



**A W O R K B O O K
O F Q U E S T I O N S**

*Marcie Vallette
Allen Moulton*

FIRST EDITION 2017
Date Edited 10/21/17

This workbook belongs to:

name/date

signature

Address/phone

Our goal is to take some of the confusion out of the death and end of life process so that all of us facing end of life may more easily focus on what is important.

By directing your attentional activities regularly through questioning, reading, fellowship and contemplation, we can improve our care giving skills to those at end-of-life.

We are not providing medical or legal counsel.

CONTACT US

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Personal message from Marcie

Dear Friend,

Thanks for your interest in making the death process less painful.

I am speaking only for myself, not on behalf of any organization. I am sharing this because I feel death work is important and needed in our culture. I also feel like it should be shared, since sooner or later, we all will need it. This is for all mortals and caregivers, whether your help be personal or professional.

Helping people with sickness, death and dying is a skill that can be cultivated and learned. I have a personal history of not being very good at handling death. It used to seriously freak me out. However, in the past few years, through circumstance, I needed to get better at handling death and loss because I was called upon to help people I knew. Some of my friends were going through illness and death, and my husband has become quite disabled by Parkinson's. I also took on nursing as a second career, and I have been in the position of helping many people at end-of-life. It was simply time I stepped up to the task!

I have had a regular mindfulness meditation practice. When another one of my friends became ill, I knew I needed to stop being so freaked out about death, and so I added death meditations to my repertoire of meditations.

I came to understand that helping people at end-of-life is a skill that can be learned and improved upon by asking questions and using attentional activities. That is what I hope to clarify and share.

We all will experience loss and death, and my wish is that we can better attend our friends, family and clients, and eventually, ourselves.

May we build presence, courage, equanimity, and humor.

Marcie Vallette, Feb. 2021

Last Rights Vermont

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Your name/date _____

PART 1

IDENTIFYING YOUR WISHES

These questions will help you reflect and inform others to help them celebrate your life.

Full name: _____

Do you have a nickname? _____

Where have you lived? _____

What have you done for work? _____

What are your passions? _____

Where did you go to college? _____

What are your college degrees? _____

Where did you go to high school? _____

What are you the most proud of? _____

Do you have children? _____

Did you win any awards? _____

What are your parents' names? _____

What are your children's names? _____

What clubs or organizations are you in or have you been in? _____

What activities do you do in your extra time? _____

What church or religious organization are you affiliated with? _____

What charity groups do you support? _____

What obstacles have you overcome? _____

What are some of your successes? _____

What are your volunteer activities? _____

What do you love to do? _____

Your name/date _____

More questions and answers

When you are stressed, what brings you the greatest sense of comfort?

Is there one thing that you want to pass along to those left behind?

Would you prefer to die at home or in the hospital? _____

Are you worried about anything?

Do you worry about becoming a burden to anyone in particular? _____

What do you think will happen to your loved ones after your death? What would you like for them?

What is your role in the family? _____

Do you feel as though you are being including in your health care decisions? _____

Do you have tasks you want to complete before you die? _____

Your name/date _____

Your obituary

If you choose to write your own obituary, you can have the last say! It can be anything from strictly factual to humorous and fanciful. Your answers to the previous page's questions may help get you started. **What do you want people to know about you?**

Your name/date _____

PERSONAL PAGE: MAKING PEACE

You may have some personal business to sweep up, and that's none of our business! Use the phone, write a letter, a card or an email. Now's the time.

Name a person or some people whom you trust to talk to. This is a person or people you can call upon for nonjudgmental support if you need it while you tie up loose ends. _____

Do you have any old friends you want to c? _____

Do you have any unfinished personal business you want to finish up? _____

Do you have anyone you wish to thank? _____

Do you have anyone you wish to make amends with? _____

Do you have any old flames to you want to say goodbye to? _____

Your name/date _____

DETAILS PAGE

Computer password _____

email _____

password to your email _____

website _____

password to your website _____

website host _____

online banking, website, passwords _____

online banking, website, passwords _____

online banking, website, passwords _____

accounts: savings _____

checking: _____

credit cards: _____

Cell phone password: _____

Key individuals

Key Individuals	Name	Contact Information
Your name		
Main support		
Support		
Support		
Support		
Who declares death?		
Hospice		
Spiritual support		
Coroner		
Legal Counsel		
Gatekeeper (phones, door)		
Crematorium or Funeral Home		





PART 2
YOUR WISHES ON THE DAY YOU DIE
AND AFTER



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W O R K B O O K

**Please fill out the next six pages and
make copies for your friends.**

Your name/date _____

Your name/date _____

YOUR WISHES FOR TIME OF DYING (VIGIL)

You never actually know when the time of death will come and what the circumstances will be, but addressing these questions can help clarify your wishes to your friends, family and spiritual helpers. These pages will give all involved some peace of mind.

