

GRACEFUL CLOSURE
PLANNING FOR LIFE'S LAST CHAPTER
April 5 - May 24, 2017

Objectives of course:

- 1) To normalize the discussion of death and dying by exploring possibilities and resources for the last chapter of life; and
- 2) To empower participants to prepare for a vibrant last chapter and to make their plans known to friends and family.

Logistics:

- 1) Classes will meet for eight weeks April 5 - May 24, 2017
- 2) Classes will be held at Unity of the Valley from 6-8 pm
- 3) Registration will be open to the community.

Course Summary:

This course is designed to take participants on a journey of personal reflection about death and dying and to present to them a menu of possibilities to help them create the life and death they choose. A combination of personal and group exercises, discussions, speakers and surprises will be used to create this personal journey.

Week 1, 4/5/17: Topic - How Do I Feel About Death and Dying?

This session begins with an informal Circle of Life Cafe that provides a menu of topics to help participants get comfortable with talking about death and dying.

Week 2, 4/12/17: Topic - Where Am I On My Life Journey?

Where am I in my life journey and what do I think the last chapter of my journey will look like?
How do I feel about this?
Who will be with me?

Week 3, 4/19/17: Topic - Who's On My Team?

This session goes deeper into individual reflection on the importance of our quality of life. How do I live life when I am well to prepare for what may come. How do I accept physical and emotional changes? How do I decide when my quality of life is gone? Emphasis on purpose, friends, family, support groups, fun and laughter.

Week 4, 4/26/17: Topic - Planning For a Good Last Chapter

How do I plan for the end of my journey? How do I talk with my family?

Ronit Cohen, from A Home to Fit You, will talk about finding local resources for retirement centers, nursing homes, home care, etc.

Taking care of business that prepares us to let go and reflect on our lives to make sense of it all:
ethical will
planning funeral/Celebration of Life
writing obituary.

Week 5, 5/3/17: Topic - Planning For a Good Death Part I

This session will explore the question "What does a "good death" look like?" Personal reflection around fear of dying, experiences with death and what choices exist around how we die.

How to talk with physicians about end of life choices will be discussed as well as Death with Dignity, VSED, stopping or not initiating treatment and palliative care. Rev. Inge Tarantola will talk about accepting the personal journey of a loved one who takes their own life. Dr. Roberta Boyden, Veterinarian, will talk about making these decisions for our pets.

Gene and Suzanne from Unity of the Valley, will debut their song "Don't Plug Me In."

Week 6, 5/10,17: Topic - Planning For a Good Death Part II

This session will have a panel of experts to discuss hospice and legal documents that will assure choices at end of life. Dale Mostkoff RN from Cascade Hospice and Kay Hoyt-Patton, an Elder Lawyer, will talk about Advanced Directives, Wills, POLST, and Hospice/Hospice House.

Rev. Sherry Lady will share her journey as she, her family and her husband dealt with Alzheimer's and the resources they needed along the way.

Week 7, 5/17/17: Topic - Life After Death

What happens when we stop breathing? Spiritual thoughts about life after death.

What are our expectations about what happens next and what are our expectations for our family and friends?

What happens to our body?

What happens to our pet's body?

Cynthia Beall will talk about traditional and green burial. Roberta Boyden, Veterinarian, will talk about options for our pets.

Is there a funeral or celebration of life?

What is grief? What do we say to those who are grieving?

Week 8, 5/24/17: Topic - Reflection, Making Sense of It All

This session ends the course by returning to the Circle of Life Cafe to reflect on the journey taken over the past 8 weeks. The menu will return to some of the original questions and will highlight which parts of the journey have been most significant.

The course ends with a fun celebration of life!