

DEATH: WHAT SURVIVORS EXPERIENCE

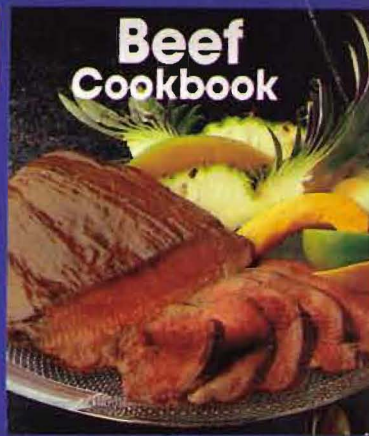
**Beef
Cookbook**

McCall's

FEBRUARY 1988

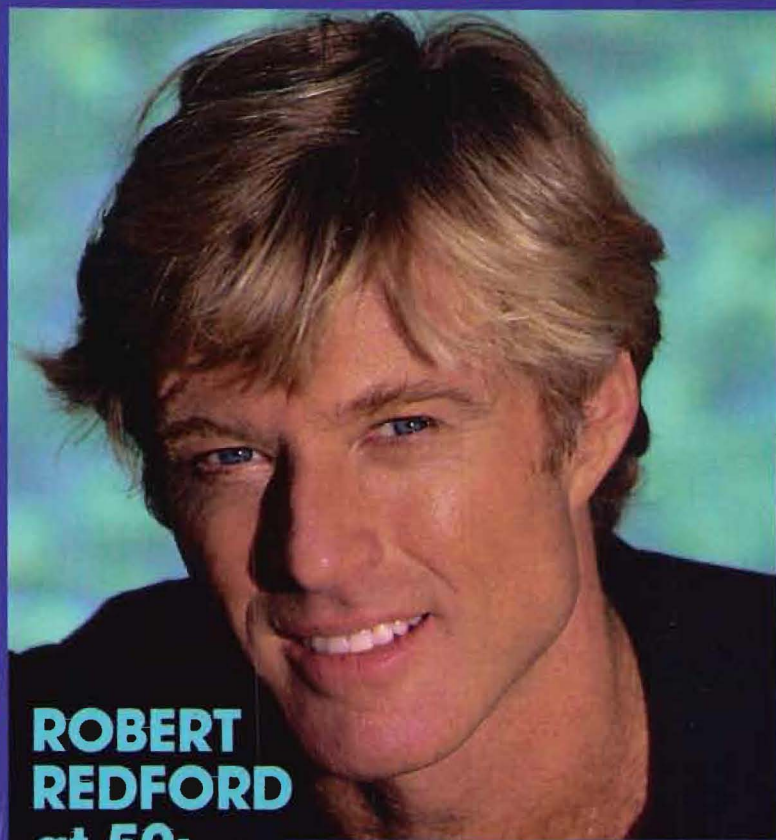
\$1.50

When You DON'T Need a Doctor

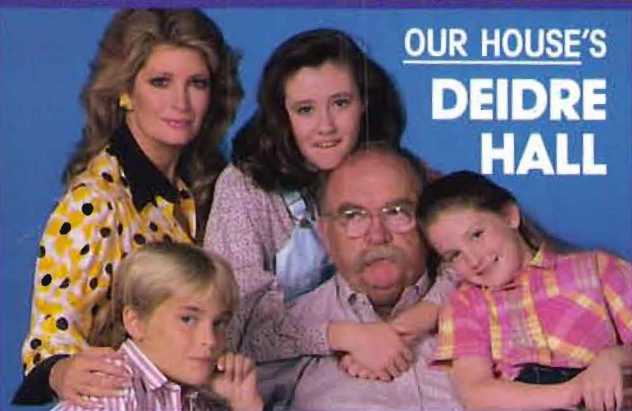


**STEFANIE
POWERS:**

Dazzling, Daring and Dedicated



**ROBERT
REDFORD**
**at 50:
The Way
He Is**



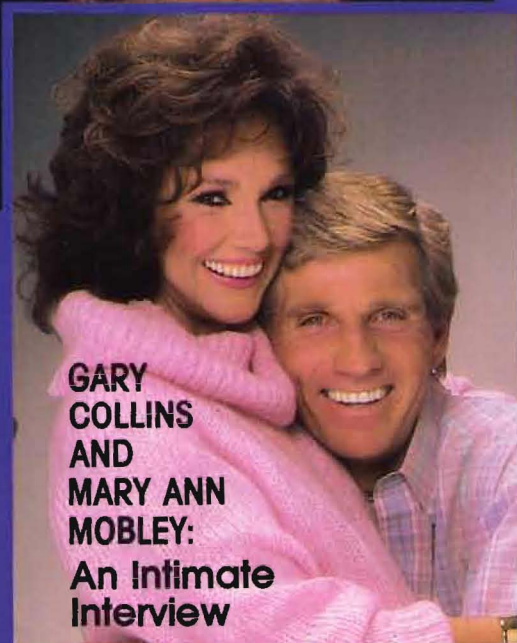
**OUR HOUSE'S
DEIDRE
HALL**

SHARING GROWN-UP CONCERNS WITH KIDS

Giving Advice ...Nicely!



**Saying "No" to
Hysterectomy
(Fibroids, PID and more)**



**GARY
COLLINS
AND
MARY ANN
MOBLEY:**
**An Intimate
Interview**



Michael Carroll
B.S. (Pharm.)
Atlanta, Ga.

Ask Your PHARMACIST

Q What's fastest for gas pain and bloating?

A Doctors and my own experience give the right answer ... GAS-X® tablets. GAS-X has the strongest, fastest gas relief ingredient you can buy... the one doctors recommend most. And customers say the fastest gas relief they've found comes in GAS-X and Extra Strength GAS-X tablets.



Q What laxative will fit my busy schedule?

A If your schedule calls for early morning relief, better use the laxative that guarantees it... EX-LAX®. Taken at bedtime, EX-LAX guarantees complete relief by 8 a.m. or your money back. No other laxative does that. I recommend you count on EX-LAX Chocolated or Pills.



