

Memoirs of a Bodhisattva

Short stories by Skip Nelson



MY STRANGE RELATIONSHIP WITH DEATH

My life has been filled with near death experiences. And I have actually had a verifiable NDE at the age of 11.

I was born two months premature. The doctors did not expect me to live. I weighed 4 pounds, 2-1/2 ounces, which, for medical technology in 1946, was very critical.

Subsequently, I was kept in the hospital and when taken home after a month or so, my mother had me sleep in an open drawer so as not to lose me in the crib they had purchased.

At age 11, I somehow contracted a case of double pneumonia and was hospitalized at Seattle Children's Hospital for over a month. At one point, the doctors called my parents on a very stormy and dark Saturday night and told them to get to the hospital ASAP as I would most likely not make it through the night.

It was only the result of a conversation with my mom many years later would I realize that I had a certifiable NDE. I had escaped by physical body and was over the room on that night, describing to her everyone and everything in that room. The problem is that when this happened, I was in a coma.

At age 14, doctors noticed a mass in my lower abdomen. They scheduled immediate surgery and found a 6 pound tumor, the size of a deflated basketball on my spleen. They removed the tumor and the spleen, warning that if that tumor would have burst, it would have been very likely instant death.

When I was 21 years old, I enlisted in the U. S. Army and was eventually sent to Vietnam, where I had three more experiences with near death.

On one occasion, I was sitting on top of a bunker in the mountains outside of Qui Nhon at midnight. I decided to have a cigarette. Bad move.

Almost immediately after I lit up, I notice a muzzle flash down the hill. The only sound I heard was the bullet whizzing past my head to the right at about one to two feet away.

Shortly thereafter, while on the same mountain, I woke one sunny morning to find a Bamboo Viper sleeping under my head. A bit from this creature could be quick death.

And one sunny day in a Huey over the delta of the Mekong River, on one of my many courier runs from Qui Nhon to U. S. Army Headquarters in Long Binh, after refueling and as we rose out of the local fueling depot nestled in the rice patties below, we came within feet of a mid air collision with another chopper, which would have resulted in instant death for all involved.

Just recently, I was on the freeway north of Seattle, northbound at the intersection of I-5 and I-405. As I continued north on I-5 with traffic coming in from I-405 on the right, I heard a thunderous and scraping sound.

As I looked into my rearview mirror, I saw huge steel culverts crashing across the space I had just vacated....followed by the bed of a flatbed semi and the cab scraping across the highway behind me. I missed it by five seconds.

We never know how far we are or have been from death. I am not sure if everyone has had these experiences, but they certainly have been quite noticeable in my life.

Peace and Love,

Skip Nelson