

Living Well

End of Life, the Law and New Beginnings

"Remember how we always said we'd go together?" I could hardly speak because my chin was trembling. "If you die, I'll miss you so much!"

I knew it was the exact wrong thing to say. I should be brave and say Bernice should go to God or whatever. But I didn't want her with God, I wanted her with me! ...I wanted her with ME!!!

from: "Waiting for Spring (part 1)" a *Being Your Best* story

Learn...

- How emotional, legal and spiritual choices affect peace of mind
- Why health care proxy and MOLST forms are important
- How communication, forgiveness and prayer can lead to new beginnings

Dying Well depends on emotional, spiritual and legal choices

The final days can be a time of great peace -- even a celebration of a life well lived. But for some, like Joe in the above story, it is a time of panic and despair.

Communication and forgiveness can lead to new beginnings

It's normal to avoid thinking or talking about death. But the denial of death can make a bad situation worse. It can even cause years of regret, because love depends on good communication with friends, familyand God.

The Satisfaction Skills (shown at right) can help. They offer a path to better communication, deeper prayer and greater forgiveness to opens you to the love that surrounds you.

New beginnings with friends, family and God can be sparked by better communication and forgiveness.

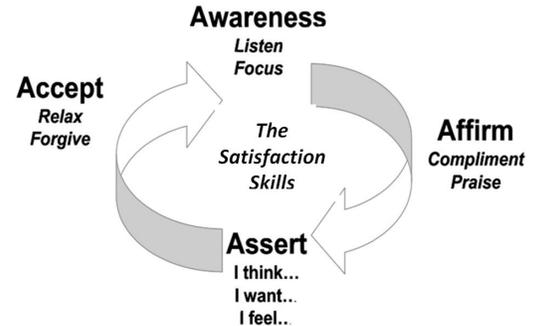
Understanding Challenges and Tragedies

You can gain a new understanding of life's challenges, including the need to accept, forgive and love, by considering:

- Sacred writings or other wisdom
- The traditions of your family and your faith
- The experience of your own life
- What your logic and reason tells you

Share your thoughts, questions, doubts, stories and understandings with family, friends and/or a minister.

To learn more about discussions at the end of life, visit www.FindingMoreLove.org You'll find more resources and learn about related programs in your community and on the Internet.



Visit us for free *Living Well* materials and program information:
www.ChooseToLiveWell.org

Legal Choices

Will Your Wishes Be Respected?

Advance directives are instructions for your future health care, in the event you can't speak for yourself.

For example, in the story on the first page, could Bernice count on Joe to follow up on her wishes if she decided she didn't want intensive care treatment. He certainly loves her ...but, what about his own neediness? Would he be the best health care proxy (i.e., someone legally designated to speak for Bernice, if she were unable to speak for herself?)

These legal forms (which don't require an attorney) can assure that your wishes will be respected:

- A *Health Care Proxy* form, which all adults should have
- A *MOLST* form for those who are critically ill

Health Care Proxy --This form, sometimes referred to as a "durable power of attorney for health care" allows you to pick someone to speak for you about medical decisions when you are no longer able to do so for yourself. In New York, as in most states, it is a legally recognized form that can be completed without an attorney.

Here's good advice about completing a health care proxy form from the [Sharing Your Wishes](#) project:

1. Think about what is important to you and how you want to receive your care
2. Select a person to speak for you if you are unable to speak for yourself
3. Talk about your health care wishes with your agent, doctor and family members
4. Put your choices in writing, using the Health Care Proxy form

The image shows two overlapping legal forms. The top form is the 'Health Care Proxy' form, which includes sections for appointing an agent and an alternate agent. The bottom form is the 'Medical Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (MOLST)' form, which includes sections for 'Do-Not-Resuscitate (DNR) and other Life-Sustaining Treatments (LST)' and 'RESUSCITATION INSTRUCTIONS (ONLY for Patients in Cardiopulmonary Arrest)'. The MOLST form also includes a section for 'SEND FORM WITH PATIENT/RESIDENT WHENEVER TRANSFERRED OR DISCHARGED'.

For more information about these four steps, illustrated by the story of a woman whose mother died from Alzheimer's Disease, please watch this [video](#).

Medical Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment (MOLST) MOLST is recommended for individuals who want to avoid or receive any or all life-sustaining treatment; People who reside in a long-term care facility or receive long-term care services; or anyone who might die within the next year. It has been adopted by New York state to translate people's preferences about end-of-life care into medical orders.

The MOLST program is designed to improve the quality of care people receive at the end of life. MOLST is based on effective communication of patient wishes, documentation of medical orders on a bright pink form, and a promise by healthcare professionals to honor these wishes. It contains valid medical orders that must be followed by all health care professionals. MOLST is not intended to replace traditional advance directives like the Health Care Proxy and Living Will.

For additional information and videos about MOLST, advance care planning and other end-of-life issues, please visit: www.CompassionAndSupport.org or www.SharingYourWishes.net

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