

What defines a Near Death Experience?

The textbook (Wikipedia) definition of Near Death Experience (NDE) refers to a broad range of personal experiences associated with impending death, encompassing multiple possible sensations including detachment from the body; feelings of levitation; extreme fear; total serenity, security, or warmth; the experience of absolute dissolution; and the presence of light.

The International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) defines a Near Death Experience (NDE) as a profound psychological event that may occur to a person close to death or, if not near death, in a situation of extreme physical crisis. Because it includes transcendental and mystical elements, an NDE is a powerful event of consciousness...

The average length of time spent without vital signs is 5 to 20 minutes; eventually, you get to the *Point of No Return* and game over. On any given day, how many people unwillingly share these same 5 to 20 minutes of time and experience near death simultaneously? Ask yourself:

How many methods of death, or near death, are there?

Who are the chosen ones?

How is it determined who will be returned to their earthly body and who will cross over?

Does the balance of good and evil play a role?

What if...one word or one action could keep you from crossing the *Point of No Return*?

What would you do...if given the opportunity to earn your way back to your life on earth?

We've seen movies like; "Heaven Can Wait", "Ghost", and "Defending Your Life" that present the viewer with possible explanations for these plains of consciousness and what is, or was, necessary for their redemption. But, what if the near death experience served as a portal to yet another alternative plain of consciousness?

What if...the near death experience isn't random?

What if...each of these experiences are prescreened and scheduled for their entertainment value?

What if...your near death experience traps you as a contestant in an "afterlife reality" game show produced by **Near Death Entertainment**?

What if...the "presence of light" common to near death experience; is actually lighting that is emanating from a sound stage?

And what if...

We see darkness for a moment. Slowly, there are random suggestions of light filtering through. Suddenly, the darkness is shattered by brilliant flashes of light splintering into refracted and magnificent patterns.

Light patterns merge and the density of the light shifts into a fully illuminated room. At first glance, it appears to have all the warmth of a hospital surgical bay, but on closer inspection the mystifying ambiance emerges.

Everything in the room is white. The walls are white, as are the furnishings. The floor isn't visible through the soft, white swirling cloud that covers it.

We hear soft melodic piano and harp music and muffled voices. There's a white baby grand piano and large harp in the room with SWEET, ANGELIC-FACED WOMEN playing them.

Rhythmically, we float to where the voices become more distinct and discover...a restless game show audience made up of varied and notable characters from history, just "waiting" for...

"POINT OF NO RETURN"

VOICE OVER ANNOUNCER: (In his unique, distinctive, staccato voice, his ever present accent and cadence, the always blustery, brassy and cocksure anchor is heard announcing)

"And...there you have it, ladies and gentlemen! Proof, that life as we know it is hard and that the afterlife is unmistakably...a bitch!"

"Next time...on *Point of No Return* we'll feature a drowning surfer; an arson-smoke inhalation casualty; a gangland stabbing; a botched suicide with drug interaction and anaphylactic shock; and last, but certainly not least, a bonus...four victim, two-car car crash!

"And this is Howard Cosell...just telling it like it is"

Each week, a very bored and unexcitable afterlife audience must vote for the six contestants they most want to see pass the "*Point of No Return*". The audience gets a thumbnail of each contestant's life and the 24 hours leading up to their possible expiration. From these 8-10 NDE victims, which six will be pitted against each other in a competition for resuscitation and revival of their earthbound lives? These six people must shoot the moon, wield the crack of dawn and put wheels on a miscarriage, just to see tomorrow come. The first three contestants to reach the *Point of No Return (PNR)* are automatically returned to their earthly lives and the last three contestants to arrive will face off in a literal round of "sudden death".

Envision: *Running Man* meets *Defending Your Life* which collides into *The Twilight Zone*.

Recent episodes and audience participation have been lack luster, and as host of the once popular afterlife game show, *Point of No Return*, **MORGAN** has serious problems of her own. She just found out that her Superiors at Near Death Entertainment are pulling the plug, her ex-husband is secretly scheduled as a contestant on the show and another week of low ratings could mean an eternal swim in the lake of fire. Morgan must now outwit the two most powerful forces in her universe -- God and her ex-husband.

In an effort to boost audience participation and ratings, the NDE Network Execs decide to make next week's show a "special edition" episode wherein all ten (10) Near Death Experience victims will advance directly to the "sudden death" round. There, they will have to "Run the Gauntlet" of "The Seven Deadly Sins". In this special episode the audience will be voting in real time, and will literally determine the fate of each contestant as they "Run the Gauntlet".

