



Founded as Hospice of Wake County • 1979

The Five Invitations

Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully

ALCA-Southeast Conference

September 2019

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SIPRESS

“Don't freak out—it's just a save-the-date.”

In the United States...

	1900	2000
Age at death	46 years	78 years
Top causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Infection• Accident• Childbirth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cancer• Heart & lung disease• Stroke
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not much	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frailty or dementia• Two- four years before death... or sometimes much more



What is most important?

What type of support would you want if you were dying?

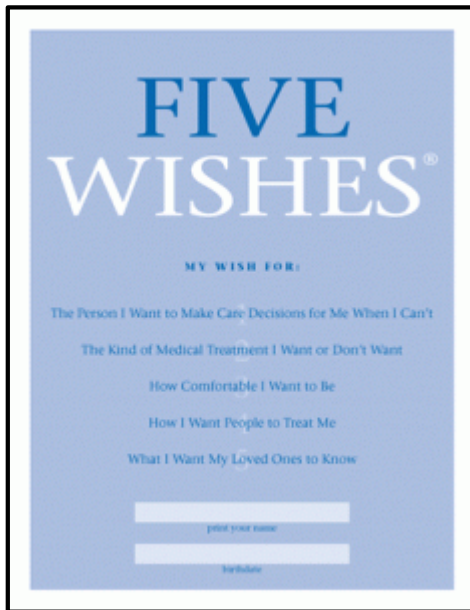
- Listen when I talk – **89%**
- Know what I want when I die – **83%**
- Know details about my illness – **79%**
- Help with chores – **78%**
- Provide transportation – **75%**



Some facts to consider...

- 90% of people say that talking with their loved ones about end-of-life care is important

... only 27% have actually done so



- 82% of people say it's important to put their wishes in writing

... only 23% have done it

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THE FIVE INVITATIONS

*Discovering What Death
Can Teach Us About Living Fully*

FRANK OSTASESKI

Foreword by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S41fhGCDX0>

What does the “medical model” teach us about death?

- It is the opposite of life
- It's an event marked by specific physiological changes
- It's “the enemy” -- so there's a battle to be fought
- Allowing someone to die is failure

**How has death
taught you?**

Lessons from death...



- Each death is unique and meaningful
- An opportunity for wisdom & healing
- Not only for the dying, but for those who live on
- A chance to connect to the heart and soul of others
- A compass, a way of traveling an unknown road to a desired destination

The Five Invitations are ...

- About life on the “edge”
- About all of life
- The “space” between the worlds
- A chance to sit at the table of unknowing
- To wonder together
- To become wise
- Invites you to “grow your eyes”

The First Invitation: **Don't Wait**



“Instead of pinning our hopes on a better future, we **focus on the present** and being grateful for what we have right in front of us right now. “

The Second Invitation: Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing

“In welcoming everything, we don’t have to **like** what is arising. It’s actually not our job to approve or disapprove. The word ‘welcome’ confronts us; it asks us to temporarily suspend our usual rush to judgement and to simply be open to what is happening.”



Compassionate Presence

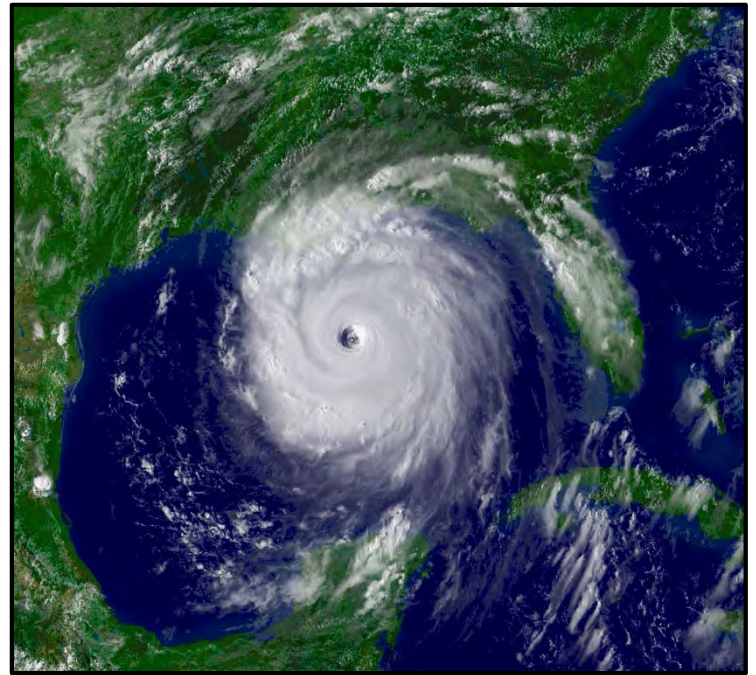


<https://youtu.be/z1rA4kiHeXA>

The Third Invitation: Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience

“To be whole, we need to include, accept and connect all parts of ourselves.

Wholeness does not mean perfection. It means no part left out.”



The Third Invitation: Bring Your Whole Self To the Experience

- When we **help**,
we see life as weak
- When we **fix**,
we see life as broken
- When we **serve**,
we see life as whole



The Fourth Invitation:

Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things

“We often think of rest as something that will come to us when everything else in our lives is complete: At the end of the day when we take a bath; once we go on vacation, or get through all our to-do lists.”



Exercise

The Fifth Invitation: **Cultivate Don't Know Mind**



“Don't know mind is one characterized by curiosity, surprise, and wonder. It is receptive, ready to meet whatever shows up as it is.”

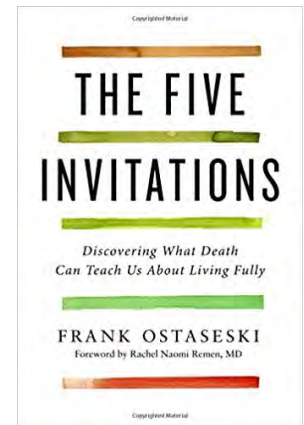
Questions and Comments

Additional Resources

1. **Handout** -- The Five Invitations: Points to Ponder
2. **Website:** www.fiveinvitations.com

Additional reading/ online courses:

- Living life more fully
- Being a mindful healthcare professional
- Be a compassionate companion to the dying
- Help facing loss, or living with illness



3. **Read the book!**
4. **G.R.A.C.E. Model:** <https://www.upaya.org/social-action/grace/>