



Conversation Starters

Talking to your loved one about end-of-life care can be difficult. Here are some ideas to assist with starting the conversation. This discussion takes the burdens of decision making off the family and ensures that the patient's wishes are being followed.

- **Find An Example from Your Family**

Think of a relative who died long enough ago that the emotion has passed, but the memories are still there.

"Does anyone know how Great Aunt Dorothy died? No one ever talked about it then. I wonder if she died at home."

- **Find an Example from the News**

These examples are, sadly, plentiful and much less personal.

"Did you hear about the woman who has been in a coma for 3 years? Please make sure that never happens to me!"

- **Use a Conversation Prop**

Discuss a book or movie with your loved ones (whomever will make decisions for you) that deals with end of life situations. After, use the story to springboard your own discussion about end of life wishes.

Examples: *Tuesdays With Morrie*, *The Notebook*, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

- **Credit Someone Else for the Conversation**

Sometimes it's easier just to offset the blame.

"Pastor Jones raised the question about what choices we would make at the ends of our lives, and I realized I don't know what your choices would be.... any thoughts?"