
P R E S S K I T

Nikki Patton

Hospice Leader • Author • National Speaker
Caregiver • Post-Acute Care Consultant • Death and Dying Advocate

20 years in the rooms most people avoid.

always-human.com | nikkipatton.com

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS PRESS KIT

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Nikki Patton has spent 20 years training healthcare professionals to have the conversation nobody else is having — and she has been the family member in the room five times.

For media who need a fast frame: Nikki works at the intersection of end-of-life care, sales leadership, caregiving, and the policy blind spots that leave 63 million American family caregivers without adequate support. She speaks from the professional side and the personal side simultaneously — which is what makes her different from every other voice in this space.

02 SHORT BIO

Use this for podcast introductions, event programs, article bylines, and social media.

Nikki Patton is a hospice sales leader, national speaker, and the author of *Sacred Conversations: A Hospice and End of Life Planning Journal* and *See Me: The Always Human Standard for Hospice Sales, Leadership, and Presence*. She has spent 20 years building and leading hospice sales teams, growing census from 11 to 150 patients in 16 months and scaling census by 70 percent across 15 markets in 18 months. She is the founder of Always Human and has been a family caregiver to five hospice patients. She speaks, consults, and trains nationally for hospice and post-acute care organizations. always-human.com | nikkipatton.com

03 FULL BIO

Use this for conference programs, media profiles, booking pages, and grant or award nominations.

Nikki Patton has spent 20 years in the rooms most people avoid.

As a regional sales director, vice president of business development, multi-market growth strategist, and post-acute care consultant, she has built and led hospice sales teams across multiple organizations and markets. She grew census from 11 to 150 patients in 16 months, achieved 135 percent ADC growth for three consecutive years, scaled census by 70 percent across 15 markets in 18 months, and launched more than eight de novo sites, each profitable within 12 months. She led the turnaround of 37 underperforming sites, returning every one to growth by returning teams to the conversation.

She is the author of *Sacred Conversations: A Hospice and End of Life Planning Journal* — a practitioner-developed guide that gives family caregivers the language and framework for the end-of-life conversations nobody teaches them to have. She is also the author of *See Me: The Always Human Standard for Hospice Sales, Leadership, and Presence*, and the founder of *Always Human*, a platform dedicated to transforming how healthcare professionals sell, lead, and show up in serious illness care.

Nikki holds an Executive Doctorate in business administration (marketing management) from Hult International Business School and is completing a Certificate in AI-Driven Healthcare Transformation through Harvard Business School Executive Education. She served as Region IV board member of the National Association of Home Care and Hospice during the rollout of value-based care and is co-author of *The Investing Revolutionaries* (McGraw-Hill, 2009).

She speaks, consults, and trains nationally for hospice and post-acute care organizations across the topics of end-of-life communication, hospice sales leadership, caregiver support, and the systemic gaps in serious illness care that leave patients, families, and professionals without adequate support.

She has lived this work from both sides of the bedside — as the professional in the room and as the family member who was not ready. Five times. And counting.

04 THE STORY BEHIND THE WORK

Nikki did not plan to spend her career in hospice. Nobody does. Her path wound through home health, post-acute care, and the broader healthcare sales landscape before hospice found her. What found her there was a gap.

The gap between what families needed and what they were getting. Between what patients wanted to say and what they were actually saying. Between the professionals who knew how to enter hard conversations and the vast majority who had never been taught.

That gap became her life's work.

"The rooms most people avoid are the rooms where the most important work happens. The professionals who learn to enter them — fully, without flinching — are the ones who change not just their census numbers but the entire experience of dying in their communities."

Over 20 years, she built the Always Human Standard: a framework for presence-based communication in serious illness care that is not a personality trait but a teachable, replicable skill. She has trained raw recruits and cynical veterans alike — and watched both kinds become professionals that families request by name.

Along the way, she also became the family member. Five times, she has had a person she loves live with her in their final months. She has sat in both chairs in the same rooms. That dual experience — clinical expertise and personal grief held simultaneously — is the foundation of everything she writes, teaches, and speaks about.

Sacred Conversations: A Hospice and End of Life Planning Journal

Always Human Press | March 27, 2026 | Large Print Edition

Sacred Conversations is a guided planning and reflection resource for patients facing terminal illness and the family members and caregivers walking alongside them. It is organized across 19 chapters covering the full arc of serious illness — from understanding hospice and palliative care, to completing advance directives, navigating family conversations, creating a living will, managing a digital legacy, caring for the caregiver, and navigating the final days and weeks of life.

