



# End-of-Life Resource Guide

## Jewish Edition

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Compiled by Judith Zaruches



*So often you just forget that you're living, and in doing so you forget that you're dying, and you forget to be present altogether. I always think that one of the easiest ways to remember to love the world is to remember that you have to leave it at some point.*

Ada Limón, "Where the Light Comes From," *Tricycle Magazine* Winter 2024



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# Introduction

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When joyful, major life events are on the horizon, we often take the time to think through our preferences and choices around how we'd like them to unfold. When we are getting married, for example, we might take a year or more to plan the myriad details. When we are celebrating a birthday or an anniversary, we set a date for the festivities and tend to the planning for the special day.

What major life event often goes unplanned? Our death. The thought of death might scare us, or we just can't wrap our minds around the fact that we will die, and we want to avoid the topic, or we don't know what plans may be needed. This guide was created to introduce various available resources as a gentle way to assist you in beginning to consider thinking about death and identifying the areas of planning that are relevant for you.

## *Why now?*

There is much we can't control at the end of life. Just as we live uniquely, so we die uniquely. Some people want to direct what happens; others feel more comfortable taking things as they come. However, it is beneficial if we proactively address matters that require emotional, physical and cognitive energy before they are needed. There are many choices and decisions we can make in advance.

After we receive a terminal diagnosis, we may feel in shock and become lost in a whirlpool of emotions. We may be struggling with low energy or possibly the aftermath of treatments. We may have a medical crisis and not be able to speak for ourselves. At such times, our family and others in our circle of care appreciate knowing our wishes, as it helps them navigate a challenging time with the support of our guidance. Completing an advance directive (a written document that tells your healthcare providers who should speak for you and what medical decisions they should make if you become unable to speak for yourself) is a significant initial step in this process.

As a result of my training as an end-of-life doula (a non-medical person who provides support and guidance to dying people and their loved ones before, during, and after death) and my continuing education in this area, I have created this guide of resources to invite you to prepare for your death. After illness comes upon us, emotions can be intense and complex, making our ability to think and act more challenging. Addressing the issues and decisions that can be made ahead of time benefits everyone.

Of course, nothing is set in stone. You can review and change all your advance choices or some of them as often as you like; they are not your final answer. Our plan for our death is a vibrant, changing vision.



## *Where to begin?*

I recommend starting with the general guides, which have been put together by a variety of organizations. This will provide an overall understanding of the kinds of issues you may want to address. Maybe you want to tiptoe into the topic of death, so the section on death education is where you can enter. When you are ready to begin planning for the time that your life is coming to an end, you can focus on legal tasks, such as completing advanced directives and a Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST) form, a medical order that allows you to indicate certain preferences for emergency medical interventions. Additionally, there are other tasks to bear in mind, including closing accounts and contemplating legacy planning.

Approaching nearer to the time of death there are some topics to consider, including Voluntary Stopping of Eating and Drinking (VSED) and Medical Aid in Dying (MAID). You can explore the various ways to receive support from palliative and hospice care professionals and organizations, which support both the dying person and their circle of care.

Planning your services can feel daunting, and you may choose to wait until you feel ready to begin this process. (Some may wish to leave those details to their loved ones, in which case the information provided here may support them.) Grief is a thread that weaves throughout the experience of dying and beyond. I've included several websites that you can explore.

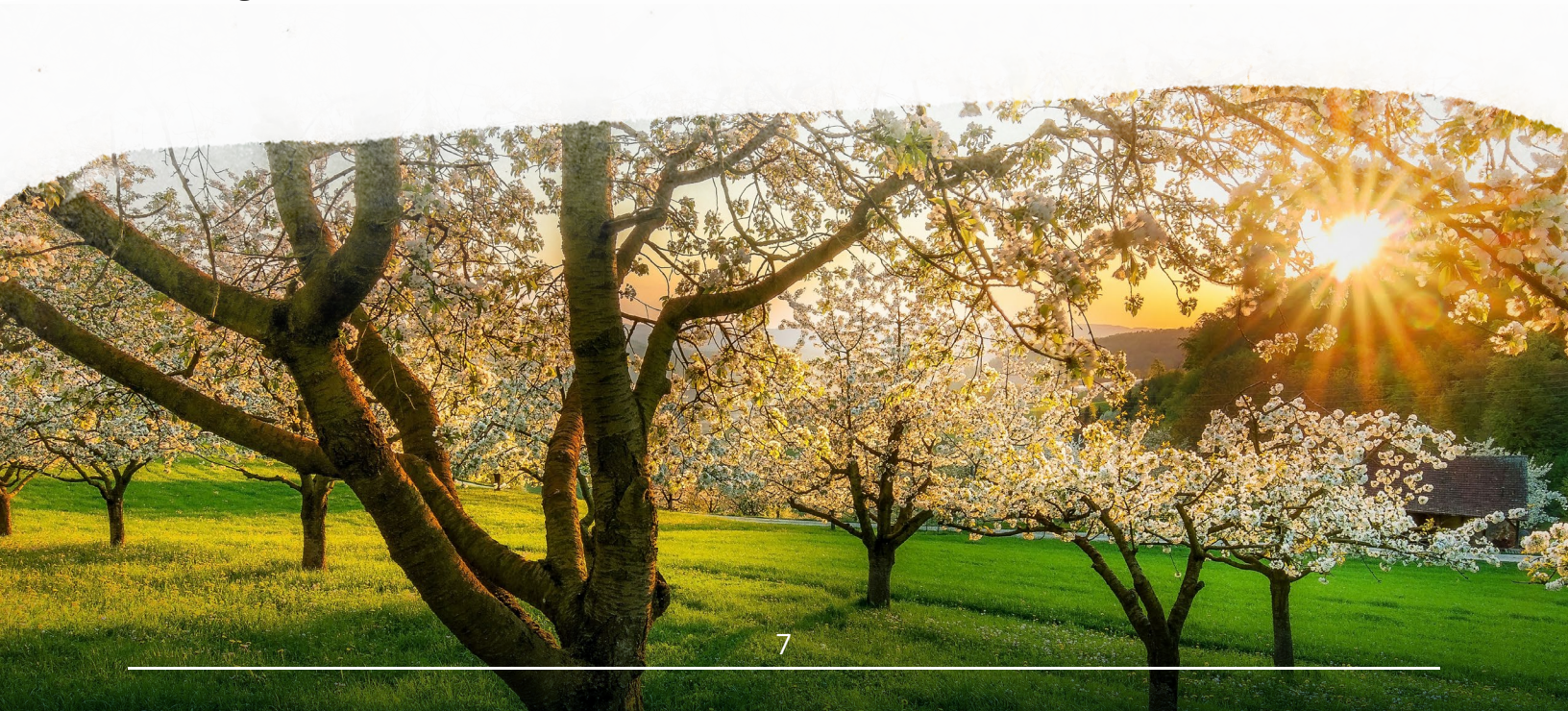
I've also included media resources, such as movies and podcasts, to spark ideas and explorations of feelings and possibilities as you think about your death and what is important to you.

## *Finally...*

I offer this guide so you and the people you love are aware of the options. My hope is that it gives you peace of mind knowing many of the details are arranged, so that when death is near, you and those who care about you can spend the precious time sharing your love and the connection you cherish.

Choose the websites and materials that interest you, either by yourself or with someone you trust. After learning more and thinking about what is important to you, my suggestion is to create a document for your loved ones, either on your own or with them, compiling all the information they will need as you approach death and after you have died. You'll find some resources that provide systems for organization.

I hope this curated collection of resources will be beneficial to you, or maybe just invites awareness for now. Use whatever is most appropriate for you today or put it aside until a later time. This guide is meant to be a starting place. I anticipate that as you begin exploring you will discover other resources that are helpful. May all our efforts begin to eliminate the taboos surrounding death and to integrate death into the fabric of life.



