

June 3, 2013

Dr. Pim van Lommel
Author
Consciousness Beyond Life

Dear Dr. van Lommel,

I recently finished your book, *Consciousness Beyond Life*. It was thought provoking and certainly much more thorough than I realized the subject of near-death experiences could be explored. Your book covered a number of other subjects I've been studying over the last several years including quantum physics, consciousness and the brain, particularly as it applies to the question of free will, and spirituality generally. *Consciousness Beyond Life* was mentioned in Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind*, which prompted me to read it, and if you haven't yet read Mr. Haidt's book, you would likely find it to be well-researched and thought provoking as well. Certainly both require a degree of introspection by the reader to be appreciated.

Nothing in my personal experience, in my estimation, would qualify as a near-death experience, but I had a kind of unexpected spiritual epiphany several years ago that, as described by the broad parameters of your instruction, would qualify. Certainly I've since gone through many of the same insights and emotions that many of your NDE patients seem to realize and to feel. Your book made me feel connected to them.

My personal experience happened in two related parts. Sometime in late February of 2006 I had an intense toothache which ultimately required a root canal. The procedure had minor complications requiring three separate sets of novocaine injections, the last one being through the jaw bone, and some of the nerve was missed, requiring a follow up procedure. So that night I was at home taking the prescribed medication and experiencing a mind-numbing ache.

It's hard to put the next part into words that adequately describe the feeling, but the next morning I awoke feeling as positive as I had my entire life, as though all of the questions had been answered, or were near the point of being so. Some time the previous fall I had discussed with my assistant and another employee/friend the idea of creating airships with a flexible solar skin capable of powering all on board systems other than propulsion. But we quickly dropped the idea and didn't discuss it again. So when I called my assistant that morning in February and asked him to meet me for breakfast, I was pleased and surprised when the first words out of his mouth upon sitting down were, "This had better be about airships."

We worked on that for several months, but the changes in thought I had experienced were not so much about airships but about God. Over the next few months I was having regular experiences where people just seemed to be interested in talking to me about deep personal issues, and more often than not our discussion would have them in tears. For a time it just seemed like I was emotionally in tune with other people. And I was talking about God all the time, and praying regularly, which I had previously done only rarely, as in once or twice a year. It seemed like God was close to me, all the time, and I just wanted to talk with people about it.

As for myself, I was also suddenly emotionally self-aware, as though repressed parts of my mind had been unlocked. For instance, there was an incident in my childhood, that was really more of an illusion of an incident, that I'd never talked about. Now twenty-six years after the incident I was meeting my brother, two and a half years younger, and sister, five years younger, to go out. This particular day I saw my brother first, and when I asked him if he remembered the incident, the first words out of his mouth were, "That was the worst thing that happened when we were kids." Then when I later mentioned it to my sister her words were identical. "That was the worst thing that happened when we were kids." Yet we'd never a single time discussed it.

In general this period was a happy time, a time of great emotional release. And people close to me commented regularly that it was like I'd become a different person. I'd previously carried around a lot of pent up hostility and was regarded by those who knew me as a bit of a temper tantrum. But that part of me was gone, or merely subsumed into a more rational part of my thinking.

I also during this time had a conversation with my assistant where I was explaining to him, in the older good-boss kind of way, the importance of being honest. I run a successful campaign consulting firm here in Columbus, Ohio, and the jobs we provide tend to attract post undergraduate twenty-somethings, so I often try to impart my wisdom to them. This was the case both before and after my epiphany. So I was going on about the importance of being truthful, and the few exceptions to it such as when someone asks you a question that they don't have the right to ask and not answering would be an admission of guilt, and he blew my mind by saying that he never lied for any reason. I went back and sat at my desk for about an hour, just pondering the idea, and then came back and told him that I was also not going to lie again, for any reason. I've since learned to guard what I say much more carefully, but I believe I've only since lied twice about minor, technical work-related issues where the specific truth could have resulted in unnecessary headaches.

The second part of the experience happened in mid-May of 2006. I was trying to remember the Ten Commandments while home for lunch, so I pulled out a piece of copy paper and the Bible given to me by my grandparents as a child and began to copy them down. In my block printing they nearly perfectly filled the page from top to bottom. And when I finished writing, it was as if the world had taken on a shimmering white quality. It felt like God was there with me and everything was shining, simultaneous bright white while still maintaining color.

I proceeded directly inside to the computer and began to write, from about one p.m. until late the next morning. At the time I could only type with two fingers (I now type quite proficiently), but by the next morning I'd written thirteen pages that I believed were from God. I spent the next four years rewriting and revising this letter, simply trying to explain it the best I could. I still ran my company, with greater and greater faithfulness to the needs of my clients, and raised my children, lived a normal life, but my primary purpose was to share what I came to call Truths of God with the world. It was thousands of hours, and tens of thousands of dollars out of pocket, and I've mailed out approximately 1500 copies to whomever I thought might have the capacity to listen and understand, in addition to copies given out and emailed. I still make an effort to provide it to people, although to a degree it has simply burned me out. It has been years since I've felt like God is close to me, but I remember what I experienced, and now it's more a matter of faith just acting on that memory.

