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SPEAKERS
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I'm feeling that it's kind of an intimate thing to talk about death and dying. And I'm also feeling that especially those of you sitting in chairs feel very far away. And I wonder if we could harmonize these two things by having people come sit closer so I can feel more closely connected as I reach for my sake.

Thank you

In Zen monasteries, they have this wooden plaque, this wooden block that is used for calling people to the meditation hall. And maybe some of you have maybe heard if you've been Zen centers, it sounds something like this.

And so you know that that sound and hit quite hard and resounds through the monastery. And on that wooden plaque is usually there's written something to the effect of something like life and death are the great matter. Practice as if your hair's on fire, don't waste time. And so every hit that Han that that block, it's kind of that that's what's being kind of sent out, don't waste time, life and death is the grave matter. And, and it can be said, I think we're very directly that the central trust of Buddhism is to come to terms with this great matter of life and death, to resolve it, deal with it. And so that this is essential issues of who we are human being and facing our mortality and is it really one The central aspects of the whole Buddhist enterprise enterprise. Many people I know come to Buddhism for more personal reasons. They've kind of dealing with their own suffering in a very personal way, trying to find personal ways of coping better with life, which is all very fine. But, you know, Buddhism itself is, you know, meant to be this great, great confrontation with this issue. And in in that spirit. It's been said, it can be said that all Buddhist practice is a preparation for dying. All Buddhist practice is meant to bring us to this point of dealing with these deep existential questions of life and death with impermanence. And to do that, with hopefully in a spirit of love and compassion and peace, and the image of the Buddha dying is a very powerful one for Buddhists, because he was someone who died at peace. Very clearly,
consciously, consciously, I suppose, but laid himself quietly down and entered into meditative states. And then in this meditative state quietly passed away.

The Buddha did not say, the Buddha offered and suggested and down to the ages, Buddhists have suggested that it's very helpful to do practices reflecting on death. And I talked about this last week. And there's a whole series of different ways of reflecting on death and practicing on it and you can be creative in your own ways and thinking about reflecting on it.

But the Buddha had very little to say, or didn't say anything as far as we know, just no record of it. But what lay people ordinary monks, even not monks and nuns, how they should die, in terms of you know, the processes, the rituals, the customs What to do with the body what to do afterwards is a funeral memorial service how to treat all these things. He didn't say he didn't talk about that very much. And so what happens to in history of Buddhism is that as Buddhism is traveled to different cultures, there's that Buddhism is tended to adopt their local customs, for how to handle this process of dying with in terms of you know, what to do with the body in the funerals, memorial service, things like that the rituals and rites and Buddhism has been quite flexible in that way. And so you find actually great diversity in the Buddhist traditions about how they handle the whole death process and when after after death. However, what's probably enduring throughout all these Buddhist traditions, so this way, that you know, what's often sometimes been said then is that in any given culture, you do that which is most helpful at the time of death and with with a whole dying process and studying cultures different things are helpful for people, partly because of different customs and partly because maybe different worldviews that people carry about themselves and the world around them. But the one thing that's probably most enduring through all the different Buddhist traditions, is the idea of offering the idea of what is most helpful. what's what's the greatest help for you, as a person you or go through your dying, or after death for the people who survive what is most helpful. And what Buddhists suggest is that what's most helpful helpful is to look at the dying process and death as a spiritual process, and as an opportunity to deepen one's spiritual life to find the possibility of awakening in that process, to find how to come at peace with our clings our attachments, our fears to find the capacity For love and compassion at those times. And so in adopting with local customs with that which is most helpful, Buddhist and will keep in mind, what is helpful for my Buddhist practice, for these purposes of what I've been practicing for in the direction the practice is going. So all Buddhist practice can be seen as preparations for death. And certain practices then become particularly important as a person gets close to death for a Buddhist practitioner to know that they're going to die, we all know but to really kind of turn the corner, which sometimes is in the mind, you really know that now you've come to the end, there's no more you have an illness and doctor has told you there's no cure anymore, and you're kind of that is going to inevitably become you. Sometimes you're given a timeframe. You have no doctor will say, maybe you have two weeks to two months or two months to a year or something. And then even then you might say, well, you don't really believe it. But then finally They are in the hospital, you know, and, and they say, you know, maybe you should think about, you know, you know what your
choices are, if your heart stops what we'd like to do then. So it comes to a point where it's really obvious that this is what's happening. This is the track that's really going to going to happen. At some point when you really see it coming, see it approaching, then, for a Buddhist practitioner, this becomes extremely important time to devote to their Buddhist practice, do the Buddhist practice to use it, to call on it. And I would encourage people to spend time, more time and spiritual practice and meditation practice during this time to make sure there's time for that. To spend quiet time contemplative time doing the practice used to usually or doing doing other kinds of practices that seem appropriate for the time finding a spiritual counselor finding a Buddhist teacher to talk to and get guidance, finding having other Sangha friends, they can come and practice with you. Come in and have discussions with you about your understanding about life and death and about Buddhism. come and spend quiet time with you anything at all you can do that somehow enhances that as a spiritual quality time for your spiritual life. It cannot always not always easy to do that because sometimes, you know, fear arises, sometimes dizziness arises. I once did an exercise for some people about imagine, imagine if you're going to die in 12 hours. Well, that'd be like if you knew they had 12 hours. And then I said, Okay, let go of that. Now imagine you're going to die in four hours. What does that bring? And then imagine you're going to die in an hour, and then 10 minutes, and then in a minute. And then what if it just now they've done that a few times where people in work different kind of workshops. Once I did that, and it was so powerful for a woman that she decided to retire from her job. After that exercise because she's felt, you know, what am I doing working is more important things to do. And she's been so happy ever since it was your best decision. She I said if she ever made, but it came from that that whole exercise of really facing, you know, what if this was the last day or something of her life, but remember, there's another woman who said that as we went back through, you know, through the shorter short of time, and there was when she, when she reached one hour, then she realized that she was the retreat center was was was more than an hour away from her house. So she could no longer rush back home and clean up and make order and take care of all the kind of details in daily life that somehow she felt she had to do. And, and she told us great relief because she kept to give up all these business that she thought she had to do to kind of settle her affairs. There was no chance of doing it because she couldn't, you know, was only our left and was more than an hour's drive. So this idea of being busy, some people to suddenly feel like they have to get busy and do a lot and maybe take care of other people. But to emphasize that this is a very important time and to find some to make the time to make the effort to use one's practice at this time is very important.

So there are certainly a lot of the practices that hopefully you're familiar with come to play at this time, for spiritual preparation for spirit, spirit, spiritual practice.

