

## Explaining near-death experiences and why they aren't always 'blissful'

Near-death experiences, or NDEs, are triggered during singular life-threatening episodes when the body is injured by blunt trauma, a heart attack, asphyxia, shock, and so on. About one in 10 patients with cardiac arrest in a hospital setting undergoes such an episode. Thousands of survivors of these harrowing touch-and-go situations tell of leaving their damaged bodies behind and encountering a realm beyond everyday existence, unconstrained by the usual boundaries of space and time. These powerful, mystical experiences can lead to permanent transformation of their lives.

NDEs are not fancy flights of the imagination. They share broad commonalities—becoming pain-free, seeing a bright light at the end of a tunnel and other visual phenomena, detaching from one's body and floating above it, or even flying off into space... .

Yet not all NDEs are blissful—some can be frightening, marked by intense terror, anguish, loneliness and despair.

...

Like a town that loses power one neighborhood at a time, local regions of the brain go offline one after another. The mind, whose substrate is whichever neurons remain capable of generating electrical activity, does what it always does: it tells a story shaped by the person's experience, memory and cultural expectations.

[Read the original post](#)