

STUDY OF THE GLOBAL MOVEMENT – “DYING WELL”

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Abstract

There is a colossal need for enhancement in clinical education surrounding the approach wherein complicated end of life news is delivered and the way to initiate dialogue with seriously ill patients and their families is important. The common observation is that a truthful conversations in the early stages with terminal patients concerning their diagnoses and advance medical directives could help the patients and their families take a well consulted decisions regarding future medical care, and also reduce their pain and anxiety. It allows patients to experience a “peaceful death”. Furthermore, end-of-life conversations normally focus on recovery plans (advance directives), but they should be broadened to contain the patients’ psychosocial, physical, and economic concerns. An apparent, sensible, and responsive end-of-life conversation can help the patients preserve autonomy and dignity in the dying process and increase their quality of life as they near death. Additionally, initiating these conversations can alleviate emotional stress and physical symptoms, and also prevent the persistent, expensive, preventable, and unwanted care. It helps grieving families through the bereavement procedure, and increase patients’ contentment with end-of-life care provisions.

Keywords : *Death, end-of-life, death doula, green burials, wellness*

Introduction

It’s called the “death positive” movement, and everything around dying is getting radically rethought—from making the experience more humane to mourning and funerals getting reimaged to people actively exploring death as part of a mentally healthy life. Finally, a “better death” is becoming integral to the idea of a “well life.”

By Beth McGroarty

It’s difficult to write a wellness trend with “death” or “dying” in the title. Today despite the fact that every minute 100 people around the world die, the act of death has become intensely untainted, veiled, lonely and scary. Until the early 20th century people died at home surrounded by their loved ones. Western medicine has made death an unemotionally clinical affair in a hospital or nursing home. In addition to this, the funeral industry co-opted the management of our dead – and with a steep decline in formal religion, rituals of communal got lost. And two very modern forces are complicit in creating an increasingly death-denying society:

1. A Silicon Valley biotech industry that now aims to “cure death” and radically extend life
2. The wellness world itself, with its insistent stay young, do-this-and-don’t-age messages

We talk ad nauseam about anxiety’s impact on our wellbeing, but our collective death anxiety is so great we can’t even seem to broach the topic. The problem is so astonishing that it sometimes seems that the only thing we humans do is actively shut our eyes to the one fact about life that we all must die.

The subdued always returns back, and perhaps it’s because our attitudes and practices around death have got so unwell, that we are suddenly seeing major change: the rise of what is being dubbed a “death positive” movement that is reimagining pretty much everything around death and dying—from better ways to experience it to the invention of new rituals around how we mourn and memorialize people to people actively exploring death and spiritually diverse cultural death traditions—as part of any mentally “well life.”

People are now thinking of how people are cared for at the end of life. Hence, there is a rise in a cult of a novel practitioner called the death doula, who fills the gap in the care between medication and hospice, families and their fears and are dedicated to giving the dying a better, more significant and peaceful death. Funerals are now getting less gloomy and formal. They are getting extremely

personal due to the rise of celebratory “living funerals” to the come back of creative home funerals. There is radical experimentation going on how we can dispose of and sanctify our dead. There is a rush for all kinds of eco-friendly green burials that “replant” the dead, back in nature. This has given rise to many platforms and seminars to just talk about the topic, which have made the death cafes very popular. Some people are exploring alternative understanding and practices around death from cultures around the globe including guided death meditations at a Zen Buddhist Center or studying the ancient Stoics’ death acceptance techniques or just downloading the WeCroak app, which dishes up Tibetan meditations daily, reminding us of the ultimate death.

The media has successfully dismissed the topic stating it is not so important right now, but we’re observing signs of a desperate awakening regarding the silence surrounding death and how it effects our life and the world around. This movement was inspired by the announcement at the Global Wellness Summit (GWS) of the new Global Wellness Institute’s Healthy Aging Initiative, spearheaded by Amy McDonald, owner of wellness consultancy Under a Tree, and Liz Terry, CEO of Leisure Media & Well Media. Their mission was to drive home a practical, positive change in the way people age and die. As McDonald put it, “The wellness world has been obsessed with ‘living well,’ and the relentless focus has been all about staying beautiful and young. But we now must tackle dying well—not only to help people accept the reality but to make this monumental life transition somehow better—or how can we lay claim to ‘wellness’ at all?”

