

Die-ologue Café

A safe place to talk about dying and death. Two subjects, that we usually skirt around, put off, even try to avoid. We think that people who are on the same wave length, given the opportunity, can find comfort and solace by sharing their stories and embracing their gifts.

The dialogues can be richly rewarding and the results empowering and life sustaining.

Why the Café exists:

Because living in a death denying time in human history is not delivering the good deaths we say we would like to have.

Because talking to ourselves (head talk, self talk) can leave us feeling lost and fearful, and with limited choices.

Because in the company of like minded people: we don't feel so alone, we can create a good death road-map.

Because:

- we need the information and the understanding to help us be ready;
- we never know when;
- someone near and dear to us as well as ourselves could benefit;
- we choose to not sit around and wait for someone else to do, what we can do, ourselves—when we have the know-how (knowledge), the where-with-all (tools) and the friends who are willing to lend a hand (help).



What it does:

Greet, Meet & Eat

Greet – welcome plus serve tea, coffee, juice, water for each other.

Meet (a) – talk: a 'round' table exchange of ideas, inspirations, hopes and fears, etc.

Meet (b) – chalk: themed conversation, discussion, debate ... invited speakers, book readings.(extracts), the use of media such as video, YouTube, Skype—are examples; and the gifts within the group.

Meet (c) – walk: do research, take on projects, write letters, practice

meditation, play games, create art, visit, invent; in other words practice the principles and report back.

Eat – serve food plus tea, coffee, juice in a convivial spirit.

*In living as in dying,
There's laughter and there's crying.
Die-ologue helps us to unravel,
The road on which we travel.*

- Stuart Carter, 27 Oct. 2013

Dialogue:

"Dialogue" comes from the Greek word *dialogos*. *Logos* means 'the word', or in our case we would think of 'the meaning of the word'. And *dia* means through. The picture or image is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. From **David Bohm On Dialogue**. Clarke University

Die-ologue Café is for people:

- who wish to affirm that dying and death are a part of the human life cycle.
- who believe a conversation about end-of-life issues will add a life enhancing dimension to their daily greetings, meetings and eatings with family, friends and associates.
- adults, from all walks of life.
- facing their fears about dying and death.
- students of sociology with an emphasis on death and dying.
- caring for the elderly and working in aged care—for their own benefit and the benefit of those they work with.

Our intention is:

to be of practical assistance to each other;
to build a body of knowledge and expertise that will, by extension, strengthen our families and communities;
to build bridges across cultural divides;
to empower people to act wisely and face the future with a positive outlook;
to raise awareness about injustices and
to provide a gentle nudge of encouragement as we face our fears.

Die-ologue Café is not :

- set up for children (special dedicated meetings can include children in the company of an adult or guardian).
- a replacement for grief and bereavement groups. It is complementary to these.
- for people who are not prepared to use the plain English words that describe our end-of-life realities. It does not shy away from the facts. While euphemisms may be used from time to time, they are no substitute for the language that describes what takes place when we are on our death 'beds'.
- everyone's idea of a good way to spend a couple of hours.

.....
We have one life on one planet. We pass this way but once. We had no choice in our birth. We have choices thereafter. We can learn what it means to have a good death. We can practice the good death principles.

Die-ologue Café is:

... a not-for-profit, non-hierarchical collective.
... reliant on those attending each meeting being respectful of others' space and place in their journey of self discovery.

The D-Cafe

.. will maintain a **register of attendance** for health and safety reasons.

.. is **not politically aligned**

.. has no vested interests in commercial enterprises. It straddles the public and private sectors. Its 'members' represent themselves. Those attending who have commercial interests are obliged to disclose these so that conversations can take place in an open and honest manner. Eavesdropping by people with a hidden agenda is seen to be a breach of trust and outside the spirit of the Die-ologue Cafe ethic.

.. **welcomes visitors** and seeks 'members' by donation / supporting donation.

.. is as strong as its weakest link.



How Die-ologue Café gets by:

As with all groups there are costs: equipment, stationary, printing, venue hire, food and drink. These costs need to be shared as evenly as possible so as not to burden a few. There being no paid staff, those attending need to commit to and undertake to contribute according to their ability and means.



Where life and death intersect, and
Conversations cause us to reflect, and
When the road seems too steep to climb, we
Cross a bridge and shelter find....