Do you have any specific beliefs about what happens after you die? _____

What is the most important thing your friends can do to support you? _____

What is the most important thing that your friends should try to keep in mind to best take care of your needs? _____

* If there is any palliative medication to be given, and you are unable to take it yourself, please ask a volunteer ahead of time or ask the attending nurse who will give it, and name the person here: _____

* If you are using the Death with Dignity law, you must self-administer medications. Certain medications require reading directions and mixing and some carefully timed dosing. Who will help you or oversee this (or will anyone)? _____

* If you have a choice, who would you like in the room with you when you die? _____

Is there anyone you do NOT want in the room with you when you die? _____

* If there are questions about your care as your death gets closer, and you cannot speak, who do you ask to make decisions? _____

-- PLEASE MAKE COPIES & GIVE TO AT LEAST 3 FRIENDS --

*** Please contact this person with this request**



Your name/date _____

* If that person is absent, who is "second in command?" _____

During passing, are there any specific prayers you would like said? _____

During passing, are there any songs or chants you would like to be sung? _____

During passing, is there any recorded music you would like played? _____

During passing, there any live music you would like played? Would you accept a choir singing to you? _

During passing, are there any specific things you would like to be said to you? _____

During passing, do you want touch or massage of any sort? _____

Can you think of a signal to give in case you want the singing (or reading or talking or massaging etc.) to stop? _____

Are there any specific environmental conditions you would like that you believe would help ease your transition during the time of death? (Examples could be candles, meditative silence, open window, darkened room, a photograph next to you etc.) _____

* Who is in charge of music: (the person in charge of music should provide technology if needed) _

* Who is the gatekeeper? (Stationed at the door) greeting people and answering the phone:

-- PLEASE MAKE COPIES & GIVE TO AT LEAST 3 FRIENDS --

*** Please contact this person with this request**

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Your name/date _____

* Note: Extra copies of prayers, hymnals and ritual items should be provided to attendees as needed/ if needed. Please request someone to take on task of providing copies: _____

Do you have any other wishes for during your time of death?



Your name/date _____

YOUR WISHES FOR POST MORTEM

These questions will help your friends and family the time directly after you die.

POST MORTEM VIGIL?

A post mortem vigil, or wake, may happen directly after death, or soon after, when your body can be seen by friends and family and others. It can last anywhere from a couple of hours and in some cultures, up to 3 days.

Do you want a post mortem vigil? _____

Where will the post mortem vigil be held? _____

How long should the post mortem vigil last? _____

* Who will wash you and dress you? _____

What would you like to be wearing? Any makeup? _____

* (if longer than a few hours) Who is in charge of keeping your body cool? _____

Do you want recorded music? Meditating? Chanting? Praying? Talking? _____

Who may attend the post mortem vigil? _____

Is there anyone you do NOT want coming to your post mortem vigil? _____

* Please **assign someone** to invite people to attend the pm vigil. _____

Do you wish to add any other requests regarding your post mortem vigil? _____

-- PLEASE MAKE COPIES --

*** Please contact this person with this request**



WHO IS MAKING PHONE CALLS?

* Directly after you die, someone will need to phone hospice. Please ask someone to be in charge of calling the hospice organization/ funeral home/crematorium/coroner directly after death. _____

* You may want certain people to be notified via telephone (or email) of your death. Please request one or two people to make phone calls to those whom you want to be notified.

Who do you want called or emailed or somehow informed?

Family: _____

Family: _____

Friends: _____

Friends: _____

Friends: _____

Spiritual group: _____

Work colleagues: _____

Hairdresser: _____

Doctors: _____

Dentist: _____

More: _____

*** Please contact this person with this request**



ABOUT THE BODY ...



Do you wish your body to be buried cremated other _____

Details: _____

Name of crematorium _____

Name of funeral home _____

* Who is transporting the body? _____

Where will you be buried? _____

* Who will be receiving your ashes? _____

What do you wish done with your ashes? _____

Do you want a memorial service? _____

* Who is in charge of organizing your memorial service? _____

Where would you like it held? _____

Which newspapers would you like your obituary sent to? _____

Do you want your obituary sent anywhere else - you church; your alma mater; your clubs etc

Are there details of anything above you would like to elaborate on? _____



Suggestions for this process:

We understand this workbook presents you with a lot of work to do. We also understand it's easy to procrastinate! Here are the ABCs of death planning that we found helpful as well for creating space for being a better caregiver for those at end of life.

