



**A
GOOD
AFTER
DEATH
PLAN**

Why do I need one ?

In any group of people close to someone who is dying there will be different reactions and different needs at the moment of death. Making a plan can help ensure that those you love have the best chance of moving forward without you in a helpful and healthy grieving process. Surely that is worth the effort.

What kind of reactions might my loved ones have ?

Some people want to get busy, some people want to sit quietly. Some people think it is morbid and creepy to be close to a dead body, some people are greatly comforted by being close to a dead body. Some people think a dead body should be taken away as soon as possible, some people think it is important to honour someone's body as sacred spiritualised substance.

How can I know what needs my loved ones may have ?

It may not be possible to discern your loved ones needs ahead of time, especially if they have not had many experiences of someone dying. They may not be able to discern them either. Yet, it can be helpful just to ponder that each loved one will have needs to be met, and that they may be very different. Even if death is expected, most people react in shock at the moment of death.

Research has shown that some people have no need to see someone's body after they die and some people have a strong emotional need to see it. For those who intuitively want to see someone's body, they can have longstanding deep regrets if they do not do so. For these people, the situation in which they see the body is important. Privacy, familiarity and physical comfort are helpful elements to consider. As is possibly emotional support from someone not so close.

Who is least likely to want to be involved with my body after I die?

In our anecdotal experience people least likely to want to be around someone's dead body are

- ✓ men
- ✓ those who have not had any experience of being around a dead body
- ✓ those who find it too emotionally painful to face the death

Who is most likely to want to be involved with my body after I die ?

In our anecdotal experience people most likely to want to stay close and gently release from someone's body are

- ✓ women
- ✓ those who have been caring intensely during the dying process
- ✓ those who have had a previous helpful experience of doing so
- ✓ those involved in a dying process that hasn't "gone to plan" eg when a dying person wanted to stay at home but was taken into hospital in their final days
- ✓ those who are informed by cultural or spiritual beliefs and traditions

SO how do I make a plan that meets everyone's needs?

A "good plan" for the few days after someone's death is one that

- A** has flexibility to adapt as intuitions come forth,
- B** allows plenty possibility for anyone to have private time with the person who has died - preferably in a familiar and comfortable environment,
- C** has at least one person around who will be able to pick up signs and cues of what is unfolding, and able to prepare/support anyone who wants to be close to the body but is apprehensive about it
- D** has several small rituals for close loved ones as the first days unfold, so that when they come to the funeral they are ready to be open to the love and support of the community,
- E** includes a ritual of "leaving home" if possible—this can be a powerfully poignant way to say goodbye.

This may involve identifying several possible places your body may lie at rest, getting help with suggestions for helpful rituals, asking a good friend to support your loved ones. Flexibility is the key. We can help you think about options!

This leaflet was prepared by Pushing Up The Daisies to inform people wishing to take good care of their loved ones at the time of their death.

We can help you think through your options so that you can make a plan that is realistic for your situation and budget. Please get in touch.

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