Die-ologue Cafe

Resources

For reading—print on pages

Dying Well: A holistic guide for the dying and their carers Richard.Reoch, Gaia Books. 1997
Dying to Know, Hardie Grant Books, Sydney. 2007
The D-Word: Talking about dying, Sue Brayne. Continuum, 2010
Final Gifts, Maggie Callanan. Simon&Schuster, 2012
Get Dead, Jamie Oliver. Friday Books, 2009
The Whole Death Catalogue Harold Schechter Ballantine Books, 2009
Death for Beginners, Karen Jones Quill Driver, 2010
The Good Death Guide: Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask. M.Dunn. Oxford 2000
A Good Goodbye: Funeral panning for those who don't plan to die, Gail Rubin Light Tree Press 2010
Funeral Rights, Robert Larkin. Penguin, 2007
The Good Funeral Guide, Charles Cowling. Continuum. 2010
The Intimacy of Death and Dying Leimbach, Claire; McShane, Trypheyne & Virago, Zenith A&U 2009
The Last Dance: Encountering Death and Dying, (9th ed.) L.DeSpelder & A.Srickland. McGraw Hill. 2010
The Natural Death Handbook, Ru Callender et al, NDC, 2012

For watching and listening—screen

In the End, Aus
Tender, 2013 Aus
Zen and the Art of Dying, 2014 Aus
A Family Undertaking, 2011 US

For browsing—online on the web

Death Talker, Australia
Planning Ahead, Australia
The GroundSwell Project, Australia
Natural Death Centre, Australia and UK
Be ready for it, UK
Dying Matters, UK
The Good Funeral Guide blog, UK
Final Fling, Life and death decisions, UK
Death Knells (quotes)
7 Cups of Tea, Worldwide
It's OK to die (and book), USA
Order of the Good Death, USA



Die-ologue Café affirms life in the face of death:

- Food is an essential part of the mix.(roster to spread the load of provision).
- Sharing is a given.

Join us on the journey as we embrace life and talk about death.

This meeting arrangement will not suit everyone. There are others: *Death Café*; *Death Salon*, and *Let's Have Dinner and Talk about Death*.

Protocols

Common courtesies will be the order of the day.

Standard meeting procedures will be followed, minus the formality of moving motions and voting unless there is a need to do so due to differences of opinion that cannot be resolved in any other way.

An **organiser / conductor** will be in charge of each meeting having overall responsibility for its direction, tempo and rigour. **The tenor** in which the meeting is conducted is most important. Smart aleck remarks are unwelcome.

A **meeting record** will be kept in lieu of minutes, for the jogging of memories, to demonstrate continuity for new members and for the preparation of a history showing progress of the die-ologue. Minutes are an optional extra.

A **moderator** will keep an eye on participation and if necessary create a space for the quieter members.

In addition, a **time keeper** will signal when a person has held the floor for more than an allotted time agreed to by the meeting.

A **brief evaluation** will conclude each meeting to provide feedback to the organisers of that meeting.

Day time meetings will most likely suit elderly people, night meetings for younger ages. It is suggested that meetings last for about 2– 2.5 hours (maximum).

Meeting organisation/leadership should rotate over time so as to allow the gifts of members to shine and to reduce burn out.

Die-ologue Café is working to make death and dying less mystifying. We acknowledge ...

Events: (Australia)

- *Harmony Day*—March
- *Spark of Life Day*—March
- *Epitaph Day*—April
- *Will Awareness Day*—August
- *Dying to Know Day*—August
- *Dementia Awareness Week*—September
- *National Carers Week*—October
- *Day of the Dead*— November
- *Remembrance Day*— November
- *Blue Christmas*—December

Remember friend, as you pass by,
as you are now, so once was I.
As I am now, so you must be.
Prepare yourself to follow me.

Gravestone quote .. Anonymous

Die-ologue Café—*to live, to learn & to pass it on*

We stand on the shoulders of giants.

- Isaac Newton

We learn from:

Intensive Care specialists
Morticians
Doctors and Nurses
Midwives
Aged care carers
Legal practitioners
Communities of faith
People who profess no faith
Financial and Estate planners
Providers of funerals
Indigenous communities
Researchers and their findings
Authors, Broadcasters, Journalists

We learn about:

Aging in the 21st C
Advance Care Directives
Memorandum of Wishes
Dying, death and disposal
Funerals as a rite of passage
Natural Death Centres, Aus and UK
Medicalisation of death
Entitlements to life
Palliative care
Cultural diversity
Dying with dignity
Grief, loss and bereavement
Suicide prevention
Gentle regenerative exercise
Food as medicine, medicine as food
Living in harmony with nature
Community gardening
Meditation

Post your special event, your story, your insights here

Die-ologue Cafe is a work of the imagination and so it can be tailored or custom built to fit many different requirements. It is intended to be cross-cultural and sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of anyone genuinely seeking the truths (plural) about dying and death in the 21st century.

While the location, the time, the group may be different the underlying sentiments remain ...

...open, honest dialogue as a backdrop to creating a dance with death that when played out in daily life, will reveal treasures untold and enrich all who stumble across its stage.

Please share your story



Use of the Die-ologue Cafe 'brand' requires

users to commit to the framework and guidelines contained in this document. Only the **Resources, Events, and learn from, learn about** sections are negotiable, the rest are integral to the concept and necessary for it to function as designed. Jakaranda flower

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Creating our 'rite' of way

There is no right way. We can, however, discover our rite way (as an outcome of our personal search for meaning) that can bring peace of mind and sufficient certainty to our constantly changing circumstances, that will give us safe passage to the harbour when the seas get too rough to ride.

That is the right way for us. It is as *Zenith Virago* puts it: '**whatever gets you there**'.

There are two proven precursors: dialogue and preparation. We do both at ..

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