

Consciousness studies and quantum theory examine near death experiences.

Unexplained Consciousness Events: Exploring the Possibilities

by Robert De Filippis

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UNEXPLAINED CONSCIOUSNESS EVENTS:

**EXPLORING
THE POSSIBILITIES**



**JOURNEY TO A SPACE WHERE
SCIENCE AND RELIGION MEET.**

ROBERT DE FILIPPIS

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Exploring the Possibilities

Robert De Filippis

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First Edition

Dedication

For my six beautiful grandchildren:

Sara, Matthew, Noah, Sebastian, Owen, and Jordan. May this book be one small step in the creation of a better world within which you can grow to maturity and live a good life full of love, joy, and peace.

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Introduction

Why read this book? Some possible reasons are:

- You've struggled with your faith tradition, want to leave but can't think of yourself as an atheist or non-believer.
- You are an atheist but have misgivings about your beliefs.
- You have strong suspicions there's more to life than we can explain.
- You want to ground your suspicions with more than hearsay and folklore.
- You have experienced a strange consciousness occurrence like a premonition of an event that happened, or communication with someone without the aid of a device, or a dream that became reality.
- You are naturally curious and want to explore the full potential of human possibilities.

These are all good reasons to take the time and make the effort to read and understand this book. I can't promise a complete transformation, but you can expect to come away with a greater appreciation for the basis of religion, the potential for the unification of science and religion as lenses on reality that don't need to be in conflict, a new understanding of your own potential and an appreciation for this planet's web of life of which we are a part.

Let's start with some astounding stories of real live people having unexplained consciousness experiences that defy understanding in what we call our common sense.

Case 1

The following quote came from Abraham Lincoln's dream journal verbatim: "There seemed to be a death-like stillness about me. Then I heard subdued sobs as if a number of people were weeping. I thought I left my bed and wandered downstairs. There the silence was broken by the same pitiful sobbing, but the mourners were invisible. I went from

room to room; no living person was in sight, but the same mournful sounds of distress met me as I passed along. I saw light in all the rooms; every object was familiar to me; but where were all the people who were grieving as if their hearts would break? I was puzzled and alarmed. What could be the meaning of all this? Determined to find the cause of a state of things so mysterious and so shocking, I kept on until I arrived at the East Room, which I entered. There I met with a sickening surprise. Before me was a catafalque on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards; and there was a throng of people, gazing mournfully upon the corpse, whose face was covered, others weeping pitifully. ‘Who is dead in the White House?’ I demanded of one of the soldiers, ‘The President,’ was his answer; ‘he was killed by an assassin.’ Then came a loud burst of grief from the crowd, which woke me from my dream.”

Lincoln continued to be vexed by the dream, which occurred about a week before his assassination. “Although it was only a dream, I have been strangely annoyed by it ever since,” he wrote. Obviously, he anticipated his own assassination. 1

(By the way, in case you’re wondering, dreaming is considered another form of consciousness.)

Case 2

A woman is awakened by a nightmare at four A.M. In it, a dear family friend has a serious medical crisis. Not wanting to wake his family, she waits until an appropriate time to call. She calls to hear her friend’s wife tells her he had a massive stroke during the night. He subsequently dies.

Case 3

A lady is bedside as a dear friend is dying. Suddenly, the room fills with an intense, brilliant light. She had never experienced this kind of light in her life before. When her friend breathed her last breath, the light disappeared. The experience of this light has been reported in

many other similar situations. Think of the Biblical description of Paul's experience on the road to Damascus.

Case 4

A young woman calls her father on two occasions to tell him that two of her siblings were going to be parents before they told her. She was right. Two children were born to her siblings exactly as she had predicted.

Case 5

An elderly lady living with one of her daughters tells her that her other daughter in another state is terminally ill, a fact that was being kept from her mother. Her daughter, confused about how she knew, asks how her mother came to know this. The mother tells her, "your father told me last night in a dream." Her father had died recently.