Q Can you stop my itching right now?

A Yes I can! All you need is BiCOZENE®. Doctors say BiCOZENE Cream works faster than any hydrocortisone product. People say the instant they use BiCOZENE, itching stops and they get cool relief.



SANDOZ
CONSUMER HEALTH
CARE GROUP

McCall's

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL REPORT

- 103 **The Near-Death Experience**
Amy Sunshine

ARTICLES

- 14 **Robert Redford at 50: The Way He Is**
Natalie Gittelson
- 38 **Stefanie Powers: Head Over Heels in Love With Life**
Heidi Yorkshire
- 42 **"My Pet Cat and the Big Cats of Kenya"**
Stefanie Powers
- 56 **Mary Ann Mobley and Gary Collins: America's Sweethearts**
Natalie Gittelson
- 140 **Deidre Hall: At Home in *Our House***
Wanda Urbanska

BEAUTY/FASHION

- 23 **Dressing Up for a Dream Date: Romantic Fashions for Going Out**
- 28 **The Best Way to Make Up**

ENTERTAINING/ETIQUETTE

- 112 **America Entertains** Colette Rossant
- 114 **Doing It Right** Charlotte Ford

FOOD

- 116 **Lite Eating: Elegant Oriental Dinner**
- 119 **Beef Cookbook**
- 133 **Micro-Way Cooking: Liven Up Your Leftovers**
- 136 **No Time to Cook: Tortellini—Pronto!**
- 138 **Food Tips to Clip**