One of the useful things is to practice forgiveness is to look at your relationships that you have, and see if there's any unfinished business. And certainly it's good, because it makes good sense. It's helpful for everybody concerned. It's certainly a gift we give other people to clarify those relationships when we have a chance it can be hard for people To survive you, and to feel the ambivalence or the difficulty of the pain, or that relationship was never clarified or. But it can also be, it's also very important for the dying process itself, that as you get into those last days, last minutes, if that's what's
happens to you, that your mind is now still holding on to what if four could die or I need to or, you know, I'm not going out with that person, you know, I'm not going to forgive that person. And so their mind is holding on to something. And if the dying process is going to happen, if it can happen if it happens in a natural smooth way, which is no guarantee it's going to happen that way. If the mind is holding on to something, it makes the dying process more difficult. So anything you can do to help loosen up the attachments in the mind prior to dying is helpful. It's helpful for living also. And so if you have if you still have unresolved relationships, that that entails some kind of holding you holding your heart you have resentment for example, which is kind of holding It's very helpful for you at that point, to be able to release that in whatever way you can. And hopefully it's done in relationship with a person, if you can't talk with him, deal with it. If you can't deal with it directly, maybe there's more personal private ways you can do it, but somehow come to terms with those things, you know, carry those with you to the very end. So the practice of forgiveness, which is not necessarily an easy thing to do, again, you can try to get help with that. And I've gotten in counsel people who are dying and kind of, you know, very close to death, and was surprised that to be pulled into the role of being a marriage counselor, you know, I kind of hadn't first time that happened. You know, I was there to counsel a person you know, that the person was dying within a few days and momentous time for their life and, and, and I was surprised that didn't want to talk about married marriage problems. And but actually, that That's what needed to happen. And I don't know, I don't. Some people might interpret and saying, well, this person was holding holding out until those problems could be resolved before they could actually die. And so people have this sense. I don't know if it's true or not have a sense people hold out because things are unresolved and they're holding on or hoping to get them resolved. So sometimes getting help for that. It's certainly a time to work on your relationship with yourself. Yes. who dies? Yeah. Great. Which one who dies or one year to live or which book? a year to live? Yeah. Yeah. And there are people who for the people who form year long support groups. A friend of mine who does a couple of people I know doing it

So, you know, to review your life and look at what's unfinished. But it's also then to look at your relationship to yourself. And as some people put that on hold, some people never really deal with that in a deep way. And sometimes, you know, as many of you might know, their whole at realms of who we are, that we don't really face until we do something as powerful as going to retreat. And we kind of happily go along as if it's not there. And then on retreat, it's hits us in the face and Wow, I didn't know that was there for me. The dyeing process is kind of like you know, if it just happens slowly enough that the ultimate retreat and so to look at your relationship to yourself and to realize that's part of the process. You know, many people have many different attitudes towards how to relate to each other when people are dying. Some people want to make everything peaceful and nice and Ignore how they're really feeling, if they're really afraid, or if they're grieving or if they're angry or whatever, it for the sake of the person who's dying for the sake of the people who survive and you don't really show them how, what's going on my own biased amount of my understanding along this regard is that just like everywhere else in life, that the honesty, the honest confrontation to honest bringing up what's within us, the practice of mindful so those things is part of the process for everybody concerned. And then rather than holding back and hiding something, I have great faith that the people are practicing or
have some sense of how to work, process of mindfulness of honesty, that the best thing to do is for everybody concerned to be really honest about what's really going on for them. If you're really afraid about for someone who's dying or really upset about it, really distressed about it. Find some way you might have to be a little bit careful how you say it, but have some way to share that with a person so that they can be a process a greater intimacy can happen then if it's done in the right way, careful way, if you're unsure how to do that, how to share those port difficult parts of yourself with someone else, then again, pull in some kind of friend, a counselor or teacher or someone, maybe you can share you work with those kinds of issues. But I have a great faith that whenever arises in the context of dying, whatever the feelings or thoughts, whatever arises, is all part of that process of dying. It's all to be included as part of the practice of that time. Nothing is outside of that process of practice at that time. So don't don't feel like you have to inhibit or censor anything that's going on. Though you might have to do things in a wise way best, you know, kindly if you can and

So the nature of spiritual practice during the dying period of someone's life varies a lot. That kind of practice a person does varies a lot depending on the stage of dying they're in. Some people are still relatively strong and robust when they know they're dying. And perhaps they can do more active, intentional practices. They can practice they can, it's great to cultivate your concentration. There's I've heard great stories in Thailand, they love telling stories like this in Burma and Thailand about people who die and kind of the practices they do and, and remember one person, I think, is one of the ajaan Charles books is dedicated to her. But she came to see ajaan charges before you know, when she knew she was dying of cancer. And he taught her how to concentrate on the breath. I think because the breath and to say that the mantra Buddha as she was doing it, and she was able to get very concentrated, cultivate and develop concentration or she she still could, and having a strength of mine of a concentrated mind is very helpful. Applying process, partly because if you're concentrated, your mind is strong, it's much less less likely to be caught up in the reactivity caught up in spheres, they might still happen. But you might not be caught up in it. It's a lot easier to be a peaceful frame of mind if you have the ability to be concentrated in calm. So if you still have the ability, then if that's what you focus on, maybe you focus on doing loving kindness, practice cultivating that ability, developing that ability to do loving kindness, practicing forgiveness, practicing developing mindfulness, if you have a chance go on retreat. There are people who come on retreats that I teach that they show up and they say, Well, you know, I'm dying. That's why I'm here. And so, you know, that's what they're trying to do. And it's beautiful. It's really one of the great things to do if you have enough time and the ability to do that. So, but then there are times when we're dying and other times and other times perhaps when we're quite weak and bedridden and don't have a lot of strength, maybe even mental strength to kind of engage and kind of focus practice. And then perhaps the primary practice a person might do is a practice of letting go or surrendering and just letting go or non doing practice, there are non doing meditation practices, like Zen is considered a non doing practice or choiceless awareness practice can be considered a non doing practice, you try to not do anything at all, every time you notice the mind trying to do something, you let go of trying to do something. And the mind is expert at trying to do things right. And but if you can't do anything, you don't have the energy to do a lot of things. The non doing practice can be actually very, very helpful and very easy. Because you can feel that how tired it
makes you to make the effort. And so to know that this actually is a valuable practice to let go of all the doing, especially if you had a background in practice of doing that in regular life. Then you can trust how significant it is to keep letting go. keep letting go of all You're efforting all you're doing trying to do anything at all.