# Part One:

# Beginning Planning

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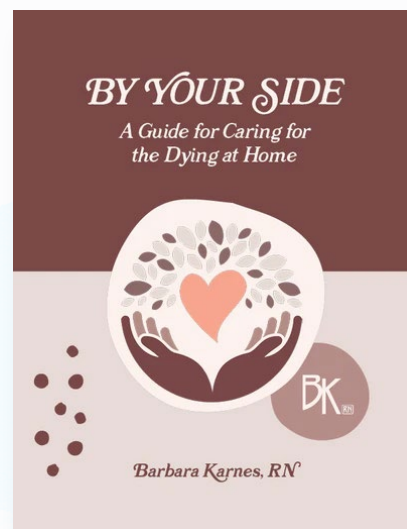
Rather than recommending only one website, I am providing a list of several I have found to be highly useful. We have our own preferences, and I suggest you explore these to identify what aligns best with your needs. These platforms are comprehensive and come from reliable sources.

## GENERAL GUIDES

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### Barbara Karnes Books

Barbara Karnes, RN, offers compassionate end-of-life education designed to guide families and professionals through the final stages of life. Her booklets are outstanding, and they are good to read before they are needed. Some hospices give them to patients and families; however, the information may be useful long before that point. My recommendation is to start with [\*By Your Side: A Guide for Caring for the Dying at Home\*](#). Another option is her [\*End of Life Guideline Series\*](#).



### The Conversation Project

There are so many choices we may make for end-of-life care, and the Conversation Project offers several guides tailored to different circumstances

and topics. Please take time to review the options and select the ones that suit your needs. You don't have to answer every question the guide prompts you to consider. The guides are meant to help you identify what is important for you to think about and share with your circle of care. All guides are available to download and print at home for free.

## *Excerpts from the Conversation Project website:*

“The Conversation Project is a public engagement initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement. The goal is both simple and transformative: to help everyone talk about their wishes for care through the end of life, so those wishes can be understood and respected.

“It's time to share the way we want to live through the end of our lives. And it's time to communicate about the kind of care we want and don't want for ourselves.

“We believe that the place for this to begin is at the kitchen table—not in the intensive care unit—with the people who matter most to us, before it's too late.

“Together we can make these difficult conversations easier. We can make sure that our own wishes, and those of the people who matter most to us (our loved ones, friends, chosen family), are both understood and respected. The Conversation Project offers free tools, guidance, and resources to begin talking with those who matter most about your and their wishes.”



## [Five Wishes](#)

This is another excellent website to guide you regarding decisions and conversations with family members. Take time exploring the [booklets](#) for your wishes and directives for advance care planning. The website has an outstanding curated collection of podcasts, videos, news items, and book recommendations to help you find the right tool to get the conversation started in a way that's right for you and those you love.

## [A New Yorker's Guide To End Of Life Planning, Options, And Rights](#)

Even if you don't live in New York, this website offers excellent resources. Check out their [advanced directives documents](#) and an excellent comprehensive guide to [end-of-life choices](#).

## [Dying Your Way](#)

*From their website:*

"We offer an excellent educational program that empowers users removing the fear of death so it can become a beautiful experience. The mission of Dying Your Way is to empower everyone, everywhere to prepare for the end of life by promoting, educating and providing services before the need is there."



## Compassion and Choices

*From their website:*

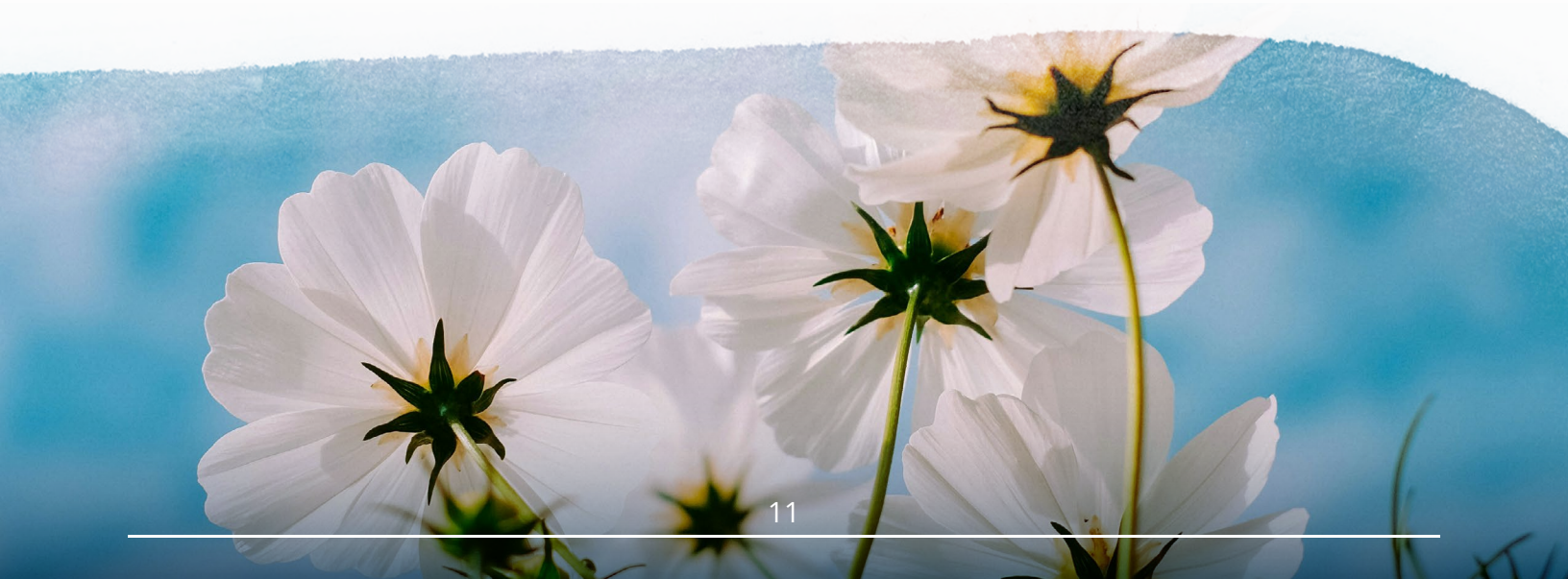
"We're an organization dedicated to improving care, expanding options and empowering everyone to chart their end-of-life journey." One page I want to highlight that you may find quite helpful: [Living \(and Dying\) With Dementia](#).

## National Institute of Aging

*From their website:*

"[Advance care planning](#) involves discussing and preparing for future decisions about your medical care if you become seriously ill or unable to communicate your wishes."

