


WHERE CONSCIOUSNESS



L I N G E R S

Words by Daniela and Ralph Klose

Near-death experiences challenge what we think we know about consciousness. From vivid perceptions during clinical unconsciousness to profound life changes afterwards, these stories cross cultures and defy easy explanation. While science searches for answers, these glimpses from the edge invite us to live more openly, with less fear and deeper wonder.

 A seven-year-old girl – we will call her Alina – was gravely ill in a children’s hospice. She had been blind since birth and was battling a rare form of leukemia. Following a severe fever that led to a brief cardiac arrest, she was successfully resuscitated.

A few days later, Alina began to calmly and matter-of-factly describe what she had seen. She spoke with startling precision about the room she had been in: the curtains, the machines, the colours of her nurse’s clothing. She said she had seen herself lying there and that, “for the first time, I could look at everything with my own eyes”.

She also spoke of a light that “didn’t blind me – it touched me”. She described a warmth, a voice without words, telling her she could choose to stay. In the final weeks of her life, despite all physical suffering, she radiated calm and trust.

Experiences like hers are difficult to explain within conventional neurological or psychological frameworks. They challenge our assumptions about perception, identity and consciousness.

Death is omnipresent yet almost invisible.

It unfolds behind closed doors, in sterile rooms, surrounded by machines and medical professionals.

As modern medicine fights to preserve life at any cost, there is little room left to ask what it truly means: to live and to leave.

And yet those who have come closest to dying often return with stories that challenge our conventional understanding of consciousness. Near-death experiences, reported from emergency rooms, intensive-care units and hospices, tend to follow a strikingly consistent pattern: a profound sense of peace, encounters with light, reunions with the deceased, an out-of-body perspective and an inexplicable certainty that consciousness continues beyond the physical body.

The phenomenology of near-death experiences

Despite individual differences, near-death experiences (NDEs) tend to follow a remarkably consistent structure. Across age, gender and cultural background, people describe similar elements: a deep sense of peace and detachment, an out-of-body perspective, the passage through a tunnel or threshold, encounters with beings of light or loving presences, panoramic life reviews of stunning clarity and often, reunions with deceased loved ones.