



A Newsletter For Prisoners  
Based on the Conversations with God Material

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**Win or Lose, Surrender!**  
by Janine Cantin

*Just about all of my life, I thought of surrender as losing. One combatant surrenders, the other wins. To me, surrender was synonymous to giving up.*

*But is it?*

*Today, I feel that surrender may just be the most sublime thing I can do, the most blissful experience. I now believe that it is in surrendering myself totally that I may just become everything that I really am.*

*Some of the greatest masters of the world have had much the same reaction to events in their lives. They said something like, "So be it", "God's will be done", "I don't know, God knows."*

*I've believed for some time that nothing has meaning. We give the meaning we choose to give to every event in our lives; to every encounter with every person. But even this is judgmental.*

*If something feels good, I will choose to give it a "positive" meaning. If it doesn't, then it's "negative". Although I can now safely state that most of the*

*"negative", most painful experiences in my life have turned out to be "positives", I am still judging them.*

*Neither of those judgments, whether positive or negative, put me anywhere near the level of Mastery that I aspire to.*

*So what is Mastery, to me? I don't know if there is a definition that everyone would agree with. At this point, I don't really worry about that. I just need to choose my own definition, particularly since Mastery is my journey.*

*Antoine de St-Exupery said, "Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when nothing is left to take away."*

*I think that defines Mastery to me. I believe we all have it deep within ourselves. At least that's what it feels like to me. It feels like if I could just get under all the junk I'm carrying, all the fears, the resentments, the pain and suffering, I would reach a pure, deep pool of bliss. Perfection!*

*tion!*

*This is where Mastery resides for me. In this place where nothing more needs be removed. And it is closer and closer to this place that surrender brings me.*

*Giving up anything presumes that those things have value, have meaning. But if I acknowledge that nothing has any true value other than my connection with the Divine, then "giving up" anything would simply free me.*

*I am who I am, regardless of what is around me. I am who I am, regardless of what I'm doing. I am who I am, regardless of what I'm feeling.*

*I am who I am, the rest is just, "So be it."*

*There is nothing more to say about it. Nothing that needs doing.*

*But, of course, I live in this body so I need to do stuff, I need to move. Some of the things I do are simply for survival —eating, drinking, sleeping, finding shelter, clothing— but other things feel more defining of who I*

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## Win or Lose, Surrender!

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**choose to be—writing this newsletter, for instance, makes me feel very good about how I am showing up in the world.**

**So where does surrender come into play for me? Would surrendering to my Divinity change what I do in my everyday life? It might!**

**For one thing, I don't think I would choose to keep my mind so busy. I don't think I would talk so much (or write so much??). If my attitude was, "So be it" then my mind would be much calmer than it is. I wouldn't need to talk, to explain, to retell comments, stories, experiences. All would be as it is and that would be enough.**

**Have you ever thought that every time we speak, we do so in order to somehow change what is happening in front of us? I believe I need to "speak my mind" when things are not "So be it" for me. When I believe things just might get to be okay with me, if only I can get some input into the situation and change it!**

**"So be it" is hard!!!!**

**I love Deepak Chopra's idea of "Detached Involvement" where we put the best of ourselves in each situation, in everything we do, every interaction we have; where we are involved at our fullest, at our best. And then detach from the consequences, from people's reaction to us. Lovingly detach and ready to get fully involved again in the next situation.**

**That is how I choose to live my life: with Detached Involvement. I don't think this brings me to True Mastery, to the surrender to all that is, to the love of all that is, exactly as it is showing up. But it comes close.**

**So be it.**

## FEAR:

### Immaculée Ilibagiza's Story

*Immaculée Ilibagiza's life was transformed dramatically during the Rwandan genocide when she and seven other women spent 91 days huddled inside the bathroom of a local pastor's house, as killers lurked outside. Immaculée entered the bathroom a vibrant, 115-pound student with a loving family and emerged weighing 65 pounds to find her entire family murdered. Finding new faith in God, Immaculée now writes and speaks full time, and her book, "Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust," is a best seller. She runs Left to Tell Charitable Fund, which supports children orphaned by the genocide.*

**Q. While you were in hiding, what did you actively do about your fear, knowing that killers were outside?**

**A. I thought about this in church today, actually. What I did in those moments of fear was pray and direct my thoughts to something positive. When I prayed, I spoke the words so completely, physically mouthing them so that I really felt them, saying to myself, "I really mean this." I had so many questions for God in that moment, like, "Are you really there? Are you really the protector of everyone?" I wanted so deeply to understand what that meant, to know who God truly was, and to understand what would happen if I called upon him in that moment. Usually, we pray quickly and don't think about it so much. In those moments, though, I didn't have a choice. I felt so much fear and wanted to understand so deeply what was going on that I focused very intensely on my prayers, so much so that during those times I didn't feel that much fear. Giving meaning to the things I was saying, focusing on really meaning them, felt like the one thing that burned my fear. If I didn't force rules and a structure upon what I was saying, my mind would just drift back to the fear. If I told myself, "Just think about something else," it didn't work, because I was totally paralyzed by fear; I had to really make a serious effort to direct my mind to something different, to something more positive and constructive. It was the only thing I could do to keep my mind out of fear. In those moments of fear, when you can't run away or don't want to run away from your fear but you have to face it, you have to open up your mind and think, "What can I do in this moment?" Most times when we feel fear, it's natural to find out how to protect ourselves, but I kept thinking to myself, "What can I do right now? Do I even have a chance of convincing this man (the pas-**

