

The last in the series help and encouragement for discouraging and frightening times for a patient or family.

Preparing for the final chapter

Finishing the book

Life is like a book. For the person facing death the chapters of the book have been varied but with one chapter left to write. The book mark is now placed just short of the end. Some of the chapters were long and some short. The painful disastrous chapters far too long, and the pleasant chapters far too short.

Remember those pleasant chapters? Those chapters filled with dreams of adventure and excitement as young child at the very prospect of life. Those chapters of excitement at the thoughts of marriage and a family, that special, ideal job or the excitement of a long awaited vacation. All of these etched forever in the bank of your memory.

But as we went along we are reminded of other chapters. Those filled with hard work, sadness, pain and suffering, the loss of those dearest to us. Those chapters also etched into our memory bank and although far too long they will remain for as long as we live.

If you remember, I just said that there is one chapter to be written and you dear friend are in the process of that right now even though, weak and wondering. The question is what are you writing?

In 2007 there was a movie entitled the bucket list. In this movie two terminally ill men who share a hospital room (played by Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman), define a list of things to do before they 'kick the bucket'.

Is it possible that your bucket list is simply finishing the book well? Is it adding to the good chapters instead of the bad ones? You may be thinking, how can I write any chapters when I am struggling with my own terminal illness. If you would allow me, I would like to offer you a few simple suggestions to help you finish strong. I would entitle this chapter. Fulfilling the bucket list for the terminally ill person

To begin I would suggest that you set your goals for your personal bucket list. They may not be things like travel, seeing exotic places, going to a Luau on the beach in Hawaii but I would suggest that you consider this. Make it your goal to climb one last mountain. The mountain of restored and refreshing relationships.

Now may I offer you some suggestions on how to accomplish this wonderful goal.

First swallow. Swallow your pride. Don't let pride make you die alone. Pride keeps a person from eating crow. In other words pride keeps a person from acknowledging their part

in disrupted relationships. Remember though, “No one ever choked to death swallowing his pride”

So dear one swallow your pride, admit your part. If they respond and accept your gift and they admit their part as well, they can be with you and you will not die alone. If they refuse to accept your admission or admit their part in it, you can at least die with a free and clear conscience

Second decide, Decide to do it rather than procrastinate. The best way to get something done is to begin. So swallow your pride, make that call, write that letter, whatever you need to do to reestablish that broken relationship

Fear not. Remember, sometimes a person may act harsh and unyielding but deep inside it is often a cover up for their own insecurity and fear. The fear of being rejected by the person you are trying to be reconciled to while there is yet time.

But you dear friend fear not because who is going to fight with an dying man or woman, especially when looking at you, they remember that one day they too will be in this place

Finally forgive them. Someone said he will not forgive burns the very bridge over which he himself must one day pass.

I remember a place where it says A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. How about this for a soft answer, I 'm sorry.

Then when you die may this be your story. He died with a clear conscience, enemies forgiven, a smile on his face, love in his eyes, peace in his heart, surrounded by those whose lives he has touched, and those who have touched his life and who love him.

And now for the final few pages in that last chapter . What will we leave for those who have been reading our book? How will a person be remembered. What is the epitaph we will leave for a life well lived

We will be remembered for what we DO, more than what we SAY.

We will be remembered for what we DID with what we HAD

We will be remembered for HOW we did WHAT we did

We will be remembered by the lasting and eternal affects of what we did.

How is that as a way for your friends and family to remember you? Thomas Campbell said, to live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die.

Thank you my dear friend for writing the book.

If you have any questions, you can find out more about our program in Cortland County NY by calling Caring Community Hospice of Cortland 607-753-9105 or visiting www.cortlandhospice.org (See our Web Link Page)