

August 27, 2026

### Seeking Advisory Council Members for *Five Minutes on the Low Road*

#### A near-death musical with research grounding

*Five Minutes on the Low Road* is a new music-theater work in development, following Tanya, a driven pharmaceutical executive whose car accident triggers a textbook near-death experience -- the tunnel, the light, the life review, the choice to return -- and the disruption she carries back into a life she no longer recognizes.

The show is explicitly research-based. It draws on P. M. H. Atwater's *The Big Book of Near-Death Experiences*, the *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation database, and many other works. It aims to render the documented aftereffect profile -- decreased death anxiety, increased empathy, a reordering of priorities, and often significant life disruption (career change, relationship strain) -- with fidelity.

Book, music and lyrics are by Charles T. Betz, with additional book, lyrics, music and dramaturgy by Josiah Thomas Turner (Kennedy Center Emerging Playwright) and orchestrations by Ben Jossi. The piece was originally developed in the New Musicals, Incorporated writer's workshop and is in active development under the Minnesota-based New Musical Theater Exchange (Minneapolis); excerpts have been presented at Nautilus Music-Theater's Rough Cuts showcase. Additional dramaturgy by Ben Krywosz (Yale faculty and head of Nautilus Music Theater).

#### What we're asking

We're forming a small **advisory council** of NDE researchers, IANDS-affiliated experts, and experiencers, to serve as a fidelity check as the show develops -- reading drafts, listening to songs, viewing videos and storyboards. We need them to flag where dramatic license has drifted from the documented phenomenology or aftereffect research, and help us represent the experience (and the people who've had it) responsibly.

**The commitment is deliberately light: 30 minutes prep and a 30-minute conversation, twice a year**

**while the work is in development.** More often or longer would of course be appreciated. We'll send materials in advance (script pages, a recording, or specific questions) so the conversation itself can be focused. There is no expectation of ongoing availability between check-ins, no fundraising ask, and no obligation beyond the two calls.

In return, council members are credited (or not, at their option) in the show's materials (program, website, and grant/funder communications) as advisors -- and have a direct hand in shaping how NDE experience reaches a general theater audience, many of whom will encounter this material for the first time through the show.

#### Who we're looking for

- NDE researchers (clinical, psychological, or parapsychological)
- IANDS chapter leaders or long-time members with deep familiarity with the literature
- Experiencers willing to speak to the emotional and relational accuracy of the material
- Health-humanities or hospice/palliative-care professionals who work with dying patients and their families

#### Why this matters

Popular impressions of the NDE tend to focus on the "other side" as the story. There are misunderstandings, e.g. not portraying the soul's strong reluctance to come back. But more importantly, the research -- and experiencers themselves -- consistently say the real story is what happens after. The divorce. The career change. The years of not being believed. We want the show to get that part right, and we don't think we can do it alone.

#### Interested, or know someone who'd be a good fit?

Reach out to Charles Betz ([char@charlestbetz.com](mailto:char@charlestbetz.com)) to learn more or set up an initial conversation. See [5minlowroad.com](http://5minlowroad.com) for further information.