

# *this life*

by *Róisín Fitzpatrick*



**ON A BRIGHT** spring morning in March 2013, I met Dr Bruce Greyson, one of the leading medical experts in near-death experience research in the United States. I had flown from Ireland to meet him at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, in search of the answer to one question: did I have a near-death experience when I had a life-threatening brain haemorrhage nine years earlier?

I wanted to know if the extraordinary event which had such a profound impact on my life and my whole way of being was indeed a near-death experience.

I had discovered on that fateful day that I am, as each and every one of us is, more powerful than we can begin to imagine.

Exactly nine years to that day, on March 22, 2004, my life was transformed in one instant when without any warning, a sharp pain shot through the base of my neck and ricocheted throughout my skull. My head wrenched backwards in excruciating agony, pulled by a severe spasm.

At home alone, I managed to call the ambulance and was later admitted to the intensive care unit of the neurosurgical department at Dublin's Beaumont Hospital. The doctor told me: 'You are having a brain haemorrhage. There is a high risk of dying, having a stroke and being paralysed, and an operation may be required with all the potential dangers of neurosurgery.'

Later, while in intensive care, I felt isolated, overwhelmed and terrified as it slowly dawned on me that my life was in danger.

I had only just celebrated my 35th birthday the day before and I was fit, able to salsa dance for hours on end, didn't smoke, and hardly drank any alcohol. Yet there I was in a life-threatening situation.

I thought: 'Well, this certainly isn't the best day of my life!' And then came another question: 'Is this the last day of my life?'

WHOOOOOSH... suddenly, in one instant, I was drawn out of my body and surrounded by a brilliant light which refracted everywhere into tiny glistening sparks of ignited energy. Simultaneously, I became enveloped by a love that was so real, pure and blissful, oh so blissful... Mesmerised, I realised that 'I' still existed, even though I was not in my body.

Yet I felt more alive, and this place was more real than anything I had ever experienced before. I remained there free-floating, weightless and serenely

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peaceful. The experience of this euphoric love was so enticing, so incredibly enthralling, that I found it extremely difficult to come back.

Sitting in Dr Greyson's office nine years later with the early morning sun streaming through the windows, surrounded by rows of beige filing cabinets all stacked tightly together and filled to the brim with research he had compiled over 40 years, I continued to explain how after that day, my whole life was turned upside down or, to be more accurate, right side up!

Everything which I thought was real before, paled into insignificance.

My former work as an expert in privatisation for the European Bank, my home, car, even mobile phone, they were all totally irrelevant when I was stripped of everything material. I did not even have my body any longer. What I did have was a knowledge that this powerful source of eternal light and sublime love is my deepest truth – as it is of everyone.

After speaking together for long while, Dr Greyson smiled as he leaned forward and said: 'You have something valuable to share with people who are searching to find a meaning in life, a reason why we are here and a purpose for our existence.'

'Many people are looking for something deeper, wishing to find more joy and inner peace, maybe even yearn for a divine connection which at some level we know exists but seems to be elusive and beyond our grasp.'

'Through the journey of your near-death experience you can share how this unconditional love and powerful eternal light is the truth of who we really are.'

I discovered that 'heaven' lies within each and every one of us. Through connecting with this light we can create joy in our everyday lives. Imagine what your life would be like if you could feel and experience this powerful light and pure love in your everyday life?

Or if you are going through challenging times with health issues, work stress, bereavement, financial worries, by allowing yourself to connect, reconnect and stay connected with this infinite eternal light, would this give a strength and courage to navigate life's trials and tribulations?

Each one of us is more powerful than we can begin to imagine when we connect with this eternal light. The only question is: how brightly do we wish to shine?