

## Keeping it Real

“In terms of mortality, loneliness is a killer” – Dr. Andrea Bonior

In September 2018, my dad suffered a massive saddle pulmonary embolism. If you aren't privy to medical diagnoses, this is a dinger. He was able to take his first trip in a helicopter and had his first stay in an ICU. It was the worst day of my life. I still get emotional when I think about that day. Not only did my father's mortality become a reality, I was alone. You see, I am an only child. And my dad raised me, so it has been him and me for 43 years. I wasn't ready to see him in agonizing pain, wasn't ready to make some potentially tough decisions, and certainly wasn't ready to say good-bye to him. Luckily, the amazing doctors at UNMC fixed him up and he survived what should have killed him. But that day made me realize that death is bound to happen, and I will be facing it alone.

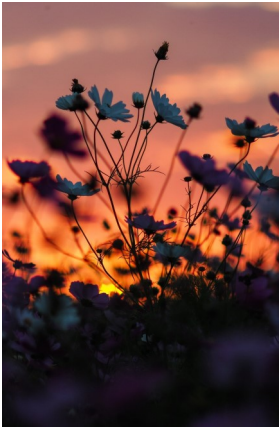
Luckily, my dad has all of his estate planning documents in order. He has taken every step to ensure that I don't have to lift a finger when he passes. One phone call to our friend, the local funeral director, and I can sit back and allow myself to grieve. Not everyone has this “luxury.” So many people we talk to and meet with in this business are left with no direction and no idea where to start. This makes the grieving process so much more complicated and at times delayed.

I have kids of my own and while discussing death planning isn't pleasant, it needs to be a priority. I don't plan on checking out any time soon, but I also am quite aware that I am not the one in

charge of those plans. My children and family deserve to know my wishes should I become incapacitated or die. They shouldn't be responsible for making them for me. The weight of what I want my end stages of life to look like should not be on their shoulders.

My great uncle recently passed. His granddaughter was the only person with him and walked a lonely road. We all sent our well wishes and prayers, but the reality was she was alone. Fortunately, for her, he planned for this day. He made those heavy decisions so that she wouldn't have to. She was able to just be with him and love him every minute of time he had left here on earth.

I guess the moral of my story is BE PREPARED. Deal with the uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Have those discussions with your family members and friends that will be left when you are gone. Let them grieve and then celebrate your life. Having a proper estate plan in place is one of the most thoughtful gifts you can provide your loved ones.



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