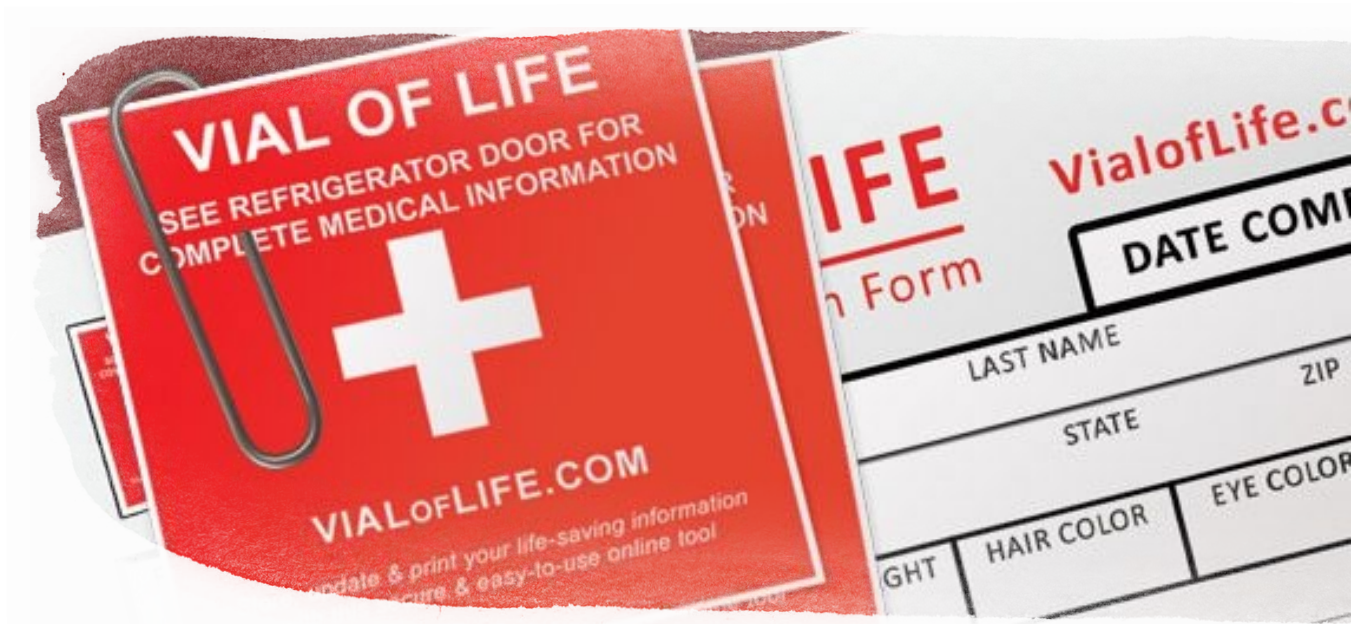
These worksheets can help you reflect on your values and your care and treatment preferences, and to take steps to prepare your own plan. You can download, print, and copy the [worksheets](#). "[Think About What Matters Most When Making Medical Decisions](#)" is a simple and useful worksheet.





## Vial of Life

Vial of Life is a program providing emergency responders with quick access to your critical health information. It includes medical conditions, allergies, emergency contacts, preferred hospital, physicians and more. It is stored in the refrigerator in a vial or a plastic bag that are provided, along with a decal for the refrigerator door to alert first responders. You can also conduct an internet search to find your local organizations that provide these vials at no cost.



# JEWISH RESOURCES



## Shomer Collective

*From their website:*

“Shomer Collective seeks to accompany individuals and families as they confront and plan for end of life by curating partners and resources that lift up Jewish wisdom, values, and practices. Shomer Collective offers concierge services to help you navigate all things end-of-life, Jewishly. We curate the most accessible resources to help you find what you need when you need it, whether it’s a Jewish how-to video about end-of-life rituals or a link to a Jewish funeral home in your area.”

## Kavod v’Nichum

*From their website:*

“We serve communities and individuals through a focus on the Chevra Kadisha – sacred communities that come together at the end of life to care for the deceased and comfort the living through Jewish rituals and traditions.”

## Ematai

*From their website:*

“Mission: To inspire and educate Jewish individuals & families to honor their values and preferences for aging and end-of-life with Jewish wisdom and *halacha*.”

“Our name, Ematai (“If not now, when?”), is a call to action. We seek to upstream the necessary conversations that will facilitate meaningful choices later. Ematai helps individuals and their families anticipate the questions they’ll need to answer as they continue on their healthcare journey.

Ematai also explores the big moral questions that society needs to face as technological revolutions change the human experience. We are here to demonstrate how Jewish wisdom responds to the ethical dilemmas often found in healthcare innovation. To this highly relevant moral frontier, Ematai brings together rabbis, healthcare professionals, ethicists, and communal leaders to represent Judaism with a wise and nuanced voice.”

Ematai’s [Netivot](#), an Advance Healthcare Directive and Conversation Guide, addresses these challenges by providing two critical documents that will help protect you and your family.”

Also, you may find emotional and spiritual support exploring the prayers on the [Ematai Tefilot Project](#) page.

## [My Jewish Learning](#)

The link is to the website page titled “Mourn” and addresses a wide range of topics, including shiva, mourning rituals, Jewish perspectives on end-of-life care, Torah readings and much more.

ematai  
אימטאי

PRAYERS OF REFLECTION

**Introduction**

The goal of these prayers is to stimulate personal reflection, a sense of tranquility, and spiritual elevation through:

- Proclaiming faith in God and His justice
- Repentance
- Reconciliation
- Asking for and granting forgiveness
- Imparting final blessings and advice about living a good life

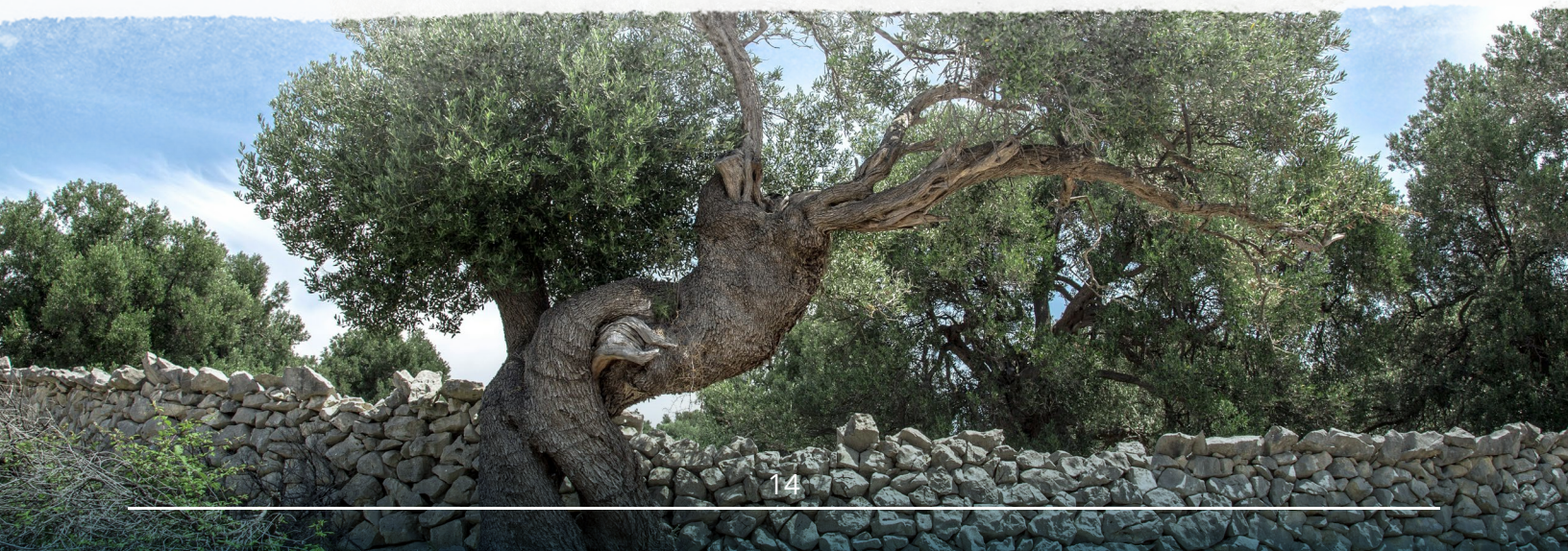
Given these goals, it is best for a person to recite such prayers when they are clear-minded. A person can recite them at any time of critical illness or danger. He or she should not see this as a portent of their impending death as many people recover after medical interventions and repentance is always beneficial.

The vidui text includes a prayer for recovery, making it a fitting prayer to recite at a pivotal crossroads in one's healthcare journey. Indeed, classic rabbinic texts state that the person should be told, "Many have confessed and not died, and many did not confess and died. As a reward for your confession, may you live. All who confess have a share in the world to come."

One can recite the abbreviated version if they are unable to state the longer text. If the sick person cannot verbally recite these prayers, they can say it in their heart. Family members may also read it aloud for them. These prayers may be recited on Shabbat and festivals, as necessary.