continued on page 8

U.S. subscription rate: \$13.95 for 12 issues; Canada, add \$6.00 for postage; Pan-American countries, add \$7.00 for postage, foreign, add \$8.00 for postage. For fastest service, please send all correspondence about subscriptions to McCall's Customer Relations Manager, Box 56093, Boulder, Colorado 80322. Since subscription lists are addressed in advance, please allow six to eight weeks for delivery of the first subscription copy, and changes of address should be sent eight weeks prior to effective date in order to avoid postage for forwarding. When sending new address, please include old address, preferably the address label from the latest issue. McCall's is published each month simultaneously in the United States and Canada by Working Woman/McCall's Group. Dale W. Lang, Chairman of the Board; Ronald Jensen, Executive Vice-President; Richard P. Latora, Vice President/Finance; Patricia Hall Smith, Treasurer/Secretary; Michael Owen, Vice-President/Circulation; Jack Craven, Controller. Executive and Editorial Offices: 230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10169. MANUSCRIPTS and ART MATERIAL will be carefully considered but received only with the understanding that the magazine shall not be responsible for loss or injury. Copyright © 1988 by WWT Partnership. McCall's (ISSN 0024-8908), February, 1988, Vol. 115, No. 5. Reproduction in any manner, in whole or part, in English or other languages, prohibited. All rights reserved throughout the world. Protection secured under the Universal International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash. Printed in U.S.A.

McCall's, published monthly by Working Woman/McCall's Group, 230 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10169. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Postmasters: Please send address changes to McCall's, Box 56093, Boulder, CO 80322.

Kevin Vida was an active 15-year-old, into sports and jazz but admittedly "not much of a tree climber." One day, he decided to scale a backyard pine to check out the view. On his way down, a nearby power line brushed the tree, shooting 27,000 volts of electricity through his body and locking his joints so tightly he couldn't release the branch. "For a second, everything turned blue," he recalls, "and all I could think of was, What am I going to tell Mom—that I just got electrocuted in a tree? She'll kill me!"

Kevin's brother, alerted by the smell of smoke, found him dangling in the tree and managed to pry him loose. Luckily, the older boy knew how to administer CPR. Four full minutes later, Kevin's heart started beating again.

Meanwhile, Kevin was experiencing a separate drama that would change his life forever. "After I passed out, I found myself walking along a path in a humongous forest," he remembers solemnly. "I'd never seen anything like it, but I knew for sure I wasn't dreaming. This was *real*. At first I was afraid, but then I saw my grandfather, who had died about a year earlier. He kept reassuring me, 'Keep going, you'll be fine.'

"I began to sense something warm above me, so I looked up and saw an incredible light—crystal-clear and brighter than the sun, but you could look right into it without hurting your eyes. Inside the light was the figure of a man with his hand held out to me, radiating so much love..." (He pauses for a moment to control the emotion in his voice.) "It was the most beautiful feeling I've ever experienced. I never wanted to leave." But within seconds Kevin found himself back on the ground, surrounded by emergency vehicles and terrified relatives. After two weeks in the hospital and several months' recuperation, he was able to resume most of his activities, but his world would never seem the same again.

"For a long time I was angry," Kevin admits. "I didn't understand why I had to

Scientists are investigating an astonishing journey described by people who almost died—a journey that has changed eight million lives forever

come back. I wished God had just taken me. But now I think he put me here for a reason, to help other people. That's what matters most." Today, at 19, Kevin works as an emergency medical technician by day and volunteers on an ambulance squad at night. He speaks with intensity and conviction beyond his years.

Kevin's experience is not unique. According to a recent Gallup Poll, eight to nine million Americans have reported strikingly similar mystical experiences while temporarily "dead" or on the

THE NEAR- DEATH EXPERIENCE

verge of death. Like Kevin, they describe a sense of peace and inexpressible joy. Many are reunited with loved ones who have died before them, and encounter a "Being of Light" who radiates pure love and acceptance. While most people yearn to remain with this light forever, they are sent back to life to fulfill certain responsibilities. Scientists have termed this extraordinary journey a "near-death experience," or NDE. Although the experience varies somewhat from person to person, it is consistently recounted as joyful and profoundly real.

The Gallup Poll further indicated that NDEs can happen to anyone. It found no relationship between the occurrence of NDEs and a person's age, sex, race, occupation, education, area of residence or, significantly, his prior religious beliefs or practices. (While a religious person might *interpret* his experience differently than an atheist, the experience itself remained consistent.)