Case 6

With eyes taped shut and molded speakers inserted into her ears to emit loud clicks, the patient was fully anesthetized. The doctor opened her scalp with a unique tool to expose her brain. She had been cooled to 60 degrees F. Her brain stem showed no responses from the clicking in her ears. Her brain was in total shutdown.

After the surgery, she accurately described the 20 doctors, nurses, and technicians in the room, 17 of whom she had never met, provided a detailed description of the unique tool used to cut open her skull, and the cardiac surgeon's surprise at finding her femoral artery too small to use.

A different genre

This book falls into a genre called speculative non-fiction. The challenge involved in writing in this genre with integrity means doing four things well: 1. Stating the foundations of my topics. 2. Stating my

tentative conclusions. 3. Showing the basis of these conclusions. 4. Clearly identifying my speculations.

All this is as preamble; the following section is offered for your review as you consider whether to read this book or not:

Foundation: Mechanistic universe fails to explain consciousness.

The West's model of reality is based on Newtonian physics with Einsteinian enhancements. This model says the universe is a purely material, deterministic, place where we and the objects we observe are separate and distinct. Where what happens to others has no effect on us. Where there is no meaning or purpose other than what we make of it. It says it is a cold, dead space made up of matter and energy. This model fails to explain the whole process of consciousness.

As consciousness study advances, two primary theories have emerged in contrast to each other: 1. Production theory – consciousness is produced by the brain's physiological functions. 2. Reduction theory– consciousness is universal and a primary element in the cosmos and the brain tunes in and receives only that which we need to function at this level of the universe.

Tentative Conclusions: We need a new explanation.

Being that the production theory of consciousness is understood as a purely physiological process, it fails to explain at least two certain, observable functions of consciousness: 1. The brain, a physical object, interacts with the mind, a non-physical phenomenon and vice versa. 2. Consciousness, a non-physical phenomenon, affects the outcomes of physical/scientific experiments like the classical double-slit experiment.

There must be another explanation.

Key Facts: We do not experience the universe as it is.

Cognitive science and theoretical physics tell us the universe does not function as we perceive it. We are limited by our sensory systems

and adapted to operate in what we call the classical 3 D level of the cosmos. We also know the most basic level the universe consists of a holistic field of probability waves where everything connects to everything else.

What appears to us as distinct and separate objects are temporal-spatial extensions of that basic fabric that last as long as the conditions that create them exist. We also know that we cannot separate the observed from the observer and by this awareness recognize that we create our own subjective experience. Some cognitive scientists have shown by mathematical calculation the speed of the brain alone is not able to create consciousness.

Certain unexplained consciousness events are not possible within the context created by the current Newtonian model.

Speculation: Unexplained consciousness events offer new clues.

A different model incorporating quantum mechanics offers us more possibilities for understanding how consciousness affects the physical level of reality.

Anecdotal accounts and formal records of unexplained consciousness events, UCE's, provide sufficient reason to believe something authentic is happening and this creates the curiosity to explore these events further. A particular category of UCE, the Near Death Experience, NDE, and the enormous body of legitimate research on same, provides the opportunity to examine human consciousness in unusual circumstances to create a fuller understanding of the entire process.

Although some NDE researchers conclude that NDE's prove the existence of the supernatural, this book proposes this is another level of this universe. If this is true, what we have called the supernatural, i.e., those experiences that seem to happen outside our normal way of understanding and explaining them, might be classified as occurring at levels of the universe we simply don't have access to from our classical 3D level.

Caveat emptor – Buyer Beware

People read for different reasons: To escape, to pass the time, to be entertained, to learn, to be transformed. This book is not light reading. It is not for the reader who wants to relax and be distracted from their daily woes. It is a book that can transform you.

It is a serious treatment of a serious topic for serious readers.

We will delve into the depths of our reality. It may be deeper than you prefer to go. And yet, here is the paradox: The deeper we go, the better we see our highest potential. At this level, we get a glimpse of our peak possibilities; we might even call it the essence of our existence.

The journey is difficult. It will take effort to absorb what you read. It will require that you re-read portions to grasp the content.