1. **ALLIES:** Find one or two friends who are interested, and get together periodically to update your death wishes and planning. Make sure they know what you want.
2. **BOOKS:** There are many great books on death, both practical and inspirational. Our personal favorites are:
3. **CONTEMPLATION:** We recommend a regular practice of prayer or contemplation, as it is known to help with emotional regulation. If you are so inclined, please ask your priest, minister, rabbi or other spiritual teacher or consult directly with scriptures or other books for prayer and meditation practice. These can be practiced on your own, or you could form a group if you can of practitioners and meet up for contemplative activity. We have found this immensely helpful.
4. **DISCUSSION:** Engage in open, frank discussion about death and dying issues. We recommend Death Cafe, an international organization geared toward discussion of death. It is open to public, and strictly a discussion group (not a bereavement or support group). As caregivers or potential caregivers, it is important to hone our listening skills and also practice articulating our thoughts. As mortals, it is important to address death directly if we want to articulate our needs. Death Café may also be a good place to find friends or like-minded people to accompany you with your death planning. Find a group near you or form one yourself, guidelines are online: www.deathcafe.com

See www.lastrightsvt.com for details on these attentional activities.

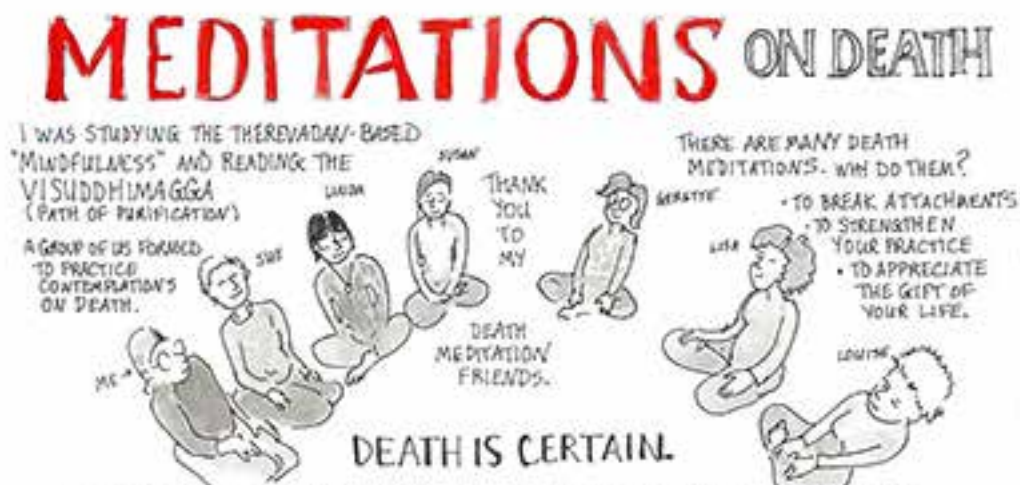
Thanks to Linda Cannon Hoffman for all her help. We thank our “Beta Testing” group for feedback and good humor in helping us create this workbook and being part of our own “Death Prep Group,” with whom we meet regularly. These are:

Marilyn, Gerette, Mara, Steve, Louise.

Additional thanks to:
Dr. Laura McCray
The Death Café organization

Fellow death meditators

Here’s part of a cartoon from my graphic novel “Smile, You’re a Parkinson’s Caregiver” - coming out 2022. Stay tuned.



About us

Allen Moulton, R.N., M.S., M.S.N. Allen Moulton has degrees in Cultural Anthropology, Counseling Psychology and Child Health Nursing. He has worked in mental health settings, both inpatient and in the community. He has had a very busy private practice as a licensed psychologist-masters in Stowe and Montpelier, Vermont. Mr. Moulton taught at Norwich University and Castleton State College. He has a married son in Alaska.

My view: Since caring for my father when he died at home in 1988, I have been looking for ways to be involved in care that deals with the end of life. Having studied Anthropology (B.A.) Counseling Psychology (M.S.) and Nursing (M.S.) I have had opportunities to help people in dealing with many of life's challenges. I believe there is no more meaningful action than preparing for a loved one's death or the end of one's own life. We would like to help make the reality of death no more distressing than necessary. With preparation, the death plan can be comforting and supportive.

Marcie Vallette, BFA; M. Ed.; LPN. Marcie Vallette works for various non-profit organizations as an educator, a nurse, and a graphic artist. She is also an active fine artist, with a personal interest in contemplative practices. She has been studying mindfulness meditation as a student and as a facilitator for the past 5 years with Shinzen Young (Author of "The Science of Enlightenment"). Her professional nursing practice and personal life has included working with death and dying issues in various aspects, and she is a founding member of the Johnson Death Café, in Johnson, Vermont, and runs a small death-meditation group that explores Theravaden death meditation.