The Buddhist goal, the goal in Buddhism, for the dying moment, is to be as aware and conscious as you can. And this also seems to be the primary goal these days in the hospice movement, as best as I can tell. And the hospice movement has been a pioneer in this country in learning how to administer pain medications, non narcotic medications and all kinds of other kind of non pain medications that help with pain and kind of kind of the right recipe so that a person stay is aware and conscious as they can, but still managed with their pain so they don't get go unconscious or get kind of drugged or something. And so Buddhists put a great value on that and I've been in hospital situations where I haven't done it personally but other Buddhist teachers I've been with have had to have discussions with the doctors to try to convince the doctors to try to keep the use the least amount of pain medication, least amount of narcotics or morphine or whatever, because the doctors Tennessee This was I don't know what it is now maybe things have changed quite a bit now. But I used to be going to hospitals in the 80s when we had to have these discussions and because the doctors read the cranks crank it up wanted to make the person as absolutely as unconscious as possible to be so they have become completely convinced that the person would not feel any distress or pain. For a Buddhist you want to certainly it's valuable to to medicate and try to keep the pain under control. But you want to you know, ideally you would moderate yourself if you can, and if you can cope with the pain and deal with the pain great. And if you had a meditation practice where you've dealt with pain and looked at pain and work with pain a lot before, then perhaps you can stay much more clearly alert. use less medication because you're more comfortable with pain. than you would be if you hadn't practiced. It's very powerful people. Sometimes people ask on retreats, why? Why should I sit with pain? You know, I don't usually say this, I don't think but one of the reasons is that way maybe you know how to deal with pain when you come to the end of your life and you are in a lot of pain, you've painful death. And you've already dealt with pain, some degree, you know the territory, you know, how your mind reacts, you know, how to work with it, you know, how to, you know, the whole the whole show. So, the Buddhist goal is try to be as conscious and aware as possible. And to be in a wholesome state of mind, because the for two reasons, one is the classic reason is that the state of your mind when you die, the moment of death, what you're thinking about the moment of your death has a great influence in how you get reborn. So you want to put yourself in as wholesome state of mind, to resolve the issues and all that, to do a kind of life review someone mentioned, but to do it kind of with looking for those parts of your life that bring you happiness and joy to remember, your good deeds, your good qualities, think good things you've done your accomplishments and make you happy people you've loved people you've helped. And often I think some of you've had this experience on retreats, we give this exercise did people think about something that some good deed you did in your life to make you happy, and inevitably, someone will
say, I can't think of one. And I doubt it's because they haven't done one, done any. But sometimes there's a big block that people have from that kind of deep self appreciation that can be helpful to you. Bring the mind to wholesome state of wholesome state of mind, at the time of death. In Asia and Southeast Asia, one of the ways that monks, people will counsel the dying is will actually tell them about Oh, remember when you did that, remember that remember that thing you did, as a way of kind of lifting up their mind making it happy. So the idea is to be as aware as you can at the mind as clear as possible, and to be have the mind in a wholesome state. Now, it happens to be that mindfulness itself the practice of mindfulness in my mind is practicing mindfulness. Mindfulness is a wholesome state, wholesome activity of the mind. So some people will simply focus on doing mindfulness the best they can, as much as they can, in that dying process, because that also happens to be you doing you're doing two things at once.

And then you know, you certainly do a lot of other wholesome activities like thinking about your good quality, some people will reflect on the Buddha Remember their spiritual teachers have a statue of the Buddha or picture of their spiritual teachers or someone who brightens their mind spiritually and you know, kinda kind of way presence so that maybe there's one tradition in Buddhism, we have a painting or picture at the foot of your bed. So you're actually looking at that while you're dying. So that kind of helps you stay in the best frame of mind. So you don't get anxious or distressed or, in the last minutes. The practice of loving kindness. I've never heard of this happening, but I can imagine that some people do it. You can imagine it could be a good idea that some people would practice loving kindness. Rather than practicing mindfulness right up to the last moment, they would dedicate themselves to practicing loving, loving kindness as much as they can right up to the last moment. That is a very powerful, wholesome state to be in. And I imagine that it could be very wonderful way to have to condition one's mind in the last moments.

Some people in Southeast Asia in tera, vaada tradition, there's a lot of emphasis on the practice of generosity, both before you die, and in your name after you die. And usually it's usually it's done towards monastics, but it's not always sometimes just done chair for charity or for good causes. But and, and the classic reason for practicing generosity is to create merit. And if you the more more good merit you have, the better your rebirth will be. The currency of merit. Wait, usually it usually doesn't have much holding power in the psyche of Westerners. They haven't you know, it doesn't mean a lot for them, unless you kind of explain it in different ways that that merit has to do with the habits of mind that you're creating. And so if you do a lot of good things, you're creating wholesome habits of mind, which that have certain momentum that help you out in the future. But the practice generosity also, besides you know, creating merit, also as a way of gladdening the mind, bring happiness bring peace. And some people would like it and when they know they're going to die to practice it even more generosity, they usually would they start giving away their things. Let me give you some things here, take that home you like that whenever to do things, you know, to actually know that make you happy, or some people will do it through their will. You know, they can they're quite happy knowing what's going to happen to their estate. Wow, you know, this is really great. I can just imagine what, you know, the ACLU is going to do with that money. It's really great. It makes you really happy.
So that's kind of like a you know, a spiritual preparation. The last week I talked about the kind of preparation kind of reflections of meditation on death. You can do when you know you're still healthy and not dying soon. And then there's a lot of things you can do while you're dying. And if you come come and talk to me or come to talk to other teachers, and we'll talk about those practices and, and sometimes if you're dying, and you're weak, or semi conscious or unconscious, sometimes it can be very helpful to have someone come along and guide you through some practices, guided loving kindness meditation a friend can do or they can read a passage guide you in doing letting go practices, and so have this guided help and the practice. Sometimes, as you know, it can be hard to practice alone. And so sometimes even you know, on your deathbed, it'd be helpful to have fellow practitioners come and meditate with you. Just be in the room with you and meditate and maybe you give instructions that they shouldn't talk to you. You don't want any conversations. You can't deal with it. And it might even be songs on the Sangha people you don't even like them, particularly, you know, you don't want you know, whatever they're going to bring in terms of conversation. But so you make sure that the polite way You know, it's clear that people are invited to come and sit with you. And people would really like to do that. I think it's very helpful to generous act. It's a supportive act. And just know that someone's around you sitting and meditating can be a great support and help. If you can't practice yourself in some way, at least, it helps create the atmosphere in the mood. That is very settling and helpful. Some people who are practitioners find it very helpful to have other practitioners come to meditate or to be around there, because they tend to be much more calm in the face of death than other people might be. And so if you have relatives coming in, or being around, or doctors, even over nurses who are anxious about this thing of death, to have people who are comfortable and know how to practice how to be calm and peaceful, is helpful for everyone concerned. And then people have to run around kind of anxious, and I had once a doctor tell me, I was really surprised, but I was never a doctor was a nurse. She worked in a kind of intensive care Ward where people came basically to die. So you know, your work to be around dying people. And we would go and sit with this fella who was dying. And he was, you know, I think it was medicated so much that he I don't know where he was pretty much unconscious or semi conscious. So I didn't know and we just didn't know most of us didn't know him. We just had been a student at Zen Center in San Francisco, and at some point in the distant past, and he'd asked people to come and help him who's dying process and so we would take turns, we would have vigil there in 24 hours a day someone would be sitting with meditating in his room with him. And so I went, I went once a week for two hour session meditating this room. And as I was leaving, the nurse said to me, Oh, it's so helpful for us for me when you Buddhists come and meditate, because it makes us so much calmer. You're You're so calm and accepting of it, that it makes it helps us become more be more peaceful with this situation also. So inviting people in can be very, very helpful and you know, if you Know that you're going to be incapacitated with the expect to be in some ways, maybe telling telling your relatives who are in charge, maybe aren't practitioners. But this is what you want ahead of time is very, very important. So there's a lot of kind of spiritual preparation can be done. There's also practical preparations for dying that can be done, and it should be done. And I kind of think of the practical and the spiritual to be the same or not the same, but to be, I don't see the practical preparations for dying to be separate from the spiritual preparation, even
though we can talk about them separately, that anything that helps you kind of look at death directly in
the face and to be honest about it and to help you, you know, helps you to come to terms with it and,
and use it to inform your life and teach you about impermanence, then I think it's really helpful and so
that planning ahead for your death and preparing for it is helpful for your own sake. It's also very
helpful for you, people that you leave behind Your family, your loved ones, your friends. Because it can
be quite, you know, it's a big deal to have to make big to sit, you know, if you haven't told people what
you want, then people have to decide themselves and they don't necessarily know and they kind of
have to, you know, search their minds, or they have to argue or, you know, one side of the family
wants this, you know, Saudi family wants that, and, and whatever, you know, it's kind of it can be
difficult. And so it's a kind of, I think it's kind of a gift, that kind of a generous thing to plan ahead. So
you don't burden the people who the people are grieving, anyway. And that, you know, it's better.

