

Death is a change in consciousness, which expands when the body shuts down; at that moment, which is not the end, the purest lucidity of life is revealed.

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LA VANGUARDIA

La Vanguardia interview with

Vicente Arráez

Doctor specializing in transplants



Dr. Vicente Arráez.

Introduction by web-ur.com: In this article from the LONGEVITY section of 'La Vanguardia', Dr. Arráez states with conviction that death is not the end, contrary to the common (and sometimes arrogant) belief in today's Western society that "everything ends" with the disappearance of the physical body. However, he does not go beyond stating that what survives is consciousness, without mentioning why it exists as such, what its origin is, why it has "inhabited" a physical body for a certain time on Earth, or whether that consciousness already existed "before incarnating." It tells us that, upon leaving the body, consciousness expands, revealing the purest lucidity of life, but without clarifying what kind of life and what purpose it has in itself. Undoubtedly, a more complete view of the course of Universal Life in its entirety would be of great help to the reader. In any case, despite this lack of a more comprehensive explanation, we find the inclusion of this article in UR interesting because of its focus on the fact that the process of dying is nothing more than a change in the level of consciousness.

Evelyn López, journalist for La Vanguardia.
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We live knowing that death is the only certainty and that no one knows how long we will live. When we ask Dr. Vicente Arráez how one can prepare to die well, he replies that it has nothing to do with age or time, because both, he says, "are just a construct of the mind." He does not speak from theory or faith, but from a wisdom of experience and deep observation. That is why, when he states that "death is not an end, but an

expansion," it does not sound like a philosophical idea, but rather a h y truth that he has witnessed many times in the eyes of those who are departing. "Death and life are two sides of the same coin. And this very moment, even this one, is already a farewell."

He was a transplant coordinator for 15 years at the General University Hospital of Elche (Spain) and currently participates in international projects on consciousness and the process of dying, in addition to presiding over Metta-Hospice, a foundation dedicated to accompanying terminally ill patients and their families. Precisely, in his book *Dying is not what it seems. The Journey Between Mind and Consciousness*. (*Morir no es lo que parece. El viaje entre la mente y la conciencia*, Editorial Grijalbo, 2025), Arráez delves into that invisible transition between life and death. He talks about the mind and the brain, matter and consciousness, dreams and mystery, as someone who has crossed a threshold from which few return to tell the tale. This doctor and researcher has been observing death up close for more than four decades, not to distance himself from it, but to understand it. Listening to him is an invitation to let go of fear, to look at life without running away, to understand that every moment is a way of dying... and of being born.

Death is a human construct, a way for the mind to name what it does not understand. It is not an event, but a process, a transformation of consciousness. What dies is the form, not the essence. When the body shuts down, consciousness expands. In that moment, which is not an end but a transition, the purest lucidity of life is revealed.

But why are we so afraid of death?

Because we fear the unknown, when in reality it is part of who we are. Fear, when understood, ceases to paralyze us; it is a good teacher that shows us where we are vulnerable. It appears when we resist change, but life is a constant change. And when we accept that fragility, existence becomes lighter. Life and death are, in the end, two sides of the same coin.

“Death is a transformation of consciousness.”

You say that fear is a teacher. How can we overcome it?

By observing it. Fear has a message, but it only reveals it when we stop running away. We must not fight it but listen to it. When you look it straight in the eye, it dissolves. When you go through it, it changes form; it is no longer an obstacle, but energy. Fear is pure attention; a force that, if you understand it, pushes you toward life.

And yet we tend to control everything, even what does not depend on us. Why does control cause so much suffering?

We want everything to happen according to our plans, but life does not respond to our expectations. To control is to deny the natural flow of existence. When we let go, life surprises us, uncertainty ceases to be a threat and becomes a learning experience. Life is not mastered; it is paced.

How do you learn to truly let go?

By accepting. But accepting is not resigning oneself, it is understanding. Acceptance does not paralyze, it liberates. Every moment we live is a farewell: to who we were a second ago, to what is no longer there. When we understand this, we stop resisting and begin to trust.

And what happens when someone stops resisting death?

Terminal lucidity appears. It is a moment of absolute clarity, in which everything falls into place. Fear dissolves and a deep understanding emerges: that we are not the body or the thoughts, but the consciousness that observes them. It is the moment when the ego surrenders and life opens up, luminous, as a whole.

“[When we die] fear dissolves and a deep understanding emerges; it is the moment when the ego surrenders and life opens up.”

What happens in that moment of lucidity, when fear dissolves and life opens up?

The mind is a tool of the brain that helps us navigate the physical world. It allows us to think, analyze, compare, and decide. But there is something deeper than the mind: consciousness. The mind reasons, consciousness understands. The mind observes fragments, consciousness perceives the whole. When the mind is silent, consciousness begins to speak. That is who we really are.

