

## ***Possibilities for the Survival of the Human Race: A Global Near-Death Experience***

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"[The near-death experience is] perhaps the most important psychological phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as shocking and counter-intuitive as quantum mechanics."

~ Michael Grosso, *The Final Choice: Death or Transcendence?*

In a near-death experience or NDE, an individual close to death may experience a variety of sensations including detachment from the body; feelings of levitation; total serenity, security, warmth, and ecstasy; and acceptance, belonging, and unconditional love. They may traverse a tunnel, see a glorious light and deceased loved ones, and they may experience a review of their life. These experiences seem hyper-real and more valid than everyday awareness. They are also ancient. In the *Republic*, Plato tells the story of Er, a soldier who awoke on his funeral pyre and described his journey into what was considered the afterlife. Religious texts such as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the *Bible*, and the *Koran* describe experiences of life after death which remarkably resemble modern NDEs...

Near-death experiences involve not only individuals, but they can also involve groups of people. In these shared or group near-death experiences, multiple individuals have an NDE at the same time and location. The participants may all be dying or near death, or they may be healthy, as when loved ones gathered at the bedside of a dying person experience an NDE while the dying individual may or may not be undergoing such. The multiple participants typically experience themselves as out of their body, and they may see others out of their bodies as well. They may independently describe experiences that synchronize with the reports of the other participants.

As cardiac resuscitation has become commonplace, NDEs are increasingly frequent. An estimated 15 million Americans have experienced NDEs. This includes people with various beliefs — not just believers in an afterlife, but also skeptics and atheists who believe NDEs are bogus, as well as medical professionals who are experts in the neurological sciences.

### **RESIDUAL EFFECTS OF NDEs**

Those who recover following an NDE find that the fear of death vanishes. They may be transformed regarding their morals, ethics, behaviors, and their sense of what is important, typically becoming more loving, compassionate, and forgiving. They usually become intensely aware of their responsibilities in the total global milieu, passionately concerned about environmental issues, the welfare of other living things, and the future of humanity. "What tends to happen is that people who've had these very profound experiences may come back positively transformed — they become more altruistic, more engaged with helping others. They find

a new meaning to life having had an encounter with death," says Sam Parnia MD, director of critical care and resuscitation research at NYU Langone School of Medicine in New York City.

Let us therefore keep in mind four features of NDEs that are important for the discussion that follows. First, NDEs can involve individuals who are healthy. Second, NDEs can be experienced by individuals who do not believe they are valid. Third, NDEs can be experienced simultaneously by groups of individuals. Fourth, NDE experiencers are typically transformed dramatically regarding their ensuing ethical and moral perspectives, with an intense concern for the future of all living things and the integrity of the earthly environment.

These features of NDEs open up new vistas in the human journey. Using the NDE as a portal, we can see how we might make choices in our individual lives that positively influence whether the human species survives and thrives on planet Earth, regardless of our prior beliefs and behaviors. In discussing this scenario, I'll focus on philosopher Michael Grosso's exceptional book *The Final Choice: Death or Transcendence?* More clearly than anyone I know, he has elaborated on how and why a planet-wide NDE-type event may come to pass.

## THE GOAL OF LIFE

Here is a central motif that informs Grosso's narrative:

What at bottom drives all living things? The goal of life seems to be more life, self-replication with infinite variations. ...The tendency among mammals, and humans in particular, is toward greater mobility, freedom and detachment from the environment. Human life is especially mobile and already has begun to move beyond the planetary habitat to explore outer space habitats. If the goal of life is more life — in a word, survival — the function of our nonphysical psychic potential may be to mediate survival of bodily death.... If the goal of life is more life, higher, freer, more complex forms of life, then our psychic potentials represent the power of life transcending its biological template. <sup>1 (p.11)</sup>

## A GLOBAL VERSION OF THE NDE

“’Tis healthy to be sick sometimes.”

~ Henry David Thoreau

Grosso suggests that, with possible environmental destruction now on the horizon, a planetary version of a near-death experience may be forming, analogous to a human approaching death. It's the sort of thing one might predict from the life force, whose evolutionary vector is toward more life, survival, a future. And just as individual NDEs result in a radical transformation and reorientation of the person undergoing them, our planetary citizenry, *en masse*, may similarly change channels in our priorities, values, and how we live our lives. If so, we just might squeak by. (I'm reminded of a hallway conversation I once had with the eminent physicist David Bohm. I asked him his opinion of the future of humankind: "Do you think we'll make it?" He paused, thinking intently, then said, "Yes. Barely.")

