institutes, and its grants-giving foundations. Together these gatekeepers have ensured that no whiff of any theory that smacks of the existence of God ever has found scientific acceptance.

At one time, atheism may have been useful in protecting science from religious interference, but now it has become an impediment. What quantum physicists have found is the place where the material meets the non-material, and until enough of them come to terms

with that fact, they never will venture far enough to see what apparently underlies everything.

Mainstream Religions

Religions are belief-systems. They are based upon faith and not upon facts; or, more precisely, they are based upon modern faith in a set of ancient facts. There is no room in most religious denominations for any new information, in part because each denomination fights so hard to protect its own cherished doctrines. Recall that old joke about Catholics and Baptists living in separate rooms in heaven (since each group thinks that the other is in hell), and you realize how much each denomination has invested in enforcing its own beliefs.

Some of the Eastern religions have for millennia held theories about death which have turned out to be pretty close to what evidence now tells us is true. But mainstream Christianity has not shared the Easterners' curiosity about details. Instead, it has set up a generic heaven as a reward for having followed the rules, and a generic hell as the ultimate cudgel to keep the faithful from leaving the flock. So while Christians believe in an afterlife, our mental picture of life after death is full of clouds and thrones and hell and fire and the terror of God's judgment. Even believing that a heaven exists does little to ease our fear of death.

Our Need to Open Our Minds

Dividing human knowledge into material and spiritual truths may have made sense in Plato's day, but

today it makes no sense at all. Truth can defend itself against error, and if it cannot do that then it is not truth. For centuries, misguided attempts to protect outmoded truths have been a primary obstacle to the advancement of our knowledge. If no one had questioned the settled science that balancing bodily humors improved health or that each sperm contained a tiny human being or that the earth was the center of the universe, then our understanding of what is true would have advanced little in a thousand years. When you study nearly 200 years' worth of long-ignored evidence of our eternal life, you realize how much harm has been done by our segregating two kinds of truth and ignoring whatever fit nobody's dogmas, which is why we won't be doing that here. Instead, we will take the opposite approach, and use both scientific and religious facts to validate and further reinforce what afterlife evidence now tells us. This approach may seem odd to you at first, but remember that what we are seeking here is neither scientific nor religious truth, but rather human truth without either bias.

Overcoming Our Beliefs-Based Anxieties

Anyone who wants to understand what actually happens when we die is not going to get much help from either mainstream science or mainstream religions. That turns out not to be much of a problem, since for the past century there have been quiet researchers of every stripe working to document what has turned out to be a lot of evidence. Their lives' work is all there for the studying. To do that, however, we religious types first have to

make a logical leap, and accept the fact that — no matter what our religious leaders might say — no religion owns God.

Religious anxieties have been my biggest problem. Even as I spent decades in research, for most of that time I rejected anything that seemed to be inconsistent with Christianity. For years I felt stymied, still firmly Christian but ever more certain that the evidence was right, and — like any modern-day physicist — unable to reconcile the two. Then finally it occurred to me to sit down and read only the Gospels.

For those not familiar with the Bible, the Gospels are four accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus. They begin the New Testament, the rest of which is commentary by the Apostle Paul and others. The Gospels are the only place where the words of Jesus are reported, and I found that reading just his words without Paul's earnest interpretations was a revelation. I have included here some of the results of my Gospel study, even though my doing so may annoy both religious and non-religious readers. However:

- **If you are a Christian**, consider that besides whatever you understand to be the greater import of the life of Jesus, his words are consistent with modern evidence for an afterlife. This makes him all the more remarkable.
- **If you are not a Christian**, think how affirming it is that the words of someone who lived long ago and claimed to know the truth about death are entirely

consistent with evidence that first came to light two thousand years later.

It was Jesus who sealed the deal for me. Having first done decades of research, I was astonished to read the Gospels freshly and realize that the recorded words of Jesus are consistent in even small details with modern evidence of what happens when we die. This unexpected validation seems to me quite amazing and wonderful. It would be inexcusable not to share it.

I should add, though, that nothing said here is based on the teachings of any religion. Everything mentioned in this book appears in lay sources; and except where noted otherwise, each detail can be found repeatedly. The Gospel words of Jesus are used here only because they support and further illuminate the modern evidence. To tip into scientific lingo for a moment, what are the odds against chance of that?

The Evidence

The scientific method serves us well, but it cannot be used to study life after death. Most replicable experiments are impossible, mathematics appears to be irrelevant, and much of what we know about material reality does not seem to apply beyond death. So we will approach the study of what happens at death in a different way, by looking for consistencies in nearly two centuries' worth of varied evidence.

