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# BEING HUMAN IN A HOSPICE WORLD

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BEING HUMAN IN A HOSPICE WORLD

# OBJECTIVES

- Explore hospice work through a human lens
- Provide tools to learn from and cherish our work
- Recognize the worth of our work in the world



**WHAT'S IN  
YOUR BAG?**

What do we  
carry with us  
as we do our  
jobs?

The shortest distance between  
two people is a story.

- Patti Digh,  
author of *Life is a Verb*

MARIE

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# Learning that...

- I can't fix everything
- Suffering is real, and love is the antidote
- The patient and family are the heroes of this story, not me

# Letting go of...

- Old perceptions about the sterility of death
- Myths about end of life care
- Professional arrogance

# Leaning into...

- My own human capacity for vulnerability
- My ability to be fully present with the messiness of death
- My empathic connections to the realities of death and dying



**PATTY**



# Learning that...

- I can use words with courage and kindness
- There is power in warm hellos and goodbyes
- I sometimes wrongly use boundaries as barriers

# Letting go of...

- Fear of saying the wrong things
- Resistance to getting close to patients and families
- Unwillingness to express my own grief

# Leaning into...

- The full human experience of loss
- What it means to feel grief as a caregiver
- The tension between my need to protect myself yet be fully available

**BETTY**



# Learning that...

- The care of a caregiver is vital to the wellbeing of a patient
- Interdisciplinary teams have a special strength and skill
- Decision-makers without a plan feel a special kind of burden

# Letting go of...

- The need to control everything
- Resistance to allowing others to share in the experience
- The myth of the solo caregiver as a hero

# Leaning into...

- Acknowledging we can't control everything
- The tension between the authority of the caregiver and the need to keep the patient central to the process
- The felt sense of kinship with all people that comes from this work



CHARLES



# Learning that...

- Not everything we value has value to someone else
- Caregivers can summon incredible resilience by bonding together
- Not every hospice experience is enriched or meaningful

# Letting go of...

- A sense of self-importance
- The mindset that we always know what is needed
- Our idea of what a “good death” looks and feels like

# Leaning into...

- The need for humility in the face of death
- Being able to ask for help when we need it
- Reimagining the meaning of our work in the world

# QUESTIONS TO ASK

What do I need to learn or unlearn  
in this moment?



# QUESTIONS TO ASK

What meaning can I make of what is happening in this moment?



# QUESTIONS TO ASK

**What do I need to let go of in this moment?**

**Who do I want to be in this situation?**



# QUESTIONS TO ASK

What wants to happen here?

Can I allow it to unfold as  
it wants to?





# BEING HUMAN IN A HOSPICE WORLD



**What's in  
your bag?**

