

SUGGESTED READING LIST

St. Joseph Health Hospice Services

Updated 10/2021

TOPICS: GENERAL DEATH AND DYING, HOSPICE

Dying Well With Hospice, by Gustly, Jo and Wren, Paula. Amans Vitae Press, 2017

“Authors address the fears we have about death, discusses the many options we have available for making this a productive and loving time of transition.”

Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness, by Luskin, Dr. Fred. Harper One, 2001

“Based on scientific research, this groundbreaking study from the frontiers of psychology and medicine offers startling new insight into the healing powers and medical benefit of forgiveness. Dr. Luskin is the cofounder and director of the Stanford University Forgiveness Project.”

Kitchen Table Wisdom, by Remen MD, Rachel. Riverhead Books, 1996

“Dr. Remen has a unique perspective on healing rooted in her background as a physician, a professor of medicine, a therapist, and a long-term survivor of chronic illness. In a deeply moving and down-to-earth collection of true stories, she shows us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives.”

What If This Is Heaven? By Moorjani, Anita. Hay House Books, 2017

“Moorjani addresses deeply held misconceptions in our modern global culture. Her evolving wisdom empowers readers toward much greater health and harmony: to truly love oneself in the face of life’s challenges is integral to every human’s fulfillment here on earth.”

Signs of Life: A Memoir of Dying and Discovery, by Brooks, Tim, Upper Access, Inc. 2010

“Brooks, known for his mastery of the English language, turns an account of the death of his mother into a work hailed as literature by book critics, and as moving testimony of the value of hospice care by leaders in the hospice movement.”

The Better End: Surviving on Your Own Terms, by Morhaim MD, Dan. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012

“While modern Americans strive to control nearly every aspect of their lives, many of us abandon control of life’s final passage. The Better End is about hope, empowerment, and inspiration.”

Listening Below the Noise: A Meditation, by LeClaire, Anne. HarperCollins, 2009

“A meditation on silence, the art of being present, and simple spirituality from critically acclaimed novelist LeClair. She offers a practical path to achieving calm, peaceful solitude in hectic lives.”

Being Mortal, by Gawande, Atul. Henry Holt and Co, 2014

“Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End is a non-fiction book by American surgeon Atul Gawande. The book addresses end-of-life care, hospice care, and also contains Gawande’s reflections and personal stories. He suggests that medical care should focus on well-being rather than survival.”

Life After Life, by Moody, Raymond. Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1976

This book, written by Psychiatrist Ray Moody, is a report on a qualitative study in which he interviewed 150 people who had undergone near-death experiences. It presents the author’s composite account of what it is like to die.

Staying Well With Guided Imagery by Naparstek, Belleruth. Warner Books, 1995

“Using the techniques of imagery, the book shows how total body wellness can be achieved without prescriptive medicine. Readers will learn how to create powerful images in the mind that direct the body to heal – both emotionally and physically.”

The Art of Comforting by Walker, Val. TarcherPerigree, 2010

A step-by-step guide to sitting down and establishing a human-to-human connection, in even the most difficult or chaotic situations.

No Death, No Fear: Comforting Wisdom For Life, by Hanh, Thich Nhat. Penguin, 2002

This book examines our concepts of death, fear and the very nature of existence.

TOPICS: PREPARATION FOR DEATH AND CAREGIVING

Knocking on Heavens Door by Butler, Katy. Scribner, 2013

The author lays bare the wrenching moral choices we face when the ancient reality of death collides with the technological imperatives of modern medicine. Butler traces the odyssey of her parent’s final years with honesty and compassion.

Final Crossing: Learning to Die in Order to Live, by Eberle MD, Scott. Lost Borders Press, 2006

This book weaves allegory, Mayan culture, Native American wisdom and rites of passage with the real life death journey of Steven Foster – from the perspective of the hospice physician who helped ferry him across.

Awake At the Bedside: Contemplative Teachings on Palliative and End-of-Life Care, by Koshin, Paley Ellison. Wisdom Publications, 2016.

Pioneers of end-of-life care as well as doctors, chaplains, caregivers and even poets offer wisdom that will challenge, uplift and comfort – and change the way we think about death.

How We Die: Reflections of Life's Final Chapter by Nuland MD, Sherwin. Vintage Books, 1995

The author presents distinct yet connected perspectives on death based on his own knowledge, experience and character. He addresses the choices we have during our life and when we die.

