

The Gift of Relationship at the End of Life

Tools and Perspectives for Dancing with our Friends and Family in the Final Season of Life
with Hospice Chaplain Patrick Davis, MA, HB

JEAN'S FINAL WORDS...

Outcome: Building confidence in responding to families facing the death of a loved one.

Three Guiding Principles: Being Clear to Support Others

#1. Maturing into our own Grief Work Empowers us to be more Present

#2. Flip WHO is making the contribution: Humility--We are not the "experts." See the Christ in others. They are on a heroic journey. People hold their own answers.

#3. Our Focus is a Ministry of Presence: As a spiritual community we may all participate in the three spiritual tasks of hospice: *Offering Comfort, Celebrating a Life and Grieving Well*. In addressing emotional/spiritual needs, there is nothing to do, fix or figure out—just BE with.

(Note: The many tasks of advanced care planning (while important) are not our focus today. Addressing medical needs, caregiving resources and the resources of time and money can be addressed via tools like *The Five Wishes* and holding proactive conversations with family, friends and your team of legal, medical and financial experts.)

INQUIRY: TELL ABOUT A TIME WHEN BEING WITH SOMEONE WHO WAS DYING

CONTRIBUTED TO YOU. Follow-Up Inquiry: IN LIGHT OF THESE STORIES, WHAT ARE YOUR BUILDS ON THESE GUIDING PRINCIPLES?

Three Skill Sets We Practice Today: Some Ways to Be Present...

- 1) SLOW Down, Be Present and Hold a Hand: Pausing Often and being in Quietude.
Offer a Comforting Touch when this is a respectful option. (See Side 2)
(Balance Being & Doing)
- 2) Hold Gentle Conversations & Ask Humble Questions: Creating a space of mutual discernment by being Curious and in Awe (Holding Inquiry) (Balance Being Both Gentle & Candid)
 - ✓ Quietude; Authentic Acknowledgement and Appreciation. Reflect back their own words and the felt sense of what you notice in their eyes, face and body.
(See Premise #2)
 - ✓ "What's behind your tears?" (don't assume or project your own story/emotion.)
 - ✓ "How did you first fall in love with...?" (life review and reminiscing)
 - ✓ "How can I be helpful/supportive?" (When I faced a challenge, I found it helpful when...)
 - ✓ Others:

INQUIRY: TELL ABOUT A TIME WHEN, A QUESTION OR KEY WORDS CONTRIBUTED TO YOU...

- 3) Begin Identifying Ways A Faith Community is Uniquely Designed to support a conscious dying process: CIRCLES OF SUPPORT SIMULATION (Balance Both Individual & Community Responses)

SIDE 2: Reference on Comfort Touch

One approach for engaging the body holistically is best summarized by the **S.C.R.I.B.E.** principles and techniques of Comfort Touch® as developed by Mary Rose at www.ComfortTouch.com. Building upon this framework established within the profession of massage therapy, we offer the following tips to caregivers of all types.

Practice making “SCRIBE” your own mantra or centering prayer.

SLOW RHYTHM

- ✓ Full and Deep Breathing
- ✓ Non-Anxious Presence
- ✓ Slow Speech and Movements Soothe The Nervous System

COMFORTING INTENTION

- ✓ Come from your own place of comfort
- ✓ Ease pain, nothing to fix or cure
- ✓ See clients’ inner strength

RESPECTFUL ATTITUDE

- ✓ Pause often to assess non-verbal cues
- ✓ Ask permission
- ✓ Ask simple questions

Now that we agree on the philosophy of how to approach a client, we will guide you through practicing (or just observing) the following THREE TECHNIQUES with how to touch another person:

INTO CENTER: Deeply connect by going into the center of the part being touched. Even with light to moderate touch both the giver and receiver may experience a profound connection and deep sense of relaxation.

BROAD: Exert rhythmic pressure using the fullness of the fingers and palms together.

ENCOMPASSING: Surround the natural curves of the body. Hold the person in the space between your hands as a mothers’ womb holds her child. Hold the body in ways that contributes to a feeling of wholeness and connection.