

# Breaking into Light

by Tarron Estes

I have always been fascinated with death and the stories associated with “going home” and “returning to the Light.” When I was very young, the paintings of Christ surrounded by a full body halo magnetized me. I imagined that God was Light. My longing to get closer to this light was stronger than anything I knew, and of course, at that time, inexpressible. The only reason I wanted to go outside and play was to see the sun hitting a leaf wet with dew and sending off rainbows of light, or to see a shaft of light falling through the limbs of trees.

I would practice feeling my skin as porous, the edges of what I called “myself” disappearing, so that I could be this light. Even though I had no words for this then, deep in the cells of my physical body, somewhere inside each of these living mysteries, I knew that Light, God, and Death were encoded within me; these were my holy trinity. It was death that seemed to hold a key to this special, subtle aspect of being human. Despite death’s association with that “final exit,” it became the focus of my longing. If death could get me closer to the Light, I wanted to go there.

Later in my teens, my fascination with death expanded as I learned more about its magical power as a portal of access to the Light. My father was a devout Christian, whose love for reading brought him to the works of the late Rev. D.H. Moody. One day I found my dad’s copy of *Life after Life* by Dr. Moody and started reading it because the cover showed a person drifting off a hospital bed into a portal of light.

I was hooked! Sitting on my grandmother’s couch, I read the entire book over the weekend while she brought me meals and cookies and made sure I stayed alive!

Published in 1975, *Life after Life* focuses public attention on the near-death experience (NDE) like never before. Moody recorded and compared the experiences of 150 people who had died, or almost died, and then recovered. In his book he describes the results of decades of inquiry into the NDE phenomena and outlines nine elements that generally occur to an individual during an NDE.

*A strange sound:* A buzzing or ringing noise while having the sense of being dead.

*Peace and painlessness:* Dying people may be in intense pain, but as soon as they leave the body, the pain vanishes and they experience peace.

*Out-of-body experience:* A dying person often has the sensation of rising up and floating above his or her own body, watching as a medical team is at work. There is the feeling of being in a spiritual body that has been described as a living energy field.

*The tunnel experience:* Being drawn into darkness through a tunnel at an extremely high speed, until reaching a realm of radiant, golden-white light. Although those experiencing an NDE sometimes report feeling scared, they do not sense themselves on the way to hell or that they fell into it.

*Rising rapidly into the heavens:* Instead of a tunnel, some people report rising suddenly into the heavens and seeing the earth and the celestial sphere as these would be seen by astronauts in space.

*People of light:* Once through the tunnel, or having risen into the heavens, some experiencing an NDE have reported meeting people who glow with inner light. Often, friends and relatives who have previously died are there as well.

*The Being of Light:* After meeting the people of light, the dying often meet a powerful spiritual being whom some have identified as God, Jesus, or another religious figure.

*The life review:* The Being of Light presents the dying with a life review: they relive every act they have ever done to other people and come away feeling that love is the most important thing in life.

*Reluctance to return:* The Being of Light sometimes tells the dying that they must return to life. Other times they are given a choice of staying or returning. Most are reluctant to return. The people who choose to return do so only because of loved ones they do not wish to leave behind.

The work of Dr. Moody became the single most confirming source of my belief that being human is more than my skin and bones. I began to love death because it could take me out of this flesh into a finer, rarified, subtle reality. During my childhood and into my early adulthood, I felt like Alice in Wonderland who went down the rabbit hole, but I wanted to access the tunnel going up! I searched everywhere—mountains, valleys, foreign countries, teachers, the right food, community, dreams, moonlight, desert, ocean. Somewhere between then and now, my belief about the subtle realities turned to knowing. Along the way, that knowing has come and gone, though the longing remains. It is a longing for death that is life, light that is love.

Now, in my work as a conscious dying educator, I am called to remember this knowing and talk about it. So I ask:

Is there something inherent during the dying process that can transform our experience of ordinary reality,





own beliefs and lost access to the portal of transformation that appeared for them and for the one who was passing.