Most of the evidence of what happens at death is personal to one or to just a few people, so it goes without saying that no single story — and no group of stories —

can be considered trustworthy. However, when hundreds of such stories are studied as a whole, many detailed common experiences emerge. Here are some of the kinds of evidence that we will be using in the chapters that follow:

- **Deathbed Visions.** Before the middle of the 20th century, most people died at home, un-sedated. It was then widely observed that dying people would be visited by departed loved ones who had come to ease their passage. Recorded accounts by bedside witnesses are stunningly consistent and highly evidentiary. It is obvious that these dying people experienced something that they thought was real.
- **Near-Death Experiences.** Reported deathbed visions are less common now because most of the dying are sedated, but near-death experiences happen more frequently as people whose bodies have been close to death are revived through the efforts of modern medicine. These people often tell amazing stories. No two near-death experiences are alike, but elements of the death process and the reality beyond materiality that they show us are remarkably consistent across the genre.
- **Communications Through Psychic Mediums.** My research with psychic mediums has convinced me that many of them rely on our cues and some may be outright charlatans. But this is one area where double- and triple-blind scientific studies are possible, and these studies suggest that some psychic mediums indeed are in contact with the dead.

- **Communications Through Deep-Trance Mediums.** Unlike the mind-contact with dead Aunt Mildred that we associate with psychic mediums, deep-trance mediums are able to withdraw sufficiently to let the dead use their vocal cords to speak. Developing mediumistic ability to this degree requires long sessions of silent darkness, so deep-trance mediums have been rare since the advent of the radio; but as late as the 1930s, there were people still working who had been able to spend the time necessary to cultivate this skill. Some of what they produced is wonderful. As with psychic mediums, I come to these accounts with a high degree of skepticism. But there have been cases where deep-trance mediums appeared to be in contact with dead folks who gave detailed and incontrovertible validation of their identities. There have been cases, too, where teams of dead people thought up clever proofs of their existence and delivered these proofs to living researchers with the help of deep-trance mediums. The testimony of the best evidence received this way is such that if mainstream science had not a century ago already been dogmatically atheistic, the fact that you will survive your death would long ago have become common knowledge.
- **Accounts Received Through Automatic Writing.** Sometimes a medium can invite a dead person to write using the medium's hands. I have read a few accounts that were purportedly written this way, and have found them to be so consistent with all the

information that I have assembled from other sources that I consider them to be likely genuine.

- **Accounts by Out-of-Body Travelers.** There is a lot of evidence that we travel out of our bodies during sleep, but to learn to do it while awake is difficult. There are some, though, who seem able to do it, and the published accounts by out-of-body travelers are generally consistent with the rest of the evidence.
- **Instrumental Transcommunication (ITC) Including Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP).** Communicating with the dead by means of computers, tape recorders, telephones, and televisions is a very promising area that has yet to bear much fruit, in part because few living researchers are able to devote the necessary time. Occasionally, too, squabbling among living researchers will cause their dead collaborators to withdraw.
- **Hypnotic Regression.** Some therapists help their patients regress to what appear to be past lives, and thereby help them to resolve certain psychological ailments. Inevitably, it has occurred to a few therapists to regress their patients to periods between lives. In doing so, they have uncovered some fascinating — and consistent — information.
- **Past-Life Memories of Children.** Some toddlers appear to have memories of recent past lives that ended violently. These cases seem to me to be less evidence for general reincarnation than they are evidence of what might perhaps go wrong in the process of transition.

- **Ghosts and Spirit Possession.** Ghost stories are as old as humanity, as is the idea that living people can be possessed by spirits of the dead. Can the dead appear as ghosts? Can possession happen? Modern researchers have some fascinating answers.
- **Quantum Physics and Consciousness Research.** Here I am so far beyond my depth that I need a maximum-length snorkel, but fortunately there are physicists and other researchers who have done the work for us. I taught myself a little quantum physics because the picture that I had built of what appeared to be a greater reality was so consistent and sensible that I thought there had to be scientific support for it. My brief study suggests that indeed there is.

The after-death realms are surprisingly culturally dependent, and since all the death-related evidence that is readily available in English has British or North American sources, you can assume that what is said in this book will be most relevant to Americans, Canadians, and Britons. Evidence tells us, however, that each earth culture has its own similar after-death reality. The same sort of easy and happy survival of death is our universal birthright.

