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What To Do When Death Comes Knocking



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Helping You FINALLY Find Peace

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Help for those who believe they or their loved one might be dying

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Help, My Loved One is Sick!

Don's Story



Don was always an active man. Life and even hardship could never get him down. After many years of working hard at the local mill, Don finally had retirement in sight. Just a few more years, and he would have all the time he had dreamed of to camp with his wife and fish with the grandkids.

But, life had different plans. Cold, hard, painful plans. Don was diagnosed with cancer just months before his retirement party was scheduled. So, Don listened to the doctors and did all of the treatments – chemo, radiation, even surgery. And still, the doctor said there was nothing she could do for Don.

Don, his wife, his sons, and the grandkids feel devastated. Actually, devastation is an understatement. They are at a loss for what to do. The doctor said there was nothing more she could do, but she did not say what Don and his family could do next.

Where can they find help?!

Betty's Story



Betty was such a kind woman. She had lived such a long and fulfilling life. Her husband died many years ago, and Betty had learned to live life, but she missed him dearly.

In recent months, Betty's own health had taken a turn for the worse. Her once active lifestyle of bowling with friends, Sunday morning church, and lunch outings with the great-grands gave way to late mornings in bed not feeling well, more and more doctor appointments, and what seemed like an endless regimen of medications morning, afternoon, and at bedtime.

Betty told her children that she was ready to go on and see her husband and her Lord. She didn't want to kill herself, but she was ready to move into the next life when the Lord saw fit. She no longer wanted to go to the doctor multiple times a week or take handfuls of pills throughout the day. She simply said that she wanted to live until she no longer did.

Betty's daughters don't know what to do. Her sons want her to keep taking the medicine and seeing the doctors, but the daughters feel like their mother should get to make some decisions about her own life. Betty and her family need help!

Tom's Story



Tom was young and successful. He had worked hard to get where he was in life, and life was good. That is, until he started having some significant stomach issues.

Tom had always battled a nervous stomach. Even when he was a kid, Tom was prone to butterflies and a little bit of stomach upset when things got stressful at school or on the basketball court. But this was different. He had made it through a rough season at work, and things were going well now. It was smooth sailing at home with Tom's wife and their 3 little kids, ages 3 through 8. Tom adored his wife, and she him. The kids were always excited to see Daddy walk in after work, and he could not wait to kiss his wife and wrestle on the floor with the 3 kiddos.

But these stomach problems were bad. And they were getting worse. Tom eventually, at the prompting of his wife, made a doctor appointment, and it was all a whirlwind after that. One test became several. Several tests became chemotherapy. And chemotherapy gave way to a terminal diagnosis by the oncologist. "What do you mean, 'terminal?'" asked Tom's wife.

Tom and his family need help!

Doctor Speak

Your situation may be similar to these situations. Or, it may be completely different. But you still do not know what to do or how to proceed!

The doctors keep running tests. Or they have stopped running tests. They said there is nothing they can do. Or they keep doing things that seem to not be helping. Or you don't want them to keep doing the things they are doing, but you don't know how to tell them. Or you don't know what will happen if you tell them to stop.

None of it makes sense!

What Are My Options?

What am I supposed to do in my particular situation?

I think the first question to ask yourself is one that does not come up often enough in our healthcare system today:





What Do I Want?

What do you want out of life and healthcare? Did you know that is what matters? Have you ever been told that before?

Much of the time patients feel as though their wants and desires do not matter in the healthcare system. We feel as though we **MUST** get this test or that test. We **HAVE TO** have this procedure or that procedure. But did you know that you do not have to do anything that you do not want to do?

What you want out of life should be the driving factor behind your healthcare. What quality of life do you want? How do you want to spend the last months and weeks of your life? If you are caring for a loved one and making these decisions for him or her, what do you believe he or she would want right now? Would Papaw want to be in a nursing home? Would Momma want to keep taking handfuls of medications, even though her dementia has progressed so far that she doesn't know who you are anymore? Does Daddy really need to have a feeding tube at 90 years old, especially if all his life he has been super-independent and misses his long-deceased wife? Is it okay that Cousin George does not want CPR since he has a terminal diagnosis of inoperable cancer?

These are the questions that matter. What do you want out of life and healthcare? What does/would your loved one who cannot any longer decide for him/herself want out of life?

Different People, Different Choices

When one believes he or she is dying, has a terminal diagnosis, or is aged and deciding how to proceed with healthcare, there are really 2 options: **Aggressive Treatment AND Comfort Care.**



Aggressive Treatment

Aggressive Treatment is the option available to patients and families who want to continue to fight for a longer life and fight against disease. This option aggressively pursues cure. The following kinds of scenarios fit into this category:

- You or a loved one are diagnosed with cancer. The doctor recommends various kind of chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, etc in order to prolong your life.
- You or a loved one have worsening heart disease. The doctor makes medication changes, recommends diet changes, heart procedures, surgery, devices such as pacemakers or defibrillators, etc in order to prolong your life.
- You or a loved one have worsening lung disease. The doctor recommends that you stop smoking, wear oxygen to help your breathing, various breathing treatments, CPAP or BIPAP at night, etc in order to prolong your life.

