

Archetypes of Near-Death Experiences



In our [dreams](#), the symbols and images that appear represent [archetypes](#) of our higher consciousness. As in dreams, near-death experiences are experiences of our higher consciousness, and therefore, it shouldn't be surprising that similar symbols and images appear in near-death experiences as well. On Karen Keeley's website, Insights into Consciousness and Personality, she provides a good explanation of how these symbols and archetypes are universal and what they mean. She states:

"The fact that the same symbols and archetypes surface over and over again in all cultures is evidence that mankind does indeed possess a "collective unconscious," and that (according to those who believe in a personal God) behind the collective unconscious is God. [Carl Jung's](#) "Self" is not just the individual person, but includes "the preexistent matrix of consciousness from which the ego, or individually differentiated consciousness, arises." In order to be taken seriously as a scientist and psychologist Jung obviously couldn't use the term "God," so he used "Self" instead. Those accustomed to thinking of God as totally separate and apart from themselves may find this blasphemous, but others find God in (or through) their own inner self, by discovering or remembering their True Self, higher self, core self -- which was created in the EXACT image and likeness of God in the beginning, is intimately connected to God and can never be separated, therefore to know one's own true Self is to know God. The implication of Jungian psychology is of a "deeper" center than can normally be consciously experienced, but which is accessible inwardly, JOINTLY, to all individuals on Earth, to each according to their specific needs and desires, if they seek and ask. Jung taught that without ego consciousness, the Self (or God, "I Am") cannot realize itself in the world; and without the Self, the ego has no depth or source of meaning and integration. The ego stands to the Self as "the moved to the mover," and through the process of "individuation", as consciousness of the Self increases, the ego increasingly experiences itself as "the object of a supraordinate subject" and the individual transcends the ego. It is helpful to think of a wheel (or a circle, a mandala) as a symbol of the Self, as Jung did."

The following are examples of sacred circular symbols, or "mandalas," appearing in near-death experiences.

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1. Nancy Evans Bush



Nancy Evans Bush, a devout Christian, had an unusual near-death experience resulting from a severe complication during childbirth. In her own words, she described seeing unusual mandalas during her near-death experience: "I was rocketing through space like an astronaut without a capsule with immense speed and great distance. A small group of circles appeared ahead of me. To the right was just dark space. The circles were black and white and made a clicking sound as they snapped black to white and white to black. They were not evil exactly, just mocking and mechanistic. The message in their jeering was, "Your life never existed. The world never existed. Your family never existed. You were allowed to imagine it. You were allowed to make it up. It was never there. There was nothing there. There never was anything there. You're not real."

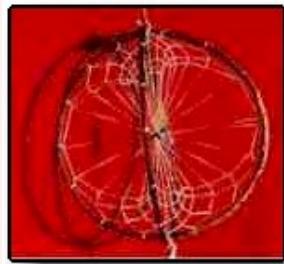
Several years after her near-death experience, Nancy was looking through a book on eastern philosophy. What she saw in the book so upset her she threw the book across the room. In the Eastern philosophy book was the same circular shape she saw in her near-death experience. It was the Chinese symbol "yin-yang" which represents the oneness of all so-called opposite principles we find in the universe.

The Buddhist concept of reality is that nothing in this physical world is real. People consist of a "bundle" of habits, memories, sensations, desires, and so forth, which together delude people into thinking that he or she

consists of a stable, lasting self. This false self is what reincarnates body after body. In Buddhism, life in a corporeal body is the source of all suffering. Hence, the goal is to obtain liberation. This means abandoning the false sense of self so that the bundle of memories and impulses disintegrates, leaving nothing to reincarnate and hence nothing to experience pain. "Nirvana" is the Buddhist term for liberation. Nirvana literally means extinction - an extinction that allows a person to become one with all there is – to become "God" (Buddha). To attain Nirvana, one must face and accept the concept that physical reality is not real; true reality comes through self-extinction which results in becoming one with the Clear Light.