Since the socially recognized traditions are seeing a decline, new rituals have made their way in, including the death practices which are fuelling the trend. In 2018 Pew Research Center conducted a global survey which showed that people around the world still believe in religious identity, but the formal religious practice is on the decline. A striking age gap has been observed – out of 106 countries that were studied, the adults under the age group of 40 are significantly less affiliated to a religious group than those over 40 years of age. The world seem to be getting more secular and pessimistic, and with the recognized religions not “handling” as many of our deaths as they used to, therefore the new rituals are creating a place themselves. There is an increase in the number of people who are adopting a “hybrid” approach of spirituality, where one might go for a typical Hindu family vacation and also train themselves in yoga or meditation. The Harvard Divinity School researchers Casper ter Kuile and Angie Thurston have dubbed this phenomenon as a religious “unbundling,” which refers to people picking and choosing rudiments of different spiritual traditions and this has been explained how belonging to a wellness studio, such as CrossFit and Soulcycle, functions as a religion for their members. The internet is playing a major role in dispersing varied information and people are increasingly gathering more ideas about spiritual traditions including death traditions from a different regions and this is giving rise to a more individualized approach to how we want to die.

Treatment of the lonely, aging and near to death population have ended in numerous horrendous deaths. Until the 20th century, nursing the sick and dying and eventually the funeral was handled at home. But in the West, caring for the dying has taken a awful drop. Death has been taken over by the medical industry. Patients die in the cold environment of hospitals and nursing homes. And while hospital services reached homes in the last few decades to provide pain relief in the concluding weeks of the patient, it served only a small percentage of the world’s population. The concentrated urbanization of the world adds to the disengagement and loneliness of the old, sick and dying and hence an increase with many people dying alone. In aging country of Japan (where one in four people are over the age of 65), this distressing reality is so common locally that it has a name, “kodokushi,” or “lonely death”. It has been observed that the dead bodies are not found for weeks together. In 2017 a well admired Japanese magazine echoed the alarming anxiety that there are “4,000 lonely deaths a week” in the country, with too many people dying discontented and inhumane deaths.

The Baby Boomers are entering into the death years and are not accepting a appalling end-of-life :

The senior most of the baby boomer generation who are born in between 1946 and 1964 are currently in their 70s. They are a generation who redefined aging and pioneered the wellness movement and now poised to redefine dying as they face their own transience. They have elaborated the journey from end-of-life care to what the future of funerals and burials will be. An UK-based *Beyond*, a funeral cost-shopping site made to the headlines in 2018 when it ran a series of advertisements designed hilariously shuddering up the taboo around the concept of death. A “never-die” Silicon Valley & never-age wellness market regarding collision course with healthy attitudes toward death.

It is observed that there are two trending forces that are increasingly intensifying the death-denying culture that we live in. One is a chain of high-tech start-ups, mostly from the global Silicon Valley that aspire to “cure death” and radically extend human life. The second is the wellness industry that increasingly sells a “life” which is an unrelenting chase of no aging and no dying.

The media carried headlines about the Silicon Valley billionaire investors who are now keen on “curing death”, this vocal new breed of “longevity entrepreneurs” look at death as just another computer code to be cracked, and with the help of new biotech ventures aim of delivering long lives in the near future. Their approaches are too diverse to discuss, but one excellent overview is the *New Yorker’s* “*Silicon Valley’s Quest to Live Forever.*” Many billions are being exhausted for this purpose. Mark Zuckerberg launched a \$3 billion initiative to eliminate human diseases. PayPal founder Peter Thiel, expresses that he is “against death,” and has poured heaps of money into life extension start-ups. Oracle founder Larry Ellison has ploughed hundreds of scientist and millions of his wealth into anti-aging research. Google launched the biotech company Calico (which secured \$1.5 billion) to “solve death,” but reports are that they are experimenting by testing molecules on mice to see if they extend lives. The United Therapeutics is putting in a lot of efforts for growing new organs from people’s DNA. The most controversial company Ambrosia Medical, is steadily specializing in young blood/plasma transfusions that would reverse aging. It is now all ready to open its first clinic in Manhattan. The independent agency called the National Academy of Medicine is investing \$25 million for any breakthroughs that will “end aging forever.”