רבונו של עולם,  
יהי רצון מלפניך  
שיהיה שלום במנוחתנו

Navigate Healthcare Choices with Jewish Wisdom © Ematai 2023



# DEATH EDUCATION



These organizations offer valuable resources to facilitate exploration of emotions, thoughts, and concerns related to death.

## Death Café

*From their website:*

“At a Death Cafe people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss death. Our objective is ‘to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives’. A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counselling session.”

## Death Over Drafts

*From their website:*

“I started Death Over Drafts by blending two of my passions: open conversations about life and death, and a good craft beer. What began as a small local gathering has grown into events across the country, each guided by our network of official DoD Crafters. No matter where we meet, one thing stays the same — people are often surprised by how uplifting it feels to talk about death and dying.”

## The Death Deck

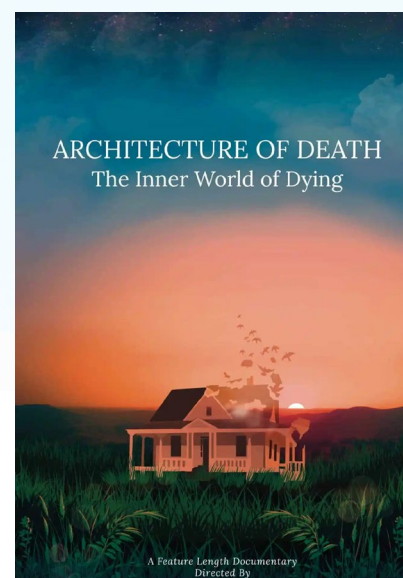
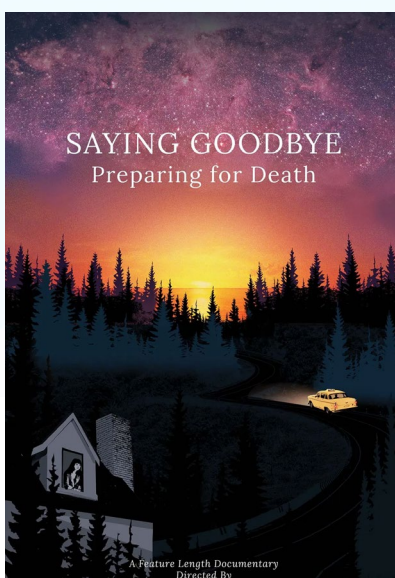
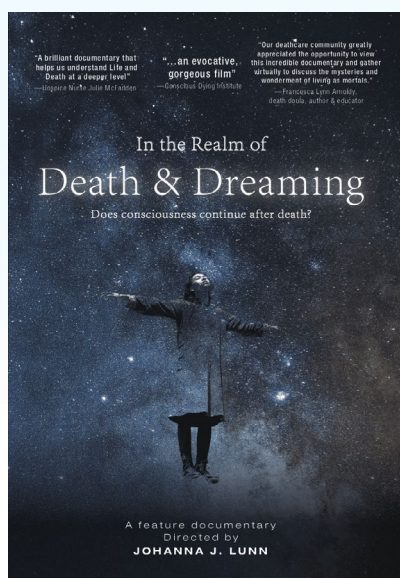
Lisa Pahl, the creator of the Death Deck, is dedicated to enhancing death literacy and enabling individuals to confront illness, death, and grief with courage and clarity. The Death Deck offers an engaging and memorable evening of spirited conversations with friends or family. Lisa emphasizes, “I guide individuals and families to engage in meaningful conversations about end-of-life preferences—so that when the time comes, they are prepared and empowered.”



## When You Die.org

From their website:

“As a filmmaker, I stepped humbly into the world of death and dying informed by my own traumatic experiences as a young person and seasoned by time and the inevitable losses around me that come with aging. My goal was to produce a single feature-length documentary. As I began to research the film my creative and business partner James Hoagland and I started a website that linked to the many resources I was exploring. Soon we felt the website could be of great benefit to others. It became a place filled with information, a place to find answers as well as a place that raised questions previously unthought of. Eighteen on-camera interviews later, the single documentary became three, the website got fuller, a podcast was added and the When You Die Project was born with the primary goal of giving people something to talk about. After all, we are most afraid of what we don’t know, but exploring death and dying brings the subject into our day-to-day life and reduces our fear enormously. I genuinely hope these films, and the project on a whole, are helpful to as many people as possible!”



## End Well

*From their website:*

“End Well is a nonprofit on a mission to transform how the world thinks about, talks about, and plans for the end of life.”

## End-of-Life-University

*From their website:*

“Dr. Wyatt also hosts End-of-Life University, an online interview series that features conversations with experts who work in all aspects of end-of-life care. She is widely regarded as a thought-leader in the effort to transform the way we care for our dying in the U.S. In addition, she is valued for her application of spiritual principles to illness and healthcare and teaches that in order to live life fully we must each overcome our fear of death and embrace the difficulties that life brings us.” [EOLU also maintains a YouTube channel.](#)

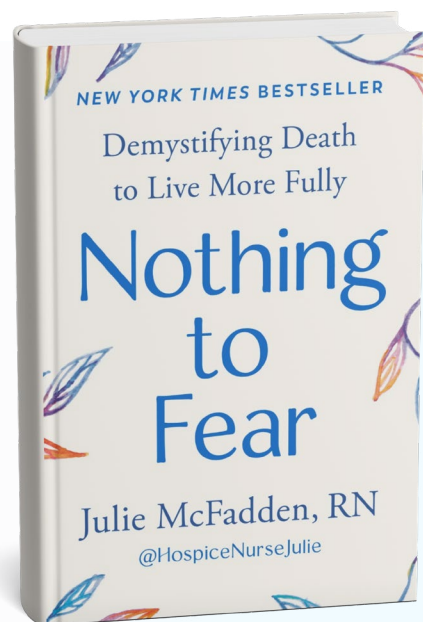
## Bevival

*From their website:*

“Bevival was created to be a welcoming entry point to explore life’s inevitable conclusion, *before time of need and long before the end.*” You might want to explore their excellent [podcasts](#).

## Hospice Nurse Julie

She has a large following on [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#). Her book, [Nothing to Fear: Demystifying Death to Live More Fully](#) is a bestseller. She also offers short-form content like this [before you die list](#).



# Part Two: Estate Planning

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## LEGAL AND FINANCIAL

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There are many legal and financial details to put into place. Here are just a few sites to explore.

### Estate Planning

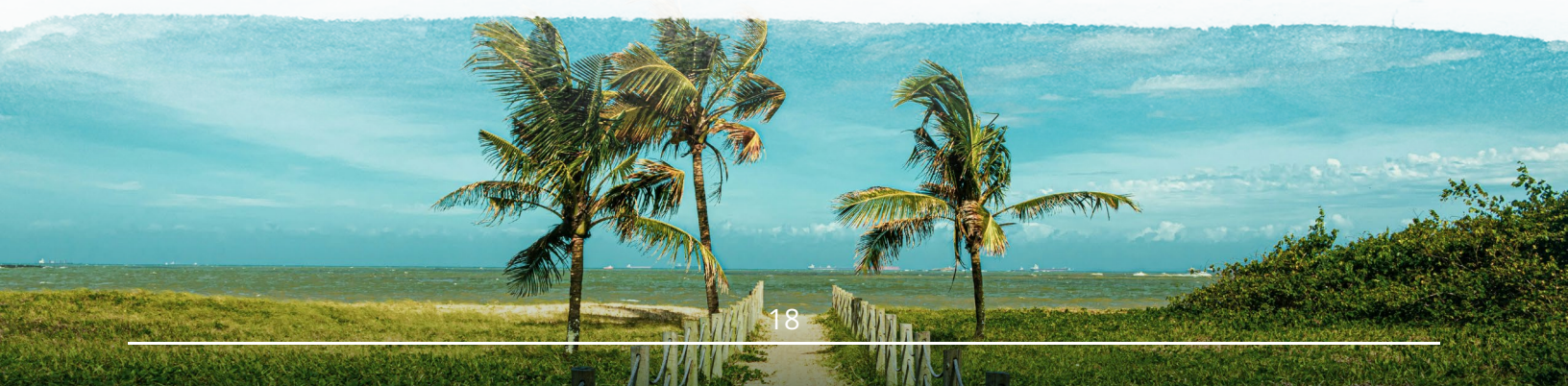
You will need to name someone to manage your estate. Some people ask family members or trusted friends to fulfill this role. There are other options, and you can explore finding a professional fiduciary or executor in your state.