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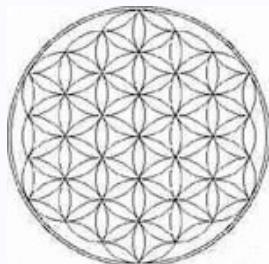
2. Black Elk



Black Elk was an American Indian who saw an interesting mandala during his near-death experience. He was shown an elaborate vision oriented around a classic Native American mandala: the circular hoop, the four directions, and the center of the world on an axis stretching from sky to Earth. Numerous neighing, dancing horses, surrounded by lightning and thunder, filled the sky at each direction. Then he heard a great Voice say: "Behold the circle of the nation's hoop, for it is holy, being endless, and thus all powers shall be one power in the people without end." Then Black Elk, standing on the highest mountain, surveying the grand vista of the hoop of the world, said: "I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw; for I was seeing in a sacred manner the shapes of all things in the spirit, and the shape of all shapes as they must live together like one being."

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3. Plato's Er



Plato described the near-death experience of a soldier named Er. In his near-death experience, Er saw a "cosmic axis" - a rainbow light holding together the eight spheres revolving around the Earth, each guided by its own Fate. One of these Fates casts before those who are to be reincarnated a number of earthly destinies from which they may choose to be, for example, a tyrant, an animal, an artist, etc.

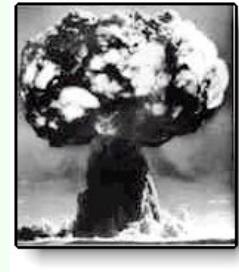
Then, just before returning to Earth as a shooting star, each soul is required to drink from the "River of Forgetfulness" so that all these cosmic events will fade from memory. Only Er was not allowed to drink and forget. Thus, Plato's cosmology was based on a near-death experience and this amazing vision of the universal light.

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4. Mellen-Thomas Benedict



Mellen-Thomas Benedict saw the light in his near-death experience change into different figures, like Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, mandalas, archetypal images and signs. He was told that our beliefs shape the kind of feedback we receive from the light. For example, if you were a Buddhist or Catholic or



Fundamentalist, you would receive a feedback loop of your own beliefs. The light revealed itself to Mellen-Thomas as our "Higher Self matrix," a mandala of human souls. He saw that what we call our Higher Self in each of us is a matrix and all Higher Selves are connected as one being. All humans are connected as one being and we are actually the same being, just different aspects of the same being. We are part of the same soul fractaling out in many creative directions, but still the same. Mellen-Thomas saw this mandala of human souls and describes it as the most beautiful thing he has ever seen. When he went into it, he experienced an overwhelming love – the kind of love that cures, heals, and regenerates. He was told a grid exists around the planet where all the Higher Selves are connected. Later in his experience, Mellen-Thomas rode a stream of consciousness through the center of a galaxy. The stream was expanding in amazing fractal waves of energy. He realized that, as the stream was expanding, his own consciousness was also expanding to take in everything in the universe. He learned a tremendous amount of information including how the atomic bomb mushroom cloud is the holiest mandala humanity has manifested to date, as an archetype. It, more than any religion or philosophy on Earth, brought humanity together all of a sudden, to a new level of consciousness. Knowing we can blow up the planet hundreds of times over, finally made us realize that maybe we are all in this together.

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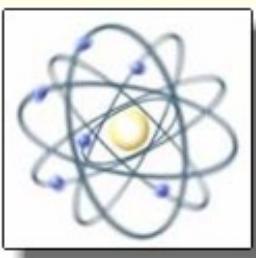
5. Lynnclaire Dennis



Lynnclaire Dennis had a near-death experience in 1987 while hot-air ballooning in the Swiss Alps. During her experience, she came into contact with what she calls "the Pattern", a mandala which she describes as "primarily a matrix of personal and global healing." Seeing the Pattern, she knew she was looking at life itself. It was light; it was time and space. It was the energy of all matter, the heart of all that mattered. Lynnclaire states there are many symbols that appear in this pattern such as mathematical symbols, religious symbols like the yin/yang, the cross, a tear, a circle, a straight line, the vesica pisces, a crescent, a pentagram, a six-pointed star and on and on and on.

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6. George Rodonaia



Dr. George Rodonaia saw molecules flying around, atoms, protons, and neutrons during his near-death experience. On the one hand, it was totally chaotic, yet what brought him such great joy was that this chaos also had its own symmetry. This symmetry was beautiful and unified and whole, and it flooded him with tremendous joy. He saw the universal form of life and nature, laid out before him. It was at this point that any concern he had for his body just slipped away, because it was clear to him that he didn't need it anymore, that it was actually a limitation.