So, which of these contestants will they vote save and which one(s) will they cross the *Point of No Return*?

A tanned, golden-haired surf bum, slips into unconsciousness and drowns after being hit on the head with his board, during his last attempt at the World Championship Surfing Competition. **MATT WHEELER** comes from a wealthy and affluent family and although he recites the common and often stereotypical "dude" dialog spoken by his peers, **MATT** has a secret. In addition to his almost genius IQ he is a brilliant musician. Will **MATT WHEELER** survive? Will he live to become the research scientist his mother always wanted, the next Yitzhak Perlman or the World's next surfing champion?

An unhappy and crotchety spinster high school English teacher is working late, grading papers. An arsonist sets the school/room on fire...but why? Was it to kill **MARTHA GILBERT**? Was it to cover another crime? Why is Martha so unhappy that she hates her job and the world in general? Will **MARTHA GILBERT** live to see any of her students blossom? Does anyone care enough to save her? Is her survival important and if so, to whom and why?

A foul-mouthed skinhead, as part of a gang initiation must kill a minority, but gets stabbed by his intended victim instead. Lying in a pool of his own blood; will **BILLY RAY MARTIN** recover only to spark nationwide prison riots or will he find redemption in a race for his life? Is he past redeeming? What motivated **BILLY RAY'S** gang mentality or into killing?

A depressed and broken-hearted beauty queen attempts suicide by mixing antidepressants with pain killers; will **CASSANDRA RUSSELL** survive the drug interaction that results in her anaphylactic shock, or will she realize how much she has to offer the world? **CASSANDRA** has no idea how beautiful she is. What could possibly bring such a beauty to such a sad end? Will the handsome and awestruck ER Doctor be able to revive her or will she slip away before his eyes?

And for our BIG MVA finish...we have a spectacular 2-car crash wherein lays four potential contestants. But, which two of the four will be pulled into the game?

To avoid an imminent head-on collision, car number one holds an attractive, aggressive and somewhat drunk publicist who drives her enigmatic and philanthropic ex-husband client over a cliff. Will car number one's occupants: **MONICA (BARTLETT) EVANS** live to get even with rich ex-husband **TAYLOR BARTLETT** or will she forgive him? Will the afterlife audience be convinced into saving one or both of them? How did **TAYLOR** betray **MONICA**? Will we want to choose them over the occupants of car number two?

- As we see car number two swerving from side-to-side on the treacherous mountain road we look inside to see a set of mirror twins fist fighting. Which twin, if either, will live to fight another day? Will it be **JANETTE** or **JANINE VAN GELDER** that's thrust into the game, or will one or both walk into the light? Since childhood, they have always been at odds with one another. Clearly, one is good and one...well, not so good – is it the usual battle of good and evil, or is there something more sinister at work here?

The only way to know for sure is to watch next week's "special edition" show!
And don't forget – we have a special surprise in store for the show's host - **MORGAN!**

At the end of this special episode, four contestants will conquer the Gauntlet and be returned to their physical bodies to accomplish something, two will find love and one will sacrifice their very soul to save that of a teammate. All seven contestants will be returned to their physical bodies and the remaining three's fates are unknown. And Morgan, after successfully running the gauntlet between her ex-husband and Network Execs, will she find both she and the show are picked up for another season?

"The Near Death Experience" and "The Point of No Return" are a state of consciousness and not judgement. On the other side of "The Point of No Return" possibly lies judgement, but the fates of those that cross is unknown to all that play the game.

Key Concepts:

This high concept fantasy could function as a screenplay or episodic programming. The example characters and the circumstances surrounding the "contestants" near deaths may profit from additional back story, changes and/or twists, but the basic concept provides a plethora of programming possibilities. Given the number of ways near death could occur, the people, personalities and circumstances involved in each, these possibilities are limited only to the writer's imagination.

This high fantasy concept could be applied as a tense psychological thriller propelled with well sculpted characters or a comedic satire driven by:

1. Characters with layered and complex back stories;
2. Story or character driven about the method of near death, i.e. the incidents and/or accidents leading up to the experience;
3. Story or character driven about the Near Death Experience itself;
4. Story or character driven from the entertainment production perspective;
5. Story or character driven by our obsessions with and for, Reality Shows;
6. Or, all of the above

LOGLINE: Trapped in a real-time near death experience, ten strangers are thrust into an afterlife “reality” game show as unwilling contestants. Together, they must navigate this surreal gauntlet of “The Seven Deadly Sins” to the “Point of No Return”.