The Caregiver's Challenge: Living, Loving and Letting Go, by Schacht, Maryann. Feterson Press, 1995

The author, a therapist, uses her own very moving experience caring for her sick husband to help other caregivers. She offers advice, exercises, and helpful resources.

Final Journeys: a Practical Guide for Bringing Care and Comfort at the End-of-Life, by Callanan, RN, Maggie. Bantam, 2009.

A practical guide for bringing care and comfort. Callanan, a hospice nurse, offers wise advice on death, dying and grief.

Graceful Passages: a Companion for Living and Dying, by Michael Stillwater and Gary Malkin. New World Library, 2003

This book addresses themes of letting go, closure, expressing love, forgiveness, appreciation of life, and continuity of spirit from different perspectives and faith traditions.

Intimate Death: How the Dying Teach Us to Live, by de Hennezel, Marie. Knopf, 1998

Psychologist Hennezel draws on her personal experience of working with terminally ill in a palliative care unit. She helps patients overcome fear, reconnect with their true feelings, and to reconcile with loved ones.

Living Into Dying: a Journal of Spiritual and Practical Deathcare, by Jewel Poer, Nancy. White Feather Publishing, 2002

Written in a warm and accessible style, the book includes many spiritual insights into the process of dying and our connection to loved ones.

No One Has to Die Alone by Leary, Lani. Atria Books, 2012.

This book offers meaningful insights and practical tools to rise above fear and make a difference in how we face transition of death, dying and bereavement.

Being With Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death, by Halifax, Joan. Shambala, 2009

A Buddhist teacher draws from her years of experience in caring for the dying to provide inspiring lessons on how to face death with courage and compassion.

Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities at the End of life, by Byock MD, Ira. Riverhead Books, 1998

Dr. Byock tells first hand stories of love and reconciliation in the face of tragedy, pain and conflict. He believes no one should have to die in pain, and no one should have to die alone.

The Four Things that Matter Most, by Byock MD, Ira. Atria Books, 2014

This book offers simple but solid solution in four phrases, that provide wisdom to enrich our lives.

The Best Care Possible, by Byock MD, Ira. Penguin, 2013

Byock offers a call to all of us to join together in unity to create a Culture of Loving Care that will end the isolation of the dying, ease their suffering, banish their loneliness, and assure that we all remain important and cherished members of the human community no matter the state of our health, ability, or age.

TOPICS: FACING CHANGE AND TRANSITION

Facing Death and Finding Hope: A Guide to the Emotional and Spiritual Care of the Dying, by Longaker, Christine. Main Street Books, 1998

Longaker offers an uplifting spiritual paradigm together with guidance on assessing and responding to the emotional, spiritual and practical needs of the dying and their families. This book includes invaluable advice for understanding and healing grief, for supporting children, and for caregivers.

When things Fall Apart: Heart Advice for Difficult Times, Chodron, Pema. Shambala, 2016

Most of us think that the point is to pass the test or to overcome the problem, but the truth is things don't really get solved. They come together and the fall apart.

Broken Open: How Difficult Times Can Help Us Grow, by Lesser, Elizabeth. Villiard, 2005

Author describes being "broken open" by pain, death, and other losses rather than being "broken down" and consumed by them. During times of transition, amid everyday stress, and even when we face insurmountable adversity, life offers us a choice: to turn away from change or to embrace it, to shut down or to be broken open and transformed.

The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully, by Ostaseski, Frank. Flatiron Books, 2017

This is an exhilarating meditation on the meaning of life and how maintaining an ever-present consciousness of death can bring us closer to our truest selves.

Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes and The Way of Transition: Embracing Life's Most Difficult Moments, by Bridges, William. DaCapo Press, 2004

Transitions remains the essential guide for coping with the inevitable changes in life. It takes readers step-by-step through the "three perilous stages" of any transition, explaining how each stage can be understood and embraced.

TOPICS: GRIEF AND LOSS OF A SPOUSE, CHILD OR OTHER LOVED ONE

Getting Grief Right: Finding Your story of Love in the Sorrow of Loss, by O'Malley, Patrick. Sounds True, Inc. 2017

This is a subtle and delicate understanding of living a life a grief. Patrick O'Malley, a psychotherapist, himself suffered the inconsolable loss of the death of his child and accompanies others through their grieving.

Widow to Widow: Thoughtful, Practical Ideas for Rebuilding Your Life, by Davis, Genevieve. DaCapo Books, 2004

From a widow and Therapist, a guide to life after losing a husband, with reflections on grief and practical advice in this remarkably useful guide.