Typically, an NDE begins with the sensation of being outside one's body. Barbara Harris, a 32-year-old Michigan housewife, was completely immobilized in a special bed following spinal surgery. When her vital signs began to fail, she lost consciousness. "I remember waking

THE NEAR- DEATH EXPERIENCE

up in a hallway, looking straight into a loudspeaker, and realizing I must be at ceiling level," says the petite brunette with radiant eyes and a keen intelligence. "I went back to my room and looked down at my body in the bed. It looked pathetic." Barbara also wandered into the hospital laundry, where she spied two nurses stuffing urine-soaked pillows into a dryer without washing them first. Later, when she chastised the nurses for their negligence, they were too stunned to deny their actions. How did *she* know what they had done? "Because I was there," Barbara answered. "I watched you."

For some people, the NDE is limited to a free-floating, out-of-body episode and a sudden return to the body. But Barbara's journey continued. She remembers moving through total darkness and hearing a low droning noise (strange sounds and dark tunnels are cited frequently). The most profound aspect of Barbara's NDE was what researchers call the "life review." Much like the expression, *My life passed before my eyes*, many of those undergoing an NDE witness a panorama of their life experi-

ences and take stock of their actions. They are not condemned for "misdeeds." To the contrary, the Being of Light is gentle and forgiving, stressing only love and learning.

"There was no one judging me," Barbara emphasizes. "I was judging *myself*. I saw thousands of bubbles, each containing an event in my life, and I relived each scene. I could smell every smell and feel every emotion. I could also feel everything my mother and father had felt. I saw a loving connection with every person in my life." As a child, Barbara had been treated harshly by her parents, and she'd grown to be a guilt-ridden, fearful adult. Her entire outlook changed in a matter of seconds. "I suddenly saw that my parents and I had been victims of each other," she says, "and underlying our battles there was love. I kept hearing myself say, *No wonder! No wonder you're so insecure!* My whole life started to make sense."

"After [an NDE] the person can never again return to the former way of being," writes Kenneth Ring, Ph.D., a professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut, in *Heading Toward Omega*. The NDE "comes to take precedence over whatever he has been taught or previously believed. . . . It is not even just an experience that changes one's life. It is one's life. And it becomes the source of one's true being in the world."

The search for explanations

Unlike psychic phenomena that remain on the fringes of scientific investigation, the near-death experience is being studied worldwide by eminent researchers at major universities. The 1975 publication of *Life After Life*, by

Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D., first brought the near-death experience to wide public attention. Dr. Ring's research confirmed and extended Dr. Moody's findings. In 1977, a number of prominent scientists joined forces to found IANDS, the International Association for Near-Death Studies (c/o Department of Psychiatry, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington, CT 06032), which today serves as a clearinghouse for information, sponsors research and offers support services to those who have experienced near death.

Clearly, NDEs could not be the figments of eight million imaginations. But questions abound. Bruce Greyson, M.D., IANDS' Director of Research, is currently conducting a nationwide psychological study comparing NDE-ers to people who have come close to death *without* having NDEs and people who have never come close to death. "Although the study is not yet completed, preliminary results show no significant psychological differences between people who have NDEs and those who don't," he reports.

Michael Sabom, M.D., a cardiologist and author of *Recollections of Death*, was an admitted skeptic who dismissed near-death reports as mere fabrications. Five years and 116 interviews later, he changed his mind. His bedside interviews with patients who'd been revived after cardiac arrest revealed that nearly one third had blissful, mystical experiences. Furthermore, many were able to detail medical procedures that took place while they were unconscious and which they could only have viewed from outside their bodies.

Ronald K. Siegel, Ph.D., a psychopharmacologist at UCLA School of Medicine, however, maintains that NDEs are nothing more than hallucinations. "We've been able to reproduce near-death experiences in our lab by administering LSD and other drugs," he reports. Dr. Ring allows that drugs might produce similar effects. "It's possible that certain drugs could bring about a state of psychological death and rebirth that could vault an individual into the same domain of consciousness as an NDE," he says. "But just because drugs may give rise to the experience doesn't lessen the validity of an NDE." Furthermore, hallucinations are often perceived as unreal or frightening, while NDEs are experienced as "more real than waking reality" and uniformly joyful.