What if a traditional, clinical education included training in how to validate and support the experiences of those who speak of traveling back and forth between this life and the next? How would this impact caregivers and their ability to serve the sick and the dying if they were introduced to the subtle energy realms listed below and allowed to express their own understanding of them?

Accounts of subtle energy as factual reality have existed since the beginning of recorded time—experiences with angels, devils, fairies, elves, gods, heaven, the void, mysteries, colors, sounds, and miracles—a whole universe of mysterious events during life and death.

It doesn't matter whether you believe in these things or not. What matters is how you use this information to tap into these subtle energies to become fully human, fully conscious and present, integrated with all elements, visible and invisible. It

is about becoming aware of human capacities as caring, healing beings to be of maximum service to those in emotional, physical, or spiritual crisis in life or death.

### *Subtle Energy Realms*®

1. Acknowledge mysteries
2. Be open to miracles
3. Acknowledge unexplainable events
4. Be aware of nearing death portals
5. Allow for the return of the ancestors
6. Validate the presence of departed loved ones
7. Honor the waiting in between
8. Protect the time of crossing over
9. Imagine breaking into light

something subtle and mysterious that is available to anyone?

Do we have to be a special kind of person to experience it, if in fact, it exists?

If this subtle reality exists, are its inherent features within us or outside of us?

Do we have to work hard, study, become saints to reach them?

Is subtle energy simply a myth within our religions?

Do miracles really happen now?

Why do people laugh or freeze up when a dying person talks about seeing God, or a dead relative, or an angel?

What is this subtle energy many people talk about when someone is dying?

Do we all feel it?

Are we attracted to it, like the moth to a flame, or do we turn away from this invisible, altered reality?

Many people are mystified, shocked, or “frozen” when they encounter the mysterious, subtle energy surrounding death. Nurses and caregivers helping people at end of life might witness something mysterious or inexplicable. Based on their faith tradition, they may believe in the existence of such miracles, yet have no confidence or authority to validate the dying person's experience. Caregivers may feel regret, guilt, shame, or confusion because they denied their



Death is an especially valuable time for transformation and healing. Some people say that the veil between the subtle realm and our physical reality is so thin that with awareness and preparation, we can enter it along with the one who is passing. From this perspective, the dying person is like a beacon or a divining rod, receiving and sending signals that connect this life to the next. If we are open, we can feel this enhanced, subtle energy field in the presence of the dying one as the portal

increasingly opens around the time of death.

What is this portal and can scientists describe these subtle realms? How can we learn to access them to enhance our wholeness, our interconnectedness, and our caring, healing ability? Dr. Jean Watson, internationally renowned nursing theorist, has integrated the work of many leading thinkers in the caring world to broaden our understanding of medicalized care and treatment to include healing versus curative care.

Dr. Watson identifies a fundamental life source—referred to as the unitary field of consciousness—that feeds us and connects us to our essential nature of love and compassion. This is a life-generative force field and the web of life into which our human and cosmic belonging to all life on earth and beyond is woven.

It is my experience that the portal of death amplifies our connection to the unitary field of consciousness, allowing us to access this powerful resource for personal and collective transformation. The transformation of human consciousness—the return and restoration of our innate caring, healing nature—is why I am totally in love with this thing called death. It is why I teach transformational conscious dying care. And why I developed the *10 Conscious Dying Principles and Practices* listed below. These, I believe, are supportive guidelines that assist us to enter the transformational portal and the subtle realms during the time of death. 🌐

*Tarron Estes is the founder of the Conscious Dying Institute, [ConsciousDyingInstitute.com](http://ConsciousDyingInstitute.com).*

## *Conscious Dying Principles and Practices*®

- ♦ Increase beauty, pleasure, contentment.
- ♦ Provide emotional and spiritual support.
- ♦ Initiate conversations about the dying process.
- ♦ Practice self-care to reduce burnout and emotional fatigue.
- ♦ Demystify the stages of the dying process.
- ♦ Acknowledge mysteries, miracles, and unexplained events.
- ♦ Learn how to be with intense emotions.
- ♦ Honor other's beliefs without allowing them to threaten your own.
- ♦ Be a steward of conscious deaths.
- ♦ Attend at bedside. No one dies alone.

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