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7. Carl G. Jung



The world-renowned psychiatrist, Carl G. Jung, had a near-death experience in which he saw the Earth from a vantage point of a thousand miles into space. The sight of the Earth from this height was the most glorious thing he had ever seen. His vivid encounter with the light, plus the intensely meaningful insights led Jung to conclude that his experience came from something real and eternal. Jung saw the Earth as representing

the "mother" archetype. Carl Jung, who founded [analytical psychology](#), centered on the archetypes of the collective unconscious.

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8. Dannion Brinkley



During his near-death experience, [Dannion Brinkley](#) entered a glorious heavenly temple where he saw thirteen Beings of Light. He was able to count the beings as they stood behind a podium. Each one of them represented a different emotional and psychological characteristic that all humans have. For example, one of these beings was intense and passionate, while another was artistic and emotional. One was bold and energetic, yet another possessive and loyal. In human terms, it was as though each one represented a different sign of the zodiac. In spiritual terms, these beings went far beyond the signs of the zodiac. Each being then proceeded to show Dannion visions of the future.

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9. John Engelbrecht

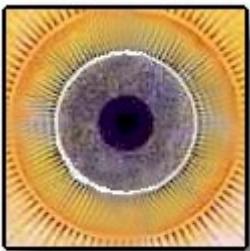


During [John Engelbrecht's](#) near-death experience, he saw in heaven a new full moon. The moon in the new world shined so clear and bright, that it was beyond all comprehension. John told two heavenly beings that he would like to fly higher up under heaven and take the sun in his right hand and the moon in his left hand and count all the stars. His wish was granted.

According to Carl Jung, the moon is an archetype representing the male unconscious femininity. He also said the moon represents a principle of the feminine psyche, in the sense that the sun is the principle of the male psyche. This is particularly obvious in the astrological interpretation of the sun and moon, not to mention the age-old assumptions of mythology.

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10. Josiane Antonette



Josiane Antonette had a vision during her near-death experience in which she saw a sun attempt to shine upon one side of a darkened Earth, but the inhabitants paid no attention. The other side of the Earth remained in darkness. She watched as the darkness grew and covered the whole planet. No one paid attention as the darkness covered the sunlight. A voice told her, "This is the world with the absence of light, love, and free will. It is the people's choices that created the world you have just seen." With these words, the Earth became a place of vibrant, breathtaking beauty. She perceived how the Earth, the sun, the moon, the darkness, the light, the planets, and all forms of life – plants, rocks, animals, and people – are interconnected; they come from the same source of light. Everything is united by a transparent net, or web, and each thread shines with great radiance. Everything pulses with the same luminosity – a magnificent light of unparalleled brilliance. The voice then tells her, "From the light we have come, and to the light we all shall return."

Carl Jung theorized that the sun was an archetype of the human concept of self. Through Carl Jung's research we now know that the individual psyche is not just a product of personal experience, but has an evolutionary history resulting in a transpersonal dimension manifested in universal patterns and images such as are found in all the world's religions and mythologies. Jung further discovered that the psyche has a structuring or ordering principle that unifies the various archetypal contents. The archetype of wholeness is the central archetype that Jung calls the Self. The Self is the supreme psychic authority and subordinates all else to it including the ego. It is the central source of life and the fountain of our being. It is represented through those symbols that indicate wholeness, or completeness, such as mandalas, circles, and most importantly, the sun, which has been described as the "Window opening into eternity," and the source of the divine within all living things.

In metaphysical terms, light is eternal and omnipresent, and while it diminishes in inverse proportion to the square of the distance, it sooner or later fills the entire universe. Light is the vehicle of divinity; it is the consciousness of God. We stand at the center of our own creation because at the center is the sun or the light

of the ONE. We exist as a preordained Idea manifest within the Self. As an image of the One, so is the One an image of us; the **mind** of humanity is made manifest through the physical body as the ONE manifests through the body of the sun. Life is a solar idea.