There are some technologists keen on using AI and robotics to extend our “life” and “minds” indefinitely. Elon Musk has argued we need to become cyborgs which is a portmanteau of cybernetic and organism. It is a organism with both organic and biomechatronic body parts. The term was coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes. This initiative is made to survive the approaching robot insurgence, and Elon Musk’s brain-computer interface company Neuralink wants to create a new era of trans humanism, this 2045 initiative has a mission of uploading our personalities into an artificial brain and when we die continue to live on as virtual holograms floating around space.

The *New Yorker* comments that every announcement of a research breakthrough on reversing aging has been followed by hindrances, but some of them are closer to reality and ready for the market. *Unity* a biotech company with investors such as Jeff Bezos and Thiel, is the pioneer in eliminating senescent (or what they call “zombie”) cells, which spread chronic inflammation in the body and are related to things such as dementia and cognitive decline. Their trials show that treatments can delay cancer and increase median lifespan in mice by 35 percent. Their first human trial is underway, but their solution did not thump the market as yet. With the discovery of gene-editing tool CRISPR, scientists are now more confident that they are on the thresh hold of a disease-eliminating, anti-aging gene therapy era. Further the Harvard researchers have identified 45 promising, live-very-long gene variants, which include samples from people who have lived upto 110. There are some already existing approaches with promising research which say, taking Metformin, the diabetes medication may reduce DNA damage and keep the cells healthy for a longer time or Rapamycin, an immune suppressant that keeps the aging cells in control by regularly reproducing.

The wellness world remains complicit in denying aging & death

The wellness planet has been cornered for many things, from being too wealthy to too pallid. Often, the criticism is sharpening around how it is constantly marketing its self-optimization due to which the anti-aging cures is inducing the fear of aging and death. Professor Sheldon Solomon, Professor of psychology at the Skidmore College is one of the thinkers who forged the Theory of Terror Management in the 1980s. He argued that all our conscious and subconscious anxieties about death are responsible of what we keep doing, and recently quoted “Wellness is a 21st-century secular belief system that, psychologically speaking, is fundamentally directed at avoiding death anxiety...Because, in part, it’s convincing oneself that the right regimen of diet and exercise will either keep you perpetually young or... perpetually alive.” This critique is also at the front-and-center in cellular biologist Barbara Ehrenreich’s provocative but honest book published in 2018. Sheldon Solomon, in her book *Natural Causes: An Epidemic of Wellness, the Certainty of Dying, and Killing Ourselves to Live Longer*, argues that the two defining factors of modern life, a perpetually medicalized existence and a highly commercialized wellness sector that equates health with virtue, are conspiring to make us radically unprepared for aging and dying... turning it into some kind of unnecessary evil or personal failure. Most of the stakeholders in the wellness sector follow to reject the position of Silicon Valley technologists who are claiming for a world where “death is optional”. The squabble now is whether an individual aims to live for more than a century or even older, then in that case what would be the intensity of social, economic, moral and environmental issues related to that extended life. There is already a crunch of resources, and the carbon foot prints is heading towards a global disaster. Will there be a possibility to choose between stretched lives and reproduction by sanctioning zero population growth. We need to contemplate – How the world will appear without new generations. Who would take the responsibility of looking after the aged and very old citizens. Is social welfare and social security prepared enough to sustain this uncalled change. Another very critical issue is the concern of wealth inequality, because with the given price tags of the life extension technologies, there will be a world where only the rich don’t grow old.