People don't choose to have an NDE. They happen alike to believers and nonbelievers in an afterlife. Something benevolent seems to be at work. Grosso provides examples throughout history in which a huge variety of individuals,

even rogues and villains, are transformed after an out-of-the-blue, NDE-type event. A New Testament example in the Acts of the Apostles is Saul of Tarsus, who was zapped and transformed on the Damascus road on his way to persecute Christians, after which he was known as Paul the Apostle. Grosso:

What is interesting from the empirical record is that even those who don't court the higher powers often receive their help.... Now and then in dire scenarios, a higher-order type of entity may emerge and offer a helping hand. We have barely scratched the surface; something is in play that is interested in the upward ascent of life.<sup>1(p. 165)</sup>

This is important. It suggests that even individuals who appear blind to environmental issues, whose energies are devoted to greed, selfishness, and plundering the natural world, are not beyond hope of transformation, often when they least expect it.

Grosso's stated goal in *The Final Choice* is "to create a new, fact-based mythology of transcendence." For him, this entails two aspects of transcendence: "the survival of consciousness after death and, no less momentous, the idea of an extended *transpersonal* mind. [Dutch cardiologist] Pim van Lommel calls it 'endless consciousness' or following the Upanishads, [Nobel Prize-winning physicist] Erwin Schrödinger referred to the *one mind*. Later, Larry Dossey coined the phrase 'nonlocal mind' and has described in detail how we can make sense of being part of the one mind in his book of that title"<sup>1(pp. xi-xii)</sup>. (Full disclosure; whether Grosso's favorable nod to my work influences this article is for the reader to decide.)

## **NONLOCAL MIND**

Grosso employs a *nonlocal* model of consciousness — consciousness that is not localized or confined to specific points in space, such as brains or bodies, nor to specific points in time, such as the present. Nonlocal mind is Mind at Large, as Aldous Huxley and others have called it. Survival follows, because mind that is boundless or nonlocal with respect to time is seemingly eternal or immortal; and mind nonlocal or boundless with respect to space is omnipresent. So the critical question becomes: What is the evidence that mind is nonlocal? Grosso shows how consciousness manifests nonlocally, making the case for Mind at Large, a universal or unitary mind of which each individual mind is a part.

## **LOOMING DISASTERS**

Grosso wrote the first edition of *The Final Choice* in 1985. At that time the fear of nuclear war was palpable worldwide. Grosso points out that in Russia, at that moment, Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (removal of barriers) lay in the future. The Berlin wall and communism seemed permanent fixtures, and mutually assured destruction (MAD) was a strategic principle among the great powers. Grosso describes MAD as literally mad: "The idea that peace and our lives depend on such a precarious assumption has the odor of insanity."<sup>1 (p. 188)</sup> Here's how he appraised this global situation and how he responded to it:

I looked around at our fear-and-greed driven world and thought that maybe something like the near-death experience could be the template for the needed transformation.

I found it helpful as a model for speculating on what might happen to consciousness in the event of a near or actual global disaster.

The question I kept asking: Are we approaching a time when events of such enormous proportions may jolt the collective consciousness into new forms of awareness, perhaps a more vivid sense of human solidarity?

As to my aim in this book: Evidence exists of an array of extended human capacities — intellectual, moral, aesthetic, mystical, and superphysical. In the interests of life at large, we need to focus on the skills and rich potentials that human beings possess and think of new ways of mobilizing their creative uses. The times seem ripe for a new Manhattan Project about harnessing our neglected human potentials.

There are times of crisis and transition when breakthroughs to a larger frame of reference, a new take on reality itself, can slip into focus, become viable, even inevitable. The discontents of civilization are finding their voices. Instability is magnified by information and communication technologies operating 24/7....