Could NDEs be induced by the release of endorphins, the brain's natural painkillers credited for "runner's high"? Unlikely, says Dr. Sabom. Endorphins relieve pain for 22 to 73 hours, while the NDEs are painless only as long as they last. He also rules out oxygen depriva-

"Following a NDE, people can often sense what someone else is thinking, or when someone is about to die," Dr. Greyson reports

Typically, an NDE begins with the sensation of floating out of one's body. . . . The accident or deathbed scene is often observed with great clarity.



tion: "As oxygen supply to the brain decreases, there is a progressive muddling and confusion of cognitive abilities . . . in sharp contrast to the clarity of mental functioning and awareness described by persons who have had an NDE," Dr. Sabom writes in *Recollections of Death*.

Researchers face a continuing dilemma: Since the NDE itself cannot be measured scientifically, it may be beyond their scope of study. Russell Noyes, Jr., M.D., a professor of psychiatry at the University of Iowa, has likened NDEs to depersonalization (the sense of being "outside oneself" and calm during moments of extreme danger). While his theory has been used to challenge the authenticity of NDEs, Noyes himself is reluctant to draw conclusions. "Some of these experiences are religious," he says, "and I try to stay away from interpreting religious experiences in psychological terms. I attribute the positive changes in near-death survivors to spiritual—if not biological—rebirth." Perhaps the only "proof" of an NDE lies in its aftereffects. "People seem to be catalyzed rather than immobilized by the experience, and they gain wisdom," explains Carol Zaleski, Ph.D., a lecturer on religion at Harvard University.

After-shocks

In a follow-up survey of 111 NDE-ers, Kenneth Ring found his subjects' lives radically transformed. Again, a distinct pattern emerged: These individuals demonstrated a greater appreciation of life; greater tolerance, compassion and concern for others; higher self-esteem; and less concern with material goods, status and how they appeared to others. They had lost all fear of death and found themselves engaged in a deep quest for the meaning of life. While many defined themselves as "more 'spiritual' than 'religious,'" they reportedly felt "inwardly closer to God" than before and embraced a broader theology that stressed the underlying unity of all religions.

Barbara Harris's transformation took her by surprise. "Before my NDE," she says, "I was a sophisticated, modern, scientific atheist. Sometimes now I feel

as if I am on a mission from God!" ("Oh boy, does *that* sound wacky," she says, laughing.) "I don't have a *belief* in God. I have a direct *knowledge* of his love."

Barbara's newfound self-esteem required her to make painful choices and changes in her life. Before her NDE, Barbara had lived with her very traditional husband in a wealthy suburb, wanting nothing more than to blend into her community and appear "normal." "After my NDE, my true personality began to emerge. I became a respiratory therapist because I wanted to work with sick people. I had so much love to give. . . . My family and friends couldn't accept it, but my patients could." Sadly, Barbara's marriage ended ten years later, after 23 years. "I drove away with nothing but my stereo speakers and my clothes," she recalls. "I left behind a lot of financial security, but the spiritual security I was finding inside me was much more solid." Today Barbara works as Dr. Greyson's research assistant.

THE NEAR- DEATH EXPERIENCE

According to a number of independent studies, the near-death experience also awakens "intuitive" abilities. "Following an NDE, people can often sense what someone is thinking, when someone is going to call or when someone is about to die," Dr. Greyson reports. "Somehow, their field of energy changes: As incredible as it sounds, computers malfunction in their presence. Car batteries die. I don't know how many people have told me that streetlights have blown out, one by one, as they walked past them. The next stage of research will be to get people into the lab and measure their electromagnetic fields."

