

A LIGHT TOUCH ON DISCUSSING DEATH, DOWNSIZING AND GRIEF

Presented by Gail Rubin, CT, The Doyenne of Death®

Kicking the Bucket List: Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die

Do you plan to live forever? Do you ever plan to move? Depending on where you're going, you can't take it with you. This talk focuses on practical ways to downsize excess goods without being overwhelmed by the job, what you need to know to organize your information for your executor, and how to plan for end-of-life issues.

We Can Do That? New Trends in Death Care a.k.a. Green/Natural Burial Options

The modern funeral is changing. Learn about new death care trends in the United States, including green burial, DIY/home funerals, alkaline hydrolysis and other developing body disposition methods, rising cremation rates, and how to make a memorial service all about the person who died. Available both with and without film clips.

Laughing and Learning: A Practical End-of-Life Workshop

Even though humans have a 100% mortality rate, only 25% of us do any end-of-life planning. The Laughing and Learning workshop will give you the tools and the inspiration to take practical steps for outlining your funeral plans/memorial celebration, drafting your own obituary and/or famous last words, and preparing advance medical directives.

What are Your Ethical Will Life Lessons?

In a Last Will and Testament, the Ethical Will was the Testament portion of this important end-of-life planning document. An Ethical Will enables us to speak words of truth before the end of our days on earth. We can share the life lessons we've learned, passing along our values and wisdom to our loved ones and the world. This can be a short talk or a longer participatory workshop.

Mortality In Popular Culture

People will remember information from a film or television show 30% longer than simply hearing a speaker. By watching and discussing film and TV clips related to end-of-life issues, audiences will better retain and act on planning ahead. This presentation can be customized to include clips about estate planning, funeral planning, grief and other topics.

Your Customers are Discussing Death, Where are You?

For those in the insurance, estate planning, health care, funeral and cemetery businesses, this talk has insights into death discussion movements that have sprung up in the US, the UK, and worldwide over the past 10 years. Tens of thousands of participants flock to these events. They include: Dying Matters Week; Death Cafes; Before I Die Festivals; Death Over Dinner; Death Salons; and Reimagine End of Life Festivals. Gail Rubin has pioneered Death Cafes, Before I Die Festivals and Mortality Movie Nights. Are you aware of these opportunities to engage with customers? Learn tips to plan events that will help get end-of-life planning conversations started and generate sales.

FUNNY FILMS FOR SERIOUS SUBJECTS

Laughing in the Face of Death: Funny Films for Funeral Planning

This upbeat talk illustrates funeral planning issues with clips from comedy films and television programs. Learn what you need to know before someone dies to reduce stress and conflict, save money and create a “good goodbye.” Just as talking about sex won’t make you pregnant, talking about funerals won’t make you dead – and your family will benefit from the conversation.

The Funeral Director on Film

Watching scenes from comedies and dramas focused on funeral directors throughout history, learn the history of U.S. undertaking, perceptions of funeral directors and funeral planning tips. With humorous insights, Gail Rubin educates and entertains with Hollywood portrayals of “the last man to let you down.”

Answers to Your Burning Questions on Cremation — a.k.a. Ashes to Ashes, Dust in Your Face: Cremation, Comedy and Creativity

Cremation is the fastest growing disposition method in the U.S. Watching funny and serious film clips, learn about what you need to know about cremation **before** there’s a death in the family, including choices to make and disposition options.

The Many Faces of Grief: Mourning in the Movies

Grief and mourning is a process that takes on many faces. Using clips from Hollywood films to illustrate and lighten the conversation, learn about different grieving styles, length of mourning, disenfranchised grief and other elements of thanatology, the study of death, dying and bereavement.

“Doctor, How Long Do I Have?”

Having a serious healthcare conversation with your doctor and family takes effort to ensure clear communications. Learn how to ask questions and be involved in treatment decisions by watching dramatic and comedy films depicting doctor-patient-family conversations.

Estate Planning: Hollywood Myth versus Facts

The way the movies portray it, wills are supposed to cover funeral plans in addition to the distribution of assets. Unfortunately, family members may die before doing any estate planning. Even with a will, plans can go awry. Clips from comedies and dramas illustrate the need to do estate planning TODAY.

Jewish Funeral Traditions on Film

Jewish traditions regarding death and dying, the funeral, the treatment of the body, burial, mourning, and annual remembrances are very different from Christian practices. This talk illuminates the differences and similarities of these funeral traditions – highly beneficial for interfaith families.

Lessons on Grief and Mourning in Cartoons

Animated movies designed for children can also address the grief of adults. This presentation incorporates clips from popular cartoon films that illustrate and instruct about mourning losses. From the death of loved ones to significant life changes, we can learn about resiliency and the rebirth of joy by watching characters address their challenges.

Newly-Dead® Games

Based on the classic television program, *The Newlywed Game*, the Newly-Dead game tests couples on how well they know their partner's last wishes. Gail Rubin also created a Singles Edition so that everyone, not just couples, in the audience can play along. There's also a Newly-Dead Bingo game. They all offer an upbeat way to start conversations about end-of-life planning.

About Gail Rubin, CT



Gail Rubin, CT, The Doyenne of Death®, is author of the award-winning books *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die*, *Kicking the Bucket List: 100 Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die*, and *Hail and Farewell: Cremation Ceremonies, Templates and Tips*. Her newest book is *98.6 Mortality Movies to See Before You Die*. She is also the coordinator of the award-winning **Before I Die New Mexico Festival**, a pioneer of the Death Cafe movement in the United States, and creator of **Mortality Movie Night** at funeral homes.

A doyenne is a woman who's considered senior in a group who knows a lot about a particular subject. Gail is a Certified Thanatologist (a death and grief educator) and speaker who uses humor and films to get end-of-life conversations started. Her 2015 TEDx talk (<https://youtu.be/r9qR4ZiGX2Y>) focuses on the importance of starting end-of-life conversations *before* there's a death in the family. Her second TEDx talk in 2025 is about medical aid in dying (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eTpRaY6zSOs>). She also hosts *The Doyenne of Death* podcast and *Mortality Movies* TV series.

The Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) recognized her pioneering work with their prestigious 2024 Community Educator Award. *Albuquerque Business First* named her one of their Women of Influence in 2019.

She's a member of the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association, ADEC, Toastmasters International and the National Speakers Association. Her motto is: "Talking about sex won't make you pregnant. Talking about funerals won't make you dead."

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