

A GOOD DEATH – MODULE ONE: Assessing Your Values, Current Status and Where You'd Like to Be

Pulling from the medieval idea of a good death and Schneidman's criteria, there are areas we can control and those we cannot. Leaving aside the areas we have less control over (manner of death, age of death). Which of the following areas are most important to you? Rank them with 5 being the very important, 1 being less important.

Paperwork and Possessions

- Having legal paperwork in order – wills and trusts
- Having a funeral plan
- Pre-paying for a funeral
- Having a home that contains only things that bring you joy and value; no extraneous clutter

Medical Planning

- Having medical documentation in order – health care proxy/advance directive
- Having had conversations with those closest to about the values which drive your medical choices

Legacy

- Creating an ethical will
- Resolving open conflicts
- Writing your own obituary
- Making any bequests – now or later

What areas did you rank 4 or 5 and why? List them here:

What areas were less important? Why?

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1. Consider a person you've lost or a celebrity whose death resonated with you as a "good death" according to Schneidman's criteria. Why did you feel this way? Be specific about the ways that person's life and death embodied these qualities.

2. As you begin to think about taking steps towards your own "good death," what obstacles – internal or external – do you think might arise for you? (examples: fear, complacency, uncertainty, etc.)

3. What strategies do you think would help you navigate and overcome these obstacles?