

## **INTERVIEW ABOUT COMA –work. July 16, 2012.**

**We thank Emmanuel Haddad [emmanuel.haddad02@gmail.com]** a French journalist for his work for **Global magazine**, (a French online magazine working on issues such as ecology, geopolitics and social issues).

1) **E.** In general, waking up from a coma is more lived as a trauma or as a chance to begin a new life?

**A+A.** Dear Emmanuel This first questions of yours is a good question. The people we have worked with and known who have lived through comatose states do not show any one reaction such as “traumatic stress” or “chance for new life.” The reason might be that although coma is common, the origins of the comatose state are many.

2) **E.** Do the persons who wake up remember what they have been through and does it help them, or is it just better forget and come back to what they had before, if possible?

**A+A.** Depending upon the depth and specific origins of the coma, some people do remember aspects of their experiences. Whatever they remember, as with dreams, is what a person can use and integrate into the rest of their life—if and when they are ready.

3) **E.** For the persons who have been close to death, have you received many testimonies of a new conception of life, of eagerness to take more into consideration what they had neglected before their coma? Any strong example?

**A+A.** Those who have had N.D.E’s, that is “near death experiences” and who return to their daily life often have deep experiences that frequently lead to new views of life. For example, years ago in Zurich, one of Arny’s first comatose patients was lying, dying in an oxygen tent. Arny spoke with her through the tent, and to make the story short, got good feedback from her indicating her normal awareness was still present, though she was in what her physicians at that time called a “coma.” From hearing about her past, Arny suggested to her that she re-consider the possibility of life on earth. She immediately reacted with body movements, and he encouraged her reaction to go further. She began to sit up in that Oxygen tent, to the great surprise of the doctors and nurses around her. Then, even more surprising, after connecting more with her in that altered state of consciousness, she herself pulled back the oxygen tent and started to get out of bed. The nurses resisted telling her to stay in bed. But as soon as they left, when she was alone, she somehow got dressed, and apparently got out of the hospital, in her run down condition. What happened next? She

went back to work on the Bahnhofstrasse in Zurich, a main business place in Switzerland. She told Arny she had to go back to complete her business there. Five years later she died peacefully.

- 4) **E.** The trauma can also be for the family or closest friend who'll attend a person in coma for many months or years. Is communication a way to reduce the negative consequences of this situation?

**A+A.** Yes, in our experience, everyone in the family, and everyone who is a friend of this person has at least a slight "shock", not just because they might love the person, but because most people don't have any connection with their own mortality. So seeing a loved one very ill or in a near death situation is shocking. However, if it is possible to actually connect with the person in their state (for example, using a binary connection --see our books on Coma), then yes, the trauma of the family system is relieved. If the communication is deep, it can even be "enlightening" for all.

- 5) **E.** You promote a different level of communication with the person in coma, because he uses different kind of language: how do the family and friends react to the necessity of learning another language to communicate: despair and refusal or satisfaction to be able to exchange no matter what?

**A+A.** Good question. We first ask the family and friends if they will allow the possibility of trying to communicate with the ill person, or if they are content to just love and sit by the person. If the family and friends are open to such communications, we first show it to them briefly, using the friends themselves to demonstrate with. Only after having gotten positive feedback from the friends, the family, as well as the medical helpers, do we approach the comatose person. As a result, we usually get good responses from the family and friends. When we are able to truly connect at a level where responses are easy to understand, everyone seems at least relieved.

- 6) **E.** You talk about an ethic of double state: for you, people in deep coma still have the right to decide of what to do with their life. Is it also because there is always the possibility of an unexpected come back? Is communication with a person in coma a way to promote those unexpected waking up?

**A+A.** Nothing in life is completely predictable. We know that from quantum physics. Sudden, improbable situations can surely arise. The same holds true for all of human life, and especially comatose states. We have often been greatly surprised ourselves by what people do near death, as Arny says in his "Coma, Key to Awakening", and Amy says in "Coma, a Healing Journey". Therefore we developed what we called, a "Double State Ethics." This means that how we deal with someone near death should "ethically" speaking depends upon at least two states of consciousness. The first state is what the person said –or may have said--in their everyday life about how to deal with near death experiences. And the second state of consciousness we must listen to is communication with the altered state, the vegetative or comatose state. There, the "yes" and "no" we get from "binary communication" can sometimes lead to a second opinion about what's next in life...or death.

Your question about whether communication with someone in a coma promotes unexpected awakening is a central, statistical and important question. To answer that question definitively, we need to assemble many hundreds of such situations, each of which must have a specific measure for coma, and a specific definition of awakening. We and our Portland colleagues (Dean Yamamoto, Pierre Morin and Gary Reiss) are in the midst of such a statistical study now. However, from our personal experiences until now, we must say, YES, it surely seems as if trying to connect promotes at least wakeful states, and awakenings.