We live in a strange time. Our fellows have unleashed destructive forces infinitely disproportionate to the moral IQ of the species. Nine nations on earth possess about 15 thousand nuclear weapons, most belonging to the United States and Russia. Such power in the employ of small groups of men or women of dubious mental and moral capacity is an unsettling thought.<sup>1</sup> (pp. xii-xiii)

How have things changed since the 1985 edition of *The Final Choice*? Today many believe that the danger of nuclear holocaust has receded since the Cold War years following World War II. But in view of North Korea's crash program to develop nuclear-armed missiles capable of striking North America, and the heated exchange of puerile, cartoonish insults between the American president Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in 2017, it is not clear that the risk of nuclear war has diminished, and may have increased. As the recipients of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize stated, we are only "one impulsive tantrum away" from nuclear destruction. A casual attitude toward nuclear war appears to be gaining traction at the highest levels of government. As US president Donald Trump flippantly asked repeatedly during his presidential campaign, "If we have [nuclear weapons], why can't we use them?"

Our current global challenges make the new edition of Grosso's book *more* relevant, even, than the 1985 version. New planetary threats have emerged as apocalyptic additions to potential nuclear disaster: climate change, anthropogenic global warming, and planet-wide degradation of our physical environment. This new potential global catastrophe differs from the nuclear one in tempo — a slow, gradual decline in the habitability of the planet for our species — but not in deadline. The overwhelming majority of climate scientists worldwide warn that we are edging toward the possibility of irreversibly wrecking our climate and environment. As author John Graves wrote a half century ago in his elegiac *Goodbye to a River*, "That long and bedrock certainty of thoughtful men that regardless of the race's disasters the natural world would go on and on is no longer a certainty."

The urgency of this global situation is analogous to that of a very sick patient. Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of the prestigious medical journal *The Lancet*, has said, "We must act on facts and on the most accurate interpretation of them, using the best scientific information. That does not mean that we must sit back until we have 100 percent evidence about everything. When the...health of the individual is at stake...we should be prepared to take action to diminish those risks even when the scientific knowledge is not conclusive...." If we substitute "health of the planet" for "health of the individual" in Horton's statement, we have a call to immediate action in dealing with our current global challenges. If we wait until we have "100 percent evidence" about the threats to human survival, this is in effect a sell-out to *thanatos*, the death instinct. Waiting for

total scientific certainty was the fallback position of the tobacco industry during the heated Tobacco Wars of the twentieth century. The tobacco scions maintained that health warnings about their products were premature as long as any hint of uncertainty existed. It would be irresponsible and unscientific, they maintained, to take any regulatory action before all the facts were in (and they would be the judge of when that occurred). Their stalling and lies condemned millions to premature death worldwide. We cannot afford to repeat these mistakes regarding the natural world, the only home we have.

## **THE IDEOLOGY OF MATERIALISM**

Grosso has long been one of our keenest science watchers. He has contributed to recent works examining the shortcomings of materialism, such as the seminal *Irreducible Mind* by University of Virginia's Edward F. Kelly, Emily Williams Kelly, and others. His concerns encompass one of the strangest twists and turns in our era: how materialistic science, which largely views itself triumphant in the search for knowledge, has sacrificed our own consciousness on the altar of materialism.

The overwhelming consensus among biologists and neuroscientists is that our brain somehow produces consciousness, although this has never been directly observed and there are no adequate explanations how this could possibly happen. The logical consequence is that when our brain and body die, our mind or consciousness is totally annihilated. Other casualties occur before physical death. These include any deep sense of meaning, purpose, or direction to our existence. As Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Weinberg has said, "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless." If consciousness results from the swarms of subatomic particles comprising a physical brain, many see self-consciousness as merely an illusion. As philosopher Daniel Dennett asserts, "We're all zombies. Nobody is conscious." Of course, not everyone agrees with these presumptuous assertions. As philosopher Galen Strawson says, "This particular denial is the strangest thing that has ever happened in the whole history of human thought." And computer scientist Bernardo Kastrup states, "Here we have consciousness trying to trick consciousness into believing that it doesn't exist."

However, against the materialist backdrop all talk of the survival of consciousness beyond physical death — Grosso's position — is widely viewed as a cowardly conceit stoked by primitive fears of extinction. No paid-up scientist, it is often said, should take seriously any hint of transcendence. Rather, better to keep a courageous, stiff upper lip in the face of impending death. As Lord Bertrand Russell said, "I believe that when I die I shall rot, and nothing of my ego will survive.... I should scorn to shiver with terror at the thought of annihilation." Against this tide of materialism Grosso explores the mythical, historical and modern attitudes toward death and the evidence for our possible survival. Those who expect a gee-whiz, wide-eyed, new-age treatment of these issues will have to go elsewhere. Grosso carefully examines the major sides of the survival question. He reconsiders the closed-mindedness of committed materialists toward survival as a dead end. It is rare, he states, to find any skeptic of survival who has even read the relevant research in the extensive portfolio of nonlocal mind — areas such as near-death experiences, telepathy, clairvoyance, remote viewing, precognition, presentiment, and psychokinesis.