**tor whose house we hid in) to take us somewhere else?" I wanted to do something, but nothing seemed realistic to me at the time. Once I started feeling helpless, that's when the fear set in, and it was just paralyzing. I asked, "Is this fear just here to destroy me, or is it here to tell me to act?" It's like when you lose your job, and instead of going out and trying to look for another job, you sit at home and don't move, and you start going through all the things that can go wrong, imagining, "I won't have a house ... I won't have another job," and in your own imagination, the whole world ends. This is what fear does. Fear directs you to disaster. At that time, the only thing I could do to block the fear was pray, because it drowned out the negativity inside of me. I prayed very, very hard and tried to mean the words as wholly as I could. And I did mean them, because for those few moments, it felt that I ran away from my own mind for a little while, like I blocked the fear even for a few moments. I felt solace when I prayed and continued to do so from the moment I woke up to the time I fell asleep. And if I said the prayers and didn't mean them, the fear found its way into my heart again.**

**Q. So you prayed to control your mind and it overrode the intensity of the fear?**

**A. I had to exert almost a physical effort when I felt the fear arise. Even in daily life, when we get into negative thinking, we have to direct our mind to something else, but sometimes just thinking alone doesn't get you out of it. Sometimes you need to look at something written down or listen to something directly through your ears. When you're crippled by fear, you can't even make yourself think of anything else, because your feelings are so intense. Directing yourself out of your own**

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## HEAVEN IS REAL: A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE AFTERLIFE

*Newsweek*

Oct 8, 2012 1:00 AM EDT

When a neurosurgeon found himself in a coma, he experienced things he never thought possible—a journey to the after-life.

As a neurosurgeon, I did not believe in the phenomenon of near death experiences. I grew up in a scientific world, the son of a neurosurgeon. I followed my father's path and became an academic neurosurgeon, teaching at Harvard Medical School and other universities. I understand what happens to the brain when people are near death, and I had always believed there were good scientific explanations for the heavenly out-of-body journeys described by those who narrowly escaped death.

The brain is an astonishingly sophisticated but extremely delicate mechanism. Reduce the amount of oxygen it receives by the smallest amount and it will react. It was no big surprise that people who had undergone severe trauma would return from their experiences with strange stories. But that didn't mean they had journeyed anywhere real.

Although I considered myself a faithful Christian, I was so more in name than in actual belief. I didn't begrudge those who wanted to believe that Jesus was more than simply a good man who had suffered at the hands of the world. I sympathized deeply with those who wanted to believe that there was a God somewhere out there who loved us unconditionally. In fact, I envied such people the security that those beliefs no doubt provided. But as a scientist, I simply knew better than to believe them myself.

In the fall of 2008, however, after seven days in a coma during which the human part of my brain, the neocortex, was inactivated, I experienced something so profound that it gave me a scientific reason to believe in consciousness after death.

I know how pronouncements like mine sound to skeptics, so I will tell my story with the logic and language of the scientist I am.

Very early one morning four years ago, I

awoke with an extremely intense headache. Within hours, my entire cortex—the part of the brain that controls thought and emotion and that in essence makes us human—had shut down. Doctors at Lynchburg General Hospital in Virginia, a hospital where I myself worked as a neurosurgeon, determined that I had somehow contracted a very rare bacterial meningitis that mostly attacks newborns. E. coli bacteria had penetrated my cerebrospinal fluid and were eating my brain.

When I entered the emergency room that morning, my chances of survival in anything beyond a vegetative state were already low. They soon sank to near non-existent. For seven days I lay in a deep coma, my body unresponsive, my higher-order brain functions totally offline.

Then, on the morning of my seventh day in the hospital, as my doctors weighed whether to discontinue treatment, my eyes popped open.

### Photos: Patients Draw Life-After-Death Experiences



*'You have nothing to fear.' 'There is nothing you can do wrong.' The message flooded me with a vast and crazy sensation of relief. (Photo illustration by Newsweek; Source: Buena Vista Images-Getty Images)*

There is no scientific explanation for the fact that while my body lay in coma, my

mind—my conscious, inner self—was alive and well. While the neurons of my cortex were stunned to complete inactivity by the bacteria that had attacked them, my brain-free consciousness journeyed to another, larger dimension of the universe: a dimension I'd never dreamed existed and which the old, pre-coma me would have been more than happy to explain was a simple impossibility.

But that dimension—in rough outline, the same one described by countless subjects of near-death experiences and other mystical states—is there. It exists, and what I saw and learned there has placed me quite literally in a new world: a world where we are much more than our brains and bodies, and where death is not the end of consciousness but rather a chapter in a vast, and incalculably positive, journey.

I'm not the first person to have discovered evidence that consciousness exists beyond the body. Brief, wonderful glimpses of this realm are as old as human history. But as far as I know, no one before me has ever traveled to this dimension (a) while their cortex was completely shut down, and (b) while their body was under minute medical observation, as mine was for the full seven days of my coma.