I would think it's better not to have to do a lot of these kind of big decisions and wondering what to do
and what your wishes might be. Because they don't know. I think it's better they know, and then they
can kind of be with their own process more. I know, some people prefer not to deal with their grief right
away, and they'd rather be. Some people tell me they actually prefer to be busy doing a lot of things
and all the things that have to happen. Some people get sick, you can be funny. nominally a bit busy,
probably some of you knows right? after someone dies and you've taken care of what's left, you can
be so busy. You know, it's exhausting. You hardly even know what you think and feel because you're
just, you know, taking care of so many relatives come out of town and friends, this and that. So, you
know, there are practical things to do. And some of the impure A lot of you know these things. And I
want to just mention a few of them. There are great books on this topic, it talks about all the different
practical things and all kinds of things. And I was hoping this kind of class is mostly focused on
particular things that Buddhism had to offer, not the kind of basic common sensical things that are
available for people in general. But there are things that I think are very helpful to think about. There
was a time in California when people made living wills and then also a durable power of attorneys
document. And my understanding now from reading what Kaiser gave me Is that that has been
changed in California. Now instead of those two documents, there's something called the advanced
Health Care Directive. And those that healthcare healthcare directive is, combines the living will, and
the durable power of attorney in one document. And is is more offers more choices for you than the
earlier kind of versions said to, to provide it. But there's a lot of choices of decisions you need to make,
that you can make is very helpful. Especially when situation where you can't express your own wishes.
If you can especially express your own wishes, then the doctors will listen to what you have to say. But
if you if you're unconscious or can't speak for some reason, then to have some document that says
what your wishes are and have some persons in charge of making those decisions and helping those
making those decisions through these documents is very, very helpful. And I'm going to go through a
list Kind of just list some of the things that you might want to think about, personally, with the idea that
for some of you, it might be a surprise to realize how many things you might have to someone might
have to decide about in the last days of someone's life. You might think, oh, anything, anything is fine.
There's a lot of interventions, medical interventions that you have some choice over. And you might
want to have some decide ahead of time. Do you want to be fed through artificially through feeding

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tubes? Do you want to get or through artificial, you know, do you want the tubes down, you're down down your throat or tubes in your stomach or whatever way they do it. You want mechanical support for your breathing? You want CPR. And some people will, you know, very clearly say no CPR, the heart stops. And sometimes they have, you know, they write that on the chart above the bed or something so the nurses know that Oh, okay. They're not going to do anything massive. Sit here. How do you feel about blood transfusions and using other kind of blood products? Do you want dialysis if your kidney fails? Do you want the antibiotics? You know, and in what circumstances do you want these things? You know, you should specify if there's some hope that you might survive and get well, then please maintain it do these things. If you know there's no hope, and you know, you're dying, then you want some of them in order to maintain the quality of your life. So there's kind of a more gradual, kind of more pleasant and more comfortable quality of life in the last moments as you die last minutes or days, or do you just want to let nature take its course and just not have any interventions at all? Do you want to be you want any life support treatment at all? And so what circumstances would you want such treatment

What do you do if you're in a coma? And you're not expected to wake up or recover from the coma? Do you have wishes around that? Do you, you know, say it's been a few months now or a certain length of time, and no one expects you to ever recover. I mean, there are occasionally people who recover after many years, and stories have been known to happen. But the doctors basically think you're in a coma and maybe have brain damage, you're not going to die, you know, they have maybe as long as they keep feeding you with feeding tubes, or as long as they keep you in a breathing machine or whatever it may be live for many, many years that way. Do you want that? Do you want that for yourself? Do you want that for your loved ones? Is that or would you rather not make a decision now that then other people make the decision later, it can be agonizing for surviving relatives, to have to face this issue about what to do about a loved one who's in a coma. And the doctor says you know, this person has brain damage. They're not going to die. Unless we you know, stop feeding them and so agonizing and families get split Split up sometimes about, you know, decisions around this. So if you could make those decision ahead of time they could know and it can be helpful if you have severe brain damage to the point that you can't speak, and also can recognize the people around you, what would you want them to stay alive at all costs? So would you like to quietly go out then? What is your What is your choice? You want to see receive life support treatment, or medical treatments at whatever financial cost to your own estate? Or to the finances of your relatives? Is there a financial cap that the after, which is not worthwhile and I'm dying anyway. I'm going to die within a few month or week or some days. And, you know, at some point, if you have insurance, I suppose you people don't worry about Don't worry about this too much. But there can be financial decisions that come into play many years ago, 30 years ago I met this guy who lived in a commune little rural commune in Oregon. And he was the first person who ever told me that he had a ceiling and how much money he wants to spend for his to stay alive. And he said back then that if it costs more than $10,000 to keep him alive, then he didn't want to be kept alive. Now $10,000 and go very far anymore doctors but but that was really impressed by this guy had thought about this. And he felt that his that his his argument was that anything more than that was taxed. Other people taxed the environment
taxed the whole world too much, and it wasn't worth it. That was his decision. And do you have such a thing? You have some thoughts around financial limit? And then what instructions do you have for pain management? Again, for Buddhists, this is particularly in Because you want to try to stay as conscious as you can.