Using the Evidence

When I first began to do afterlife research, I assumed that much of what I read would be the product of wishful fantasies or the urge to make a buck. I guessed that at least half of published afterlife accounts would turn out to be inconsistent nonsense, and I thought that I

could live with that. If a few of these accounts were consistent with other accounts from sources widely separated in time and place, then perhaps I could use those precious few bits to construct a picture of our after-death reality. What astounds me now is that after having read many hundreds of books, some as much as a century old, I have found that fewer than one percent of published afterlife accounts seem to be inconsistent with the glorious picture being painted by all the rest. I find it equally amazing that I cannot recall reading any duplicated death-related stories. I have noticed no copying among books whatsoever. The experience has been like reading hundreds of accounts by a century's worth of travelers to Fiji. They had widely differing experiences, true, but clearly they all were describing the same complex and fascinating place.

This book is based on all those accounts, detailed in more than a century's worth of books, to paint for you the glorious and downright thrilling experience that dying can be. You will live your life more productively once you understand that it never will end. And even though some of this information is by now well documented and widely known, you will be surprised to see how much more evidence there is for your own eternal life.

So I ask you to drop your pro-materiality bias temporarily. Please drop your pro-religion bias, too: if you are a Christian, you know that Jesus wants you to seek and he is glad when you find. Let's work together to look at the evidence with thoughtfulness and an open mind. This is a big topic, but it is not so big that we

cannot understand it. And understanding it turns out to be important.

Our Need to Know the Truth

The mortality rate is one hundred percent. As you read these words, people of every age are breathing their last in hospitals and huts, and many of them are dying in terrible ignorance and fear. Those who love them are ignorant and fearful, too, since from this side death looks like the permanent ending of a human life.

But afterlife evidence lets us study death from the opposite direction, and what we learn is that for most of us, death is an easy and enjoyable transition. It doesn't hurt and it is not frightening. After death, most of us find ourselves in a beautiful, solid, earth-like place, young and healthy in the arms of family and friends and surrounded by love. Death is the best time of your life! Wouldn't it be good if more people knew that?

It would be good, too, if more people knew that death is not fun for everyone. As you will see, the way we live our lives turns out to be extremely important, and the guidelines for how we should be living are as simple as they are absolute. Shouldn't people know that now, while they still can influence the happiness of their after-death forever?

Earth-life feels very different once you realize its purpose. Abundant afterlife evidence tells us that we are here to learn to forgive completely and learn to love others universally. That is the reason for your life. And when you see each day's annoyances as more

opportunities to learn to forgive, and when you regard each creepy co-worker and each mass-murderer as another lesson in love, you see the world quite differently.

The Risk of Becoming Earthbound

There is a third reason, too, why it is important that everyone know the truth about death. Not only does it take away fear, and not only does it teach us how to live, but each one who knows the truth about death is one less potential earthbound spirit.

It is only recently that I have come to accept the possibility that some of the dead wind up as long-term earthbound spirits. The whole idea seemed too much like ghost stories told around a campfire, and it took a while for me to accept that this gentle afterlife process based in love might have an unfortunate glitch. But the evidence for earthbound spirits is strong, and now that I understand enough of the science of death to see how it might happen, I only wonder how common it is, and how many problems that we think are mental illness might be caused by earthbound spirits. This might be a terrible problem, or it might not be much of a problem. But if it happens to you, becoming earthbound is a tragedy that could linger for centuries.

Using the Evidence

One reason why so few have tried to write about the experience of dying is that to do it thoroughly, you first must investigate a great many fields and accumulate

a lot of knowledge, much of which relates slightly to death but is not directly on point. Think of the process as similar to figuring out how to build a house. You cut down trees and make planks and start to fit them together, only to realize that before you do anything you first must learn about engineering to keep the house from falling down, and also metalworking to make nails, cement and brick-working, and — yes! — even plumbing and wiring. So you dutifully study all these topics. Then when at last the house is standing, you slap your head as you realize that still you have to learn about paint and wallpaper, bathroom fixtures, electric lights, and glass for windows before you can build and step inside a house that is real enough to let you study the front door.

This book is about just the death experience. Therefore, in writing this book, I have had to put aside most of the things that I have learned in doing this research. These are some of the topics that we will not be much discussing here, even though afterlife-related evidence gives us fascinating information about each of them:

- Predestination and free will
- Whether and how and by whom our lives and deaths are planned beforehand
- The power of our minds to affect reality
- The relationships among our conscious, subconscious, and eternal minds
- Reincarnation
- Angelic beings

- Pixies, fairies, and sprites
- Spirit guides
- Guardian angels
- Ascended beings
- Spirit possession
- After-life progress
- Human history
- Religious history
- Quantum-based sciences
- Evolution
- Intelligent design
- Life on other planets and in other dimensions
- The nature of life
- The nature of God
- How the universe began
- How the universe will end

The more afterlife-related evidence you read, the more these other topics may seize your mind, and I wish you many happy years of study. Evidence now is so much more available than it has been for most of my life that the research that took me decades is likely to take you just a few years. The answers to your questions are there, and those answers will be consistent with this brief summary of just the parts that bear upon the death experience.

