

Death Cafe

Select Language | ▾

Search

Home About ▾ Find a Death Cafe ▾ Hold a Death Cafe ▾ Death conversation ▾ Support us Login

What is Death Cafe?



At a Death Cafe people, often strangers, gather to eat cake, drink tea and discuss death.

Our objective is *'to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives'*.

A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counselling session.

Our Death Cafes are always offered:

- On a not for profit basis
- In an accessible, respectful and confidential space
- With no intention of leading people to any conclusion, product or course of action
- Alongside refreshing drinks and nourishing food – and cake!

Talking about death

To date we've held 5038 Death Cafes. These never involve agendas, advertising or set conclusions. Interesting conversations are guaranteed!

Host a Death Cafe

People who adopt the model set out in our guide are welcome to set up their own Death Cafes. So far we've held Death Cafes in 51 countries.

General Guidelines for holding your own Death Cafe

Decide who is hosting the event and who is facilitating, although one person can perform both functions.

The **host** coordinates the Death Cafe, arranges the venue and refreshments, advertises, and ensures the facilities are amenable.

The **facilitator** introduces the session, brings people into the discussion and moves the discussion along if necessary. Facilitators do not require formal qualifications but they do need to be able to listen to and discuss all aspects of death and dying with equanimity, and be able to handle any problematic situations that might arise.

Register your Death Cafe on the Death Cafe website (www.deathcafe.com), agreeing to follow the death cafe model

Advertise as you normally would: library website, posters, newspapers, social media. (I limited attendance to ten or twelve not only because my area was small but because I felt discussion might flow more easily in a smaller, more intimate group.)

Provide refreshments. Cake is a MUST! Also tea and/or coffee. The idea is to nurture the living body while talking about death.

A Few Useful (and Inspirational) Books

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande

Atul Gawande, a practicing surgeon, examines the medical profession's limitations and failures as life draws to a close. And he discovers how we can do better. *Being Mortal* shows that the ultimate goal is not a good death but a good life – all the way to the very end.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi

At age 36 and just completing his training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with lung cancer. In *When Breath Becomes Air*, Kalanithi, confronting his own mortality, gains a deeper understanding of death and illness and examines what makes a virtuous and meaningful life.

Driving Miss Norma: One Family's Journey saying Yes to Living by Tim Bauerschmidt and Ramie Liddle

When Miss Norma was diagnosed with uterine cancer, she was advised to undergo surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. But instead of confining herself to a hospital bed for what could be her last stay, Norma told her doctor, "I'm ninety years old. I'm hitting the road." Packing what she needed, Norma took off on a cross-USA journey with her retired son Tim, his wife Ramie, and their standard poodle Ringo, in a thirty-six foot RV.