Each chapter closes with Sacred Conversations for This Week: a set of guided questions designed to open the conversations most families avoid until it is too late. The journal is not a medical text. It is a companion for the space between diagnosis and death that most healthcare resources leave empty.

For the 63 million Americans currently serving as family caregivers — and for the patients who love them.

See Me: The Always Human Standard for Hospice Sales, Leadership, and Presence

Pending Release | Fall 2026

See Me is the professional companion to Sacred Conversations — a field guide for hospice sales professionals, leaders, and post-acute care organizations who want to build teams that show up in the hardest rooms with both expertise and humanity. It introduces the Always Human Standard: a three-skill framework of curious entry, the brave pause, and discomfort tolerance that can be taught, practiced, and transferred across any team, in any market.

Grounded in 20 years of measurable business results and the belief that presence is the most powerful sales tool in healthcare. For the ones who sell it, lead it, and live it.

Nikki speaks to three distinct audiences: hospice and post-acute care professionals and organizations, family caregivers and the public, and women in healthcare leadership. She adapts content for keynotes, breakouts, panels, and workshops. All sessions are available in-person or virtual.

For Healthcare Professionals and Organizations

- Sacred Conversations: The Communication Skill That Changes Everything — A framework for how healthcare professionals enter hard rooms, ask the questions families need answered, and stay present when staying is the hardest thing.
- Why Your Sales Numbers Are a Communication Problem — How hospice organizations grow census sustainably by training teams not just in what to do but in how to be. Grounded in real market results.
- The Caregiver Conversation Nobody Is Having — How to see the family caregiver as your patient, name anticipatory grief, and create the kind of trust that drives both referrals and retention.
- Training Teams to Stay — A leadership session on building team culture that sustains presence-based care without burning out the professionals delivering it.
- The Healthcare Worker as Family Caregiver — A policy and practice session on the population nobody is supporting: professionals who are simultaneously serving as family caregivers, and what organizations and policymakers can do about it.

For Family Caregivers and General Audiences

- What to Say When You Don't Know What to Say — A practical session for family caregivers on end-of-life communication, anticipatory grief, and the questions that open the conversations families avoid.
- Sacred Conversations: A Journal and a Practice — An introduction to the journal and the framework behind it. Works as a community workshop, library event, or hospice family education session.
- The Grief That Comes Before the Death — On anticipatory grief, its universality, and why naming it is the most powerful thing a caregiver can receive.

For Women in Healthcare Leadership

- How I Built a Sales Empire in Rooms Nobody Wants to Enter — A leadership session on what it means to lead with presence in high-stakes healthcare environments, and why the skills women are most likely to minimize are the ones that produce results.
- Selling in Sacred Spaces — For healthcare professionals of all kinds on the intersection of emotional intelligence, trust-building, and sustainable business performance.

07 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND TALKING POINTS

These questions are offered for podcast hosts, journalists, and event moderators. They are organized from personal story to professional insight to policy. Nikki is available for any format — long-form interview, panel, fireside chat, or short media segment.

You spent 20 years as a hospice sales professional. What does that actually mean — what did you do every day?

I sat with families in the hardest moments of their lives and helped them figure out what came next. I also trained other professionals to do it. The sales part was about building trust with physicians, discharge planners, and social workers — showing up consistently, asking real questions, and being the person they could call when a situation got complicated. The work was relational at its core. The census numbers followed the relationships.

You have also been a family caregiver to five hospice patients. What does it feel like to be on that side of it?

It breaks everything open. Every time. I knew what was happening medically. I knew the trajectory. I knew what each decline meant. And I still lay awake wondering if it was enough. The clinical knowledge does not protect you from the grief. In some ways it makes the grief more specific — you know too much to pretend. What I discovered is that there is a particular loneliness in being a healthcare professional who becomes the family member, and almost no support structure for it. That is a gap I talk about in everything I do now.

What is a Sacred Conversation? Why that phrase?

A Sacred Conversation is not about death. It is about not leaving the people you love guessing. It is the conversation where someone finally asks what you actually want — not what the treatment plan says, not what the family hopes, but what you want. And someone stays to hear the answer without flinching. I call them sacred because they happen in the fullest space of a human life — the space between diagnosis and death that most of us leave empty. And because the people who receive them never forget them.

70 percent of Americans say they want to talk about end-of-life care with their doctor. Less than 30 percent ever do. Why is that gap so persistent?