Debunkers

A few credentialed scientists have turned their attention to studying death-related phenomena. Some, like Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, Raymond Moody, Gary Schwartz, and Brian Weiss, have concentrated their efforts in death-related fields and have made important contributions. Others, however, have couched themselves as defenders of pure atheistic science and have set about trying to debunk the evidence. Years ago, I read debunker literature as part of my research, but I soon realized that debunkers are not working as serious scientists.

Debunkers begin with the fundamental premises that God does not exist and there is no such thing as an extra-material reality. So they do not open-mindedly investigate afterlife phenomena, but rather they try to disable what they perceive to be the most important claims being made in an effort to debunk the whole idea of an afterlife.

Two quick examples will show you how it's done:

- **Tunnel Vision.** Many near-death experiences include seeing what seems to be a whirling dark tunnel with a bright light at the end. So debunkers have spun volunteers in a centrifuge or otherwise severely stressed their brains, and have found that before they lose consciousness, some volunteers suffer a narrowing of their visual field and see sparks of light. Therefore, say debunkers, near-death experiences must be the product of a dying brain! Of course, these scientists never mention the fact that many near-death

experiences happen when brains are demonstrably not dying. Nor do they tell us how brains in flat-line can turn out to have been so active. And surely they don't tell us why brains in distress would produce consistent visions of fields and flowers and meetings with dead relatives, including relatives the dying person did not know were dead.

- **Out-of-Body Illusions.** In August of 2007, the British journal *Nature* summarized an experiment simulating out-of-body experiences. Subjects were rigged to view the output of a camera pointed at their backs. When experimenters then touched them in specific ways, the subjects described a feeling of being out of their bodies. What this might have to do with decades of actual out-of-body experiments that include long-distance validations is uncertain.

Debunking cannot be a useful strategy because none of the classes of evidence on which this book is based can be debunked entirely. Oh, you may prove that one medium is a charlatan or that someone has fabricated a near-death experience. But there are by now many thousands of afterlife-related reports, each of them so consistent with the others of its type (even when collusion is impossible) that nobody with an open mind can deny that we are seeing something real. To disprove the theory that all crows are black, it is necessary to find only one white crow (as early researcher William James famously said). Today the white crows fill the sky.

A Word About Reality

I am tempted to say cheekily, “There is no reality,” but that is not precisely true. It is more accurate to say that from our perspective, no reality — not this one, and not what comes after death — can be very well comprehended. We lack the experience and the frame of reference necessary to understand what we are seeing, so it is important to emphasize here that the information in this book is expressed in human terms. What happens after death may be more real than the reality that you see around you now, but what we can know of it from here is only a narrow and human-centered glimpse.

So let us look at dying now frankly and freely, without being hobbled by religious fears or by atheistic constraints. As Sir William Barrett said in his seminal book, *Death-Bed Visions* (1926, pp. 5-6):

In considering the value of evidence for supernormal phenomena the importance of the cumulative character of the evidence must be taken into account. It is the undesigned coincidence of witnesses who have had no communication with each other that constitutes its value taken as a whole, whilst a single case may be doubtful or disproved, just as a single stick may be broken but a faggot may defy all our attempts at breaking a bundle of sticks.

On this point Archbishop Whately has some admirable remarks on the value of testimony. He states: “It is evident that when many coincide in their testimony (where no previous concert can

have taken place), the probability resulting from this concurrence does not rest on the supposed veracity of each considered separately, but on the improbability of such an agreement taking place by chance. For though in such a case each of the witnesses should be considered as unworthy of credit, and even much more likely to speak falsehood than truth, still the chances would be infinite against their all agreeing in the same falsehood.”

Our present seemingly solid reality makes it hard for many of us to believe that an equally solid and real afterlife is possible. I needed to figure out some of the science underlying our going from here to there before I could trust the afterlife evidence, and the results of my dabbling in death-related science are summarized for you in the next four chapters. Of course, if you don't share my need for some scientific grounding first and you want only to know about the fun of dying, feel free to skip ahead to Chapter Six.

Either way, thanks to Sir William and so many others, let us together part the veil. . . .