And if you're not able to make the choices because you can't speak anymore, then are you leave instructions behind about how much pain medication that you want to be given. Sometimes people can get a sense that the person is in a coma or kind of unconscious. I'm still distressed because you seem to be in pain. And you want to be left alone not have any pain medication, even when you show show signs of distress. Do deal on your own with what's going on there. Or do you want pain medication to you know, to settle you out? So are you prepared to endure a certain degree of pain in favor of maintaining mental clarity? If it seems that you're in pain while in a coma? Do you want pain medication? And if so, how much do you want other kinds of medication, medication or medication for depression for shortness of breath hallucinations. Do you want that kind of that you want that? Or do you want to be left alone? let nature take its course. And then you know, I think the other thing is what are your wishes are on organ donations, you know if you have any wishes along those lines

so those are kind of huge so you can get legal documents and at some point I'm putting, I'm trying to break a little manual for center here so people can have resources for themselves and I'll put some of these things but you know, if you have cars or cars or just ups these things, and these other places this this has various ways of getting this document that can be filled out and instructions on what to do. And I encourage you to take this and yes,

no charge for it. Just make a small donation.

So that, so I encourage people to do that. The other thing is, so those are kind of the more bigger practical questions. And there's more specific instructions that you have that you want to give people for your dying. And again, this can be very helpful to have that in written form, or at least certainly tell someone about it. For example, where do you wish to die? You have a choice in preference, where you wish you wish to die. And that can be very specific. You know, you might say, well, I want to if it's possible, I want to die at home. But then you might say we're in your home, you want to die. Some people further bedroom perhaps, or some people might want to die in their living room or they might have some, you know, you might have their garden you know, I don't know, I never heard that. But I can imagine someone saying wheeled me out to the garden. And, and so do you have any particular wishes that you have about where you want to die? And probably should specify that you don't want to you don't want to die in intensive care if at all cost intensive care tends to be a very busy place. And if there's a choice for moving someone who's dying away from intensive care to a quieter room, please talk to the doctors and server to the hospital and try to make that happen. It's really helpful to create a peaceful environment as much as you can for the person who's dying and sometimes
intensive care is not the place where that so where do you want to die? Who if anyone do you want to be present when you die? You might have your own you might have preferences around that. I know some people prefer to die alone. And so you know to give some instructions around that, you know, if it looks like a right you know, coming up to the last minutes I'd like to have some time quiet time or I like to be alone. Some people seem to die when they're left alone. And it seems kind of out of choice, you know, people go off to make a cup of tea and they come back and the person is dead. And it seems perhaps that, you know, it was easier to let go when no one was there. Who do you want to be notified? If you're a dying if you don't have the opportunity to notify people who should be notified and have a list of that in some place, so that people who are surviving don't have to be stretching their minds thinking about who would that person want, and there might be people they wouldn't think about. For example, you know, if you're the only Buddhist you know, in your family and your extended family, and you're kind of a closet Buddhists at that, and, and but for you, it'd be really valuable to have some of your Buddhist friends there or to have a Buddhist teacher present. It wouldn't have occurred maybe to your family to have to have such a person come unless you specified ahead of time. It's it's really important for me to have this person come There's one person in our Sangha who has clearly written instructions that when she dies, she's in a nursing home that most people know this, that I'm supposed to be notified. They have my phone numbers and, and when she dies, I'm supposed to be called right away or just or while she's dying and you know that's going on. And because she wants me to come and know whether I can be there while she's dying, she she would like me to be there as she dies. If I can't get there in time, she would like me to be there with her body after she dies. Kind of attend to it for a little bit. There's instructions she has about you know, if I die and you know, in hospital or somewhere, please leave my body alone. It's like y'all can get there. That's what she says.

What do you want done while you're dying? So I mean, very spiritually, kind of practice wise. Say that you can't talk anymore. You can't express your wishes. You want people to be reading certain places. passages, poems, loving kindness discourse, passages from Tibetan Book of the Dead or some kind of passages that you that they're helpful for you something is inspiring something that's meaningful for you. It can be very helpful to have selected some passages to be read or book to be read or something while you're dying, not just for your own sake, but sometimes it can be helpful for your loved ones, because they have something to do. And it makes it a lot easier. They feel like they have something to do rather than sitting there, you know, wondering what they should do to sit quietly, whatever, giving them some sense of meaning and purpose is helpful. It helps you in return, because they're quieter, more settled, and, and so you know, selecting readings ahead of time, perhaps you'd like some guided meditations, and maybe there's specific ones that you'd like to do. And there's various places you get guided meditations from. Some of them are specifically have to do with death and dying. And so you can have those being Read tier two you are told to you or a teacher or somebody can come and do guided meditations. Do you want chanting, he wants me to come into chanting or do some Buddhist rituals? Would you like someone to come like me to come for example, and perform refuge ceremony for you? This is one of the spiritual things that people do preparing for dying is the direct take refuge to do refuge ceremony. And I've done that at people's deathbed come to them and then done the refuge ceremony in the chanting. But also if people are in a coma or
unconscious or semi conscious, to give instructions you'd like to do that. If I'm invited in to someone's home or some situation where someone's dying and they're unconscious, and I know them from the Sangha here. I would chat to the refugees for them with them. That's one of the things I would do. Kind of pretty pretty automatically. And hopefully that's okay with both you and Mostly become concerned about you, does that be okay for other people?

Do you want people meditation around you? You know, what would you like to happen? You want some music to be played? Do you want silence? Do you want, you know, a Buddha image nearby? You want to have, you know, just your What are your wishes. So to specify, I think that out ahead of time, and that's a very, very powerful because it really makes your own death really much more real for you to plan out what would you want what's important for you? And it helps you kind of clarify what is of great value to you. What is your great existential value, what's a great, great value to you, at this very important juncture in your life when you're dying? It's a great reflection to do

Oh, so you know the, It's often said, you know, dying can be a form of letting go it's kind of letting go that happens. The implications of the Buddhist theory or idea of rebirth is that dying doesn't mean that you are able to let go completely. It's because you don't let go completely that you get you get reborn If you're still clinging, that's the it's the force of clinging, that causes an expert to happen. If there's no clinging no attachment, there would be no fuel, there'd be no cause no condition for further birth. So what this implies then is that it means that dying itself is not doesn't like doesn't involve letting go of everything. And so, practicing letting go and having other people encourage you to let go as you're dying can be very helpful. So, you know, have someone come to your bedside. And even if you're, you know, unconscious or removed yourself, your senses have drawn you in and you're not really tuned into the world around you. Maybe you want to have someone come and give instructions and letting go. It's one of the things I would do if someone was in the last moments or minutes or their death or last period of their life, and even if they say that you couldn't communicate with them so much anymore. I would try to Intuit as best I could, where the person was at what was going on with the person, and whether I thought it was appropriate to actually then give instructions to the person, encourage the person guide that person in letting go. And in the final moment, even if even if someone's in a coma, I believe that the words can get through and

So it's one of the things I would do if someone was dying.