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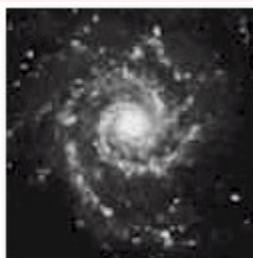
11. David Oakford



David Oakford traveled past all of the planets in our solar system during his near-death experience. Near each planet he could see the auras around each one of them. He saw spirits on all of them as well. He was told that all planets are places for spirits to live, learn and thus evolve. He saw great cities on each and every one of those planets. It was explained that other life in the universe is not readily seen because the beings were all of higher vibration and most spirits in human form have yet to attain the higher vibration required to see them. He was told that each planet has a theme for learning and that any of them can be chosen by a soul when we are between physical lives. He was told that souls practice on the other planets to be ready to live on Earth. He was told Earth is the ultimate experience for a soul. It is ultimate because our souls evolve faster here than anywhere else. He was told that the lessons we need to learn are difficult to learn without having a physical form. After he was told of all these things, he was able to see our whole solar system all at once in full color. The planets were all in a line and he could see all of them from Pluto to the sun. He felt very blessed that he was given this great gift.

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12. Howard Storm



Rev. Howard Storm was completely stationary yet hanging in space during his near-death experience. Everywhere around him were countless radiant beings, like stars in the sky, coming and going. It was like a super-magnified view of a galaxy super packed with stars. And in the giant radiance of the center they were packed so densely together that individuals could not be identified. Their selves were in such

harmony with the Creator that they were really just one.

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13. Thomas Sawyer



Thomas Sawyer described his experience with an image that appears very frequently in near-death experiences. In his near-death experience, he saw the shape of a tunnel. It was perfectly level, straight and cloud-like. It was very vast, as opposed to small and confining, and was anywhere from a thousand feet to a thousand miles wide. It was cylindrical. If you took a tornado and stretched it out straight, it would be similar to that. It extended to infinity. Simultaneously, with the awareness of this tunnel, he had a feeling of forward motion. While moving through this tunnel he felt an acceleration. There was not any wind vibration, nor any noise. It was like floating within a vacuum. He went faster and faster through the tunnel until he attained the speed of light, or faster. Off in the distance there appeared an extremely bright light. It was brighter than anything he'd ever seen in his life.

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14. Edgar Cayce



Edgar Cayce described the tunnel as a "column" that winds around on a wheel such as the Rotarians use. Cayce said he ascended this column during his out-of-body experiences and there would be beings on either side of him calling out to him for help, or trying to get his attention. Cayce knew that any deviation from this column, and the beam of light ahead of it, would mean he could not be able to return to his body.

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15. Kimberly Clark-Sharp



Kimberly Clark Sharp experienced an enormous explosion beneath her during her near-death experience. It was an explosion of light that rolled out to the farthest limits of her vision. She was in the center of the light. It reached the ends of the universe, which she could see, and doubled back on itself in endless layers. She was watching eternity unfold. The light was brighter than hundreds of suns, but didn't hurt her eyes. She had never seen anything as luminous or as golden as this light, and she immediately understood it was entirely composed of love, all directed at her. This wonderful, vibrant love was very personal, as you might describe secular love, but also sacred. Though she had never seen God, she recognized this light as the light of God.

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16. The Edgar Cayce Reading



The Edgar Cayce readings revealed that God built the cosmos using the tools of music, arithmetic, geometry; harmony, system, and balance. The building blocks were all of the same material, the life essence. It was a power sent out from God which, by changing the length of its wave and the rate of its vibration, became a pattern of differing forms, substances, and movement. This created the law of diversity that supplied endless designs for the pattern. God played on this law of diversity as a person plays on a piano, producing melodies and arranging them in a symphony. According to Cayce, the planets of our solar system are physical representations of afterlife realms. There are nine planets to our solar system. Therefore, our solar system is a physical representation of nine of the many afterlife realms that exist. The Earth is the third planet from the sun and represents the third afterlife realm. According to Cayce, circular geometric images represent our Higher Self and the circle itself is a mandala representing the divine.

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17. Adi Da Samraj



According to the Hindu yogi **Adi Da Samraj**, each of the levels of this Great Mandala of the Cosmos represent a quality of energy, or light. In each of the rings or portions of this Mandala, which moves out from the central Whiteness, are infinite numbers of possible worlds and various kinds of embodiment. The level which we exist in now is on the outskirts of the Great Mandala of the Cosmos. There are grosser conditions of awareness, grosser possibilities, than the present one, which may be called "hells", or degraded states, or states of embodiment less than human. They may appear as forms of worlds other than the present one, as well as states in the realm of this gross world that are not necessarily apparent to vision.