All the chief arguments against near-death experiences suggest that these experiences are the results of minimal, transient, or partial malfunctioning of the cortex. My near-death experience, however, took place not while my cortex was malfunctioning, but while it was simply off. This is clear from the severity and duration of my meningitis, and from the global cortical involvement documented by CT scans and neurological examinations. According to current medical understanding of the brain and mind, there is absolutely no way that I could have experienced even a dim and limited consciousness during my time in the coma, much less the hyper-vivid and completely coherent odyssey I underwent.

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## From the Outside

### THE FINAL WORD

by Tom Brown

When we truly understand the power of words, we learn to discern anything that has the potential to bring us down. If we don't understand the power of words, then words will control and manipulate us in unimaginable ways.

All words that arise in a person's mind have their own meaning and their own effect. If we think "I feel great!" then we feel great; if we think, "I have a lot of pain," then we experience pain. Ultimately, we understand this process of cause and effect.

The power of suggestion, brainwashing, propaganda and advertising relies on the power of words. A whole society can be controlled and manipulated simply by determining in which words

will be seen and heard. Do we have any idea where all the words we hear actually come from and what the motivations are behind them? We must transcend the power of words in order to be established in our own inner state.

By their nature, words label differences. Black, White. Male. Female. And too often in the language of social action, words like "victim", "oppressor", or "targeted group" can feel like an assault, polarizing "us" against "them". I am convinced, though, that language has the power not only to polarize but also to help us to remember our underlying connectedness.

May we look for words which loosen

our tightly-cadenced fears of one another and listen to the silences between the words. May we look for images drawn from life, images which shock us out of old habits of thinking and living, tapping into hidden reservoirs of tenderness.

Together we may be able to create a safe place where we can be vulnerable enough to see beyond our deeply-conditioned ideas and fears, vulnerable enough to see our true selves in one another.

The consciousness in you and the consciousness in me, apparently two, really are one...and they seek their unity in the expression of words. And that is *love*.

### THE CALL

by Tom Brown

Following our call may mean leaving our past behind us and walking through our fear to the unknown. To walk on despite all the pleas for us to come back is to know we are free from the clutches of guilt. When we are free from guilt and fear, love blooms—love of the truth. Now we will say what we have to say and do what we have to do; not out of anger, nor irresponsibility, but simply because we must.

The truth upsets things, brings down branches that were rotten on the tree, and dislodges stones whose foundations were already shaky. It sorts out the wheat from the chaff in our lives.

So when the wildness courses through our veins, we have not option

but to leave conventional wisdom behind and head for the source—for the source of some holy river, the summit of a mountain, perhaps, but always to the source that is in the innermost heart. The door for this journey opens inward as well as outward, and the inner terrain is often more rugged than any outer wilderness.

We cannot plan for this sort of journey because the entire undertaking relies on the unreasonableness of faith. Faith is unreasonable because it rests on no tangible evidence. It is the faith in the truth that can burn through the mists of confusion, uncertainty, fear, and leave us revealed to ourselves, to a new voice that was in us all along.

This is the birth of a new self, one not conditioned by the past. This is the self who slips through the cracks of the ordinary mind when the sentry is looking the other way. If there is one word that can describe its voice, it's the word AUTHENTIC. It will carry our own true taste, free of the flavor of anyone else.

In being true to that small voice within, we are being of service to others and to the world in the most profound way possible. We cannot know where that voice will take us, but we are affirming one of the deepest and most sobering truths of all: no one else can ever walk our journey for us. We alone can respond to our call.

## LOVE'S PATHWAY

by Tom Brown

What if we asked ourselves what it is we are dedicated to when we meet a homeless person on the street, a child in tears, a person we have struggled with, or someone who disappoint us? Can we let go of our resistance, judgments and fears? Can we find the courage to remain present when we want to flee?

The path of love involves a willingness to go beyond the borders of our experience and judgments. What would it mean to place myself in the heart of a begging child? What would it be like to never know if I will eat today, depending entirely on the hand-outs of strangers? Journeying beyond our familiar borders, our hearts can

tremble, but then we have the possibility of truly making a difference.

We have the capacity to give so much of ourselves, but in most cases we are unaware of what we have to give and the impact we can have on the world around us. One thing is for certain: we should never underestimate the power of our own love.

Remarkable openings can occur when the great sigh of letting go, of sinking through level after level of fear and holding, reaches the heart. The heart becomes restored when we surrender our pain and begin to release the grasping that turns the open palm to a closed fist. When the heart peels back those once supple fingers that

have gradually become frozen into a fist around its fears and attachments, it is at first surprisingly painful to open that cramped closeness. We soon find, however, that it is the pain that ends the pain. Each finger opening in this process of letting go increases our capacity to love and melts the armor into plowshares.

The path of love asks us to transform our own hearts and minds in the moment. It is cultivated one step and one moment at a time, and each of these steps lessens the mountain of sorrow in the world and adds to the compassion in the world.

## GRATEFUL IMPERFECTIONS

by Tom Brown

Nothing brings the worlds of spirit and earth together more quickly than being grateful. To be grateful means giving thanks for more than just the things we want, but also for the things that surmount our pride and stubbornness. Sometime, the things we've wanted and worked for, if actually received, would have crushed us.