So what's the Buddhist view on the moment of death? You know, as many of you are somewhat familiar with in Tibetan Buddhism, there's an intermediate period. So between your final your final moment of this life when you die and the next birth in two Theravada Buddhism has a tendency, there is much more to believe that rebirth happens instantaneously. As soon as you die, then you're going to get reborn somewhere else, or almost instantaneously. There's not like a long Intermediate Period. However, the important issue is when is the moment of death. And I'm not an expert on this. I don't
feel like I know for sure, maybe no one really knows when the exact moment of death is. There's no other medical definitions of when death occurs. But just as the cause a person has stopped breathing, and you said, Oh, that's the last breath the person has not breathing anymore. That's in Theravada Buddhism is not the definition of death. definition is when final breath occurs. When there's no longer any temperature in the body, when all the body temperature has kind of dissipated and body's cold, and that can happen slowly over different parts of your body, sometimes it just has maybe the last two releases heat. And so what this implies to me is that you, I don't really know exactly how long or when exactly death occurs, there is a transition period time. So I want to be very careful that I don't take the first sign so this person has died as being this is when the person has actually died. This is when the person is no longer able to listen to instructions or hear go through their process. So I would want to be very peaceful, very careful about that time after the last breath and keep the room very quiet and very peaceful. Try not to have a lot of any talking at all. If someone is grieving, or wants to cry, to try to do at somewhere else at that moment to try to Keep that room as quiet and peaceful as possible to help that person because they still might be going through the process of letting go. Who knows how long it is. It's often commented upon that last moment of death. I don't know if it's a universal is true, but I haven't seen that many deaths. But the last moment of death is peaceful. It's often a kind of peacefulness sets in and even though it might be difficult, up to a very last moment. There's sometimes a kind of peaceful quality that sets in into the room sense emanating from the person perhaps there's kind of a peaceful sense that happens. And when that peaceful sense happens, align yourself with that. Stay with it, be in harmony with it, stay in that peaceful mode. Maybe continue talking to the person in a way that's helping them in that process of letting go and dying. 

Certainly don't be in a hurry to call if it hoppers is dying in the hospital to call in the doctors and the nurses to tell them the person is, you know, is now dead. There's no need to hurry and tell anyone I think if a person is that, you know, death is not a medical emergency. And so, you know, keep keep things quiet and peaceful. Sometimes people have the sense that there's a presence still there. There's a consciousness is still there that kind of you kind of become somebody who's still there for a while, and at some point, it feels like it's leaving the body. Some people have a sense sense it actually leaves certain part of the body leaves the chest or the head. Some people get the sense that it's the depression kind of presence or consciousness or lifeforce. It still hovers in the room for a while. So any kind of sense like that a sense of palpable peace in the room or in the body sense of presence that's there still, you want to try to be one of the reasons to meditate after person has died like that. That is try to stay tuned in to the subtle cues, subtle sensations, subtle perceptions you might have, but what's going on there at that time, so you maybe can be supportive or be aligned in that process at some point, and maybe have a more definitive sense of the person now really dead presence has gone pieces quality, the pieces change, perhaps at some point, maybe you want to start attending to the body. What if there's a peaceful period right afterwards that you feel a sense of presence still there? It's best it's said often it's best not to touch the body. Because if the if the dying process is slow process, if it goes beyond for a few minutes or something beyond the period of the last breath, then
you don’t want to disturb the person. You want to let you serve the process that's going on. So you
don’t want to touch the body because that said, you know, might disturb I don't know if that's true, but
that's what it said.

I think I my my understanding is under normal circumstances rigor mortis takes it sets in around after
about two hours. And so if you want to do something with a body that involves moving it, it's good to
do something for those first two hours like if you want to dress the body into some respectable nice
clothes and seem appropriate, it's usually best to to put on something it's very lightweight the cool
because of the decay process so that you keep things cool. Or you just put a light cloth over the
person

Some people who prefer to have the eyes shut, and I've tried sometimes closing the eyes and holding
my hands over the eyes for a while and I've never had any luck with that. And no one ever told me this
until recently I read about it. So I don't have an experience with this is use tape, tape the eyes down.
Same anybody done that? Anybody would take over the eyes. Yeah, you don't have the hospice and
just scotch tape,
special tape that comes in the back

and take the teeth out before we
take them out I think pretty sure there it is to stay in. Because once once you can worsen, you won't
get them back in again

if it's important to you

and then how long do you keep the tape on? When I see it is a bit strange to me all these loved ones
around and putting flowers around the head and there Sitting meditating this tape is there and there’s
also this thing of tie I haven't done this either but I know about this technique of using a scarf and tying
up their their jaw so they're closer mouse's to stay open because it looks nicer with the mouth closed
looks more dignified. So people sometimes and it
dressed in his golf clothes so I'm

sure when I was eight or nine respected that way she does so

as I thought it was but after the nurse and I put the clothes on her chin was
was open so just cut a little washcloth button the collar up and there was enough foot underneath the chin, you know, kept his mouth shut. Put his glasses on, because we're kind of rolling around Yeah, we got the blood more circulating.

Okay. Oh, you don't wait they mean something. So point it's fine to touch the body. The gist is this To this nebulous, uncertain period of time, when you think that dying is still happening, that is beyond maybe the last breath. Mean, so a lot of you probably will say, well, that last breath means first is really dead. But my sense, my Buddhist sense, is that you don't really know for sure what the process is what's really going on. And so you want to, you know, try to Intuit or sense or feel, you know, beyond that last breath, however long it seems like respect, respect, respectful amount of time to leave the body alone, let some process go on. As long as you send some presence in the room, perhaps, maybe you can don't touch the body. At some point, you feel like now it's time or now it's okay. Or you feel like enough time has gone by. And my own sense is not so long. You know, it's not like, you know, so, for me, you know, it's a matter of, I don't know what it is, I mean, I felt different things. Yeah.

is really, really important because we didn't have that with my mother. And so in To where they live, they have to start doing all these valiant means. And it looked at them with or relatives. She she was dead like out there. But it looked like a scene of Mayhem in some it just, you know this to download all this straps and so on and it was very was actually very disturbing. Yeah, it was the only again, that was disturbing. The other ones are just no. So I really encourage people to do that make sure they're artists, preferably before you're ready to go, it's easier time to really get all that squared away. So that then any institution or whatever, doesn't do these things as they have to do.

Yeah, so I know there's some Buddhists that I have all kinds of ideas about, you know, don't do an organ donation until there's been a transfer of consciousness and have a ritual for doing like Tibetan Buddhism, the POA in tera On Buddhism, they don't have these elaborate understandings of this process of transference of consciousness and rituals and all that you can do. It's much turbine, but it tends to be much tends to be much more simple and all these processes but so in that case in Tibetan Buddhism, you know, it's pretty quickly. But I think the idea is that if a person wants to donate the Buddhist view, I would argue, is that if a person wants to donate an organ, or eliminate their organs, it's an act of generosity. It's a good deed. And, and so if that's what the person does is doing is wonderful, wholesome thing that do it as soon as it makes sense. Maybe let that be a couple of minutes of time just to look after the last breath. What some respectful time go by don't just rush the person off not only for the person who's died sake, but also for the sake of loved ones who are there that chance to be with that. I don't know the procedures for donations and how quickly it has to be And, and I'm sure the quicker the better. But my sister got a kidney last year. And she knew she was going to get the kidney from this person before the person died because the person was in a, I think a coma or, and the family was deciding to get said decided to do remove life support systems from the person. And so the person was really alive and my sister knew she had to, you know, get ready to go to the hospital. And so now circumstances I don't know whether, you know, I don't know, you know, we
know whether they have them on the operating table when they when they remove life support and just, you know, done right away or whether the family’s there quietly on the bed and, and I don't know, I don't know how that's done. I'm sure the family's wishes count for something.