Rocket Lawyer, [“How To Choose the Right Executor for Your Will”](#)

The Motley Fool, [“How to Find the Right Estate Trustee”](#)

Advanced Directives/Advance Care Planning:

[AARP, Find Advance Directives Forms by State](#)



## Everwill

*From their website:*

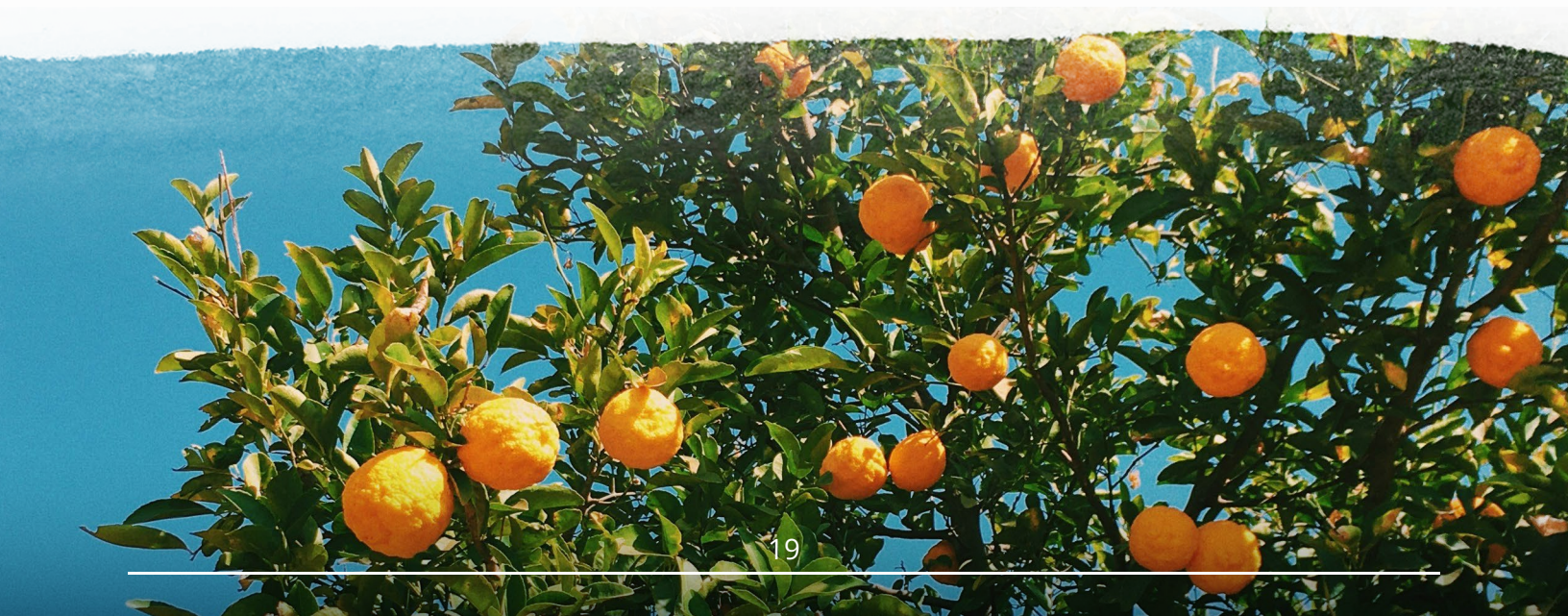
“At Everwill, we believe that everyone, wealthy or not, deserves high-quality legal services when it comes to protecting and planning for their family and loved ones. So we combine our attorney expertise with advanced technologies to make estate planning more affordable and accessible through an easy and efficient process. Our mission is to bring you true peace of mind by helping you make informed decisions throughout this process and even beyond. We are committed to building lasting relationships with you and your family, and we are here to support you, especially during those difficult times.”

## FreeWill

*From their website:*

“Navigating life’s important decisions shouldn’t come with a hefty price tag, which is why we offer our complete suite of estate planning tools at absolutely no cost to you—because peace of mind for you and your loved ones is priceless.”

“Estate planning is traditionally considered complex, scary, and expensive. That’s why we set out to build a simple tool that anyone can use to create these important documents. All estate plans made using FreeWill are 100% legal and specifically tailored to your jurisdiction.”



## Future File

*From their website:*

“We often don’t like to think or talk about it, but medical emergencies, issues like Alzheimer’s disease and mortality are inevitable facts of life that will affect every single one of us. While these life events have an immense impact on our loved ones, many of us haven’t adequately prepared for these kinds of difficult situations. And most of us don’t even know where to start.

“That’s why you need the Future File system. Future File will hold your hand and ease you through the often uncomfortable process of planning out your legacy and wishes. And there is no more important gift that you can give to your loved ones (and yourself!) than the peace of mind that comes with the clarity of knowing your wishes during their time of need, as well as saving dozens of hours’ worth of time and saving potentially thousands of dollars, too.”

## Mydirectives

*From their website:*

“MyDirectives solutions make advance care planning simple, provide secure cloud storage and enable all stakeholders to have access to the ACP documents they need, whenever and wherever they need it. Set up a free account to create or upload ACP documents. Here, you can access, manage, and update your documents anytime.”

## **Life Insurance**

Consider whether this is something you need. Life insurance can give you peace of mind knowing your family is financially protected after you die. I suggest doing your own research to determine whether this is needed and what type of insurance would be appropriate for you at this time in your life.

# CLOSING ACCOUNTS

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When we die, we leave behind numerous digital accounts, online services, etc. These guides offer strategies for closing all the digital and analog threads.

A **Social media will**, also called a digital will, is a document outlining your preferences for management of your online accounts following your death. This document may include a comprehensive log of your social media, email accounts, media storage, shopping accounts, gaming, betting, online banking, cryptocurrency, and other financial accounts.

**ConsumerResources.org** "[How to Close Social Media Accounts of Deceased Loved Ones](#)"

**Everplans** "[How To Close Online Accounts And Services When Someone Dies](#)" gives step-by-step instructions on how to close more than 230 digital (and some non-digital) services...and the list keeps on growing."

**DG Legacy**, "[What is a digital legacy?](#)"

**Funeral Consumers Alliance**, "[Your Digital Legacy](#)"



# PERSONAL LEGACY

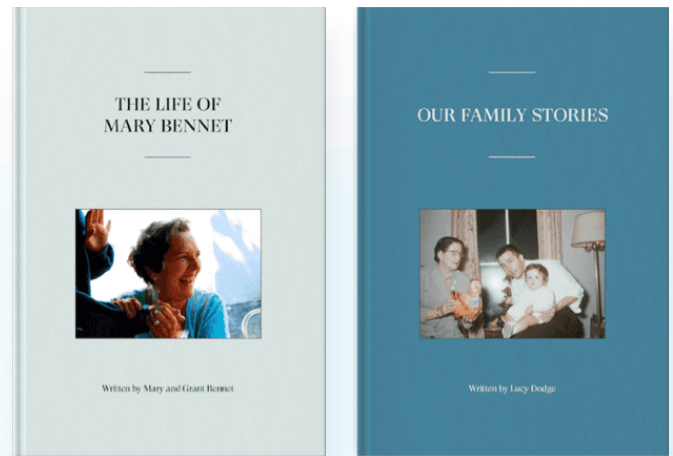


Some people wish to initiate a legacy project or write a legacy letter, a creative way to preserve memories or traditions; to share stories, teachings or values with future generations. This endeavor can be simple or multifaceted, undertaken alone or with others. If this resonates with you, the following websites offer ideas and ways to get started to create your unique project.

