



HOW TO START

Here are some ways you could break the ice:

“I need your help with something.”

“Remember how someone in the family died – was it a ‘good’ death or a ‘hard’ death? How will yours be different?”

“I was thinking about what happened to X, and it made me realize...”

“Even though I’s okay right now, I’m worried that X, and I want to be prepared.”

“I need to think about my future. Will you help me?”

“I just answered some questions about how I want the end of my life to be. I want you to see my answers, and I’m wondering what your answers would be.”

What to talk about:

When you think about the last phase of your life, what’s most important to you?
How would you like this phase to be?

Do you have any concerns about your health? About the last phase of your life?

What affairs do you need to get in order, or talk to your loved ones about?
(personal finances, property, relationships)

Who do you want (or not want) to be involved in your care? Who would you like to make decisions on your behalf if you’re not able to? *(This person is your health care proxy.)*

Would you prefer to be actively involved in decisions about your care? Or would you rather have your health care team do what they think is best?

What to talk about continued:

Are there any disagreements for family tensions that you're concerned about?

Are there important milestones you would like to be there for, if possible? (*The birth of your grandchild, your 80th birthday*)

Where do you want (or not want) to receive care? (*home, nursing facility, hospital*)

Are there kinds of treatment you would want (or not want)? (*Resuscitation if your heart stops, breathing machine, feeding tube*)

When would it be okay to shift from a focus on curative care to a focus on comfort care alone?

REMEMBER:

Be patient. Some people may need a little more time to think.

You don't have to steer the conversation; just let it happen.

Don't judge. A "good" death means different things to different people.

Nothing is set in stone. You and your loved ones can *always* change your minds as circumstances change.

Every attempt at the conversation is valuable.

This is the first of many conversations – you don't have to cover everyone or everything right now.

NOW, JUST GO FOR IT!

Each conversation will empower you and your loved ones. You are getting ready to help each other live and die in a way that you choose.