We all deserve peace at the end of life

How can you make sure that a person you love has peace at the end of life?

Hospitals and the healthcare system offer remarkable **medical treatments** that can improve the condition and future of their patients. Those treatments, however, do not always improve the patient's situation.

For many, pursuing **more treatments** means they will end up dying in an emergency room, intensive care unit or rehabilitation unit. They'll be surrounded by machines, likely to be prodded or awakened at all hours. Not peaceful.

When you choose to **pursue peace** for a person you love, you allow time and space for comfort, support and dignity. You can bring in the services of hospice, including pain and symptom management. And you get to concentrate on quality of life and meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of the person you love and family.

If you must choose between continued/additional treatment or pursuing peace – how do you **make the best decision** for the person you love?

If you're unsure on when to choose peace, you're not alone.

At Caring House we've learned from the experiences of hundreds of families. We suggest three steps for you to take right now:

Step 1. Tackle one or more of the questions shown on the back of this page.

Step 2. Then, decide whether to pursue peace or to continue treatment.

Step 3. If you choose peace, bring in the help of an experienced and capable hospice.

Picture this:

You've chosen peace for the person you love. You've obtained hospice services for them. You've made sure they are in a place of comfort, support and dignity. You and your family spend the available time supporting and connecting with the person you love and with each other. You're comfortable and confident that you did the right thing.

The person you love has peace at the end of life.

Provided by Caring House | Torrance, CA
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Three Questions

(Tackle one or more and then return to Step 2)

A. ***Ask one or more members of the medical team:*** "Would you be surprised if [name of your loved one] died within the next three months [or 30 days]?"

Have a discussion about the answer they give. A short remaining life expectancy (three months or less) suggests it's time to make the switch to pursue peace.

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B. ***Ask one or more members of the medical team*** about remaining life expectancy if you see one or more of these signs which can be indications that a person has 30 days or less to live:

- ☐ No longer able to swallow safely.
- ☐ No longer eating or interested in eating.
- ☐ Sleeps most of the time.
- ☐ Kidney patient has stopped dialysis.
- ☐ Sees or converses with persons or pets who are not present.
- ☐ Hands, arms, feet, legs now cold, purplish or blotchy.

Have a discussion about the answer they give. A short remaining life expectancy suggests it's time to make the switch to pursue peace.

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C. Gather information about the situation. ***Ask yourself:*** If [name of your loved one] could view their situation right now, would [name of your loved one] choose continued or additional medical treatment or choose to switch to peace?

Be guided by your knowledge of the situation and by your knowledge of the person you love and their wishes and values.

(Return to Step 2)

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