I've enclosed a copy of Truths of God, the finished? version of it from 2010, and the basic premises of it seem to fit well within the parameters of what your near-death experience patients have brought back with them. The things we do matter. The way we affect others matters, and our understanding that we have free will in the choices we make matters as well, whether a person believes in God or whatever understanding of God that person might have. This world can be like heaven or hell, and we have a duty to do what is within our power to make it more like heaven for others without commandeering the rights of others to make their own choices, to experience joy in their own way so long as they aren't likewise depriving others of their free will, their freedom. Protecting the physical environment of the world is a part of that. Really to me it still seems very simple, but trying to communicate it to others has proven extremely complex.

Part of what seemed to touch me from *Consciousness Beyond Life* is the way people with a near-death experience felt isolated from others. While I understood that most people were too locked into their own realities to give it consideration, I naively believed that there would be others out there like myself who would understand the message and be inspired to share it with others. That has not been the case. And while people have not openly ridiculed me for trying to share this understanding, I do feel that trying to share it, or things related to it, has caused people to drift away from me. My feeling on it is that they simply don't want to be bothered, which is frustrating when to me it seems too important to ignore. But I have learned to ignore it, because it becomes a case of acknowledging when some battles simply can't be won, so why put people through the angst of it?

I should have known better. I had an experience back in 1996 that should have served as a warning, and was what I had actually considered a near-death experience prior to reading your book, though no changes at the way I looked at life came of it. I went camping with several friends that summer at a place on Lake Erie called Put-In-Bay, and I decided, after drinking a significant amount of cheap wine, that it would be a good idea to put my sleeping bag out near the cliff face and sleep there. It was a very warm night, with a strong wind coming at us, and I'd only fallen out of bed a couple of times during my adult life, so it didn't seem like any danger. I woke up crashing to the rocks thirty feet below, and it was my great fortune to land on my hands and feet on the flatter parts of some of those rocks. It was initially nightmarish, in addition to extremely painful, but eventually I was able to get my bearings and haul my waterlogged sleeping bag to a part of the cliff where I could climb back up.

The friends I was camping with, who'd slept in their tents, didn't believe me. The next morning when I confronted them with the fact of the fall, I showed them my hands and feet, and all four were ringed with blood blisters. Maybe a third of the surface of my palms were blood blister, swollen and filled with purple blood. I can't imagine what I could have done to fake that. But when I showed them, it was like they couldn't make their eyes focus on it, and they would turn away quickly. Ten years later, when I went to visit two of those friends, and shared my somewhat better developed airship project along with an early version of Truths of God, which I read to them, they asked me, upon getting up the next morning, "Did you really fall off that cliff?" Fortunately they'd taken a picture of where it happened, which they gave me and which I still have, but they were still skeptical. Given the serious nature of the things I had come to share

with them, my claim of rolling off the cliff seemed to make them less inclined to take me seriously.

While I still believe the airship idea is excellent, and that it could be initially implemented in a profitable way as a day cruise experience, I ultimately realized by the end of that summer that it was an idea that was going to be impossible for me to sell. The realization of futility with Truths of God has been harder for me to come by. I had what in retrospect seems like incontrovertible proof that I'd fallen off the cliff in the middle of the night and sustained no injuries, other than bleeding and blisters, and my friends couldn't comprehend believing me. With Truths of God I have no proof at all. So what could possibly have made me believe that people in general might be moved by it?

Some people have been moved by it, but I believe those are people who were mostly like-minded already. Is there any hope for moving the hearts of people without having numbers to justify the reality you can see clearly, particularly in a case where you're asking people to look at the past, present and a future that has not yet occurred, and in light of the fact that most people who care already have a particular closely-held religious belief, or a equally heartfelt rejection of any kind of belief or a similar rejection of free will in general? I've always believed that I would not live to be old. I'm fatalistic in that sense, and not because I would choose it to be so. Yet, like most of your near-death experience patients, I have no fear of dying other than concern for my wife and children and how they'll get by. But for the most part it has been my belief, and particularly since 2006, that we can change the future by our beliefs, our words and our actions. So the last seven years have seemed to a degree like one long exercise in futility.

You probably get numerous letters of this nature, and I hope this one well fits into your file somehow. There must be hundreds of people who have written Truths of God who came to much the same conclusions that I believe were revealed to me who are likewise frustrated, and you must have no doubt encountered a few of them. I deeply appreciate how you have continued to further your research based, at least in some part, on evidence despite the general ridicule of the scientific community. It gives me the sense that you can at least appreciate to a degree what continues to drive me, for instance to send this letter to you. It's the most I've written directly on the subject in awhile.

I am always happy to discuss Truths of God generally as well as any experience you might find relevant to your research. I wish you the best of outcomes in your efforts.

Sincerely,

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If you should be interested, Truths of God and related writings can be found at www.TruthsofGod.net.