## **THE IDEA SPREADS**

Grosso's concerns about our current dilemmas on this planet are catching. They are increasingly shared by thoughtful people in a variety of disciplines. Consider an example from the diplomatic world. Vaclav Havel (1936-2011), the author, poet, and playwright who was the first president of the Czech Republic, saw a hell looming in our world and had the guts to say so on the international stage. As a solution, he endorsed

a collective entry into a One-Mind type of awareness he called “responsibility to something higher.” As he said in a speech delivered to a joint meeting of the United States Congress on February 21, 1990:

Consciousness precedes Being, and not the other way around...for this reason, the salvation in this human world lies nowhere else than in the human heart ....Without a global revolution in the sphere of human consciousness, nothing will change for the better in the sphere of our being as humans, and the catastrophe toward which this world is headed — be it ecological, social, demographic or a general breakdown of civilization — will be unavoidable. If we are no longer threatened by world war or by the danger that the absurd mountains of accumulated nuclear weapons might blow up the world, this does not mean that we have definitely won. We are still capable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of all our actions, if they are to be moral, is responsibility. Responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my company, my success — responsibility to the order of being where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where and only where they will be properly judged.

(Can you imagine such a speech in the US Congress during the current political climate? Think about that.) And in a subsequent speech in 1994 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia titled “The Need for Transcendence” (Grosso’s theme),Havel spoke of a unified humanity held together by a state of consciousness he called “transcendence”:

[I]n today’s multicultural world, the truly reliable path to coexistence, to peaceful coexistence and creative cooperation, must start from what is at the root of all cultures and what lies infinitely deeper in human hearts and minds than political opinion, convictions, antipathies, or sympathies — it must be rooted in self-transcendence: Transcendence as a hand reached out to those close to us, to foreigners, to the human community, to all living creatures, to nature, to the universe. Transcendence as a deeply and joyously experienced need to be in harmony even with what we ourselves are not, what we do not understand, what seems distant from us in time and space, but with which we are nevertheless mysteriously linked because, together with us, all this constitutes a single world. *Transcendence as the only real alternative to extinction*(emphasis added).

I am pleased to report that the possibility of the transcendence of consciousness is seeping into medical discourse.<sup>19</sup> I could cite many examples, but one shall suffice: the late physician Lewis Thomas (1913-1993). Thomas was dean of New York University Medical School and Yale School of Medicine and, later, director of research and president of the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York, now Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Thomas was a no-nonsense physician and a hard-core researcher. Among the things he questioned was the destiny of consciousness following bodily death. In his 1974 award-winning book of essays, *The Lives of a Cell*, he wrote:

There is still that permanent vanishing of consciousness to be accounted for. Are we to be stuck forever with this problem? Where on Earth does it go? Is it simply stopped dead in its tracks, lost in humans, wasted? Considering the tendency of nature to find uses for complex and intricate mechanisms, this seems to me unnatural. I prefer to think of it somehow as separated off at the filaments of its

attachment, and drawn like an easy breath back into the membrane of its origin, a fresh memory for a biophysical nervous system....

## OTHER VOICES

We are learning that chaos is essential to the survival of life. Our challenge now is to restore goodness to chaos and disorder.... In our current paradigm, order is to chaos as good is to evil, and this had been the status quo for the past few millennia. Meanwhile, while culture says disorder is Bad, chaos is obviously the favorite state of nature, where it is truly Good. But this truth has been banished to the collective unconscious for all these centuries. From the shadows of the unconscious it pushes forth into our consciousness and literature in poetry and song, romance and struggle.

~ Ralph Abraham, mathematician and chaos theorist

Transformation, transcendence and survival have many proponents. British sociologist Kingsley L. Dennis, in his prescient 2012 book *New Revolutions for a Small Planet* and his inspiring 2017 book *The Sacred Revival*, proposes a species-wide transformation of consciousness that resembles a planetary NDE. Dennis's formidable, well-reasoned contentions are a powerful complement to Grosso's views.