You get the point. Aggressive treatment is the option to treat the disease with the end-goal of prolonging the life of the patient.

If your goal is to be alive with family and friends for as long as you are able, this is a great option.



Comfort Care

Comfort Care is the option available to patients and families who want to fight to be comfortable and enjoy the life that they have left without necessarily fighting hard against the disease process which is bringing them closer to the end of life.

Within Comfort Care, there are two basic options:

- Hospice Care
- Palliative Care

Hospice Care

Hospice Care is end-of-life care that is focused on comfort and support for the patient and family. Hospice consists of care overseen by a physician that is provided by nurses, medical social workers, chaplains, and nurses aides in the home, in a nursing facility or assisted living, or in an inpatient hospice hospital setting. This care is for those who choose not to pursue aggressive treatments, but rather to elect to remain comfortable and enjoy life with comfort and support in the environment of their choosing, aggressively pursuing symptom management instead of aggressively pursuing cure. The following kinds of scenarios fit into this category:

- You or a loved one are diagnosed with cancer. The doctor recommends various kind of chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, etc in order to prolong your life, but you do not want to do those things. Instead, you choose to pursue hospice care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth.
- You or a loved one have worsening heart disease. The doctor makes medication changes, recommends diet changes, heart procedures, surgery, devices such as pacemakers or defibrillators, etc in order to prolong your life, but you do not

want to do those things. Instead, you choose to pursue hospice care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth.

- You or a loved one have worsening lung disease. The doctor recommends that you stop smoking, wear oxygen to help your breathing, various breathing treatments, CPAP or BIPAP at night, etc in order to prolong your life, but you do not want to do those things. Instead, you choose to pursue hospice care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth.

Again, you get the point. Aggressive treatment is the option to treat the disease with the end-goal of prolonging the life of the patient, BUT hospice care is an option if your goals of care are to maintain maximum comfort *INSTEAD* of aggressively treating your disease process.





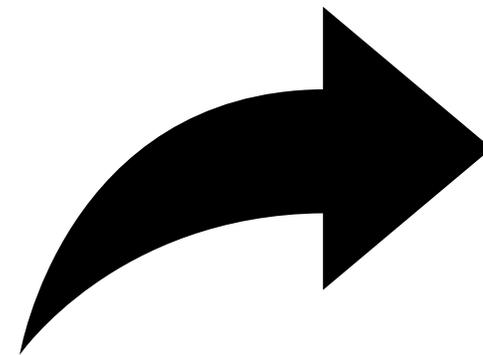
Palliative Care

Palliative Care is comfort care that is focused on comfort and support for the patient and family while the patient pursues treatment within his or her goals of care. Different than Hospice Care, Palliative Care is for those who might choose to pursue aggressive treatments, but also to elect to focus part of the treatment on being comfortable and enjoying life with comfort and support in the environment of their choosing, aggressively pursuing symptom management *AND* possibly simultaneously aggressively pursuing cure. The following kinds of scenarios fit into this category:

- You or a loved one are diagnosed with cancer. The doctor recommends various kind of chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, etc in order to prolong your life, and you do want to do some of those things. So, you choose to pursue palliative care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth, while simultaneously pursuing aggressive treatment.

- You or a loved one have worsening heart disease. The doctor makes medication changes, recommends diet changes, heart procedures, surgery, devices such as pacemakers or defibrillators, etc in order to prolong your life, and you do want to do some of those things. So, you choose to pursue palliative care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth, while simultaneously pursuing aggressive treatment.
- You or a loved one have worsening lung disease. The doctor recommends that you stop smoking, wear oxygen to help your breathing, various breathing treatments, CPAP or BIPAP at night, etc in order to prolong your life, and you do want to do some of those things. So, you choose to pursue palliative care and symptom management to be comfortable during the time you have left on this earth, while simultaneously pursuing aggressive treatment.

Once again, you get the point. Palliative Care is an option if your goals of care are to maintain maximum comfort *WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY* aggressively treating your disease process.