To understand how we disembarked into the moment where death is denied and feared in unprecedented ways, both the medical and wellness sector need to struggle with their responsibility. With advancement in the medical field, it is now very dramatically pushing the extension of life, along with the wellness care that promises stay “forever young,” the problem has only ratcheted up with irreversible consequences. It is predicted that the death-positive movement, will only keep growing as a remedial criticism.

Features of the Setting Trend

- 1. Rise of the death doula** - The rise of death doulas is an important aspect of the Dying Well trend. They believe inventing the new and restoring the lost. Death is highly influenced by medicines and goes unseen and lonely. Hospitals provide the much needed soothing care, but a support gap exists. There is a need for caregivers that give the dying their full attention and companionship and work extensively to meet their unique physical, emotional and spiritual needs during their bizarre last days. It’s a painfully yet pressing cultural need, and to meet this, a new class of wellness practitioner, called the death doula also known as a soul midwife / End of Life Doula, or EOLDs is arising speedily. These practitioners give support to the dying by focusing on the emotional, psychological and spiritual side of the dying, as well as many more practical things. They augment the dying experience for patients their family members and friends. They help strengthening the relationship between medical fraternity (the doctors, nurses, social workers) and non-medical support (the family or caretakers) This concept was born in 2003 when a New York Center hospice social worker named Henry Fersko-Weiss was perturbed by the care that medical staff were giving to the

dying patients and their sad, stressed-out families. He knew how birth doulas (an ancient Greek term that referred to a woman servant/helper) helped women during childbirth, so with this concept in mind he designed the first professional training program to coach death doulas (also called as end-of-life “midwives,” “transition guides” or “end-of-life integrative nurses”). They were taught how to provide the right emotional support and environment for dying people. Today the death doula movement is trouncing the tipping-point traction. It is the magic moment when the idea of death doulas is become a trend and spreading wildly to other countries such as the US, UK, Canada, Australia, Brazil and Mexico. Ellen Goodman, a famed newspaper columnist and founder of the Conversation Project, which is a influential platform dedicated to helping people talk about their wishes for end-of-life care. Earlier “Birth was perceived as a medical event, followed by the women’s movement. It wasn’t doctors who changed the way we give birth...It was women who said that giving birth was a human event...Dying is a human experience. We’re trying to put the person back into the centre of the experience.” Death doulas are trained to deliver kind, honest and continuous support before, during and after death occurs. And while the spectrum of what they provide varies, they’re essentially inventing new and restoring the lost but optimistic and personal rituals around the dying, and creating an out of the ordinary freedom around the event. An important aspect of what they do is to actively engage the individual dying in the process, not only by helping them do soul work, such as talking to them about their fears and anxiety which otherwise no one ever does. They also helping them plan what they most desire in their final days. They converse with the dying and help fulfil their wishes. For instance - What kind of funeral, burial or cremation do you want? “Bucket list” if any. Even, how do they want their social media to be handled after their death? Death doulas report that people are far more comfortable discussing these issues with them rather with friends or family.

The Death doulas help the dying create living legacy projects so they have a creative role in the stories they leave behind. They help them create artistic things, such as memory books and boxes, audio and video recordings, letters, interviews, collages and scrapbooks, so they can review and process, and leave behind, who they really are. They often render services as an engraver and communicator, also helping the dying make a comeback with estranged friends and family members. They also help in writing letters to loved ones which are to be read at a future wedding day or birthday. Death doulas not only sit with the dying and bear peaceful witness, but they also create rituals and experiences to soothe the dying. Respecting each person’s spiritual background, they recite prayers and meditate. They play music which has a soothing effect on the sick and dying people, they light candles for them, hold hands and watch sunsets. Since many death doulas come from the vocation in the healing arts, they often practise traditional wellness such as calming aromatherapy, massage, meditation, conscious breathing exercises, reiki to help with anxiety and pain. They also have the memory-triggering and guided visualizations techniques that can take the dying hiker or surfer on detailed journeys through the forest or on the waves. The death doulas provide immense support to the family and friends of the dying by communicating to them what the patient wants, relieving the bed side relative so that the family gets time to rest, keeping folks informed of their health status, and helping them with the sorrow.

