

Death is the elephant in the room

Larry Moffitt
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We avoid talking about death despite that we will spend much more time “over there” than “over here.” It’s not logical.



“Howdy. Death here. Polite people don’t talk about me”

Polite people don’t bring it up. But bloggers do. Is there life after life? Or is there only death after death?

Here’s the deal. The first thirty years of your life get all the media. You have ripped abs and your passion engine is a gas-guzzling, hormonal muscle machine. You still don’t know jack squat, but you’re out there mixing it up, and every song on the radio is about YOU.

However, your remaining fifty years (give or take) are mellower and far less exciting. You will spend most of it driving around, standing in line, and trying to lose weight and give up vices.

And then, one day you will atomize into fairy dust. Game over. You croak. You bite the big one, lay down your burden, kick the oxygen habit, get traded to the Angels, etc.

And then what? Two choices: there will either be something “over there” awaiting you on the other side.

Or...

THERE IS NO OTHER SIDE. There will be nothing at all. Not even white noise. Not even that comfy little buzzing sound between your ears.

Well, okay, I suppose there could be something within those two extremes, a kind of purgatory that resides between consciousness and oblivion. Personally, I think of purgatory as being like an afternoon spent with someone who’s shopping for lip gloss:

“Do you think this is too red? Which is better, this red or that red? What about Peach Blossom Mystique? Does this make my lips look too big?”

That’s the closest I can come to imagining a hellish twilight that knows neither life nor death.

But either way, you have approximately 80 years of adventure followed by a long, long, long, long time of... what? Plus, it happens to everyone. The death thing, I mean. Being born, and then someday going kaput is one of the truly universal experiences. So why don’t people talk about death as much as they talk about birth? It makes no sense.

It’s because death is creepy, right? It is, and it’s creepy because it’s unknown. It’s also disorganized. We know within a couple of weeks when someone is going to be born. People plan for it and stock up on pink or blue onesies. But death happens much more randomly for the most part. It’s also creepy because of Stephen King.

But mostly, death is creepy because nobody knows what happens afterward.

This reduces death’s creepiness factor by a lot, don’t you think?

Therefore, we avoid the topic altogether. We don’t talk about death in polite company. Dying and Death is not a required class in high school. It’s not a college major. It’s called “morbid” (a sub-set of creepy), and not something we should “dwell on.” Don’t expect to see a Grim Reaper postage stamp.

The act of crossing the River Styx is something we drown in euphemisms. Like “crossing the River Styx.”

We shower it with avoidance. There are more scholarly conferences about Bigfoot than about the end of earthly life and what happens when one passes their best-if-used-by date.



And yet everyone dies. Seriously. Everyone. There should be at least as many songs on the radio about death as there are about love. More even, because not everyone falls in love. But everyone dies. Weird, huh?

A slight digression: Here at Blogito Central, we spare no expense to make sure this column is firmly grounded in scientific reality. For the sake of accuracy we needed to communicate with the dead. But let's face it, that's a somewhat iffy proposition.

I decided we need a full-time necromancer on the staff. A necromancer would bring us messages from our dearly departed, and could also make coffee. I asked Hezekiah, our staff tattoo artist, to write up a help wanted ad and get us one pronto.

Unfortunately, "necromancer" sounds exactly like "neck romancer." And so we ended up with Chuck. He's a great guy, fun at parties and everybody loves him. But we're still not getting diddly from beyond the divide.

The idea of an afterlife began with earliest man.



Chuck: Blogito Central's Staff neck romancer. Available for parties.

Some caveman, a cavewoman actually, noticed that people fall over and stop breathing, which begged the question: Where did Leroy go?

There is some indication that Neanderthals had occasionally practiced burial of the dead, based on arms folded in positions that indicate meaning, possible tools or flowers included. But that was 50,000 years ago. There is much more available evidence for the Cro-Magnon people having some notion of an afterlife a mere 28,000 years ago. Their elaborate interments with tools, ivory tusks, small carvings and art, offer indisputable evidence of spiritual awareness and religious experience.

Then there's the God or no God question, and that really is an absolute. There either is or there ain't.

Here's why atheism is not a good personal choice. The atheist says there is no scientific proof whatsoever that God exists, that religions have started all the bloodiest

wars, and that Catholic priests... etc. No argument there. But there is considerable circumstantial evidence for the existence of God: (1) an extremely complex and orderly universe, (2) professional football and (3) pretty girls. I don't think a zillion chimpanzees randomly banging away on typewriters will ever come up with even a knock-knock joke, much less an Amazon ecosystem.

The odds favor a designer.



"On second thought, I'd rather be shopping for lip gloss."

So does common sense. For example, suppose you're an atheist. You die and arrive in the spirit world and find out there really is a God. The result: (1) you were wrong and (2) now you've irritated God.

Surely, that can't be a good thing.

God is a "big picture" deity and I'm sure he... she... can handle your little misunderstanding. I'm just saying this is good stuff to mull over while you're still alive, if you get my drift, before you find yourself, you know, taking a dirt nap, living in

a pine condo, picking turnips with a step ladder.

Why? you ask. Rodney Dangerfield (currently dead) said, "I had a friend who was an atheist. He died and I went to his funeral. There he was, all dressed up and no place to go."