The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief, by Weller, Francis. North Atlantic Books, 2015.

This book explains that grief has always been communal and illustrates how we need the healing touch of others, an atmosphere of compassion, and the comfort of ritual in order to fully metabolize our grief.

Heartbroken Open: A Memoir Through Loss to Self-discovery. By Carlson, Kristine. Harperone, 2010

Kristine Carlson's honest memoir looks at the two years that followed her husband's death and the painful but valuable lessons she learned along the way.

When Men Grieve: Why They Grieve Differently and How You Can Help, by Levang, Elizabeth. Fairview Press, 1998

Levang explains the special ways that men grieve so those who love them can better understand what they are going through.

The Goblin and the Empty Chair, by Fox, Mem. Beach Lane Books, 2009

A lonely goblin helps a family after an unspeakable loss in this rich and moving original fairy tale. An illustrated book for juvenile audiences.

Keys to Helping Children Deal With Death and Grief, by Johnson, Joy. Barrows Educational Series, 1999

This is a practical and helpful book the reads easily or can be used as a reference when helping children. It includes sections on the process of grief, concepts according to age, death education, the funeral, grief education and other big questions.

Catching the Light: Coming Back to Life After the Loss, by Gentry, Genesse Bourdeau. Books Surge Publishing, 2009

A collection of poetry and musing depicting one mother's long journey back to a life of contentment, peace and connection after the death of her beloved child. The book is unique in that it describes a bereaved mother's gamut of emotions from the first years after her daughter died, to seventeen years after her death.

On Life After Death, by Kubler-Ross MD, Elizabeth. Ten Speed Press, 2004

Kubler-Ross dedicated her life to researching the dying process and campaigned for terminally ill patients to be treated with dignity and respect. She believed that no one dies alone. According to her theory, after death, time and space are transcended and the liberated soul is able to travel anywhere just by thought and meet anyone the soul wants to say final good-byes to.

Life Lessons: Two Experts on Death and Dying Teach Us About the Mysteries of Life, by Kessler, David and Kubler-Ross MD, Elizabeth. Scribner, 2014

Written near the end of her life, Dr. Ross, and leader in hospice care, David Kessler, team up to write about the lessons we can learn from the living who are dying.

The Orphaned Adult: Understanding and Coping With Grief and Change After the Death of our Parents, by Levy, Alexander. DaCapo Press, 2000

A guide to understanding and coping with grief and all the disorienting emotions that accompany the death of our parents.

The Year of Magical Thinking, by Didion, Joan. Knopf, 2005

This is a brutally honest recounting of the grief Mrs. Didion felt after losing her husband, John Gregory Dunne, after forty years of marriage. Intensely personal yet a universal experience: a portrait of a marriage – and life – in good times and bad, that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband, wife or child.

A Beautiful Mourning, by Weber, Elizabeth A. Universe, 2010

Author Weber experienced the extraordinary circumstance of losing her husband to cancer while house-sitting. Without friends or family nearby, she found the starkness of her predicament only served to amplify her mourning process.

A Silent Sorrow: Pregnancy Loss, by Kohn, Ingrid and Moffitt, Perry-Lynn. Routledge, 1993

A sympathetic look at the full range of tragedies, including miscarriage, still births, newborn death and others.

Stars in the Deepest Night: After the Death of a Child, by Gentry, Genesee Bourdeau. iUniverse, 1999

A collection of poetry in which a bereaved parent describes the convoluted nightmare, isolation and transformation of grief after the death of a child.

The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science of Bereavement Tells Us About Life After Loss, by Bonanno, George. Basic Books, 2010

A leading expert in emotions research establishes a bold new paradigm for understanding grief – a new model of resiliency.

It's Ok That You're Not Ok: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand, by Devine, Megan. Sounds True, 2017

Devine offers a profound new approach to both the experience of grief and the way we help others who have endured tragedy. Having experienced grief from both sides – as a therapist and as a woman who witnessed the accidental drowning of her beloved partner – Devine writes with deep insight about the unspoken truths.

Unattended Sorrow: Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart, by Levine, Stephen. Monkfish Publishing, 2019

Levine addresses the grief from fresh loss, but also attends to the pain and troubles caused by the unresolved anguish, sadness and delayed stress that can accumulate over a lifetime.

Healing a Spouse's Grieving Heart, by Wolfelt, Alan. Companion Press, 2003

100 practical ideas that bring comfort and guidance after your husband or wife dies.