Marcie says, "My recent experience with helping two friends who died from cancer have brought me to a deeper exploration of my own practice of service. I was surprised to discover that helping my friends plan for their death was paradoxically uplifting for them and for me, and took a lot of the stress of uncertainty out of the final passing and deep loss."

MINDFUL END OF LIFE TRANSITION DEATH WORK/CARE FINAL CARE LAST DAYS CARE CHECKING OUT EXPIRE DEATH MEDITATOR ST PETER CROAK PEARLY GATES CARE FOR END OF LIFE PASS PASS ON MEET YOUR MAKER 6 FEET UNDER FEED THE WORMS CHECKING OUT PUSHING UP DAISIES THE BIG SLEEP EXPIRE CROSSING OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE FADE AWAY DIED WITH BOOTS ON DIED IN HARNESS TERMINATED SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES GONE TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS JOIN YOUR ANCESTORS PUT TO SLEEP PUT HIM/HER OUT OF THEIR MISERY BE WITH THE ANGELS DISCHARGED TO ALLEN STREET A TRIP TO THE MORGUE KICK THE BUCKET EXPIRE DEMISE TOOK HERS/HIS LAST BREATH BIT THE BIG ONE DAVY J ONES LOCKER BIT THE DUST THE LAST HURRAH END OF THE ROAD DRINK THE COOLADE SING IN SATANS CHOIR MINDFUL END OF LIFE TRANSITION DEATH WORK/CARE FINAL CARE LAST DAYS CARE CHECKING OUT EXPIRE DEATH MEDITATOR ST PETER CROAK PEARLY GATES CARE FOR END OF LIFE PASS PASS ON MEET YOUR MAKER 6 FEET UNDER FEED THE WORMS CHECKING OUT PUSHING UP DAISIES THE BIG SLEEP EXPIRE CROSSING OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE FADE AWAY DIED WITH BOOTS ON DIED IN HARNESS TERMINATED SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES GONE TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS JOIN YOUR ANCESTORS PUT TO SLEEP PUT HIM/HER OUT OF THEIR MISERY BE WITH THE ANGELS DISCHARGED TO ALLEN STREET A TRIP TO THE MORGUE KICK THE BUCKET EXPIRE DEMISE TOOK HERS/HIS LAST BREATH BIT THE BIG ONE DAVY J ONES LOCKER BIT THE DUST THE LAST HURRAH END OF THE ROAD DRINK THE COOLADE SING IN SATANS CHOIR MINDFUL END OF LIFE TRANSITION DEATH WORK/CARE FINAL CARE LAST DAYS CARE CHECKING OUT EXPIRE DEATH MEDITATOR ST PETER CROAK PEARLY GATES CARE FOR END OF LIFE PASS PASS ON MEET YOUR MAKER 6 FEET UNDER FEED THE WORMS CHECKING OUT PUSHING UP DAISIES THE BIG SLEEP EXPIRE CROSSING OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE FADE AWAY DIED WITH BOOTS ON DIED IN HARNESS TERMINATED SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES GONE TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS JOIN YOUR ANCESTORS PUT TO SLEEP PUT HIM/HER OUT OF THEIR MISERY BE WITH THE ANGELS DISCHARGED TO ALLEN STREET A TRIP TO THE MORGUE KICK THE BUCKET EXPIRE DEMISE TOOK HERS/HIS LAST BREATH BIT THE BIG ONE DAVY J ONES LOCKER BIT THE DUST THE LAST HURRAH END OF THE ROAD DRINK THE COOLADE SING IN SATANS CHOIR MINDFUL END OF LIFE TRANSITION DEATH WORK/CARE FINAL CARE LAST DAYS CARE CHECKING OUT EXPIRE DEATH MEDITATOR ST PETER CROAK PEARLY GATES CARE FOR END OF LIFE PASS PASS ON MEET YOUR MAKER 6 FEET UNDER FEED THE WORMS CHECKING OUT PUSHING UP DAISIES THE BIG SLEEP EXPIRE CROSSING OVER TO THE OTHER SIDE FADE AWAY DIED WITH BOOTS ON DIED IN HARNESS TERMINATED SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES GONE TO THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS JOIN YOUR ANCESTORS PUT TO SLEEP PUT HIM/HER OUT OF THEIR MISERY BE WITH THE ANGELS DISCHARGED TO ALLEN STREET A TRIP TO THE MORGUE KICK THE BUCKET EXPIRE DEMISE TOOK HERS/HIS LAST BREATH BIT THE BIG ONE DAVY J ONES LOCKER BIT THE DUST THE LAST HURRAH END OF THE ROAD DRINK THE COOLADE SING IN SATANS CHOIR