

# Support for the Survival of Consciousness Explanation

## What Happens After Death?

There are two major theories offering explanations for what happens to the mind, self, or identity (“consciousness”) of you or your loved one when the brain and physical body die. The first, called *materialism*, posits that consciousness is created by the anatomy and chemistry of the brain; when the brain dies, so does the consciousness. In the second explanation, consciousness is viewed as *non-local*; that is, it is not localized to the brain and continues to exist after physical death. Researchers call this phenomenon the *survival of consciousness*, postmortem survival, or just survival.

## Non-local Consciousness

In the non-local explanation, consciousness is not bound by space or time. Consciousness can experience reality separate from the body during *out-of-body experiences*. It can access information from the future during a process called *precognition*, at great distances during the practice of *remote viewing* or *clairvoyance*, or from the minds of others using *telepathy*. In addition, non-local consciousness can affect physical matter through *psychokinesis*. These phenomena may occur on purpose or may happen unintentionally and/or during specific states like dreaming. These phenomena (collectively called *psi*; see: <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/categories>) have been studied by researchers who have collected and published evidence that provides cumulative support for the reality of psi “which cannot be readily explained away by the quality of the studies, fraud, selective reporting, experimental or analytical incompetence, or other frequent criticisms” (Cardena, 2018, p. 663).

These non-local phenomena demonstrate that consciousness exists beyond the brain. It is like a signal and the brain is like an antenna. When the antenna is damaged (like during brain injury or disease), it can have problems receiving the signal but the signal itself is not altered. In the non-local explanation, the consciousness signal continues to exist after the death of the antenna/brain.

## Survival of Consciousness

Several areas of scientific research have collected evidence supporting the survival of consciousness explanation (reviewed in, e.g., Kean, 2017). These include:

- children who remember past lives (e.g., Tucker, 2013),
- near-death experiences (NDEs; e.g., Holden, Greyson, & James, 2009; Rivas, Dirven, & Smit, 2016; van Lommel, 2010),
- end-of-life experiences (ELEs; e.g., Fenwick, Lovelace, & Brayne, 2010; Kerr, et al., 2014), and
- various types of after-death communication experiences (ADCs).

At the Windbridge Research Center, our survival research primarily involves studying mediums, people who report experiencing regular communication with the deceased (e.g., Beischel, 2015; Beischel, 2018; WRC, 2017; see also: [www.windbridge.org/education](http://www.windbridge.org/education)) and those who receive mediumship readings (sitters).

Taken together, psi research and the survival of consciousness data from several areas of inquiry collected by an international group of trained investigators over the last century—in conjunction with countless examples of personal experiences across the globe (e.g., Cheung & Broad, 2017)—best support the explanation that consciousness is non-local and survives the physical death of the body.

## References and Further Reading

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