

## **A KTWB Mini Series – Living Through the End of Life** **Book and Resource Recommendations**

The recommendations below were chosen by our mini-series producers and guests.

Please note that this is not a comprehensive list of books regarding the topic of death and dying. There are many excellent books written about this topic. We've chosen a few for you to consider. Many of these are available at the Two Harbors Public Library, as are copies of this list.

### **DEATH AND DYING**

***The American Book of Living and Dying, Lessons in Healing Spiritual Pain*** by Richard F. Groves and Henriette Anne Klauser.

(Comprehensive research into four types of spiritual pain: meaning, forgiveness, relatedness, and hopelessness, including the identification, diagnoses, and a tool chest of ways to address these pains in the dying process.)

***ANXIETY: the Missing Stage of Grief, A Revolutionary Approach to Understanding and Healing the Impact of Loss*** by Claire Bidwell Smith, LCPC

(Explanation of the intimate connection between death and grief and how they cause anxiety. This book unveils everything from entrenched fears about mortality to feelings of vulnerability after a loss)

***Being Mortal: Medicine & What Matters in the End*** by Atul Gawande.

(A surgeon and journalist look at aging and death. He follows a hospice nurse on her rounds, a geriatrician in his clinic, and nursing home reformers. The reader takes a riveting journey toward understanding the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life – all the way to the very end.)

***Being With Dying, Cultivating compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death*** by Joan Halifax.

(This Buddhist approach to death is compatible to all backgrounds and faith traditions, and articulates the wisdom found in the transformative power of the dying process.)

***Final Gifts: Understanding the Special Awareness, Needs, and Communications of the Dying*** by Maggie Callahan and Patricia Kelley.

(Two hospice nurses share stories from their twenty years of experience that illuminates how the dying communicate their needs and choreograph their final moments.)

***The Four Things That Matter Most, A Book About Living*** by Ira Byrock, M.D.

(Four areas of conversation that help the dying and their families of any background talk about what is most important at this time of life are: I forgive you, please forgive me; Thank you; I love you; and Goodbye.)

***The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*** by Frank Ostaseski.

(As the founder of the Zen Hospice House in San Francisco, Frank tells wisdom stories of how with simple presence, people and their families of any background have been accompanied into a spiritually gratifying death process.)

***Greening Death: Reclaiming Burial Practices and Restoring Our Tie to the Earth***

by Suzanne Kelly

(an examination of the ways in which death has been separated from nature and exacerbated fear and meaninglessness, with ways to restore our connection to the earth via the death process. )

***A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward An Undivided Life, Welcoming the Soul and Weaving Community in a Wounded World*** by Parker J. Palmer.

(Beautiful and profound descriptions of how to connect to a soulful life which prepares us to live with the inevitable woundedness of life and our ultimate death.)

***The Journey Through Grief and Loss – Helping Yourself and Your Child when Grief is shared*** by Robert Zucker, M.A., L.C. S. W.

***The Needs of the Dying*** by David Kessler

(A compassionate look at dying and key areas of concern including the need to express emotion, the need for hope, for honesty, for spirituality, to be treated as a living human being, and to be free of physical pain. Kessler helps readers find a way to talk with doctors and to say good-bye. Using stories, he provides information to help us meet the needs of a loved one at this profound time in our lives.)

***Reimagining Death: Stories-and-Wisdom for Home Funerals and Green Burials*** by Lucinda Herring.

(A fabulously inspiring look at death where art and beauty, meaningful ritual, and joy to ease our loss and sorrow, returns us to ourselves, knowingness of our own bodies, and to the earth.)

***Turn Right, Good Moon, Conversations With a Dying Mother*** by L.E. Moore

(The journey of a woman from Lake Superior's north shore who, supported by her family, follows her choice to die on her own terms. Written by her daughter, this book gives a very personal look into a family's choice to accept this request and reveals profound blessings as well as a heightened understanding of what it means to live well.)

***When Breath Becomes Air*** by Paul Kalanithi.

(A best seller, that describes the journey of a physician who treated his patients with fear and worries of illness/dying and then became a patient himself.)

***When Death is Near, a Caregiver's Guide*** (Source material from - Ira Byrock, M.D.)

(Basic and critical information about the stages of decline approaches death. Distributed through Essentia Health Hospice and possibly others. Included on the ktwh webpage as a PDF file.)

***With Our Own Hands: A Guidebook to Ritual Blessing of the Dead*** by Ellen Hufschmidt.

(A warm and caring description of how a ritual blessing can be helpful to the grief process and honor the body of a recently deceased loved one in all settings (in-person or virtually).

\*Ellen is a producer of this radio show and frequent interviewee. [ritesofchange.com](http://ritesofchange.com), [ritesofchange@gmail.com](mailto:ritesofchange@gmail.com), 612-729-6817.