So, too, is the work of *Explore* columnist Stephan A. Schwartz. Schwartz — polymath, archaeologist, explorer, consciousness researcher — was a primary inventor of remote viewing protocols in the 1970s. Seeking to identify trends shaping the future, in 1978 he began asking people to remote view the future. For the next 18 years, in countries all over the world, using the same techniques he had used to locate unknown archaeological sites, he asked individuals to remote view the world in the year 2050. Eventually some 4,000 men and women, scientists, physicians, nurses, politicians, businessmen and women, housewives, and students participated. An analysis of this data has revealed a number of consensually perceived trends. One of the most notable is that individuals perceive a period of major global tribulation that will lead to the emergence of a worldview in which science, technology, and consciousness merge, as well as policies recognizing that all life is interconnected and interdependent with consciousness. This worldview will flourish, say the remote viewers, to the benefit of humanity and Earth itself. This scenario reinforces the species-wide, global NDE-type predictions of both Grosso and Dennis.

Kenneth Ring, Professor Emeritus of psychology at the University of Connecticut, is the co-founder and past president of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS). Ring has investigated NDEs for nearly four decades. He has found widespread agreement among individuals who have survived an NDE that humanity is in the midst of an evolutionary shift. He reports, "[A]ll groups tend to agree that these experiences reflect a purposive intelligence and that they are part of an accelerating evolutionary current that is propelling the human race toward higher consciousness and heightened spirituality."

Margot Grey, another NDE researcher, independently reports nearly identical conclusions in her book *Return from Death*:

[T]hese spectacular instances of transformation add up to a surprisingly large and increasing percentage of the population and might therefore be expected to have a growing influence on the collective awareness of the rest of the species, at both a conscious and unconscious level.... It would appear that a new breed of mankind may be about to be born, and that in order for this to happen our consciousness and biological structure is undergoing a radical transformation. What we seem to be

observing is a rebirth process which ... will eventually culminate in bringing forth an enlightened human being who has knowledge of the life and order of the universe.

Summarizing these various tributaries of NDE research, Dennis states:

[They] tell of both physical and psychical grand shifts. In other words, the Earth herself may be entering a period of instability and disruption whilst simultaneously catalysing a dramatic, and sometimes unsettling, transformation in human consciousness. The global initiation — our *rites of passage* — may thus entail a collective near-death experience that will not only affect us physically and psychically but also directly involve our planet Earth.

Of all the professions, it is perhaps nursing that is most decisively leading the way toward a reorientation of values and behaviors that promote wellness and the continuity of humanity on Earth. This is a fitting development, because “nurse” is derived from the Latin *nutrire*, meaning “nourish,” and it is nurses whose empathy, compassion, caring, and wisdom have nourished countless humans in their journeys from birth to death. Now nurses and their leaders are nourishing the human species in a worldwide effort. Nurses are a formidable vanguard in our race for survival.

There are around 20 million nurses and midwives in the world, of which 3.6 million are in the United States. Surveys have consistently shown that nurses are the most trusted professionals in the United States. An American example is Dr. Jean Watson, one of the most distinguished and widely honored nurses in the world. Watson has been awarded 15 honorary doctorates, 12 of which are international. She is Distinguished Professor and Dean Emerita, University of Colorado Denver, College of Nursing, where she held the nation’s first endowed Chair in Caring Science for 16 years. She is founder of the original Center for Human Caring in Colorado, and is Founder and Director of Watson Caring Science Institute, a non-profit foundation(<https://www.watsoncaringscience.org>). The Caring Science philosophy and clinical practice model that Watson has pioneered includes but transcends the needs of individuals. It promotes health in the largest sense: the health of the Earth itself (<https://vimeo.com/245550006>). Caring Science philosophy and practice have been embraced by nursing organizations worldwide. If the principles of Caring Science were emulated in science, education, diplomacy, business, and other branches of human endeavor, our world would be a very different place.

## **OTHER PATHWAYS TO TRANSCENDENCE**

“No wonder Jung was later to tell me with a laugh that he could not imagine a fate more awful, a fate worse than death, than a life lived in perfect balance and harmony.”

~ Sir Laurens van der Post

The possibility of a transformative global event is not a trouble-free, rosy prophesy. Birth pangs are real. There is no easy passage. As Frederick Douglass, the American black abolitionist and social reformer, said in the 1800s:

If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one, or it

may be a physical one, or it may be both moral and physical — but it must be a struggle.

