

AFTERLIFE AND IMMORTALITY

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(adapted)

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING

“I don't want to achieve immortality through my work... I want to achieve it by not dying!” -
Woody Allen

“Life is a great surprise. I don't see why death should not be an even greater one.” - *Vladimir Nabokov*

“Something has spoken to me in the night...and told me that I shall die, I know not where.
Saying: "[Death is] to lose the earth you know for greater knowing; to lose the life you have, for
greater life; to leave the friends you loved, for greater loving; to find a land more kind
than home, more large than earth.”

- *Thomas Wolfe*

SILENT REFLECTION

CHECK-IN: (40-50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for
loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, for five minutes each, if there is time
remaining, additional sharing and responses are welcome.

FOCUS: “AFTERLIFE AND IMMORTALITY” - Is this all there is?

Daphne du Maurier, reflecting on her husband's death, wrote:

“I have thought long and often about the possibility of life after death. Baptized and confirmed
in the Christian faith, I now acknowledge no denomination, yet have an instinctive yearning for
survival, as indeed the human race has always done, since humanity first sought to come to terms
with death. I liked to think of my husband reunited with the parents who had gone before him,
and with his comrades of two world wars. I liked to think that all pain, all suffering, had been
wiped out, that he knew, as none of us can know here on earth, indescribable joy, the “peace
which passed all understanding”--- a line he used to quote.

Yet, I had seen his empty shell. I had seen the light flicker and go out. Where had it gone?”
Of all the questions we ponder about life, none is so mysterious and less subject to proof than our
life journey, whether it preceded our birth or survives our death. Many major schools of thought
imagine that we have an existence and a purpose that exists beyond our life span on this earth.

Others believe this is it. We create our own meaning and purpose, pass on our genes, and abide
a while in memory. Is this all there is?

What do you think?

What do you hope?

Can you imagine what form your identity, spirit, soul (whatever you want to call “you”), can you
imagine what it might experience when it leaves the empty shell behind?

How/what would you like to experience in the next shapeshifting phase of your journey?

LIKES AND WISHES

CLOSING WORDS:

“And now comes the mystery...”

- *The reported last words of 19th Century clergyman Henry Ward Beecher on his deathbed*

“What will remain of us is love.”

- *Philip Larkin*