## Storyworth

*From their website:*

“Storyworth books are designed to last for generations to come. We’ve sourced quality materials that look great now and age gracefully over time to honor the stories within.”



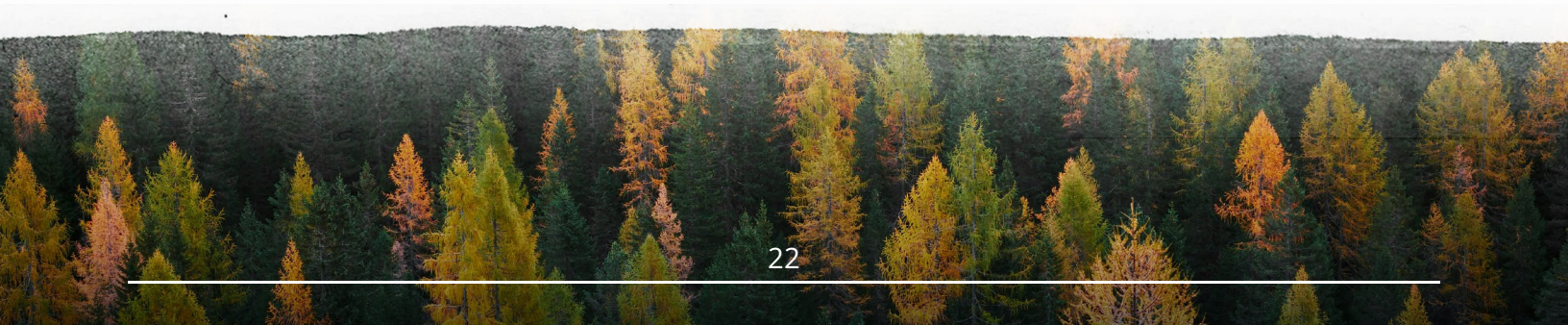
## Remento

*From their website:*

“Turn memories into a keepsake book. No writing required. Preserve a loved one’s stories the easy way. Remento turns their spoken words into a personalized keepsake book of their stories.”

## Everplans

Everplans offers suggestions for an [Ethical Will](#). An Ethical Will is a personal document that you create to communicate your values, experiences, and life lessons to your family.



Part Three:

# End-of-Life Planning

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## PALLIATIVE AND HOSPICE CARE



Patients receiving palliative care have serious or chronic illnesses but can still be undergoing curative treatment for their condition. Patients receiving hospice care have either decided not to receive more treatment for their life-threatening illness, or there is no more curative treatment available.

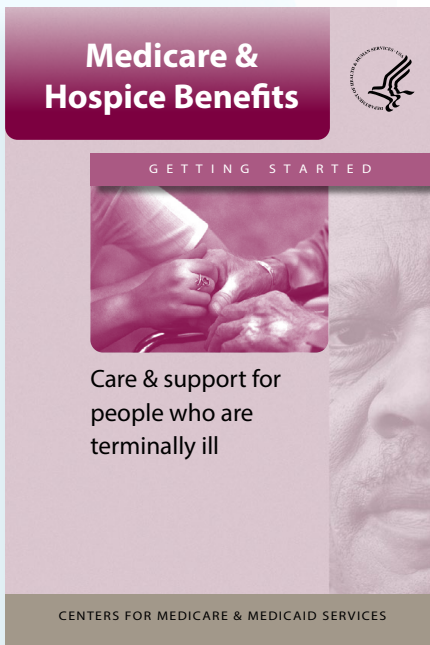
### Palliative Care

Palliative care is a medical specialty that provides support to the patient and their caregivers that is focused on quality of life. It can be part of your existing medical care team. Palliative care is available when you have received a diagnosis for a serious illness. The team will assist with symptom management, pain control, and making medical decisions. This option for care is often not offered as early as it is needed, so be sure to ask for it. It is available in stages where curative treatment is being pursued as well as when curative treatment is no longer possible or desired.

### Get Palliative Care

*From their website:*

“Are you or someone you care for living with a serious illness? Palliative Care can help. Palliative care is specialized medical care focused on relieving the symptoms and stress of a serious illness. It is appropriate at any age and at any stage, and you can have it along with curative treatment. The goal is to improve your quality of life.”



## Hospice Care

Hospice care is a form of palliative care. The time will come when it is decided to end curative treatments. With hospice the focus of care is on quality of life and supporting the dying person and their circle of care. Your doctor can refer you to a local hospice organization, which can provide care in a facility, in a hospital, or at home. You receive relief from pain as well as practical, emotional and spiritual support.

[National Alliance for Care at Home](#)

[Medicare and Hospice Benefits](#)

## CHOICES FOR DEATH



In certain states, Medical Aid in Dying (MAID) is available as an option. If MAID is not accessible, you may consider exploring Voluntary Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED).

### Medical Aid in Dying (MAID)

From their website: [The Academy of Aid-in-Dying Medicine](#) is the foremost source of evidence-based best-practice information and teaching for clinicians working with patients considering or completing medical aid in dying. While other aid-in-dying organizations are involved in advocacy and legislative lobbying for new states to pass aid-in-dying laws, the Academy is the leading national organization that advances, teaches, and supports clinicians to provide

expert, attentive care in the states where the practice is now legal.” [Essential Information for Patients Considering Medical Aid in Dying.](#)

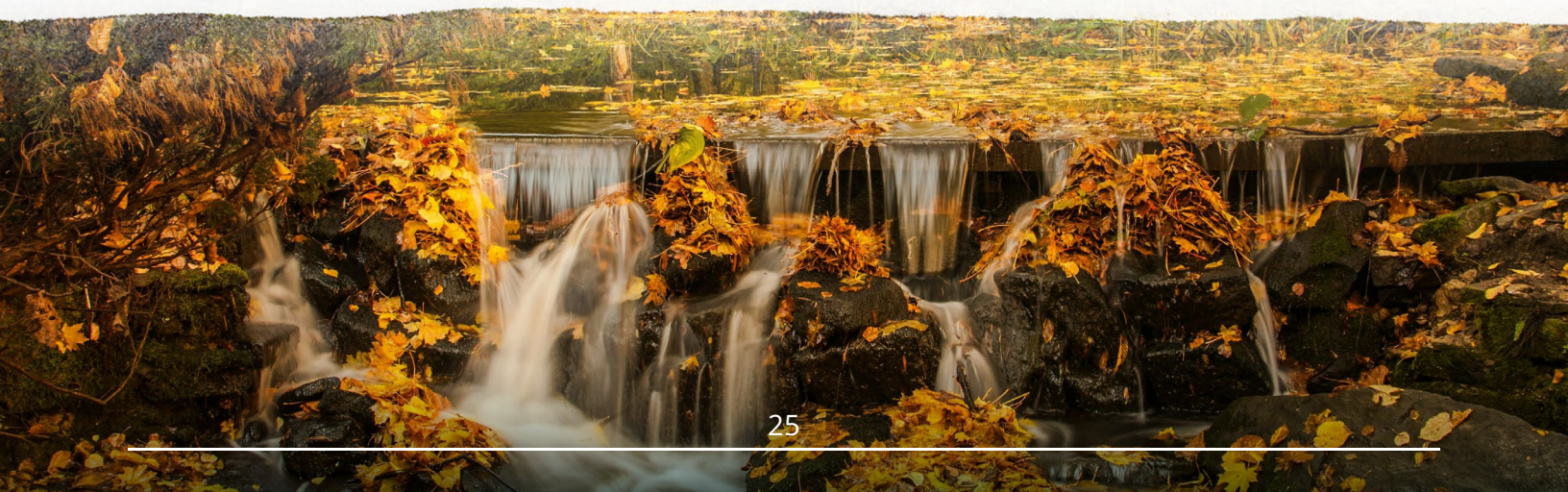
## Compassion and Choices, [“Medical Aid in Dying”](#)

### Voluntary Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED)

[VSED Northwest](#) explains on their website, “VSED stands for voluntarily stopping eating and drinking, and is also sometimes referred to as end-of-life fasting or terminal fasting. At the end of their lives, many people lose their appetites and stop eating as their body’s organs shut down. With VSED, an individual deliberately chooses to stop eating and drinking in order to hasten death.”

