

## SUGGESTED READINGS ON *FACING END OF LIFE: EMBRACING OUR MORTALITY*

Bien, Peter. ***On Retiring to Kendal (and Beyond): A Literary Excursion***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 368, 2003.

The author employs poetry and literature to reflect on the meaning of retirement and whether death is an unmitigated calamity. He concludes it is not better to live forever, and that strangely, death enhances life, rather than negating it.

Bischoff, Michael. ***The Healing Power of Stories***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 454, 2018.

The author writes movingly about his experience of living with aggressive brain cancer and his experiment of listening to and telling stories of brokenness and healing. Applying the Quaker practice of listening deeply, he shares lessons learned while telling stories and helping others to tell their stories, and the ways he has been broken open and pulled toward wholeness in the process.

Butler, Katy. ***The Art of Dying Well: A Practical Guide to a Good End of Life***. Scribner, An Imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2019.

A reassuring and thoroughly researched guide to maintaining a high quality of life—from resilient old age to the first inklings of a serious illness to the final breath. “Belongs on the same shelf as Atul Gawande’s best-selling *Being Mortal*”—*The Washington Post*

Dass, Ram. ***Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying***. Riverhead Books, 2000. **(BFM Library)**

Dass, a former Harvard psychologist turned spiritual guide, shares a positive view of aging that seeks to embrace the suffering that accompanies it. Building on years of teaching others how to grow old with wisdom, and the stroke he suffered in 1997, he offers a perspective on disease and aging that focuses on spiritual growth and healing rather than a return to the way things were.

Garfield, Charles, PhD. ***Our Wisdom Years: Growing Older with Joy, Fulfillment, Resilience, and No Regrets***. Central Recovery Press, 2020.

The author guides readers through nine tasks that can transform the struggles of aging, bringing fulfillment, joy, and serenity by letting our souls lead the way. Drawing on understandings that come from both his work as a psychologist and from volunteering with those at the end of life, Garfield offers a fresh, uplifting vision of the wholeness that awaits us.

Gawande, Atul, M.D. ***Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End***. Picador, 2017.

The author, a practicing surgeon, fearlessly reveals the ultimate limitations and failures of modern medicine as life draws to a close. Riveting, honest, and humane, *Being Mortal* shows how the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life—all the way to the very end. Named a Best Book of the Year by *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times Book Review*, NPR, and *Chicago Tribune*, this book has quickly become a classic.

Levine, Stephen. ***Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying***. Anchor Books, 1982.

A classic book by a poet and teacher who has worked extensively with Ram Dass and Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, it shows the reader how to participate fully in life as the perfect preparation for whatever may come next, be it sorrow or joy, loss or gain, death or a new wonderment at life.

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\_\_\_\_\_. ***A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as if it Were your Last***. Three Rivers Press, New York, 1997.

An account of the year the author spent living as if it were the only one left. Shows how such immediacy radically changes one's view of the world and forces us to examine our priorities.

Lyman, Mary Ely. ***Death and the Christian Answer***, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 107, 1960

A professor of religion and ordained minister believes the Christian faith helps us to accept and not be crushed by life's ultimate denial.

Morrison, Mary Chase. ***Without Nightfall upon the Spirit***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 311, 1993  
Reflections on aging, including its physical, spiritual, and religious effects, by the 83-year-old author.

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\_\_\_\_\_. ***Gift of Days***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 364, 2003.

In this moving pamphlet the author writes: "Maybe this is the death I was desiring so intensely during my illness – this death of the separate spinning mind as it merges into the intense life of the present moment. If so, then Yes, there's more. Much more. ... My work is to be ready to receive it when it comes as I would a visit from an old friend."

Murphy, Carol R. ***The Valley of the Shadow***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 184, 1972

Reflections on the ultimate problem of death and its meaning.

Ostaseski, Frank. ***The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully***. Flatiron Books, 2017.

The cofounder of the Zen Hospice Project and pioneer behind the compassionate care movement shares an inspiring exploration of the lessons dying has to offer about living a fulfilling life. A powerful and inspiring exploration of the essential wisdom dying has to impart to all of us.

Ostrom, Warren. ***In God We Die***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 385, 2006 (***BFM Library***)

The author, who has worked closely with the aging and dying for over two decades, offers his deeply considered insights on the end of life, as well as his reflections on the role of spirituality in how we face death, and guidance for finding clarity in our choices about our own final path.

Shetter, William Z. ***Some Thoughts on Becoming Eighty-Five***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 418, 2012.

The experience of long life and spiritual fruits of aging are the focus of this meditative walk through eighty-five years of William Shetter's life experience: among Friends, in relationship, as an ongoing seeker and keen observer of the world.

Singh, Kathleen Dowling. ***The Grace in Dying: A Message of Hope, Comfort, and Spiritual Transformation***. HarperCollins, 2000.

Called "the new Kubler-Ross," the author draws on her extensive experience and training in transpersonal psychology, various spiritual traditions, and with dying patients to shed light on the intimate relationship and essential unity of dying, contemplative practice, and spiritual growth.

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\_\_\_\_\_. ***The Grace in Aging: Awaken As You Grow Older***. Wisdom Publications, 2014.

Offers guidelines for older individuals of any wisdom tradition who wish to awaken before they die. Encouraging, inspiring, and practical, *The Grace in Aging* invites all those who have ever experienced spiritual longing to awaken in their twilight years. The author suggests ways to transform the predictable sufferings of aging into opportunities for growth in clarity, love, compassion, and peace.

Smith, Bradford. ***Dear Gift of Life: A Man's Encounter with Death***, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 142, 1965.

The author wrote this while dying of cancer, facing his own mortality.

Williams-Murphy, Monica, and Murphy, Kristian. ***It's OK To Die***. Published by the authors & MKN, 2011.

Filled with stories from the authors' emergency room experiences illustrating how most Americans are completely unprepared for death. In response, the authors have created a unique guide urging everyone to prepare in advance, to assure their own peace and to prevent the suffering of their loved ones.

Yungblut, John R. ***On Hallowing One's Diminishments***. Pendle Hill Pamphlet 292, 1990. ***(BFM Library)***

A lifelong student of mysticism shares the experience of contemplative prayer in facing many forms of diminishment: birth defects, natural disasters, aging, and death itself.

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\_\_\_\_\_. ***For That Solitary Individual: an Octogenarian's Counsel on Living and Dying***, Pendle Hill Pamphlet 316, 1994.

The author defines three activities of evolution: differentiation, interiority, and communion. He counsels each person to seek a contemplative life to nurture these activities.