You can imagine the difficulties of readjusting to "normal life," given such new abilities and perspectives. What makes it even harder is that the near-death experience is nearly impossible to describe (during an NDE, thoughts are communicated without words, people move without bodies, emotions are experienced that have no earthly equivalent). "When I tried to tell my doctor about my NDE, he gave me a shot," Barbara recalls. "My husband told me I was just upset and handed me a Valium. I learned pretty fast to keep it to myself."

At a recent IANDES-support-group meeting, an informal poll revealed that the average member had not told a soul about his or her NDE for ten to 20 years! "People either ridicule us or make us into saints," one woman said with a sigh. "We've been zapped by something greater than ourselves, but we're still human. Sometimes I wonder, if I'm so darned enlightened, how come I still yell at my kids?"

Work relationships are sometimes strained by NDE-ers' boundless enthusiasm. In IANDES' quarterly journal, *Vital Signs*, P.M.H. Atwater writes: "Imagine, if you will, working eight hours a day, five days a week, with an NDE survivor who

cannot differentiate between work and play and, as a result, turns out better work in half the time with no apparent effort and is virtually never bored. Now, be honest. Would you find this individual inspiring or threatening?"

"NDE-ers have innumerable adjustments to make," Dr. Greyson says. But, once they've worked through the tasks of readjustment, NDE-ers seem to have tremendous energy and optimism. Charles Flynn, a sociologist at Miami University of Ohio, has theorized that, with their increased concern for others and heightened spirituality, "NDE-ers

member being grabbed by a horrible-looking man with scars and serpents crawling on him," he says. But Kevin's terror abated once his grandfather appeared to reassure him.

Do "good" NDEs happen to "bad" people? "All researchers have encountered people who've lived less than exemplary lives, yet had very positive experiences," Dr. Ring answers, "but that doesn't mean they're exempt from paying a price. The 'life review' is the great equalizer." He has heard NDE stories from prisoners and from others who have led deviant or delinquent lives. One

"Before my NDE I was a sophisticated, modern, scientific atheist. Now I feel as if I am on a mission from God!"

might be harbingers of a more humane future." Dr. Ring goes a step further in his book *Heading Toward Omega*, suggesting that "if enough people experience it [NDE], they might eventually transform the planet."

What happened to hell?

It's certainly comforting to think that, if NDEs are a glimpse into the afterlife, we're in for a gentle experience. But, steeped in Judeo-Christian upbringings, most of us can't help wondering: Are there *no* punishments for bad deeds? Are *all* NDEs happy ones? What happened to hell?

Negative or threatening NDEs are rare, according to Gallup, Ring, Greyson and others, accounting for only 1 to 2 percent of all reports. "The few unpleasant NDEs I've encountered contained the same elements as the happy ones but were interpreted differently," Dr. Greyson explains. "People said things like, 'I was thrust out of my body into this terrifying dark tunnel.' They seem to have resisted the experience. But most said they later surrendered to the NDE and the experience became beautiful." Kevin Vida's journey through the giant forest was unusually frightening. "I re-

member said, "Hellfire, torture, damnation . . . that's nothing compared to the pain I felt when I saw my life as it actually was. The gap between the love I was receiving up there and the love I had given to others while I was alive was so great I felt I could never bridge it." This man was anxious to return to life to demonstrate love to those who had given *him* love and especially to those who *hadn't*. "He had seen a principle by which life should be led, and he wanted very much to practice it," Dr. Ring says.

Some critics have worried that the popular portrayal of blissful NDEs might encourage suicide. But, Dr. Greyson points out, "Suicide attempters who've had NDEs come back to the same problems they had before, but they now see these problems as challenges and opportunities for growth." In Dr. Moody's book, *Reflections on Life After Life*, NDE-ers reportedly got the message that suicide would be a violation of the natural order, "like throwing God's gift back in His face."

Is it possible to attain the enlightenment of an NDE without the experience? Dr. Ring believes one can. "This is too valuable an experience to be reserved for the dying. The real message of the NDE is that the state of light, love and wholeness exists every moment and is available to anyone. There's no prescription for bringing it about, but you can invoke it by yearning for it with all your heart. Just open up to others, and practice love." ■