

# Conscious spirituality in search of truth...



## **CHARLES T TART: OUT- OF- BODY- EXPERIENCES OOB**

*Professor Charles T Tart is a leading scientific pioneer in exploring consciousness, spirituality, parapsychology, and transpersonal developments. Tart has consistently experienced four decades of academic research, is author of countless articles, books and other publications in the above scientific fields.*

*In 2018, he published “End of Materialism” a highly inspirational, deeply meaningful work that attempts (successfully) to bring the areas of science and spirituality, with its impact on human development closer together. My first encounter with Tart’s work was during the late 1970s whilst exploring ‘extrasensory perception’ ESP and related parapsychological subjects. It was an inspiring experience. In connection with Out-Of-Body-Experiences Tart published “Six Studies of Out-Of-Body-Experience” half a century on provides a succinct approach to this phenomena. The articles is published on his website. An extract from this appears below.*

*—Philip Crouch, Tasmania, 2020*

## **CHARLES T TART: OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCES — HALF A CENTURY ON**

“About half a century ago - have I really been me, doing my stuff, that long? - I had an amazing stroke of luck.”[Charles T Tart.]

### **OUT- OF- BODY- EXPERIENCE DEPICTION**

‘As part of trying to make sense of life, particularly reconciling the religion I was raised in and modern science, I had read extensively in books about psychic research while still in my teens. Psychic research was a very small, but I believed very important field of inquiry, launched in the 1880s by intelligent people who had also been having difficulty reconciling religion and science, and who had the brilliant idea that science was a method, much more than just its contemporary findings.

So why not apply the method of science (observe, theorize, test theories, share) to human experiences that had religious/spiritual implications and see what was real, as opposed to what was, as many fervent devotees of science proclaimed then (and now) that religion was all superstition and nonsense? This has been a major theme in my scientific career ever since reading about it.

One of the human experiences which struck me as very important in forming religions was the **out-of-the-body experience (OBE)**, where a person unexpectedly finds themselves located somewhere else than where they know their physical body is, but their mind is fully clear and conscious.



They can reason logically about how what is happening to them, floating up near the ceiling, e.g., while looking at their unconscious physical body below them in bed, is impossible – and yet there is no doubt it is happening! The typical aftereffect of having an OBE is the person saying something to the effect that “I no longer believe that I will survive death – I know I will, I’ve been alive and awake outside my body!” This is a conviction which usually lasts the rest of their life. **Clearly OBEs happening to some people are a major source of the idea of a soul.**

But aside from an occasional trustworthy person reporting OBEs, that was about all we knew about them, with one major factor added: in some cases, the person acquired by observation (seeing it) correct information about what was happening at a distant place they felt located at, when there was no reasonable way for them to otherwise know about it. Without that, OBEs could be thought about as merely an altered state of consciousness (ASC), something like a dream but with full and clear consciousness rather than the fuzzy state typical of dreams.

And indeed there is a relatively rare kind of dream, the lucid dream[1], in which the dreamer feels their mind is awake, but they classify their experience as a dream. In practice some apparent OBEs are probably misclassified lucid dreams and visa-versa, but that some OBEs involve clear ESP functioning intensifies the question: “Is it really possible for a person’s mind to be elsewhere than their physical body, sensing that distant place?” I would have liked to have studied OBEs, but aside from one experiment while I was still a college student, had little opportunity, and with unclear results. No one else was studying them. Indeed, OBEs were taboo.

### **Lucky!**

My wife and I had become friends with a young woman who occasionally baby sat our children. When she knew us better, and it became clear that we were people who could be talked to about unusual experiences, she began telling us about the OBEs which she had been having since she was a child...

This was the beginning of my luck. Not long after receiving my PhD, I also met and became friends with Robert A. Monroe who had also experienced many OBEs by then. His three books have been of great help since then to many people who have had OBEs but didn’t know what to make of them. I was able to do three studies with him over several years.



And also I was lucky because I carried out several years of research on using hypnosis to influence both the content and the process of nighttime dreaming, and the grant supporting that allowed me to have a sleep laboratory that was also useful for investigating OBEs.

Overall I have published six studies of OBEs. They can be studied with the increased precision of laboratory work (although that's not the only way), not just be memories of spontaneous experiences, e.g., and I found out some things about the physiological state in which they may occur - you don't have to be near death, as in near-death experiences (NDEs), e.g. - and sometimes it does indeed look like the OBEr's mind really is perceiving physical reality from a different perspective than that of their physical body. ‘

You can read an overall summary of my research at:[Tart-see below]



**Suggested resources:**

Six Studies of Out Of Body Experiences

[http://vedicilluminations.com/downloads/Consciousness-Life-After-Death/Charles%20Tart%20-%20Six%20Studies%20of%20Out-of-the-Body%20Experiences%20\(OBE\).pdf](http://vedicilluminations.com/downloads/Consciousness-Life-After-Death/Charles%20Tart%20-%20Six%20Studies%20of%20Out-of-the-Body%20Experiences%20(OBE).pdf)

<http://blog.paradigm-sys.com/out-of-body-experiences-half-a-century-on/>

*The End Of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal Is Bringing Science and Spirit Together, Charles to Tart*

<https://www.bookdepository.com/The-End-Of-Materialism-Charles-T-Tart/9781572246454>