Some doulas are paid by the hour or by an allowance or sometimes are free volunteers, and associations with them can last for days, weeks or months. Some have their own private practices, while others work with hospitals or, voluntary organisations. Looking at the growing popularity there are many doula training programs and businesses coming up around the world. The first institute to train and certify professional death doulas was the non profit International End of Life Doula Association (INELDA), whose directory connects

people to doulas in the US, Canada, Mexico and Brazil. Many training programs are also conducted at Art of Dying Institute, International Doulagivers Institute, Lifespan Doula Association (LDA), Quality of Life Care, the Doula Program to Accompany and Comfort, the Conscious Dying Institute and End of Life Doula-UK. The Death doulas in Australia have received national government accreditation in 2019. In the US, the University of Vermont's College of Medicine just became the first university to offer a Doula Professional Certificate program, and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization in Washington, D.C. formed an end-of-life doula council in 2018—a sign that doulas are really being recognized. Given the keenly needed service they provide—making each death better, more meaningful, and more human—it's no surprise that each of these organizations reports a big rise in inquiries about hiring doulas and doula training. Fersko-Weiss of INELDA thinks that some of insurance companies may start to offer partial reimbursements for their services, just as they have for birth doulas.

2. **Journey from death cafes to death celebrations** - If modern culture is the first to pathologize any interest in death, then there are many more places and platforms to come together and have a real conversation about it. There are many blogs, podcasts and YouTube channels that explore all aspects of death. There are many events, such as Doughty's "death acceptance collective"; The Order of the Good Death, (whose mostly millennial members are academics, artists, funeral industry professionals, etc.), which hosts a number of events around the world, such as Death Salons that explore ways to "prepare a death phobic culture for their inevitable mortality"; or the weeklong Reimagine End of Life Festivals held in NYC and San Francisco, with hundreds of workshops, performances and exhibits all exploring death. More cemeteries are becoming places of both fun social gathering and death exploration. For example, Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn hosts cocktail parties, performances, moonlit tours and yoga classes and is home to Morbid Anatomy, which hosts art exhibits, lectures and conversations on how death and culture intersect. Today the Death Cafes, are a formal movement incubated in London in 2011 in the basement of the home of a man named Jon Underwood. He created the notion of people coming together to drink a cup of tea, eat cake, and talk pointedly about all things related to death and the dying. Underwood created a website and guidelines for productive discussions, and now there are over 7,500 death cafes held in 63 countries, from large cities to rural camps. People gather in restaurants and other spaces to talk openly about everything they want to know about death and dying. People attending the discussion report there's always a lot of laughter...that sure sign of catharsis and relief.

Green, or woodland, burials are on the rise. The body is wrapped in a plain shroud made of natural fibers and placed directly in the ground or in a biodegradable coffin made of bamboo or seaweed or unfinished pine or oak or handwoven willow baskets, such as those available at Ecoffins. There are typically just simple markers, such as trees, or locations are only identifiable by GPS.

3. **The radical rethinking of funerals** - People say almost everything in life gets "disrupted," but in the case of funerals, it's simply not true. We know what happens formally in religions for instance, if you're Muslim, your body is bathed and shrouded in white cloth before the community gathers to recite the prayer for the dead, if you're Catholic, the last rites are initiated at the bedside followed by a formal Mass. But as people become less attached to formal religions or have embraced a life of more flexible spiritual identities and as more people see the memorial as more about representing a unique person rather than a religious practice, the funerals are too being rewritten in every way possible. People are creating more