Don't buy this book if you aren't willing to put in the effort to understand it. Don't buy it if you like your explanations of the world and yourself as is. It will be a waste of your money. It's not for everyone.

But, if you read it and absorb what's here, I promise it will enhance your view of who you are and your future possibilities. It will explain how the universe provides the canvas upon which you co-create your reality. You will recognize that you are connected to everyone and everything else. You will get a glimpse of your power to have the life you want, not without limitations but certainly, more than you think you can now.

We are all integral parts of the universe, a universe of such infinitesimal and gigantic proportions we can't even apprehend, let alone comprehend its mysteries.

Some good news

My goal in writing this book is to convince the reader to question their beliefs about what's possible; to open to the possibility that we do have abilities beyond our fondest dreams.

I hope to legitimize a layperson's discussion about a topic that Western religion and science both consider their private domain of inquiry. I hope to start a conversation for possibilities.

Because it is only when ordinary people like us begin to comprehend that we are connected to and not separate from everyone else; that we are deeply dependent on this planet's web of life, of which we are a part, that positive change will begin. Until then, our futures and the futures of our children will remain in the hands of those who control the tools of destruction. These are the tools being used every day to deplete our natural resources and decimate our planet. And this all depends on a wrong-headed notion of reality.

You don't need to decide if you want to buy at this point. Read the **Free** section titled: **The Challenge of St. Paul**. When you finish, you'll know if you should spend your money.

After you've read it, you might think it's a bridge too far and decide not to buy it. If this is the case, thanks for taking the time to consider this book. I wish you the best.

On the other hand, it might stimulate your curiosity, so you'll want to read more.

Either way, thanks for considering it. For those who purchase and continue, I encourage you to contact me with questions and comments by posting them to my website, www.robertdefilippis.com.

We learn new information by adding it to existing knowledge we already possess. Think of this as a learning ladder. It's difficult if not impossible to skip the early lessons and advance to the more complex without it.

So, to assist, I've placed a note page at the end of each chapter. Use it when you finish that chapter. Hopefully, this measured approach will help in absorbing the information in each chapter that is unfamiliar to you.

Robert DeFilippis

The Challenge of St. Paul

As you begin this section, you may wonder why use St. Paul as an example of Unexplained Consciousness Events, UCE's. It's because our most hallowed ways of explaining who we are and how we function in this mysterious universe are limiting further discoveries. We've fallen victim to the treachery of a silent form of certainty in our religious and scientific ideologies. We suffer this certainty in our educational, social, cultural, business, scientific and religious systems. We depend on them to decide what is orthodoxy and what is heresy.

So, to explore another way of explaining what we consider reality. What better place to do it than religion; a firmly entrenched belief system based on tradition, ancient texts and centuries of mythology, folklore, and narrative. Let's take a closer look at Christianity: To be precise, who started it?

The danger here is you might think this book is about religion. Don't worry. It's not. The rest of the content allows us to look at how we've designed our lives to conform to predetermined models of reality. And how those models don't enable us to explain reality as it is because our subconscious narrative tells us we "already know" how it is.

What is more demonstrative of an entrenched narrative of "already knowing" than religion? Even new scientific discoveries are filtered through religious beliefs. Notice, it says "filtered" through religious beliefs. There is probably no area where people become more bound by traditional beliefs than religion. So, this chapter is an attempt to break through that rigidity to show there are entirely different ways of understanding the same phenomenon.

The topics in this book are enormous. To trim our efforts down to size, we need to have a specific tool to use for exploration. Unexplained Consciousness Events, UCE's allows us to focus our efforts. People having Near Death Experiences report events that are impossible to understand in our shared way of explaining the unexplainable, short of calling them supernatural. NDE's are a form of UCE

Don't worry if you aren't entirely clear on the details. It's only important that you know that an NDE is a type of UCE. The entire book is written to clarify any confusion that remains.

How did Christianity get started?