Position

It has to be very carefully orchestrated.

And in many cases,

prepare for

something that happens.

Yeah. So as long as you believe you have to, you know if that's the wish of the person or your wish or something, I don't see any spiritual problem myself with the process of doing that. I don't know. I don't know, return hard to know that the channels and byways of karma and, you know, spiritual processing and all that, especially that moment, but my sense is that if that's what the person's wishes are, it's a wonderful wholesome, it's a helpful for the help of the person who is dying in whatever process they're going through after their death. To have done this wonderful thing, very powerful, generous thing to do to make an organ donation. And so it should be done following the medical pretty much the medical directions as much as you can. If there's some if it's possible to leave the body alone for a couple of minutes or with the family with the body for a couple of minutes. It's I think it's much better for everyone concerned. But the wishes of the doctor I think should take precedent because the person who's donating the organs, I'm sure they want to have the best job as possible. Right. They want to be successful. Yes.

Call organ harvesting. And I think they take them away.

They take

d they do the operation before you get

there. I don't know enough about this. Possibly. Yeah.

I am

investigated in about two years ago and discovered that it is Not very, very well, kind of doesn't seem to be the central place that you express those wishes that can quote them appropriately. And I know that most people in this room know that you can attach something to the back of your driver's license,
but you're not necessarily going to be next to that piece of paper right at the moment where it matters. And so, I would encourage you to tell everybody that you know exactly what you want. Fill something out and give it to them again the next year when you see them and remind them,

make sure you really know about it. Investing, tell them specifically that you want to do that. Nobody's going to ask you, despite what the IRS says

that encourages, it doesn't happen that way. And I've also spoken to friends who tell me that it's a serious, serious problem because there are waiting lists of people We desperately need people that don't know how important it is for them. Yes

durable power of attorney for health care.

I was advised very smartly that when you fill that out and you specify what you'd like to have done, that you choose very carefully who it is you'd like to have.

Take care of those wishes for you. Because at the time of death

Well, if your family is anything like my family, there can be some arguments about how things are going to go down.

And also, I think

It's hard to say for a spouse, it could be at the time of death to really follow through on turning off machines and things like that. And it's important that you find somebody who is really willing to honor that for you no matter what,

and maybe has the strength also to stand up to other people. Exactly. And, yes,
I'm going to say that there are some cases no matter what someone would like to have done with their body, that there are many cases especially with more cancers, that what you wish cannot be done, because the disease also reminds me that if a person dies at home, for example, that you know, the ideal thing is to is to Leave the body alone. For a while, I was trained in the Zen tradition where there was a custom of leaving the body alone for three days. After that, it was considered very important to leave it alone for just three days. And I don't know whether it's helpful for the person who died, the body is left there for three days before the argument is there still in process or in the Bardo kind of stage and just leave it alone for three days, if you can, and sometimes in Zen center, we would get ice, dry ice, I think it was an epic device and dry ice, It was hard to remember it was quite something to see, you know, we would go sit with a body 24 hours a day after died in various stages of getting bloated and this one woman a member who's quite quite interesting to watch the changes. And so I don't have any strong feelings about you know how useful or not useful it is. But it might be useful for the people who serve who, who survive who you know, family, you might want to like that you might like to have it feel it's respectful for the person To keep them there for a while you might feel it's helpful for the process of coming to terms with it. And people from out of town have a chance to come and see the body before it goes away. Or that's a choice that you have to make, you know, how long do you want to keep the body at home, if the person dies at home, and, and it's not a medical emergency, then it's, you know, you're probably better off not calling anybody like medical person, like a coroner or 911 or, you know, even the doctor just just let it be, you know, that that can come later. And if you end up calling 911 for example, you might find all the fire department at your door ready to bursting in with you know, you're all sitting there very serenely with your your, your loved one you have candles going and flowers and you know and suddenly these, you know, these, you know, they come in with equipment you know and burst in and so you got to be careful you know, so you know, who you call and what you call before so you can kind of keep the atmosphere keep things intact for as long as possible. The if it is a medical emergency, it means to say that someone has a heart attack and you call 911. And they come and the person can't be revived.

Then

I believe you pretty much have to let them take the body to the coroner's office. And you don't have much choice at that point. No, there's a friend of mine named Daniel Barnes has been trying to train in paramedics, and firefighters things like that, and trade counties and get counties to change their procedures so that when someone dies definitively dies at home that they can just be to be left there when the medics come by I don't know locally what exactly the rules are. But partly they need to if it's if it's not clear why a person has died, then they have to go and get a autopsy done. Once you have death certificate on then you can do anything, anything. Once you have a death certificate, there's a

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lot of freedom that you have much more than you probably imagine what you can do with the body. And don't let any hospital or

or

mortuary, tell you otherwise. Once you have the death certificate, you can go in San Mateo County, you can go to the Department of vital statistics and get a permit to transport the body yourself if you'd like to if you think that's something you'd like to do, and some people prefer to do that themselves. For example, if it's a child who has died a young child you might want actually prefer to carry the body home you know, have it to really close by rather than rather than you know, have it be more personally and unknown. Some I knew some I met someone recently who that's what she did with her young daughter who died. Carrier home and you can also in cemetery account You can actually bury someone on your own property. But you have to get the money. You have to get the property owners notarized permission. But you can get a permit to do that. You can also you're supposed to get a permit for dispersing the ashes if that's what you've done. And you go to I guess you go to the biostatistics office and you get this

dispersing the ashes.

If the person is making arrangements ahead of time, like the crematory Yeah, and this was my experience couple months ago, is that they've said the final resting place there's this spot for it on the desk for the final resting place will be and in this case, it was in Hawaii. So the ashes we had no trouble at all transporting ashes and the legality of getting permission or going through. Everything was dispersed by just having that on the dusters the final resting place.

Travel state. I see.

Yeah. So as I'm not so familiar with this part, but yeah, So but so there's a lot you can do. And you don't have to, you know, you can you can and so don't you know, if you have your own wishes or if the person had to hit his or her wishes, assume that can be done before someone you know, can call the appropriate people called in San Mateo County, you call the biostatistics person and they'll tell you what can can and can't be done and that's probably enough for today. Yes.