“VSED is the oldest way to die, established eons ago when there were no antibiotics or medical interventions. Choosing to stop eating and drinking is legal because patients in the United States have a guaranteed right to refuse care, including food and hydration. VSED allows death to take place at home, where most people prefer to be at the end of their life.”

“What unites us is our passionate belief that compassionate death is a human right. All of us should be able to decide when our quality of life is no longer viable. Choices are important and available. Our group aims to share information about VSED so individuals can make informed choices and plans.”





## SUPPORT FOR THE DYING PERSON, THEIR FAMILY, AND CAREGIVERS

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### End-of-Life Doulas

Even if you have hospice involved in your care, it can be beneficial to have an end-of-life doula for additional support. They can be found through the organizations listed below, among others. The following websites also have many excellent resources.

#### [International End-of-Life Doula Association \(INELDA\)](#)

From their website: “The International End-of-Life Doula Association (INELDA) is a member-based, nonprofit working to meet the non-medical needs of the dying by raising awareness of the roles of end-of-life doulas and providing education to support compassionate deathcare. We are charged with our vision of ensuring that ‘all individuals have accessible, equitable, and compassionate deathcare that holistically affirms one’s humanity and supports end-of-life choices’. These tenets guide our work and daily decision-making. We acknowledge people die everywhere and end-of-life doulas can play a vital role for the dying individual. INELDA is committed to supporting doulas in residential homes, hospices, for those incarcerated, in centers for the unhoused, and on city streets.”

## National End-of-Life Doula Alliance (NEDA)

*From their website:*

“NEDA is comprised of a determined and talented band of like-minded, expert practitioners, trainers and natural death care pioneers who have forged an alliance and have the public interest as our highest priority. NEDA is an inclusive, welcoming, and transparent network of doulas from many backgrounds, philosophies, and skill levels who come together to share our wisdom with each other and the individuals, families, communities and caregivers we serve. We are wise and we are many.”

## Caregiver Support

Below is listed various organizations to support those providing primary care to the dying person.

## ARCH National Respite Network

*From their website:*

“We assist and promote the development of quality respite and crisis care programs, help families locate respite and crisis care services, and serve as a strong voice for respite in all forums.”

## CaringBridge

*From their website:*

“CaringBridge is a trusted place to communicate to your community, capture your thoughts, and coordinate help on your terms.”



## Share the Care

*From their website:*

“We envision a world where caregivers can find the support they need and those who help them can realize the impact their efforts have on the whole community.”

## CaringInfo

*From their website:*

“CaringInfo, a program of the [National Alliance for Care at Home](#) provides free resources to educate and empower patients and caregivers to make decisions about serious illness and end-of-life care and services. CaringInfo’s goal is that all people are making informed decisions about their care.

“When facing a serious, life-limiting illness, you want to feel both prepared – so you can understand your choices and make decisions – and present – so that you are mindful of today’s needs.

“Understanding and using the resources available to you, whether you are a patient or caregiver may be overwhelming. Whether it’s medical resources such as palliative care and hospice, financial resources such as Medicare and insurance, or other items like advance directives or bereavement care, we will help you navigate them so you can have the experience that is best for you.”



Part Four:

# After Death Planning

## SERVICES



Service planning is something you can do today. You don't have to wait until the time of death is near. There are numerous options for services, memorials, and burials, encompassing traditional and religious practices, as well as green burial and burial at sea. Explore what is available in your community and suits your preferences. I've provided a few resources to assist in your research.

### National Funeral Consumers Alliance

Educational nonprofit with nationwide affiliates offering funeral consumer support, information, and advocacy for legislative change.

### Blue Butterfly

*From their website:*

"We're here to help you plan and host a beautiful, affordable virtual funeral service or create an online memorial page in just a few easy steps."

### FTC Consumer Advice

Articles about shopping for Funeral Services

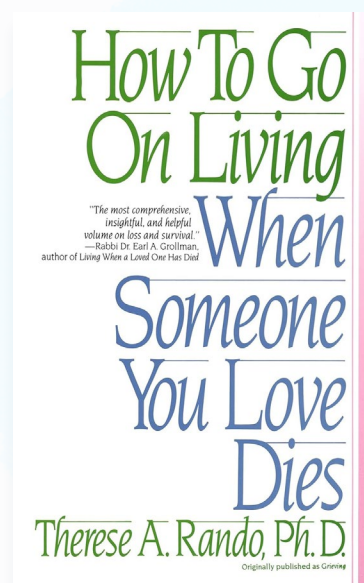


# GRIEF



## Books

There are many excellent books available for both adults and children that address various death-related topics. Consider talking to your librarian, healthcare professional, or friends for recommendations. Many of the websites in this guide have a dedicated page for book suggestions. There are many choices so find books that resonate with you. Below are a few sites that may assist you in discovering supportive literature.



## Dougy Center Recommendations

### Oprah Daily

Books about grieving.

## Organizations

Here are some groups that can be helpful.

### Center for Loss and & Life Transition

*From their website:*

“Led by death educator and grief counselor Dr. Alan Wolfelt, we are an organization dedicated to helping people who are grieving and those who care for them. Perhaps someone you love has died, or you want to help a grieving friend or family member.”





## National Widowers' Organization

*From their website:*

"The National Widowers' Organization is a virtual toolkit for men coping with the death of a loved one, a place where men can meet others going through the same transition."

## Compassionate Friends

Although the focus is on the death of a child, there are many good resources for children regarding death.

## Claire Bidwell Smith

*From their website:*

"Recognized as one of today's foremost experts on grief, Claire Bidwell Smith is a licensed therapist, international speaker, and the author of five books published in 22 countries. Led by her own experience in grief and fueled by her work in hospice and private practice, Claire strives to provide support for all kinds of people experiencing all kinds of loss."





## The Dougy Center

*From their website:*

“The mission of Dougy Center is to provide grief support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and their families can share their experiences before and after a death. We provide support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children who are grieving.”

## National Alliance for Children’s Grief

*From their website:*

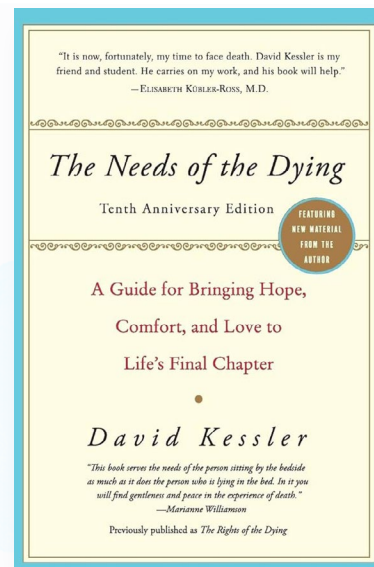
“The National Alliance for Children’s Grief (NACG) is a nonprofit organization that raises awareness about the needs of children and teens who are grieving a death and provides education and resources for anyone who supports them. Through the collective voice of our members and partners, we educate, advocate and raise awareness about childhood bereavement.”

“The NACG is a nationwide network comprised of professionals, institutions, and volunteers who promote best practices, educational programming, and critical resources to facilitate the mental, emotional and physical health of grieving children and their families.”