Surprise! Historically, Christianity was not started by Jesus? This is not a claim by a theologian. It is a historical claim. Just read the work of any legitimate New Testament *historical* scholar. (I emphasize *historical* here. You could start with Bart Ehrman or James Tabor and go from there. The bibliographies in their books will give you more resources than you can use in your lifetime.)

When and if you do read their work, it will become apparent that the only certain historical fact is that Jesus was an apocalyptic Jewish preacher who was crucified for his crimes against the Roman Empire around the year 32 of the Common Era.

He probably had twelve Jewish disciples. The stories of his death and resurrection are the basis of Christian theology. His life before his last three years is a mystery. There is no written record, factual or otherwise regarding claims of his divinity before Paul's letters were written. And divinity then was understood differently from how divinity is understood today.

Professor Ehrman's book, *How Jesus Became God, the Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*, offers a thorough explanation of how the concept of the divine evolved at that time.

In this book, you find that the full development of that theme, divinity, in the written record showed up twenty years after Jesus' death. It was created and propagated by a man named Saul of Tarsus after his radical conversion to become known as St. Paul.

The early Jewish sect that followed Jesus before the claim of his divinity had no reason to believe he was more than an inspired holy man with profound insights into human nature. He was a humanist, and devoted to the Jewish Torah and bringing Jews back to the law before the end times. He thought the end was at hand.

Fundamentalist Christians devoted to Christian theology will argue that the four gospels are inerrant and tell his story with integrity. But a

horizontal reading of the same events in these gospels show the many irreconcilable discrepancies. They will also show how his divinity appeared in the earliest Gospel written by Mark. And then how it evolved over the next two Gospels by Matthew and Luke. Eventually leading to the last Gospel, written by John, who goes into full-throated spirituality. As Professor Ehrman writes, “from (low) exaltation to (high) incarnation divinity.”

While professors know it in mainline Christian seminaries, what isn't generally understood by the faithful in the pews is that Paul's influence was more potent than Jesus' in their theology. He wrote his letters twenty years before the first gospel of Mark. So, two decades of time passed as the stories of Jesus' divinity developed.

First Mark wrote with few references to his divinity and John, 80 years later, completed the official canon with full-blown high incarnation divinity. So, in that eight decades, Jesus went from exaltation divinity, “became the son of God when resurrected,” to incarnation divinity, “Jesus is God and has existed for all time.”

Historically we know the canon was made official in the early 4th century some 300 years after Jesus died. During that period, dozens of documents were deemed heretical and ordered destroyed. But a few survived. An Egyptian shepherd and his grandson discovered what is now called The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, a collection of thirteen ancient books (called "codices") containing over fifty texts.

“They were discovered in Upper Egypt in 1945. This important discovery includes many primary "Gnostic Gospels" – texts once thought to have been destroyed during the early Christian struggle to define "orthodoxy" – scriptures such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, and the Gospel of Truth.

The discovery and translation of the Nag Hammadi library, initially completed in the 1970's, has provided impetus to a major re-evaluation of early Christian history...”²

In these scriptures, Jesus wasn't here to bring eternal salvation. He was here to teach that God and heaven are in each one of us and taught we should love one another. He didn't start a religion and never heard of Christianity. He was born, lived, and died a Jew.

The question then, is this being true, how did Jesus, one of many apocalyptic preachers of his time, influence the creation of one of the most influential philosophical forces in the world; a force that shaped Western civilization? He never wrote anything we know of; probably never traveled more than fifty miles from his birthplace, and only preached to Jews,

The answer is—he didn't. It was Paul, arguably the greatest salesman in the history of Western civilization.

Without Paul, Jesus' influence probably would have died with his brother James and those who stayed in Jerusalem after his crucifixion. Remember, those in Jerusalem were Jews and had no contact with Gentiles. Probably those disciples who left to evangelize would have had little effect on Gentiles. They were preaching to Jews in synagogues.

The historical truth is that Paul created Christianity as we know it. He was the one who preached to the Gentiles and financially supported those who remained in Jerusalem. And without the divinity story, even he may not have been very successful.