individualistic, less “funereal” celebrations...a whole new world of farewells. There’s the rise of “living funerals,” gatherings that celebrate a dying person while they’re still alive, and where the person of honor can be part of the festivities. These are not hushed, gloomy events: The person facing death and their friends and family eat, drink, laugh and tell stories (they’ve even been called FUN-erals). And it would seem to have real psychological benefits: The dying person and their loved ones can show gratitude toward each other, grieve together, and leave fewer things unsaid. Many more people are holding the funeral themselves, with services conducted by friends and family and filled with music and personal and video tributes, even allowing Skype dial-ins from faraway friends. The new funeral is about orchestrating something that really captures *that* person, whether at home, an event space, a mountaintop or the beach. More people are also embracing “home funerals,” cutting out the pricey undertaker-middleman and restoring the profound physical rituals and closeness that we used to show loved ones before the 20th century. Family and friends are now preparing the body (using dry ice to extend the time before cremation/burial) even building the casket or digging the burial site together. It’s not illegal to do, and people are improvising. Destination funerals are also on the rise, where people are laid to rest someplace in the world that they most deeply loved.

4. **A more transparent and unorthodox funeral industry** - The funeral business was known to have people over a barrel. The services delivered created stressed out audience, the practices were very mysterious and prices uncompetitive. The average American funeral runs around \$9,000, while in Japan it can run many tens of thousands. Today if you check the Internet, you get comparison sites which are providing a clearer window into the available options and prices. And some funeral companies are stripping away the language of hand-wringing gloom-and-doom to create a different, less clichéd, conversation about death and funerals. The UK company Beyond, a funeral shopping site, made serious headlines in 2018 when it ran a bunch of in-your-face ads aimed at humorously shaking up taboos around death. One involved a happy, young couple running on the beach carrying what looked like surfboards, but that were instead coffins with accompanying text like, a “one-way,” “once-in-a-lifetime” trip with “roasting temperatures” for an all-inclusive price of \$1,570. That would be a cremation. They took a lot of fire but argued, “We’re turning up the volume to 10...to say, ‘Here’s permission to talk about death’” The JWT Intelligence named some funeral companies that were digital, direct-to-consumer turning the business into something shoppable. This was one of their top consumer trends reported for 2019, citing how these innovators are “reshaping long-held cultural norms surrounding death.”
5. **New “burial” practices from radically green to out-of-this-world** - The green burial wave is pushing the sachet to speed up the return to nature. Bios Urn®, the world’s first biodegradable urn, is designed to convert your remains into a tree after life. Different cultures return their dead to the universe in a unique way. Tibetans still practice sky burial, leaving bodies on mountaintops to be picked clean, while the Caviteño in the Philippines place bodies in hollowed-out tree trunks. The US and Canada are unique for adopting embalming, a bizarre practice that started during the Civil War and involves replacing the blood with a formaldehyde-based fluid so the body can then be displayed in a decorative casket and buried in a concrete or steel vault in a grave. Most of the ethnic cultures world over (from Europe to Asia) clinch to some or the other practices of cremation. But now, as the cemeteries become overcrowded landfills and people have become more aware of how environmentally toxic embalmment, vaulted burial and even traditional cremation is, there is a sudden thought and surge in eco-friendlier, simple and cheap “burial” options. We’re seeing

some seriously out-of-the-box thinking about how we want to dispose of and commemorate the dead.