Sometimes just giving thanks for the mystery of it all brings everything and everyone closer, the way suction pulls streams of water together. Giving thanks openly, even if we're not sure what for, will allow us to feel the abundance of all that is living brush up against our heart.

True gratitude is the response to life itself. It emerges in places and circumstances where we believe that we are unreachable and irredeemable. In the midst of imperfection, we can pray to be given a grateful heart. Grateful for the opportunities of this day to come closer to what is real and sustaining. Grateful that no matter how far we wander or how many times we stumble, grace will find us and we will be blessed.

*How lovely, Tom. Thank you again for sharing your wonderfully profound wisdom.*

*This essay reminded me of something Neale Walsch said during this past Christmas retreat.*

*"The first sign of mastery is when we move from forgiveness to gratitude about every person and situation in our life."*

*I love that. I just love it. On one level, forgiveness is divine, as we have heard many times in our lives.*

*On another level, forgiveness is unnecessary when we understand why people act the way they do. With loving understanding, how could we judge people for anything they do? We couldn't. Understanding preempts the need to forgive.*

*But on a deeper level, when we trust that Love is all there is, when we believe the Universe is truly a benevolent place where nothing happens if not for our very best, then we can bless all people and situations around us, regardless of how painful, regardless of what they look like at first. We can simply know that whatever is hap-*

*pening to us is for a loving reason. So it is up to us to give them the highest meaning we can and be grateful for having them in our lives. At this level, the need for forgiveness is out of the question.*

*I do not believe that pain is necessary for spiritual growth. But I believe most of us are still at a stage where we only wake up to our mistaken understandings when we find ourselves in pain. Only then do we stop being distracted by the busy-ness of our lives and start looking at everything in a different way.*

*At least that is what happens to me. And that is why I can look at the pain I've felt in my life, give it a higher purpose and be truly grateful for everything that has brought me to this place I am now.*

*I hope someday soon, we will not need so much pain and suffering to wake us up. I believe that time will come, maybe even sooner than we think.*

*In gratitude for all of you.*

*Janine*

thoughts is one of the most difficult things to do, even in regular moments of our lives. When I was going through that much pain, I tried everything to help my mind break free of my fear. I wrote uplifting words on my palm and literally had to force my eyes to stare at it. If you can simply think positively and have it help you get rid of your fear, that's great - then fear hasn't found a way to destroy you. But if you can't, then at least you can say, "I'm going to read this passage that comforts me," or "I'm going to look at some uplifting words," and you put your mind there. You keep digging into the words, trying to understand what they mean. If you find your mind taking you away again, then read the words aloud, so your ears and brain can hear something positive on a more physical level. Sometimes I wrote, "I knew you before you were born and I loved you before you were here," which reminded me that God and the world was larger than myself in that moment, larger than that experience. I also wrote, "For those who believe, all things are possible." And I did, and do, believe, and it was the only thing that got me through. I kept remembering that God created me for a purpose and made the supreme effort to direct my mind to something that was created before me and not coming directly through me. You have to indulge all your senses - ears, eyes, touch - to things outside of your feelings and fight with those weapons. We have to make an effort to fight the fear, because it is our worst enemy. It's up to us to say, "How do I get over it? What tools work for me?" You have to choose how you do it, and only you can choose to mean the words you say. I always used to think, "Why does God want us to pray all the time? Isn't that Faith Is selfish?" I realized, though, that with the fear we live with in this world, you can't afford to just pray halfheartedly; you have to incorporate it into your daily life and personalize it. In our world, the amount of fear that's able to reach us is immense and the temptation to get caught up in that fear is so huge that unless you bring some tools with you, something that builds you up and allows you to fight, there'll come a time when you'll give in to that overwhelming fear. That's why I advise people, even people who don't pray, to have some written words they can really mean - and it doesn't have to

be religious - it just has to be personal and uplifting. Write something down when you're in a good state of mind, and then use it when you're feeling fearful. In hiding, I was so caught up with my fear about how to survive that my prayers disintegrated into "Please kill the killers. Send them to hell." I obviously wasn't in the right state of mind, so what I had to do was conjure up from my memory, prayers to trick my mind into getting away from the fear. I literally thought I was going to die from fear, it was so intense. I always tell people that prayer does have the power to change you, because I remember, in scripture it says, "Forgive us as we forgive those who trespass against us." But I couldn't say those words for weeks because of the fear and the pain. I told God, "I'm not going to say them, because you know I don't mean it," and moreover, "I don't want to say it." But day by day, as I went on skipping that part of the prayer, I gained enough inner strength to say them, and I understood that I was put into this situation to uncover my deepest potential. It was then when I felt a surrendering within me.

**Q.** Did you feel angry at God that this was happening and think, "Why should I even pray if He is allowing this to happen?"