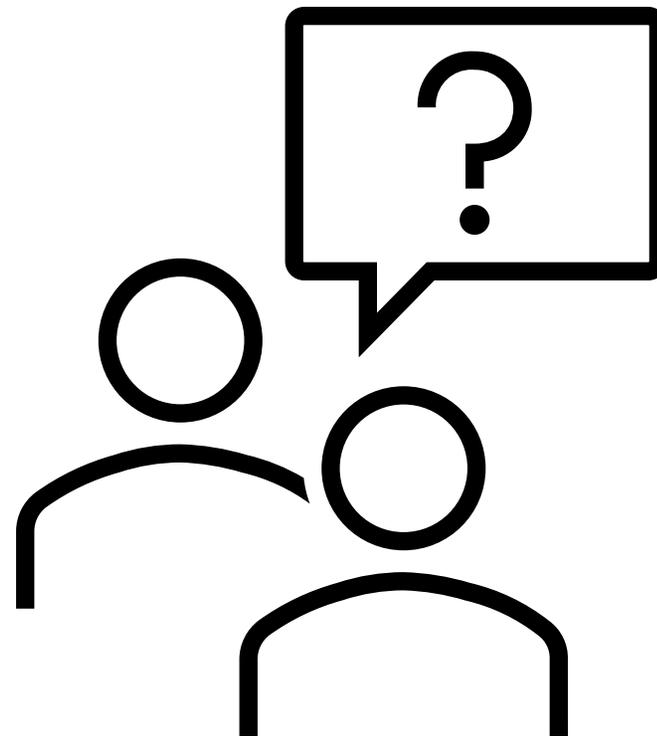
What is Right for Me or My Loved One?

How do you know whether to choose Aggressive or Comfort Care?

How do you know whether to choose Hospice or Palliative Care?

These are great questions, and they are tough ones for sure! There is no one-size fits all answer unfortunately. Each situation calls for careful evaluation, but here is a basic guide of what to consider:

- What do I want out of life and healthcare from here on out? (or what does/would have my loved one have wanted?)
- Are the aggressive treatment options I am being presented with really going to prolong my life?
- If I choose the aggressive treatment route, will I be satisfied with the quality of life I have during and after treatment?
- If I am choosing aggressive treatment for my loved one who cannot make his or her own decision, why am I choosing this option? Is it within their expressed wishes or what I genuinely believe he or she would want? Am I doing it for them or me?
- Is my soul ready for death? Do I have peace with God? Have I had my wrongs against God and others forgiven?
- And more!



Where Can I Turn for Help?

Sometimes it is difficult to know where to turn for help. Your world feels like it is crashing down, and in many ways, life as you knew it will never be again. When you feel like this, it is hard to know where to go, who to trust, what information is good and right and true.

Doctors are telling you one thing. Family members are saying another. And still, your heart is telling you something else! What should you do?! Where can you turn?!



You really need someone to walk with you through this desert, evaluate your particular situation, help you express your goals of care, and figure out the next steps.

Doctors, nurses, ministers, and counselors can all be helpful to you during this difficult time. But, what you really need is someone who is experienced with this kind of thing, with end-of-life matters. Someone who can evaluate your health situation or that of your loved one to help you determine the next stage. You need someone experienced in being in the valley of the shadow of death with folks just like you.

You can search online for coaches, counselors, and therapists who deal in aging matters, as well as end-of-life consultants.

You can also reach out to me, Jeff McCarty. I am an experienced Mental & Spiritual Health Nurse, Hospice Nurse, and long-time Minister. I have been doing hospice admissions for many years, so I am well-acquainted with the criteria for hospice care. I have helped many, many families through this transition. I can help you navigate these things.

I have several degrees, including a Masters in Soul Care & Counseling, 3 undergrad degrees in nursing, a Bachelors in Ministry, and I will soon complete a Masters in Mental Health Nursing (which will enable me to prescribe meds as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner). I am currently

licensed as a Registered Nurse in Kentucky and all Nursing Compact Licensure states (including neighboring Indiana).

I've been coaching and advising adults and teens for over 2 decades, so you might find that I can help you! I worked as a pastor for over 20 years before transitioning to coaching and consulting with Mind & Soul Care.

I can be reached on my cell phone at 502.762.5949, via email at JeffMcRN@gmail.com, or on my website at www.mindandsoulcare.com.

Wherever you are at in this process, please know that there is help available. And even more than that, know that God loves you and will walk with you through the darkest of circumstances. He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to live the perfect life that we could not live to pay the price of death that we could not pay ~ All so that by faith in Jesus we might overcome (as He did in His resurrection) the darkest circumstance – our sin. Above all things, trust Him... He loves you!

A Prayer for Clarity & Peace for You

Almighty God & Father,

Give this person and their family peace in their hearts through the Lord Jesus Christ and guidance by Your Holy Spirit that they might know how to proceed in their healthcare decisions.

We ask that you might heal their bodies; but if you choose not to do so on this side of Heaven, we pray that they would have peace with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have mercy, oh Lord. Have mercy in our bodies, minds, and souls!

In the Name Above All Names, the Lord Jesus Christ, AMEN & AMEN...