

FREE COMPANION GUIDE

5 Conversations to Have *Before the End*

*A short guide to the conversations that matter most,
drawn from years at the bedside and from the pages of
For My Beloveds.*

KEMA WARD · DEATH & GRIEF DOULA



May you find peace, clarity, and the comfort of
knowing your wishes will be honored, your story
told, and your legacy will endure.

Most of us never have these *conversations*.

We mean to and we tell ourselves that we will, when there is more time. Then time becomes the thing we no longer have.

I am a death doula. For years I have sat at bedsides, with people in their last days and with the families who love them. I have learned what most of us only learn too late: **The conversations we did not have become the regrets that won't allow us to let go.**

You can do this alone, with a journal and a cup of something warm. You can do it across a kitchen table with someone you trust. You can do it in pieces, over months. There is no wrong pace. There is only the practice of turning toward the things we usually turn away from.

Eat the fish and spit out the bones.

With love and gratitude,

Kema

KEMA WARD, DEATH & GRIEF DOULA

A few *promises* to yourself.

Go slowly. *Pick one conversation.*

Be honest. *Arrive at the true answer.*

Let the answers change. *What you believe today is allowed to be different from what you believed five years ago, and from what you will believe five years from now.*

Bring witness if you can. *A trusted person who can hold what you say without trying to fix it. Some of these conversations are too tender to have alone.*

Write it down. *The written word survives you.*

Engaging in thoughtful planning and exploring our end-of-life wishes can create a meaningful legacy for ourselves and our loved ones.

FROM FOR MY BELOVEDS



What does a *good death* look like to you?

Most of us have never been asked. We have absorbed images from media, hospitals, and the deaths we have witnessed. We rarely sit with the question of what we would actually want.

A good death is shaped, as much as possible, by you. Where you are. Who is with you. What sounds fill the room. This conversation may seem morbid but it gives you clarity about what actually matters.

PROMPTS

- If you could choose, where would you want to be in your last days?
- Who do you want close to you, and who do you not?
- What do you want to hear, smell, see, or feel?
- What kind of medical care feels aligned with your values, and what kind does not?
- Is there anything you would want to say, write, or record while you still can?

A NOTE FROM THE BEDSIDE

Many of the people I have sat with had never told anyone what they wanted. By the time they tried to, they could not. The earlier you have this conversation, the more it can shape what actually happens.

Who do you need to *forgive*, and who do you need forgiveness from?

Forgiveness is not a feeling you wait for. It is a door you walk through, sometimes more than once, sometimes for the rest of your life.

You do not need to reconcile. You do not need the other person's apology, presence, or even their living body. Forgiveness is a thing you do for yourself first. The release belongs to you.

Some of the people I have sat with carried a single name in their chest for forty years. When they finally spoke it, something in the room shifted. Often they died lighter than they had lived.

PROMPTS

- Whose name surfaces when you read the word *forgive*?
- What would you have to release in yourself, not in them, to let it go?
- Is there anyone you owe an apology that you have not given?
- Are there any unresolved relationships or conflicts you want to address while you can?
- What would it mean to write a letter you may never send?

A NOTE FROM THE BEDSIDE

The unsent letter is one of the most powerful tools in this work. Writing it is the practice. Whether you ever send it is a separate question entirely.



CONVERSATION THREE OF FIVE

What stories must *not be lost* when you go?

Your legacy is not your possessions. It is your stories, your values, the small wisdoms you have collected and never written down. They live in you. When you go, if no one has heard them, they go too.

This is a gift you leave behind, written or recorded in your own voice, in your own words, before anyone has to imagine what you might have said.

PROMPTS

- What story from your life do you want your people to keep telling?
- What lesson did you learn the hardest way that you would not want them to have to learn the same way?
- What were you proudest of, and what were you most ashamed of, and what did each one teach you?
- What advice or guidance would you offer to your loved ones, in writing, in your own voice?
- If you could leave one paragraph for your grandchildren, what would it say?

A NOTE FROM THE BEDSIDE

Voice notes count. Letters count. A messy paragraph in a notebook counts. The form does not matter. What matters is that the story exists somewhere outside of you.



What do you need to say while you can *still say it*?

There are words we save for later because we believe later will come. Sometimes it does. Sometimes it does not. The simplest gift you can give the people you love is to not save the words.

Tell them now. Tell them the specific thing. Tell them the moment. Tell them what they did that you have never thanked them for. Tell them what you saw in them that they may not see in themselves.

PROMPTS

- Who needs to hear something specific from you, and what is the specific thing?
- Who have you never thanked for something they did not know mattered?
- Is there anything you would want to say to someone who is no longer with us?
- What words of encouragement, gratitude, or love are you carrying that have not yet been spoken?
- What would change in your life if you said one of them this week?

A NOTE FROM THE BEDSIDE

This is the conversation people most often wish they had had earlier. Almost no one regrets having said too much love. Almost everyone regrets having said too little.



What will you *leave behind* that is not a thing?

This is the conversation about ethical inheritance. The values, beliefs, practices, and small daily ways of being that you want to pass on, not as instructions but as offerings.

Your true inheritance is the way you treated the cashier, the discipline you showed when no one was watching, the prayer you whispered, the dish you cooked for grieving neighbors, the way you forgave, the way you laughed. **Name them.** Out loud. To paper. So they can be carried.

PROMPTS

- What are the principles and ideals that have guided your life?
- What practices, rituals, or daily ways of being do you want your people to keep?
- What do you hope they remember about how you loved?
- What would you want your descendants to know about who you were before they knew you?
- What blessing would you want to leave them, in your own words?

A NOTE FROM THE BEDSIDE

This is what survives. Not the things. The ways. The small repeated gestures that become a way of being. They are the real estate of your legacy.

You do not have to walk this *alone*.

Some of these doors swing open easily. Others take longer. If something here has shifted, the work continues and there is support for it.

- i. **Carpe Mortem - one-on-one death doula support.** For individuals navigating end-of-life, advance care planning, legacy work, or vigil and bedside companionship.
 - ii. **Grief support - for the living.** One-on-one grief coaching, and a six-week grief circle for those navigating loss in their own time and way.
 - iii. **For My Beloveds - the full guided journal.** A complete companion for capturing wishes, legacy, and final thoughts. Available in print.
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A FIRST STEP

Begin a *conversation with me*.

If something here is asking to be tended, I would be honored to walk with you. The first conversation is free. There is no obligation to continue.

calendly.com/unpluggedcr/15min
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*May you live with intention, love without saving it, and be
remembered the way you choose.*

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