**A.** Yes. I felt so confused and angry and resentful so many times that I can just imagine that moment right now. One time, the killers came to the house, and there must have been about 400 of them inside, and my whole human imagination kept telling me, "They're going to kill you or rape you. They're going to find you - there is no way you're going to survive this." All these ideas stabbed me with fear in that moment, and I remember asking God, "Please help me if you're there." It was almost as if I was laughing at myself, like, "Are you crazy? Do you think God exists in a situation like this? Don't you see the reality is that they're going to find you in two minutes?" In that moment, if I'd given in to the reality of my mind, I would have given up right there. Something inside was even egging me on, telling me, "Open the door. Stop the torture. Don't wait for them to kill you. Go out there and be a man! Say, 'Here I am!' and let them kill you with dignity." That voice

was so strong that it sounded totally normal to me in that moment. I think we all struggle with those two voices: something that says, "Maybe there is a reason why this is happening to me." I remember telling myself, "Maybe you should ask God to help you, even if you don't believe in him right now, ask him for a sign that he is there." I remember asking specifically, "Please, IF you are there, because when I'm lost I don't even know if you're there, IF you are there, I will not question you or why this is happening. All I ask is that you keep your promise, 'For those who believe, all things are possible.' Ask and it shall be given." I said, "I'm going to hold on to those words, and whatever happens all around me - the turmoil, the war - I'm not going to question you. Just give me a sign that you are there." And it was right at that moment when I asked for a sign, and I don't know how this thought entered my mind, but I said, "IF you exist, don't let them find the door of the bathroom today." It doesn't even make any sense in my human mind that that was a practical request, but I said, "If you allow that today, I will know you are real." Well, they didn't find the door that day, and all I could think was, "How can that many people, hundreds of people, miss one door out of a four-bedroom house?" They searched the house and didn't even see the bathroom door behind the wardrobe that covered it. That's impossible even to the human imagination! And many times after that day, they came to search again and again, but they didn't find the door. But I didn't get upset that they kept coming back. I held on to, "You showed me you are real, that much I know is true. I don't care what is going on now." My belief came to such a point that I knew God existed, regardless of what is going on around me. It wasn't going to do me any good to question him in those moments. All I wanted to ask was, "How can I block this fear? How can I get some strength? What do I do?" Don't question who exists and who doesn't; it will only paralyze you. There is a phrase, "Ask God, not as a beggar, but as a child of God."

**Q.** In those moments of intense fear, when you cannot access your inner strength, how do you pray as a child and not a beggar?

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## HEAVEN IS REAL: A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE AFTERLIFE

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It took me months to come to terms with what happened to me. Not just the medical impossibility that I had been conscious during my coma, but—more importantly—the things that happened during that time. Toward the beginning of my adventure, I was in a place of clouds. Big, puffy, pink-white ones that showed up sharply against the deep blue-black sky.

*[Reliving History: The search for the meaning of the afterlife is as old as humanity itself. Over the years Newsweek has run numerous covers about religion, God, and that search. As Dr. Alexander says, it's unlikely we'll know the answer in our lifetimes, but that doesn't mean we won't keep asking.]*

Higher than the clouds—immeasurably higher—flocks of transparent, shimmering beings arced across the sky, leaving long, streamer-like lines behind them.

Birds? Angels? These words registered later, when I was writing down my recollections. But neither of these words do justice to the beings themselves, which were quite simply different from anything I have known on this planet. They were more advanced. Higher forms.

A sound, huge and booming like a glorious chant, came down from above, and I wondered if the winged beings were producing it. Again, thinking about it later, it occurred to me that the joy of these creatures, as they soared along, was such that they had to make this noise—that if the joy didn't come out of them this way then they would simply not otherwise be able to contain it. The sound was palpable and almost material, like a rain that you can feel on your skin but doesn't get you wet.

Seeing and hearing were not separate in this place where I now was. I could hear the visual beauty of the silvery bodies of those scintillating beings above, and I could see the surging, joyful perfection of what they sang. It seemed that you could not look at or listen to anything in this world without becoming a part of it—without joining with it in some mysterious

way. Again, from my present perspective, I would suggest that you couldn't look at anything in that world at all, for the word “at” itself implies a separation that did not exist there. Everything was distinct, yet everything was also a part of everything else, like the rich and intermingled designs on a Persian carpet ... or a butterfly's wing.

It gets stranger still. For most of my journey, someone else was with me. A woman. She was young, and I remember what she looked like in complete detail. She had high cheekbones and deep-blue eyes. Golden brown tresses framed her lovely face. When first I saw her, we were riding along together on an intricately patterned surface, which after a moment I recognized as the wing of a butterfly. In fact, millions of butterflies were all around us—vast fluttering waves of them, dipping down into the woods and coming back up around us again. It was a river of life and color, moving through the air. The woman's outfit was simple, like a peasant's, but its colors—powder blue, indigo, and pastel orange-peach—had the same overwhelming, super-vivid aliveness that everything else had. She looked at me with a look that, if you saw it for five seconds, would make your whole life up to that point worth living, no matter what had happened in it so far. It was not a romantic look. It was not a look of friendship. It was a look that was somehow beyond all these, beyond all the different compartments of love we have down here on earth. It was something higher, holding all those other kinds of love within itself while at the same time being much bigger than all of them.

Without using any words, she spoke to me. The message went through me like a wind, and I instantly understood that it was true. I knew so in the same way that I knew that the world around us was real—was not some fantasy, passing and insubstantial.

The message had three parts, and if I had to translate them into earthly language, I'd say they ran something like this:

“You are loved and cherished, dearly, forever.”

“You have nothing to fear.”