***Comfort and Hope: for Widows and Widowers*** by Donnette R. Alfelt

(Quotes, thoughts, and stories addressing many of the states widows and widowers pass through)

***A Dove at the Window: Living Dreams and Spiritual Experiences*** Edited by Vera P. Glenn

(True stories from real people who have been dealing with the death of someone they care about)

***Finding Meaning – The SIXTH STAGE of GRIEF*** by David Kessler

(“David Kessler writes of a world that is rarely examined with such sensitivity. Now he has gone to an even deeper and more soulful place. He is a healer par excellence to others who are in pain.”

—Marianne Williamson, author of *Return to Love*)

***Grief Journey: A Walk in the Shadow of Death*** by Dennis Herschbach.

(Poetry and prose reflections from a widower who is also a local north shore resident.)

***I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye : Surviving, Coping, and Healing after the Sudden Death of a Loved One*** by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair PHD

(Top rated in this area of books, it serves to help those dealing with the death of a loved one and those who want to assist others going through this grief process. It covers many topics including physical and emotional effects, helping children, getting through holidays, and more.)

***Loss of Dreams: A Special Kind of Grief*** by Ted Bowman

(A focused look at how a loss of a dream can be as intense as a loss of a person, with many helpful thoughts that apply to both.)

***Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Dying and Caring*** by Henri Nouwen

(A Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian shares his own experiences with aging, fear, loss, and grief. He beautifully reveals the sacred gifts the living and dying can give one another.)

## **ILLUSTRATED BOOKS - Ages 8 to Adult**

***The Gift of a Memory, A Keepsake to Commemorate the Loss of a Loved One*** by Marianne Richmond

(Compassionate and gentle, this book gives tribute to the emotions felt by those who have lost a loved one and embraces the reader while reflecting the loved one who has died. Filled with beautiful prose and artwork it provides comfort and support for all ages.)

***Soul's Garden*** written and illustrated by Rebecca Stouffer

(This book, written and published in Ely, MN, is spectacularly illustrated and beautifully written. The reader joins Cora through joy-filled walks in the woods accompanied by Kitty, her stuffed teddy, and her companion and guide, Dot, the bear. Inspired by her Grandmother, her love of the natural world, and care for everyone's soul garden, this book takes the reader through inspiring communes with nature, the beauty of shared love, and eventually to a time that requires us to say goodbye. Heartfelt and life affirming it is a feast to view and to read. This book will especially appeal to nature lovers.)

***The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages*** by Leo Buscaglia

(A beloved book bringing together the themes of loss and the natural beauty of the fall season.)

***The Next Place*** by Warren Hanson.

(This book depicts the next place with a series of vivid pictures of sky images with lyrical easy reading passages providing comfort and solace for an experience where there are few good words.)

## **CHILDREN/YOUNG ADULT BOOKS**

***Bridge to Terabithia*** by Katherine Paterson ( A Newbery Medal winner - for 'tween ages)

( This award winning book tells a story of young friendship, the journey to self acceptance, and provides an opportunity for parents and supportive adults to discuss grief and loss with 'tween aged children ).

***Charlotte's Web*** (Trophy Newbery) by E. B. White and Garth Williams (ages 8 -12)

(Charlotte's Web tells the beautifully written story of love and loss of a little girl (Fern) who loved a little pig (Wilbur) and of Wilbur 's friend (Charlotte A. Cavatica), a beautiful grey spider who lives in the barn with Wilbur.)

***The Invisible String*** by Patrice Karst (author), Joanne Lew-Vriethoff ( Illustrator)

("The message of *The Invisible String* resonates with children and adults alike.... The two ends of the treasured Invisible String are families and schools. This String, reinforced on each side, buoys students with love, guidance, direction. But when one end weakens, the entire String falters.... When we need support, reassurance, or simply a kindred spirit, just give the String a tug and someone will tug back. This is powerful, and will keep your child on track through...his or her education journey." – ***Carmen Fariña, Chancellor, NYC Department of Education***). Note that the concept of heaven is used in the message of this book. )

***The Little Prince*** (*Wordsworth Children's Classics*) by Antoine De Saint-Exupéry (Author), Richard Howard (translator)

(An enchanting story of a young prince that touches on loneliness, friendship, love and loss.)

***Michael Rosen's Sad Book*** (Boston Globe-Horn Book Honors (Awards)) by Michael Rosen (Author), Quentin Blake (Illustrator)

(Recommended for Grade 3 and up this sensitively illustrated and gently moving book presents a "personal account of the author's experiences with grief over the loss of his son and mother and various ways of dealing with the melancholy that attends it. "Sometimes sad is very big. It's everywhere. All over me" ...it assures readers that despair, anger, and hopelessness are common feelings when dealing with death , but that memories of happier times can elicit a spark of joy and optimism for the future." .– *this book review is an excerpt from a review by Maryann H. Owen, Racine Public Library, WI*)

***The Mountains of Tibet: A Child's Journey Through Living and Dying*** by Mordicai Gerstein

(Grade 2 Up This story of the death and reincarnation of a Tibetan woodcutter is a beautifully gentle look at one human being dealing with life's choices and possibilities.)