A planetary NDE-type event is the most dramatic and sudden mode of transformation and transcendence, but not the only one. British sociologist Kingsley L. Dennis, already mentioned, suggests that a transformative, nonlocal mode of awareness is gradually seeping into individuals worldwide, particularly among the young:

[This] international social group of like-minded souls... is manifesting, whether conscious of it or not, a nonlocal-field ... of relationships .... It is a form [in which]... each person is clearly isolated from another by physical space, yet at the same time very much entangled in a conscious space of connectivity and communication. [These persons understand that] the human individual has the capacity to be consciously aware of the effect of thoughts and actions upon others: to consider their reactions, to reflect upon their thoughts, and to decide whether to behave differently. In other words, each person has the ability to develop consciously.... <sup>31 (p. 178)</sup>

How? Not by abandoning reason, logic, and science, but by expanding their repertoire of knowing, by awakening, as Dennis says, to “their intuitive glimpses — dreams, visions premonitions, etc. — ...[as] trusted sources of information that originate from alternative senses. [Through practices such as] yoga, meditation, psychotherapy, transpersonal therapy, biofeedback and altered states of consciousness...[they may access]... a once-hidden, or rather neglected, realm of senses and self-knowing.” <sup>31 (p. 180)</sup>

There is an extensive literature demonstrating that these ways of knowing are not mere fantasy and delusion, but supplemental sources of wisdom regularly accessed by many of the greatest artists, poets, and scientists in human history. These breakthroughs often lead to the realization glimpsed in NDEs: that there is a larger self, a unitary One Mind of which each individual mind is a part. As the eminent physicist Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker stated: “[In any great discovery] we find the often disturbing and happy experience: ‘It is not I; I have not done this.’ Still, in a certain way it is I — yet not the ego ...but...a more comprehensive self.” There are, then, different paths that lead to a domain where ego-consciousness, competition, greed, and selfishness give way to a collective Mind at Large and a sense of belonging to a planet and universe suffused with intelligence, meaning, and purpose. One path involves a gradual process of disciplined learning; the other can unfold rapidly, like the NDEs we’ve examined. How do these two paths relate? As the humanist and systems philosopher Ervin Laszlo states:

The consciousness of individuals can transform instantly, through a sudden insight or revelatory experience, but the consciousness of the species is likely to take time to spread in society. There are people today who live with a traditional or a medieval consciousness, and a few with the consciousness of Stone Age tribes. In the same way there will be humans in the next generation who will achieve transpersonal consciousness, while others, the great majority at first, will persist in the ego-bound consciousness that characterized most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In time, however, a more evolved consciousness is likely to spread over all the continents. It will spread by a form of contagion. An evolved mind is “infectious,” it affects less evolved minds.... A more evolved consciousness will motivate people to develop their own consciousness, it will transform humanity’s collective unconscious. Unless we produce a major societal or ecological catastrophe, most of

our species will eventually graduate to transpersonal consciousness, and the next step in the evolution of human consciousness will be achieved.

## MIRACLES AND DIAMONDS

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly.

~ R. Buckminster Fuller

In *The Final Choice*, Grosso concludes that our personal decisions, beliefs and behaviors may influence what lies ahead. We are actors on the stage we call the future:

The future is menacing but there are signs of awakening to the great human drama emerging. There are grounds for enormous hope.... Given the premise of a greater mind at large, it is hard to avoid the question: Are we, singly or collectively, the subliminal artificers of the spiritual worlds that we inhabit? ...The final choice is not to accept finality. Choose to believe in a vision of renovation, and we may hasten its coming. Faith in the greatness of the future stems from knowledge of the past, and history teaches that anything can happen. Out of chaos, miracles are born, the way diamonds were created in the violent core of Earth during its birth pangs. Who can guess what new quality of life, what angel of transformation, awaits us in the days to come? <sup>1 (p. 197)</sup>

But if you are negatively inclined toward the evidence advanced by Grosso, Havel, Thomas, Dennis, Schwartz, Ring, Grey, Watson, Laszlo and others, and if you find the case for a species-wide transformation of consciousness and its survival of bodily death unconvincing or impossible, perhaps you might consider the observation of Charles Richet, Nobel Laureate in Physiology: "I never said it was possible. I only said it was true."

~ Larry Dossey, MD