“There is nothing you can do wrong.”

The message flooded me with a vast and crazy sensation of relief. It was like being handed the rules to a game I'd been playing all my life without ever fully understanding it.

“We will show you many things here,” the woman said, again, without actually using these words but by driving their conceptual essence directly into me. “But eventually, you will go back.”

To this, I had only one question.

Back where?

**Photos: Patients Draw Life-After-Death Experiences**



*The universe as I experienced it in my coma is ... the same one that both Einstein and Jesus were speaking of in their (very) different ways. (Ed Morris / Getty Images)*

A warm wind blew through, like the kind that spring up on the most perfect summer days, tossing the leaves of the trees and flowing past like heavenly water. A divine breeze. It changed everything, shifting the world around me into an even higher octave, a higher vibration.

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## SUGGESTED READING FOR PRISONERS

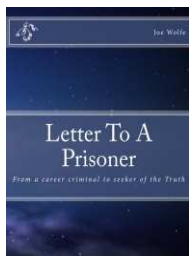
Dear Prisoner,

The list of books below are some of the most profoundly helpful and the ones I would highly suggest for your library. You can request them from me, and if it's within my power, I'll send one or more to you, free of charge.

I could use your help. Save this list and send it to friends or family. I've included the internet links for them to access each particular title..

ALONG WITH YOUR BOOK REQUEST, PLEASE SEND ME YOUR INSTITUTION'S MAILING REQUIREMENTS. This will avoid all the returns I've been receiving.

- (1) A Course in Miracles,
- (2) The End of Reincarnation with The Five Signs, by Joe Wolfe,  
Gary Renard and Carrie Triffet  
<http://TheFiveSigns.com>
- (3) Conversations With God, by Neale Donald Walsch  
<http://CWG.org>
- (4) The Holy Spirit's Interpretation of The New Testament by  
Regina Dawn Akers  
<http://ForHolySpirit.org>
- (5) A New Earth by Eckhart Tolle,  
<http://NamastePublishing.com>
- (6) A Parenthesis In Eternity, by Joel Goldsmith  
<http://Amazon.com>
- (7) The Disappearance of The Universe, by Gary R. Renard  
<http://GaryRenard.com>
- (8) Long Time No See, by Carrie Triffet,  
<http://UnlikelyMessenger.com>
- (9) Books by Dr. Jon Mundy,  
<http://MiraclesMagazine.org>
- (10) Books by Beverly Hutchison,  
<http://MiraclesDistributionCenter.org>
- (11) Time Ocular (A Novel) by Joe Wolfe  
<http://TimeOcular.com>
- (12) Books by Robert Perry
- (13) Books by David Hoffmeister
- (14) Books by Ken Wapnick
- (15) Letter to a Prisoner



*Letter To A Prisoner* is a 370 page book produced by an ex-prisoner with the intention to reach any prisoner with a glimpse of Hope, Love, Light and the Peace of God. It has changed the lives, beliefs and behavior of many people either in prison or headed there. Friends and family can order *Letter To A Prisoner* directly through Amazon

Joe Wolfe, Spirit Light Outreach  
c/o American Chiropractic & Wellness Center  
8951 W. Cermak Road,  
North Riverside, Illinois 60546

FREE BOOKS  
FOR PRISONERS

## • NEW BOOKLET OFFERED:

As of today, I have been allowed to offer you a printed copy of the booklet, *BRINGERS OF THE LIGHT*, that completes the list of concepts found in *ReCreating Your Self*. This will be about 20 double-sided and stapled pages. Again, make sure you are allowed to receive these many copies before requesting *Bringers of the Light*

Neale Donald Walsch along with Em Claire, whose poems are in the book, have generously offered to donate

• *When Everything Changes, Change Everything* (WECCE)

to any prisoner who is interested. Make sure you let me know if you are allowed to receive hard cover books or not.

Sorry, but the WECCE book is out of print for now. I am hoping to get more in a few months

ALSO, you can still receive a free copy of the booklet,

• *ReCreating Your Self*• *WECCE Workbook*

This is a downloaded edition, a 75 page book that can be copied and mailed to you. Please make sure you can receive so many copied pages as some prisons do not allow more than 15 copies or so in one mailing.

THANK YOU NEALE, EM and the  
CWG FOUNDATION FOR YOUR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT



## HEAVEN IS REAL: A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE AFTERLIFE

(continued from page 7)

Although I still had little language function, at least as we think of it on earth, I began wordlessly putting questions to this wind, and to the divine being that I sensed at work behind or within it.

Where is this place?

Who am I?

Why am I here?

Each time I silently put one of these questions out, the answer came instantly in an explosion of light, color, love, and beauty that blew through me like a crashing wave. What was important about these blasts was that they didn't simply silence my questions by overwhelming them. They answered them, but in a way that bypassed language. Thoughts entered me directly. But it wasn't thought like we experience on earth. It wasn't vague, immaterial, or abstract. These thoughts were solid and immediate—hotter than fire and wetter than water—and as I received them I was able to instantly and effortlessly understand concepts that would have taken me years to fully grasp in my earthly life.

