

We All Lead A Double Life

As you get older, the whole mystery of life and death becomes a bit clearer, especially when you get to that age where you read about so many of your heroes growing up passing nearly every day. It's not an 'older and wiser' thing as much as it's a common sense type of understanding that if you hang around long enough and pay attention, you can pick up a lot.

Since humans began to talk, they have been debating the question of what happens to us when we die. The only people who truly know the answer are the people who have died, and so far as we know, none of them have come back to let us know what that answer might be.

As an older fellow, my speculation comes from experiencing the death of people close to me. And it's not just people dying, but how they die and the whole experience of death that formulates your perspective about death.

Both my parents died of natural causes. They both lived good, healthy- for the most part- lives, and had no long, drawn-out illnesses that lead to their eventual passing. The experience of my parents death was not all that negative. They were both living active, positive lives until the end. In fact, I admit that my Dad's funeral is still one of the greatest family reunions I have experienced. All the relatives showed up to celebrate and say goodbye to this wonderful man.

I miss my parents, but their death was not nearly as sad as you would think.

My daughter passed away at the age of 37 after a two-year battle with breast cancer. For two years I watched, as my 'pride 'n joy' went through the many battles that cancer creates. I was with her for her first breath, and her last breath, and all the years in-between. Needless to say, the experience of my daughter's passing was a lot different than the that of my parents passing.

I miss my girl, and I fight with the deep sadness in my heart every day.

And that's just my inner circle of life. Two very different experiences in death.

As you get older, you have seen so many different experiences with death. Children going to school and not going home because of another senseless act of violence. Young men and women going off to the battle fields with a sense of duty, only to come home in a casket. People who have lost hope and decided to end their life on their own terms. People becoming the victim of a disease that seems to be taking over the world.

So when we debate the question of what happens to us when we pass from life to death, we certainly use these many experiences of death to formulate our speculation. Nobody knows for sure, but when we look at the experiences we have had - both personally, and on the evening news - we think we do.

I have come to believe that our life has two forms - physical and spiritual. Together, these two forms work nicely to create our own uniqueness of who we are. What makes Andy Smith the lovable, crazy guy sitting here staring at the computer screen is a combination of the physical me and the spiritual me that creates the perfect blend that you all know as Andy.

Our physical life involves our bodies. These wonderful machines were created perfectly to survive on this planet. Everything within our body was created for a specific reason to help us live our life within the rules of nature on this planet. As is the case with all other living things on this planet, our body, with all it's parts, will not last forever. All living things have a beginning and an end. Our life span can vary in length, but in all cases, there is a beginning and an end.

Our body is a great fit for this planet.

Our spiritual life is what makes us unique. Our spiritual life is what makes us who we are. Our personality, beliefs and emotions are created through our spiritual being. Though the physical and spiritual often work together to create one life, the spiritual does not depend on the laws of nature on this planet in order to survive. It doesn't need air to breath or gravity to help was walk or many of the other elements that our physical body depends on. It's the unseen part of us that separates us from one another and gives us the unique qualities that makes us individuals and not all the same.

Our spiritual life does not have a beginning or an end. It evolves from our infancy and through our experiences, expands and develops into the emotions, beliefs and personality that defines who we are as individuals. After our physical body dies, our spiritual being continues on in our thoughts, memories and feelings that made us so special.

If, then, we want to debate the question of life after death, or what happens to us after we die, I would say it depends on your thoughts about the five senses - site, smell, taste, hearing and touch. Is the five senses we have a part of our physical life, or our spiritual life?

Though you could make a good argument for both, I would suggest that the five senses create the glue that combines our physical and spiritual life together as one.

The physical part of us depends on the five senses to send signals to our brain that helps us navigate through this world we live in. We smell smoke and our brain tells us there is fire nearby. We hear thunder and our brain tells us to prepare for rain. All five senses work with the brain to keep us safe as we go through life on this planet.

Our spiritual part depends on the five senses to send signals to our heart and create the emotions that define us as individuals. We see a soldier surprise his daughter in the classroom after a being away for so long and it signals an emotion in our heart of joy and love as we watch the reunion. We smell the distinct aroma of Mom's special cinnamon rolls baking in the oven, and it signals to our heart an emotion of comfort and excitement that we will be eating well today. All five of our senses are very important in developing the spiritual life that becomes who we are as individuals.

When I die, my body will no longer have these five senses. When we see someone who has passed away, we can recognize that they are dead because there is no reaction from our five senses. The void of senses is what tells us that this person is no longer alive.

But I believe that when we die, our senses continue on with our spirit.

We have heard many stories about people who have had near death experiences. There are many similarities to these experiences, and almost always, those similarities involve our senses. They see a bright light. They don't know where exactly they are, but they feel a strong sense of warmth and love surrounding them. They have a great sense of calm and peace.

Those who have read the bible know the many stories of how Jesus visited many of his disciples after he died on the cross. We are told that he talked to them, he ate meals with them, and even though he apparently did not have to knock on the locked doors, he showed up and was recognized as Jesus and not a ghost.

It seems clear to me that there is plenty of evidence to suggest our senses go with us in our spiritual journey after our bodies die.

To see, to smell, to taste, to hear and to touch - our 5 senses- serve us well on this planet and are important to making our life on this planet what we make it to be.

I'm grateful that God designed us to have these 5 senses and that he lets us continue with them as we move away from this planet and venture into our spiritual journey ahead. They are important.