The key to Christian theology is the resurrection of Jesus, which supposedly proves his divinity. But the only event we can be historically certain of is his death at the hands of the Romans. His resurrection is a matter of faith and not evidence.

It's difficult to know exactly what transpired in the twenty-year period between Jesus' crucifixion and Paul's conversion experience on the road to Damascus. But one thing historians know for sure is the resurrection story spread as increasingly more Jews began to believe that Jesus was the messiah, the savior, and the son of God. And in doing so, began to form another sect within Judaism. But make no mistake; it was a Jewish sect, more precisely a Jesus-believing sect within Judaism. It was not Christianity as we know it today.

This sect was the very sect of Jews who Saul persecuted and condemned to imprisonment and death. Here, Saul's story gets interesting.

In traditional religious teachings, Saul's experience on the road to Damascus was an encounter with the spirit of the divine Jesus. It was the spirit of Jesus who asked him why he was persecuting him and his

followers. During that few seconds, Saul's whole worldview changed, and he became the Paul we know today. He was completely transformed and became the 13th apostle appointed by God himself—as he claimed and tradition teaches.

Here's the question: Did Saul have a Near Death Experience, NDE, on the road to Damascus? Before you make up your mind, consider these facts.

NDE's³ are Unexplained Consciousness Events that sometimes happen in periods when people are approaching death but do not die. UCE's also occur much more frequently during other times like deep meditation or prayer, periods of high stress or even in early childhood. They may have even happened to you when the phone rang, and you knew it was someone who you haven't heard from in years. You answered the phone, and it was that person calling. Or when you had a premonition that came true.

Speculating in this instance, Saul was under great stress, he was an intense, competitive man with big ambitions. Here, the last sentence in his letter to the Galatians give us a clue to his state of mind, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

Paul's stress was probably exacerbated when he thought of the scandal that a crucified, humble preacher from Galilee should be worshiped as the son of God. Keep in mind; the Romans crucified criminals to demonstrate contempt for them and left their dead bodies on the cross. A common practice done so wild animals could eat their remains to remind others of how lowly they were.

Think about how Paul felt knowing that this misguided heretical Jewish sect was promoting the idea that a crucified, humble preacher, a criminal, was the king of the Jews, the Messiah, the Son of God himself.

But the experience on the road was so powerful a revelation that it became the turning point in his life.

Acts 9 tells the story of Paul's conversion as a third-person narrative: "As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

"The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes, he could see nothing. So, they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days, he was blind and did not eat or drink anything. "— *Acts 9:3–9, NIV*

Different renditions don't agree regarding the specific events that occurred. For instance, whether his companions witnessed what Paul saw or not, this incident was the moment of his conversion. Another way of saying this is, like reports from other Near Death Experiencers, his whole life changed because of a single event that lasted only a few seconds.

There was the light, the voice, the recognition of the being, and the life review (acknowledgment of the pain he was causing other people in his life). All common elements in NDE's. But the most telling aspect of Paul's experience was the all-important, immediate life transformation that occurred as a result. In Paul's case, there were also the lasting psychosomatic effects of such a powerful experience; he was temporarily blinded.⁴

But it doesn't end here. Paul was converted to the very opposite of what he had spent his life trying to perfect; understanding and obeying the strictest laws of the Torah. In just a few seconds he went from that to offering his entire life to the belief that the single greatest commandment is to love. He believed that the traditional Jewish law that guided him his whole life did not need to be fulfilled. In this way, Paul's lesson was the same as that learned by other people who experience Near Death Experiences (NDER's): "Consciously living by love is the essence of life itself."

So, this speculation based on the fundamental facts of Paul's conversion experience is that he had what we now call a near death experience. And if we were to deconstruct all the revisions, perversions, and re-interpretations of Christian theology, we might find the connection between what Paul taught and what NDER's experience today. In thousands of authentic cases, every person learns

the same lesson: learning to love is the most important learning objective in our lives.

As a side note: Later in this book, you will be introduced to the research of Oxford scholar, Dr. Gregory Shushan, showing compelling evidence for a startling proposal: NDE's are the basis of human belief in the afterlife and the core supernatural principles in religions.