I continued moving forward and found myself entering an immense void, completely dark, infinite in size, yet also infinitely comforting. Pitch-black as it was, it was also brimming over with light: a light that seemed to come from a brilliant orb that I now sensed near me. The orb was a kind of "interpreter" between me and this vast presence surrounding me. It was as if I were being born into a larger world, and the universe itself was like a giant cosmic womb, and the orb (which I sensed was somehow connected with, or even identical to, the woman on the butterfly wing) was guiding me through it.

Later, when I was back, I found a quotation by the 17th-century Christian poet Henry Vaughan that came close to describing this magical place, this vast, inky-black core that was the home of the Divine itself.

"There is, some say, in God a deep but dazzling darkness ..."

That was it exactly: an inky darkness that was also full to brimming with light.

I know full well how extraordinary, how frankly unbelievable, all this sounds. Had someone—even a doctor—told me a story like this in the old days, I would have been quite certain that they were under the spell of some delusion. But what happened to me was, far from being delusional, as real or more real than any event in my life. That includes my wedding day and the birth of my two sons.

What happened to me demands explanation.

Modern physics tells us that the universe is a unity—that it is undivided. Though we seem to live in a world of separation and difference, physics tells us that beneath the surface, every object and event in the universe is completely woven up with every other object and event. There is no true separation.

Before my experience these ideas were abstractions. Today they are realities. Not only is the universe defined by unity, it is also—I now know—defined by love. The universe as I experienced it in my coma is—I have come to see with both shock and joy—the same one that both Einstein and Jesus were speaking of in their (very) different ways.

I've spent decades as a neurosurgeon at some of the most prestigious medical institutions in our country. I know that many of my peers hold—as I myself did—to the theory that the brain, and in particular the cortex, generates consciousness and that we live in a universe devoid of any kind of emotion, much less the unconditional love that I now know God and the universe have toward us. But that belief, that theory, now lies broken at our feet. What happened to me destroyed it, and I intend to spend the rest of my life investigating the true nature of consciousness and making the

fact that we are more, much more, than our physical brains as clear as I can, both to my fellow scientists and to people at large.

I don't expect this to be an easy task, for the reasons I described above. When the castle of an old scientific theory begins to show fault lines, no one wants to pay attention at first. The old castle simply took too much work to build in the first place, and if it falls, an entirely new one will have to be constructed in its place.

I learned this firsthand after I was well enough to get back out into the world and talk to others—people, that is, other than my long-suffering wife, Holley, and our two sons—about what had happened to me. The looks of polite disbelief, especially among my medical friends, soon made me realize what a task I would have getting people to understand the enormity of what I had seen and experienced that week while my brain was down.

One of the few places I didn't have trouble getting my story across was a place I'd seen fairly little of before my experience: church. The first time I entered a church after my coma, I saw everything with fresh eyes. The colors of the stained-glass windows recalled the luminous beauty of the landscapes I'd seen in the world above. The deep bass notes of the organ reminded me of how thoughts and emotions in that world are like waves that move through you. And, most important, a painting of Jesus breaking bread with his disciples evoked the message that lay at the very heart of my journey: that we are loved and accepted unconditionally by a God even more grand and unfathomably glorious than the one I'd learned of as a child in Sunday school.

Today many believe that the living spiritual truths of religion have lost their power, and that science, not faith, is the road to truth. Before my experience I strongly suspected that this was the case myself.

(continued on page 11)

## Immaculée Ilibagiza's Story

(continued from page 6)

A. That's so true. At that time, I felt that I was only begging for protection and strength. But as I went on praying, I began to realize that God is like a parent who knows his child. If you're lost and ask for guidance, God doesn't judge you because you're in a desperate moment - he knows the fear is so intense. Ultimately, God is love. It's up to you to seek out things that remind you of something larger than yourself. I always have an image of someone brave, someone I admire who has contacted pain in their life. The message you send to your brain is, "He did it, I can do it." Do not fear to go through the pain; accept it with strength and surrender. Today, we see people lose their jobs, their money, their homes, everything - they don't even know what to do anymore. Those are natural reactions to things out of our control. It's always OK to ask for help, and as long as you're asking for help, help will come. In that very moment, maybe you don't know how it will happen, but God has so many ways of helping us when we least expect it. When I was in hiding, I taught myself English with only the Bible and a dictionary, and when I got out after the genocide, I was losing my mind trying to find a job at the U.N. I tried eight times at the same place to get the job I wanted, and they kept refusing me. It was the only job I wanted, and after the eighth time, I left so discouraged. It was only after I left the office and walked out the door that a man ran after me and stopped me on the street. He had confused me with a friend of his, whom he thought was dead, and was shocked to see me when I turned around. He saw I had been crying and offered to help me find the job I wanted. It ended up that he was in Rwanda at the time! This is just one example of things that have happened in my life that I never could have dreamed of and which confirm the

fact that God reaches out to us beyond our expectations. When things fall apart, it doesn't mean that it's over. Until your last breath is taken, never lose hope. I would have probably died out of fear or given myself up to the killers had I given up hope then. Even at the end, you can still die in peace. Dying is not the worst thing; to die in fear is the worst thing. Fear is our worst enemy. Think of me, who lost everyone in her family, her home, clothes, pictures, up from that, you can come out of any situation. Sometimes we feel special, like, "How dare this be taken away from me?" I realized I felt that way when I was in hiding, without even the most basic fundamental human conveniences like family, food, comfort - and I was fighting for my life mentally and emotionally. I was indignant at the situation I was in.