There are a lot of different customs, I mean, many different Buddhist traditions about what to do with the body. There's a kind of a General generalized view that Buddhists do cremations is kind of general. But that's not necessarily always the case. And even in Thailand, certain people get cremated and some people don't. Often depending on the kind of death it's been, if it's a suicide, for example, then sometimes don't get cremated or the cremation is put off for some time. But generally kind of
general sense is that cremation is the Buddhist way. But there's burial is fine. A lot of Buddhist use burials. A lot of Buddhists. You know, in Tibet, there's just you know, you sky burial or you leave the body out there and the cliff stops for the vultures to eat, and a lot of different ways of doing it. And there's nothing wrong with embalming. However, embalming has a lot of toxins in it. And I read recently, maybe you read it in the Chronicle this last few days. There was an article about this, that in there if the claim was vomit, fluids are the toxic to the environment. And so it's not really the best thing to do. The article also claim that cremating is toxic to the environment, because our bodies have a lot of lead in them, you know, probably more than we'd like to admit, and lead and mercury and other things like that. And so I guess there's a movement now to get the crematoriums to have scrubbers on their smokestacks so that they clean these things out. But you know, releasing all this stuff, the environment to the air. And so this article in The Chronicle last week, argued that I was arguing for green burials and, and they suggested that you want to be buried without being involved in the ground. And in their way their way was. There was suggesting this happened in California. It hasn't happened isn't in South Carolina. So but someone bought like 1000 acres to be a nature preserve. And then they funded the nature preserve that buying this to save this land by using 200 day As a place to bury people and bury people green, where it means that there's no embalming and use a simplest kind of pine or cardboard coffin to bury people. And all you do is you put a like, you don't put a tombstone over the person, you'd put a, like, you know, a nice rock or something. And so it's kind of just you helping preserve nature there. And I think that's very much in the spirit of Buddhism. Again, Buddha Dasa was a great Thai teacher, his instructions for what he died, which were not followed, followed by his loyal students was he said, just take my body and prop it up against a tree in the woods, and just let it decay let nature take its course. And then other habit that I know I said, who's still alive said that I don't care what happens my body I just want to be wherever it happens, just let it happen quickly, just take it and burn it and you know, and if they want to do rituals, where it's fine We just use burn and get, you know, get it over with I don't the simpler, the better. There's a kind of sometimes a little bit in terrible on Buddhism, a kind of I don't know what the right word is a nonchalance, not bravado, but kind of a you know, this is a completely natural process, let's just do it in a natural way isn't simply and straightforward as you can I said make any big deal about it and that just, you know, you know, get it over with and just put, you know, put me in the woods, let me decay or whatever. And I know the terrible teachers emphasize the great value of the whole burial in the process to be as simple as possible funeral memorial service, but simplicity is a virtue in this in Theravada tradition. And you don't want to have big elaborate state funeral that they did for Buddha Dasa.

Yes, round up discussion

About conscious dynamics and you know, you didn't die. But we know especially true in the saga, the number of us will just die with a heart attack, or die asleep like person or die alone and relax and have the words to say, but apparently

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well prepare for it and get all your your everything in order. Get all these documents all your wishes in
knowing ahead of time. before you go to sleep every night, make sure that you're not holding any
grudges. And if you are, you know, resolve them, deal with them. And,

you know, you know,

so that there's no regrets. So, you know, I think that practice the best you can develop good habits of
practice, because even though that might be relatively sudden, I kind of operate with the assumption
that it's never going to be instantaneous. And so there's always going to be some moments there for
some kind of process to go on. And if there's clarity, if there's mindfulness, if there's there's a trust in
that process of letting go, that's been built up over a lifetime of practice, that maybe some of these
resources you've you've developed will be available even for those last few instances if you know if
that's what's happening. So I'm kind of, you know, hoping for the fact that even even relatively fast
deaths, there's a process going on there and hopefully, I'm prepared for that process. And I'm very
generally you know, from for my own sake, my own dying you know, if it happens, and says, You know,
I never know how people don't know how they're gonna die, but I have kind of a good feeling about
dying. I don't want to die and I feel terrible now that I have children and all that I don't want to die
anytime soon. But, but the idea of dying itself seems to me as having gone through I can remember
that it seems to me that it's, it has to be very close, very comparable. Probably the almost the same
process, as deep meditation is I feel like it's very familiar to me. I feel like it's a familiar thing. And
welcome comes something that I welcome. Because it seems so familiar and something that I feel like
a lot of comfort in a lot of possibilities for peace, in that process of letting go that happens in deep
meditation. And I'm assuming happens also, as I die. And, and my hope is that, you know, my hope is I
can stay conscious enough for that process. How conscious we are in a coma for the processes is,
you know, no one really knows how much mental processing there's going on. You know, there might
be very subtle levels of consciousness that are operating. Yeah.

I think there is a physiological process in people who die and they are endorphins being released into
your body and I have the feeling of I had so feelings that people treat incisor selves somehow right
and do not communicate and more and such The best way to die. And this he said that he have gotten
to my mother who was just about one year so that it might be different depending At what age who
died and which

processes

Yes, and you know, there's there's a lot there's a lot of really good books on this topic of death and
dying that and you know, I Written by people who understand this process much better than I do. So I
think if you're interested in this part of preparation would be to read some of these books, with layouts,
a lot of these different things. And one of the traps of that of people who you know have read Stephen
Devine and you know, or kind of learn to read about all the wonderful Buddhist teachers who have
died in meditation is to assume that the only right way or they're on their way is going to you know, basically blissful could be Grace was wonderful letting go and white light and Angel singing and just wonderful and peaceful and all these nice people around me and, and, and I think it's like he's one of these things you have to let go of is even being able to plan or even hope you know, even even even the hope for the good death. You know, you don't know it's a process which is outside of your control. And it's certainly part of deep spiritual life is letting go of control. So, you know, it's sometimes so difficult, very difficult. painful and, you know, I might be terrified, you know, as much as I can say with my bravado that I you know that well, it's welcoming process and I feel comfortable with the idea. I could just be deluding myself. And, you know, it could be very different. So certainly, you know, I certainly have some various general ideas of how I'd like to die. And maybe everybody has some ideas so people would prefer to die in their sleep, not to know about it.

And yeah, dying.

And I, you know, I can't I don't know much about

jack come to one conclusion. I can't do it a long time ago, but it was really brought home by my mother's brother who died about

four or five years ago. He absolutely refused. Have a few faded

and
dying this whatever it is funerals.

They will talk about that a little bit next week, the funerals memorial service and the Buddhist Buddhist versions of it and what you can do and that's part of next week.

Friday

covered carbon Prepare to die. So this Friday from 930 to 330. We have a practice day we're going to practice retreat on the theme of death and dying. So we'll do some exercises and discussions and we'll practice you know, deal with it ourselves, you know, our attitude towards our feelings towards it and I'm not sure I haven't decided exactly what to do yet, but what so thank you very much and I hope this, you know, was certainly provocative for you to think about this more deeply consider some of these issues. Thank you.