

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

*Intended Audience: Researchers, Clinicians, Practitioners, General*

# Finding the Right Words

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What does it mean to be on the threshold of the future? It's something that I often ask myself both in terms of my own life/consciousness and the life/consciousness of our shared world. Right now, when I ask myself this question it means struggling to write an editorial!

This writer's block isn't due to a lack of things to discuss or an absence of incredible progress going on in the fields of afterlife and consciousness studies; rather, I find myself mute in the face of so much going on and so many avenues to pursue.

What an amazing time we find ourselves in: faced with environmental, cultural, and economic instability, we are being pushed to the very limits of our collective potential. As a result, research that has remained on the fringes during more stable periods is finding its place at the table out of sheer necessity. The world's deep dive into mechanistic materialism has pushed our standard models far beyond their functional role. Like a Möbius strip we've traveled far enough for our technology and theoretical structures to develop and disprove the very models they seem to be based on. We're pushed to the thin edge of reality where we now stand ready to take a leap into the unknown.

In a recent talk on the work of Carl Jung, the scholar Peter Kingsley said something that I think sums up a key to our time: "We bring the past into the present to reveal the future."

He was discussing Jung's particular use of ancient sources, as well as his own, and yet, if you think about it, this points to our areas of research as well. Thanks to the work of researchers and organizations around the world who never flinched at swimming upstream, we have models, studies, data points, and well over a century of scientific investigation demonstrating without a doubt that we are more than just moving meat with an illusion of

identity. This alone would be a fantastic gift from these researches, and yet they offer so much more.

Think of this: the research going on in the area of afterlife studies, one of the most controversial areas of research in science, holds the potential to completely alter our sense of self, our sense of time, our sense of history, our sense of culture... I could go on, but let's suffice to say that the implications are revolutionary. The secrets of afterlife communication are themselves keys to our own living minds, our own sense of self and identity.

You probably already know all this or you wouldn't be reading this journal, but for those still on the outside of it, who are just now awakening to this wider view of life and being, they are getting their first glimpses of future potentials that leave even the most hardened researchers in awe.

Just take a look at two of our offerings in this edition of *Threshold* to see where we are heading. *Threshold* editorial board member Patricia Pearson's piece introduces us to 'terminal lucidity,' an experience that many have encountered while attending to individuals approaching the end of their life and which draws into question commonly held beliefs about the materiality of the mind. In her editorial she describes cases where the progression of a disease or physical injury has left the individual with severely impaired cognitive expression that seems to suddenly alleviate as they approach the hour of death. As she describes from her personal experience with a friend whose brain cancer had left her with cognitive impairment, "suddenly, she regained a complete flair for crisp and incisive conversation." Two days later her friend had passed away.

Like so many of the issues that surround these areas of research we are left with a very real event that has no place in the accepted mechanistic models. Pearson points out, "we can't fully discuss [these experiences] until we name them and do so with common agreement." One of our tasks at the moment is to develop this common language, and the tools of digital communication and our connected global culture are helping to do this. Such explorations serve to help us widen our sense of being as well as providing caregivers the needed understanding to create valuable end-of-life experiences for those they serve.

William Everist offers us another area of exploration with a dissertation that seeks to "establish a comprehensive understanding of the initial experience associated with the spiritual transformation process of mediums." Again, we find a topic both ripe for increasing our understanding of our own experiences and for helping clinicians and caregivers gain more understanding of this phenomenon in those they serve.

As Everist explains, “these experiences can occasionally be startling or traumatic, sometimes creating a loss of contact with consensual reality that may lead to psychiatric misdiagnosis in the individual’s attempt to understand the experience.” With a better understanding of these experiences, and with a clear consensus on how to describe them, we are able to better assist those who go through them.

This piece also opens up some of the potentials that come with this understanding. By examining the accounts of mediums through thematic analysis, Everist reveals that these transformative experiences often consist of “a sequence of developmental experiences that include an encounter with one or more spiritual entities that one may or may not consider as spirit guides.” Once we develop a language and consensus in which to study these areas, we will be able to step into a more stable understanding of the possibilities that exist when we consider the implications of mediumship and after death communication.

Our world is expanding in so many surprising ways and with it our own self-image. The image we hold of our potential is expanding as well. This has been a key promise of boundary science since ancient times and, I’m sure you would agree, we are fortunate enough to sit at one of those historical nexuses where we can see the past and present merging into a surprising future. Hopefully my own surprise tempers enough that I can get over this writer’s block and find the right words to rejoin the conversation!

### **About the Journal**

*Threshold: Journal of Interdisciplinary Consciousness Studies* (TJICS) is a free, peer-reviewed, online-only, open access journal that disseminates information focusing on interdisciplinary studies of consciousness as it relates to dying, death, and what comes next. Articles include original peer-reviewed research, review articles, research briefs, conference presentations, education and training aids, essays, editorials, case studies, and book reviews. Content is tailored to meet the needs of specific audiences including researchers, clinicians, practitioners, and the general public. For more information, visit: [www.tjics.org](http://www.tjics.org)

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