

Finishing Well 2 - Nov 6,2022

1. Unless we want our lives to be a fight to the finish it is wiser to come to the point when we opt for comfort rather than aggressively pressing for cure

- a. Default of medicine is too often to keep pushing on and not giving up



- b. Why do we choose aggressive care? life is good, survival instinct, fear of dying, medicine always proposing one more thing, pressure from family, and expecting God to heal

2. 3 Ways we di-- roughly 1/3 each

- a. Sudden death--no decisions to be made
- b. Slow decline--cancer, often need to decide whether or not to stop Rx.
- c. Having recurrent exacerbations--CHF, COPD
 - i. Hospitalizations get tuned up and home
 - ii. But the underlying disease is slowly getting worse and get lulled into thinking that medicine will continue to pull us through
 - iii. COPD next time on ventilator you may not get off

3. Why change gears?

- a. It allows you to complete the agenda--rarely seen in the ICU
- b. Pursuing life sustaining treatment to the very end may exchange a comfortable death for a potentially painful medical death
- c. It is what most people want
 - i. Gallop poll if choice in last 6 mo of being home with family or in hospital 95% said home with family and yet 60% die in hospital and 20% in nursing home
 - ii. Curious exception is people of faith where more die receiving aggressive care
 - 1. Why? Good life here--more support, community, strength in prayer, hope for miracle
 - 2. Reasons for believers to change gears
 - a. It surrenders control to the Lord
 - b. It honors the Gospel that tells us death is defeated
 - c. It takes us to be with Jesus

4. When?

- a. Physical
 - i. Need diagnosis and prognosis
 - ii. 2 questions
 - 1. What abilities or things are so important that you would rather not live without?

- 2. How much pain and suffering are you willing to go through in order to keep on living?
 - iii. Multiple organ failure
- b. Emotionally drained
- c. Spiritually
 - i. Know that your sins are forgiven-Richard
 - ii. Longing for God, freedom from sin and a resurrected body
- d. Social-Family willing to let go
 - i. This is so often the major struggle
 - ii. Often more difficult when young children are involved

5. How

- a. Talk to your family and primary care physician
 - b. Advance directives
 - i. Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
 - 1. Name the person who will be your agent to make decision when you are unable knows your wishes and who is not going to be torn up my making a hard decision
 - 2. Give them full authority
 - ii. Living will-when you are dying you do not want your life prolonged
 - 1. Include a statement of your values-mine is taken from Phil 1

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith, **Philippians 1:21-25 (ESV)***
- a. My own statement

I am happy for technology to be used so long as there is reasonable hope of it allowing me to serve others. But, if for physical, mental, emotional or spiritual reasons it is unlikely I will be able to serve others I do not want that technology.
- b. Living will-takes burden off your power of attorney
- iii. Do not resuscitate (DNR, MOLST) a potential separate document
 - 1. DNR is a suggestion MOLST is a physician signed medical order
 - 2. Remember the burden of resuscitation is great if prolonged hypoxia and the risk of brain damage increases with age.
 - 3. More appropriate in community or nursing home than ICU especially if dying of reversible cardiac problems.
- c. Continuing with how to change gears-review medications and stop those designed to prolong life (or more prolong dying) eg. statins
- d. Hospice-one of the best ways to change gears

- i. Assures that the end of your life is not a fight to the finish
- ii. Maximize comfort care
- iii. Emphasize the agenda, be at home with family and have closure.

6. How not to change gears-Assisted suicide

- a. Oregon survey of those who choose it shows
 - i. 95% desire to maintain control
 - ii. 25% for present pain and suffering or anticipated pain and suffering
- b. For me as a Christian the biggest issue is surrendering control and trusting God.

Strategy 6: When death comes rest in Jesus

- 1. This is ideal at times death is nasty and messy then with God's help we do the best we can
 - a. Family and loved ones spend quality time, be honest talk about missing them, do not offer hope in this life, talk of heaven, sing and play music, read scripture, give permission to die
 - b. For the patient surrender control, rest in him
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4 (ESV)

Dr Dunlop's email - Jdunlopmd@gmail.com