Q. Do you feel that you went through that experience to realize God?

A. There is no doubt about that. I had to realize that God is real and understand what was truly important in life. Love is the only thing that matters, and if it isn't there, nothing else has meaning. When I think about my parents and family ... everyone died. Our home was destroyed, my school was gone, everything we placed so much importance on was gone. But the night my mom didn't sleep because I was sick, or the time my dad's eyes were red from crying because I didn't get a scholarship, the love in their hearts, the knowing that they loved me, the clothes my dad gave to a poor neighbor - these are the things I cannot forget and which intensify in my heart every day. That is what's real, and that is how it's supposed to be. The little things we do out of love every day, these are the things that make us who we are. More than anything, I think my whole

experience was meant to teach other people. To let them know to be grateful and not to worry about the small things in life. To let them not feel fear because they've lost material things, but only if they've lost themselves. To remember that in the end, what remains is only love. I also think the experience is a reminder that pain is a teacher, that it comes to us to teach us something. Anyone going through pain, if they look deeply enough and ask, "What should I be learning?" will realize there's a lesson within the pain, something that will bring you more joy than what you thought you wanted before.

Q. Does everyone need to go through similar experiences to know God?

A. That's hard to say. I still go through challenges all the time that I don't want to go through, and they're painful. Pain hurts, and it's not anything you wish to go through. But what I have seen is pain that people accept in the end, no matter what, becomes a gift. Suffering doesn't last forever. Accept and trust and realize what you're supposed to learn from each experience, and continue to make an effort to get out of it as honestly and sincerely as possible. Slowly, you'll move through it. Every living person will tell you at some point in their lives, they've gone through pain and fear, no matter to what degree, but I don't think we all have to go through something as fearful as I did. As long as we can learn from each other how strong we can be, fearful moments can be a huge gift if we look at them directly and don't allow them to overcome us.

*"For those who believe, all things are possible"*



Even in your darkness, God can see your light!  
*Be the love you were born to be*

## HEAVEN IS REAL: A DOCTOR'S EXPERIENCE WITH THE AFTERLIFE

(continued from page 9)

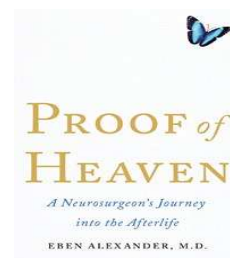
But I now understand that such a view is far too simple. The plain fact is that the materialist picture of the body and brain as the producers, rather than the vehicles, of human consciousness is doomed. In its place a new view of mind and body will emerge, and in fact is emerging already. This view is scientific and spiritual in equal measure and will value what the greatest scientists of history themselves always valued above all: truth.

This new picture of reality will take a long time to put together. It won't be finished in my time, or even, I suspect, my sons' either. In fact, reality is too vast, too complex, and too irreducibly mysterious for a full picture of it ever to

be absolutely complete. But in essence, it will show the universe as evolving, multi-dimensional, and known down to its every last atom by a God who cares for us even more deeply and fiercely than any parent ever loved their child.

I'm still a doctor, and still a man of science every bit as much as I was before I had my experience. But on a deep level I'm very different from the person I was before, because I've caught a glimpse of this emerging picture of reality. And you can believe me when I tell you that it will be worth every bit of the work it will take us, and those who come after us, to get it right.

Dr. Eben Alexander has been a neurosurgeon for the past 25 years. His book, *Proof of Heaven: A Neurosurgeon's Journey into the Afterlife*, will be published by Simon & Schuster on Oct. 23, 2012.



## The Poetry Corner

### TRANSMUTING OUR SUFFERING

by JH  
California

Beyond the whispering warm winds  
of the prison yard,  
where barbed-wire fences are seen,  
and suffering exists.

We all stand in the middle of chaos,  
where uncaring and careless minds exist,  
each living in his own concrete life.

Far from the truth, a seed is planted,  
with common answers,  
to all our suffering, guilt and shame.

Hearing the Dharma gives us compassionate teaching,  
to capture our will and our essence,  
to live a profound and priceless journey.

where dual standards merge into,  
a stream of humanism.

Where we find anger, hatred and passion,  
and compassionate wisdom transforms,  
and connects.

Wealth without work,  
pleasure without conscience,  
knowledge without character,

commerce without morality,  
science without humanity,  
worship without sacrifice,  
and politics without principles.

In the spirit of equanimity we overcome,  
the impurity of suffering.  
Our forgiveness transmutes out guilt and shame,  
and purges our fixations.

Where we can reside with an indestructible fabric  
of compassionate wisdom,  
into a free-flowing life of total interdependence,  
in a stream of humanness,  
A life of total entrusting,  
A life of naturalness,  
with no self-assertive,  
malicious calculation,  
or willfulness,  
a freedom from ego-attachment  
that meets the spiritual dimension,  
of us all, in a kinship of all life.

In Metta  
In Gassho

Do you have a poem  
that reflects the mes-  
sage in Freedom Inside?  
If so, send it in, it just  
may be chosen for a  
future

**POETRY CORNER**



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***Janine***