It is not a knowledge problem. It is a courage problem — and it belongs to the system, not the patient. We built a healthcare system so focused on treatment, on fighting, on the next intervention, that we forgot to make room for the truth. Patients are waiting for someone to give them permission to ask the real question. When nobody does, they carry it alone. That grief — the grief of the things left unsaid — is preventable. That is what I spend my time trying to change.

What do you want family caregivers to know right now?

Nobody is asking how you are doing. Not really. They ask how your loved one is doing and they mean the patient. You are allowed to be afraid and tired and grieving and present all at the same time. You are allowed to want this to be over and to never want it to end, sometimes in the same hour. And you do not have to manage. Sacred Conversations was written for you — not to give you more to do, but to give you language for what you are already carrying.

What is the most urgent thing you want policymakers to understand about hospice and end-of-life care right now?

Two things. First: Medicaid cuts to end-of-life care are not a budget line. They are a nurse who does not show up. They are a family left alone in a crisis they were not prepared for. Second: there is an entire population of healthcare professionals who are simultaneously serving as family caregivers — carrying clinical knowledge that does not protect them from grief, and with no institutional support structure for what it costs them. We have 63 million family caregivers in this country. We have no data on how many of them are also the professionals delivering care. We have never asked.

These quotes are cleared for use in editorial coverage, attributed to Nikki Patton, Ph.D.

On the conversation gap:

"70 percent of Americans say they want to talk to their doctor about end-of-life care. Less than 30 percent ever do. That gap — the space between what people want to say and what they actually say — is where the grief lives. Not just the grief that comes after death. The grief that comes before it. That grief is preventable."

On caregivers:

"Nobody is asking how the caregiver is doing. Not really. They ask how is she doing and they mean the patient. They ask how are you holding up and they mean are you managing — a very different question from what are you carrying that nobody sees."

On the workforce:

"The hospice workforce crisis is not a pipeline problem. It is a culture problem. We are asking professionals to absorb profound grief, carry complex paperwork, and be present in the hardest rooms in healthcare — and we have given them almost nothing to process any of it."

On Medicaid cuts:

"When you cut Medicaid, you do not cut a line item. You cut a nurse. You cut the aide. You cut the chaplain. You cut a human being out of the room at the worst moment of a family's life."

On presence as a skill:

"Presence is a skill. It can be taught. It can be practiced. The professional who learns to enter hard rooms — fully, without flinching, with both expertise and humanity — changes not just their census numbers but the entire experience of dying in their community."

On AI in end-of-life care:

"AI can flag a symptom change at 3 a.m. It cannot sit with a family and tell them what is happening in plain language. Technology is not the intervention. The conversation is. Always has been."

09 KEY STATISTICS AND DATA

All figures are publicly sourced. Nikki is available to speak to any of these data points in interviews.

The conversation gap:

- 70% of Americans say they want to discuss end-of-life care with their doctor. Fewer than 30% ever do. (The Conversation Project / IHI)
- 1 in 4 family caregivers reports feeling completely alone in their caregiving journey. (Caregiving in the US 2025, NAC and AARP)

The caregiving crisis:

- 63 million Americans currently provide ongoing, complex care to adults or children with a medical condition or disability — up 45% since 2015. (NAC and AARP, 2025)
- By 2030, roughly 25% of the U.S. population will be over 65. (U.S. Census Bureau)

The hospice workforce:

- 62% of hospice and palliative care clinicians report burnout, with non-physician clinicians reporting the highest rates. (American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine)
- Hospice serves over 1.7 million Medicare patients annually. (NHPCO / National Alliance for Care at Home)

Nikki's career results:

- Grew census from 11 to 150 patients in 16 months with full team retention
- 135% ADC growth for three consecutive years
- 70% census growth across 15 markets in 18 months
- Launched more than 8 de novo sites, each profitable within 12 months
- Led turnarounds at 37 underperforming sites

10 BOOKING AND MEDIA CONTACT

Nikki is available for:

- Podcast and radio interviews — any format, any length
- Print and digital media — quotes, expert commentary, bylined essays
- Keynotes and conference sessions — in-person and virtual
- Panel participation
- Organizational training and consulting engagements
- Book club and community events related to Sacred Conversations

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Book: Sacred Conversations: A Hospice and End of Life Planning Journal

Available: https://www.amazon.com/stores/Nikki-Patton/author/B0CHR2BS3Q?ref=ap_rdr&shoppingPortalEnabled=true&ccs_id=40d0b46e-fe12-4b0c-80fd-79f69a399f67

Please note that Nikki speaks from the intersection of professional expertise and personal lived experience. She does not speak in the abstract about hospice or caregiving. She speaks from inside it.

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For the ones who sell it, lead it, and live it.*