So, does consciousness survive the body?

Yes. The brain is only the receiver, not the source. When the body dies, the instrument shuts down, but the melody continues. Consciousness is not within us; we are within it. We do not inhabit consciousness; we are consciousness.

You say that consciousness is like the water in the ocean and death is like a bottle that breaks.

Exactly. We are bottles filled with water believing that we are the bottle. When the form breaks, the water returns to the ocean. Dying is not disappearing, it is returning. Death is not loss, it is a return to the place we never left.

In your book, you say that sleeping is a way of dying a little every night. Why?

Because when we sleep, the self dissolves. The body rests, the senses shut down, but consciousness remains active. In sleep, we cease to be the character we wear and enter other planes of reality. It is a daily rehearsal of detachment: we die symbolically to be reborn each morning.

What do dreams reveal about us?

Dreams are the mirror in which consciousness contemplates itself. In them, we continue to learn, even when the body is resting. There are those who dream from the surface, reliving what they have experienced, repeating thoughts or emotions from the day; others who manage to observe what they dream with a certain lucidity; and a few who reach a deeper state, where there is no longer duality or narrative, only presence. That level is the closest to what happens when we die.

“Sleeping is a daily rehearsal of detachment: we symbolically die in order to be reborn each morning.”

What about nightmares?

They are dense emotions seeking release. We should not run away from them but embrace them. They represent what we have not been able to express: fear, anger, anguish. When we accept them, they cease to be a threat and are transformed into clean energy. Behind every nightmare there is a call for balance.

Can we work with dreams to expand consciousness?

Yes. Lucid dreaming is a magnificent gateway. We can prepare for it with intention before going to sleep, observing our breathing, giving thanks for the day, remembering that we are more than just the body that is going to rest. Traditions such as yoga nidra, dream rituals, or meditation before sleep have been teaching this for centuries: the body sleeps, but consciousness remains awake.

You also talk about other gateways to expanding consciousness: meditation, nature, entheogens...

They are all paths to the same place. Meditation, deep contact with nature, shamanic rituals, or the sacred use of entheogens, always with respect, never for recreational purposes, allow us to dissolve the boundaries of the self. These are different ways of remembering that reality is not limited to what we perceive. The visible is only the surface; the essential happens in the invisible.

You say that saying goodbye is the ultimate act of love. Why?

Because letting go is loving without possession. When we accompany someone who is leaving, we should not hold them back but help them to leave in peace. Love, in its purest form, is allowing the other person to follow his or her path. Farewell is the moment when we understand that true love does not bind, it liberates.

“When we accompany someone who is leaving, we should not hold them back but help them to leave in peace.”

How can we best accompany someone who is dying?

By being present. Silence should not be filled but inhabited. A glance, a hand, a shared breath say more than a thousand words. Accompanying is not saving, it is sharing the journey with respect and tenderness. Death does not need noise, it needs presence.

How does one prepare to say goodbye?

By saying what remains unsaid. Thank you, I'm sorry, I love you. These three phrases close the circle of love. When they are said, fear dissolves and death ceases to hurt. The true farewell occurs when there are no more unresolved issues between hearts.

Does love transcend death?

Love does not die. Everything we love remains on another level of consciousness. Love is the mark of the eternal in the human, the way life has of reminding us that nothing is lost, it only changes form.

You talk about transcending rather than transforming. Why?

Because transforming implies wanting to control the process, changing what we do not accept. Transcending, on the other hand, is understanding. It is not about changing what happens but about raising our gaze and perceiving it from another level of consciousness. When we transcend, everything makes sense, even pain. It is the transition from struggle to surrender, from resistance to trust.

“Living is not about accumulating experiences but inhabiting them with presence; it is learning to die in each moment, without fear of disappearing.”

What role does time play in this process?

Time is a creation of the mind. It does not exist beyond our perception. What we call the past or the future are only mental projections; the only thing that is real is this moment. And this moment is, in itself, a farewell. We die with each passing moment, and in that subtle death, life is renewed.

So, “dying well” has nothing to do with age.

Exactly. Dying well does not depend on age, but on the awareness with which we live. There are young people who are already dead in life, and older people who still wake up every day with the innocence of a child. Dying well is having lived awake, without fear of the end.

After everything you have been through, how do you understand the verb “to live” today?

Living is not about accumulating experiences but inhabiting them with presence. It is learning to die in every moment, without fear of disappearing. Living is letting go again and again, understanding that we own nothing. Dying well has nothing to do with the end. It is about stopping trying to survive and finally starting to truly live. And one understands that, in reality, one is talking about how to live.