## [Grief.com](http://Grief.com)

From their website:

“David Kessler is one of the world’s foremost experts on grief and loss. His experience with thousands of people on the edge of life and death has taught him the secrets to living a happy and fulfilled life, even after life’s tragedies. He is the author of six books, including the new bestselling book, [Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief](#). He coauthored two books with Elisabeth Kubler Ross, including *On Grief and Grieving*, and updated her 5 stages for grief. His first book, [The Needs of The Dying](#) received praise from Saint (Mother) Teresa.”



## Part Five:

# Media to Explore

Just a few media resources for movies, podcasts, and videos to offer different perspectives.



### The Last Ecstatic Days

*From their website:*

"Ethan Sisser, a young man with terminal brain cancer, sits alone in his hospital room. When he starts livestreaming his death journey on social media, thousands of people around the world join to celebrate his courage. Still, Ethan envisions more – to teach the world how to die without fear. To do that, he needs to film his death."

### Take Me Out Feet First

A documentary series about Medical Aid in Dying

### "We Are All Just Walking Each Other Home"

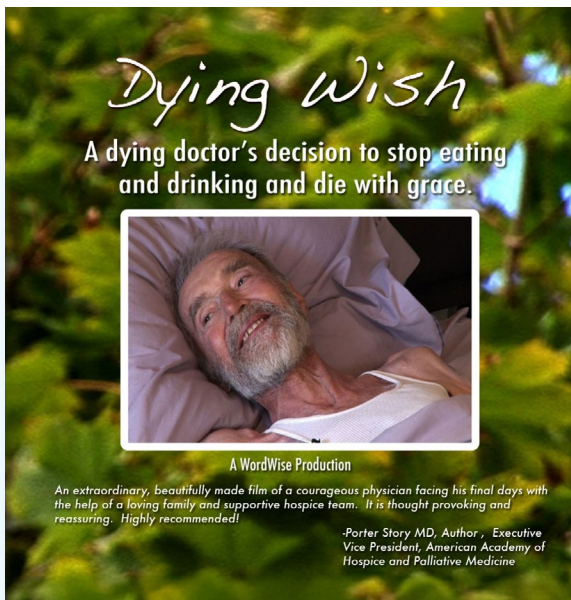
Blue Ridge Threshold Choir



## *Beautiful Stories from Anonymous People,* “Dad Died by Euthanasia”

*From the show notes:*

“A daughter explains why she supported her father’s decision to die by legalized euthanasia. She also opens up to [podcast host] Geth about finding her birth parents and her final wishes for when her time comes.”



## Dying Wish

Award-winning film that has been featured at film festivals and at the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization’s Annual Clinical conference. *Dying Wish* is a documentary about hospice patient, Dr. Michael Miller, an eighty-year-old, retired surgeon with end-stage cancer who chooses to stop eating and drinking in order not to prolong his dying process, to ease his suffering and to die with grace.

## Going Your Way

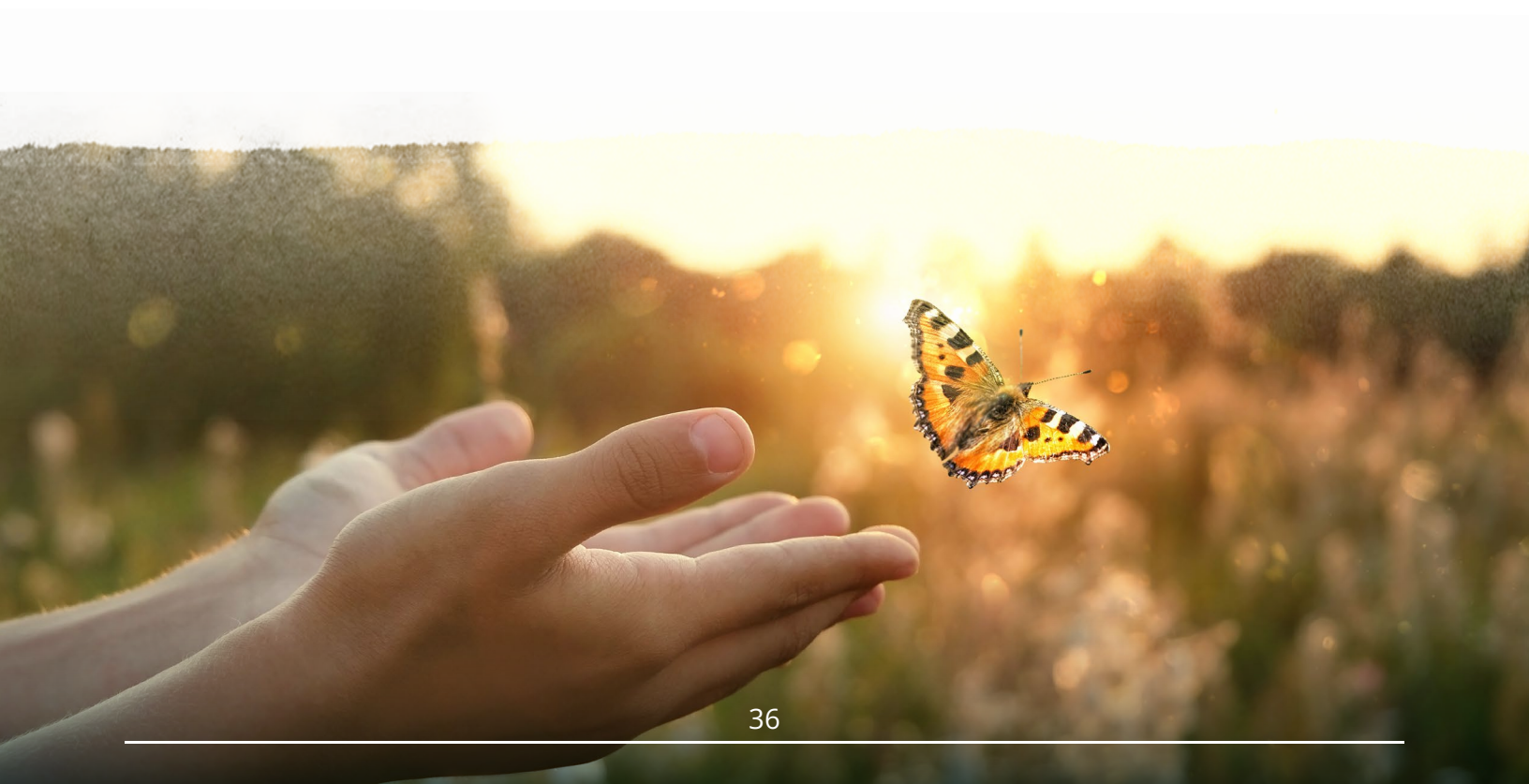
*From their website:*

“Going Your Way” focuses on the personal, medical, and spiritual issues surrounding end-of-life care, the options available, and steps that can be taken to put those wishes to practical use. Hear from experts and real people who share stories on end-of-life planning and how it can be less painful.”

## *On a final note...*



Death is not a defeat; it is a natural part of life. We can make our plans, communicate our aspirations and preferences, and then let go of expectations when death is near. A time comes when we can release control and surrender into the vast mystery of the universe, grateful for the gift of life we were given. For each of us, when our life comes to an end, may we be surrounded by love, honor, and gentle care.



## About Judith Zaruches:

I have been curious about death since I was a child treated at Mayo Clinic Hospital in Rochester, Minnesota. My professional career included work as a hospital social worker, studying with Elisabeth Kubler Ross, and working as director of volunteers at a hospice organization. In 2023, after I supported several dear friends and their families during their final days, I trained to be an end-of-life doula. This education heightened my awareness of the taboos around death. I came to the realization that a lack of understanding of this crucial subject can cause unnecessary suffering for ourselves and our loved ones. This guide represents my effort to increase awareness about the information that is both available and accessible. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all my friends who contributed to the creation of this offering.

If you have any inquiries, feedback, or wish to connect, you can reach me at [Judith@EOLResource.com](mailto:Judith@EOLResource.com)

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