

A guided tour through an experience of death

Try this contemplation, but don't really die while reading it!

You're sitting, reading a wonderful book about spirituality, when suddenly, unexpectedly, you feel a pain in your chest and fall to the ground. At first, you have a sense of shock, but then a warm comforting feeling comes over you. You feel light and buoyant, as you rise up softly from the ground without making any effort to move your muscles.

This sensation feels somewhat familiar, yet you're experiencing some confusion about what exactly is happening. Floating above your physical body, you realize that you have stepped out of that body as you may have disrobed after a long night of dancing. The body that you thought was "you" is now lying on the ground, without you.

The most amazing part of this experience is not the realization that you're not the body, but realizing that you weren't aware of this fact throughout your life. You — the you that you are right now — know this as the most obvious truth. You aren't the body, and you never were. You have known this before. How did you forget again and again? You almost want to laugh at yourself for being so silly. You're now able to understand so much more about life than you had ever imagined.

You feel as though you've awakened from a dream that was filled with delusions and misunderstandings. "How could I have forgotten again?" you cry — not out loud but with your entire being. You no longer have the use of your physical body's organs of expression or perception, yet you're still able to perceive and express.

You don't know whether to laugh or cry. You look down at your body and see it lying there, unconscious. You have a tenderness toward it — a recognition of the heart, a reminiscent interest that one would have upon seeing an old childhood house or a favorite toy of the past that you've outgrown.

Your soul begins to rise higher and higher, passing easily through floors and ceilings of so-called density. The atoms of these physical obstacles are filled with space through which your subtle body flows like airy liquid flowing around rocks in a babbling brook. You move higher and higher into the sky, through the atmosphere, and into the black of space. You understand that this blackness is the same dark space of consciousness that has always existed within your being.

You're able to see so much light and energy scintillating through this so-called blackness. As you move into this mass of light, you feel the particles of your being pulled apart as they expand to fill the entire space. This happens so quickly and smoothly that you would never have imagined how naturally you could fill the entire universe.

For the first time, you truly understand spiritual teachings that you'd heard during your time on earth: "I and my Father are one." "Thou art That." "I am Brahman (the universal absolute)." "The Kingdom of God lies within you."

Your knowledge expands to fit into the universal knowledge, just as a hand fits into the perfect glove. Your limited powers expand back into their universal powers. Your limited ability to do or not do some things expands into perfect omnipotence. Your limited knowledge becomes omniscient universal awareness. The time and space you had lived in is now revealed to be merely a construct of the mind, as you become all-pervasive and eternal.

Without ears, you hear divine music — the music of the spheres — being played inside of you. Your will is merged and enfolded into the Universal Will, just as a drop of maple syrup merges into a full glass of water. One drop fills the entire glass. You are free! You fly unencumbered, moving through the space of universal consciousness without moving at all, because you already fill the entirety of creation. This experience is what the Indian scriptures refer to as *Sat-chit-ananda*: perfect existence (*sat*), consciousness (*chit*), and bliss (*ananda*). *Sat* also means truth — truth and existence. You now know that ultimate truth flows, and forever has and will flow through all existence. Existence itself is truth.

You have become the great power and truth of this universe. All is well. All is as it should be right now — and right now is all there is. There is nothing to ask for, nothing to do. There is only the awareness of *I am*. Instead of the pulsing of blood running through your veins, there is a throb of “I am, I am, I am,” pulsating through your entire universal being. Take a moment and rest in this infinite space.

Now, remember that you are still here in this physical world, reading this book and quite alive in your body.

Look at your life and your priorities with this heightened understanding. Infuse your life with the existence, consciousness, and bliss that you were imagining just moments ago.

Bring the light of this higher awareness into the situations you face. Bring detachment and reality back into the circumstances of your life. Bring your free spirit back with you. Know that you can soar through these high spaces even within your own body.

Never forget: That higher experience is you. Thou art *That* — no matter what! Thou art *That* even if you get into an argument with someone or make a mistake and then feel guilty. Thou art *That* even if you have bad habits and bad manners or good habits and good manners. Those are just mental images projected onto the movie screen of this world. The truest part of you can sit back and watch, enjoying the show — laughing with yourself, crying with yourself, but always knowing that when the show is over you get to come home.

Famous last words

Here are some inspiring words spoken during the last moments of life by insightful folks:

- "The hour I have long wished for is now come."
—Teresa of Avila
- "I have been dying for twenty years, now I am going to live."
—James D. Burns
- "Let us cross the river and rest in the shade."
—Stonewall Jackson
- "If this is death, it is easier than life."
—Robert Louis Stevenson
- "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown, where no disturbance can take place."
—Charles I of England (last words on the scaffold)
- "Dying is a wild night and a new road."
—Emily Dickinson
- "This is the last of earth! I am content."
—John Quincy Adams
- "I shall hear in heaven."
—Ludwig van Beethoven (who was deaf)
- "I am going to that country which I have all my life wished to see."
—William Blake
- "If I had the strength to hold a pen, I would write down how easy and pleasant it is to die."
—William Hunter
- "It is very beautiful over there."
—Thomas Edison