As you contemplate this speculation about Christianity's origins, remember what I indicated above, Paul wrote before all the canonical gospels were written; at least two decades before Mark and as many as six decades before John. And as he emphasized throughout his authentic epistles ⁵ his revelation did not come from any other human being, but directly from the spirit of the dead Jesus. At least that's the way Paul described it. My question is simple: could that have been the loving voice in the light that all NDEr's experience?

Is it any wonder why Paul is considered by many to be the first Jewish-Christian mystic? Yes, his mysticism came from his experience on the road.

Our question is, did it come from an actual encounter with Jesus or was Paul reporting his experience in terms he could understand and communicate to others?

In other words, using the name of Jesus because that was the only way he could describe an experience, that like other NDEr's explain, is beyond human experience and consequently beyond common language to describe?

To repeat, if we were to trace the evolution of the numinous in the gospels, we would find that this idea advanced in each of the three synoptic gospels and finally culminated in John's gospel, the most esoteric of the four. Also, keep in mind that the reports from most NDEr's are expressed in culture-based language. The experiences are ineffable, beyond words. And thus, the experiencer tends to use language that most closely resembles their cultural or religious archetypes; in Paul's case, Jesus, whom he had intense feelings about during his efforts to persecute his followers.

Dusting off the interpretational sediments from two thousand years is an impossible challenge. We have a few original texts, but most of the oldest have been translated and re-interpreted dozens of times.

We're never going to know the exact truth about the whole Christian story. But despite the numerous horrors conducted in the name of Christianity, there remain certain core truths that resonate with us all these years later. They are the same truths taught in every NDE, usually described in cultural-religious language. Whoever the loving presence of the light may be, the message is always the same: Love is the essence of the universe.

If the focus on Christianity seems too limited, refer again to the research and work of Dr. Gregory Shushan, a research fellow at Oxford's Ian Ramsey Center for Science and Religion, and the author of the acclaimed *Conceptions of the Afterlife in Early Civilizations*.

During his presentation at the IANDS⁶ conference in July of 2016, he asked a vital question. Did the concept of an afterlife come from religion or did it shape religion but come from NDE's? His research explores ancient civilizations for clues and finds them all the way back to 2350 BCE.

There is simply no question that the concept of an afterlife and the shaping of ancient religions are like the reports of NDE's. It is in the historical record for anyone to see. If you still have a question about the authenticity of NDE's as UCE's you can either purchase his book indicated above or watch his presentations on YouTube.

Decision Time

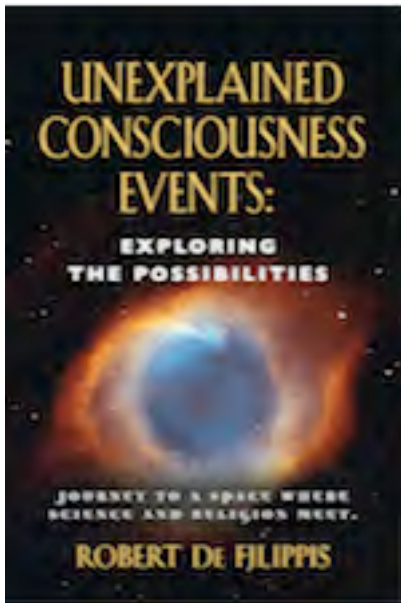
Here's the key question for you: At the very depths of your soul, does it make any difference if Paul had an authentic divinely inspired vision of Jesus or an encounter with a loving presence that all NDEr's have during authentic NDEs? The message is the same.

If it does make a difference and you need to adhere to your orthodoxy, this book may not be for you. But if you can live with the possibility of another way of getting the same message, you have the right book in your hands.

If you decide to proceed, get set for a crazy, exciting ride! The balance of this book will explore these Unexplained Consciousness Experiences from both a scientific perspective and a religious point of view.

Exploring The Possibilities

After all these explanations and admonitions, if you've decided to buy the book, welcome to my world. It's full of wonders truly stranger than fiction.



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