- 6. Replant me is a retreat back to nature burials** - The embalment and non degradable casket method of burial is an Earth killer. Every year in North America almost 800,000 gallons of carcinogenic and contaminating formaldehyde is dumped into the soil, along with 115 million tons of casket steel, 2.3 billion tons of concrete, and non degradable hardwood for caskets that equals four million acres of forest—all of which take centuries to degrade. Cremation is relatively less environmentally destructive, but estimates are that the energy required to cremate one body is equal to driving 4,800 miles and cremation still spews toxic carbon dioxide, dioxin and mercury into the atmosphere. Cremation, in general, is on the rise, in part because of the much lower costs. Since a traditional funeral is sky rocketing, more people are following David Bowie in his choice for a no-frills direct cremation , where ashes are returned to friends and family for scattering at the cost of around \$1,000. Presently people are more eco-conscious and they accept these facts, but the imposing a demand for greener burials which also represents a deep psychic need that we have to return back to nature, and to be reinstated after death to a mysterious place which goes through the eternal cycling and recycling. That's the reason why green, or woodland, burials are on the rise, where the principle is that everything that goes into the ground or sea must be as biodegradable as the body. The process goes like this - the body is wrapped in a plain shroud made of natural fibers (the company Vale offers personalized, artisanal ones), and the body is either placed directly in the ground or in a biodegradable coffin made of bamboo or seaweed or unfinished pine or oak or handwoven willow baskets that are available at Ecoffins or the Natural Burial Company. There is no concrete vault to bury, so the hole is dug only a few feet from the surface: far enough down so it's protected from animals but shallow enough so the aerobic bacteria can assimilate the cells. With green burials, there are no tombstones, just simple markers such as trees or which are only identifiable by GPS—and people are typically buried in unspoiled woodland rather than crowded cemeteries. Even the cremation processes are going green. People are insisting on biodegradable urns (made of Himalayan sea salt or gourds) or those from Bios Urn made of a coconut shell and peat that contain the seeds of the tree that the person likes. Many people are choosing “wet cremation” (or decomposition or alkaline hydrolysis), which uses water and a salt-based solution to rapidly dissolve human remains, returning only ash to the family, and releases no chemicals and uses 80 percent less energy than regular cremation. The green burial wave is creating ripples. You can buy a mushroom burial suit (such as those from Coeio) lined with flesh-eating fungi that speed up your return to nature—the choice of famed organic chef Alice Waters. You can be turned into an “eternal reef” and become part of a living ocean habitat. Your cremated remains are mixed into a cement artificial-reef formation (such as those provided by Eternal Reefs). A Swedish company called Promessa has created a way (using liquid nitrogen and sound waves) to break down a body into compost in just 6–12 months to grow a tree or garden. An Italian art project recently made waves with its biodegradable egg-shaped burial pods called Capsula Mundi, where a buried body or ashes feeds a tree planted directly above it—the perfect (and Instagrammable) eco-memorial. Wherever you look, you see a world thinking beyond the rickety old cemetery. In a high-tech columbarium in Tokyo, ashes are stored in crystal Buddhas that line the walls, and, when visitors come, they simply type in a name and “their” Buddha glows a different color. People's ashes are being turned into records (complete with recordings of the loved one's voice) or jewelry, such as Eterneva, which turns human ashes into diamonds. Companies (such as the Russian SpaceWay) will send your ashes off into the stratosphere, and your family can watch your final space launch on GoPro cameras. (Although that can't be too eco-friendly.) An Italian art project made waves with its

biodegradable egg-shaped burial pods called Capsula Mundi. The buried body or ashes feed a tree planted directly above, creating an Instagrammable eco-memorial.

7. **Exploring death becomes part of a healthy life** – Many experts agree that denying death causes serious mental issues, and when we bury it, it doesn't stay rested. For instance, Shelden Solomon, Jeff Greenberg and Tom Pyszczynski have made careers out of studying what death awareness does to our behaviour and mental wellness. They have conducted over 600 lab experiments and in the year 2018. Their research states that repressed death anxiety manifests in strange ways. They believe that acknowledging that some day we'll die...makes us better people and more grateful for our experiences. Dr. Deepak Chopra has argued that the fear of death is one of the greatest forms of stress hurting human health and that understanding our inevitable death is as critical to wellbeing as good sleep, nutrition, meditation and yoga. (The wellness guru recently noted that he's "obsessed with death these days.") All philosophical and spiritual traditions instruct that thinking regularly about death reduces our fear and living meaningful, wherein more of joy is extracted out of every living day.
8. **Seeking death knowledge from other cultures** - people find knowledge about death in the religion they're born to. But with some people adopting a hybrid spiritual identity and looking at their life as a stable, graceful soul-seeking, they are actively exploring the practices around death from other cultures. Just by opening your mind towards the different cultures of death is a therapy itself. That's the point of Caitlin Doughty's book, *From Here to Eternity: Travelling the World to Find the Good Death*, which journeys around the world, from Indonesia to Bolivia, to intimately experience rituals that may at first seem wildly foreign to us, such as children sharing beds with their mummified grandfathers or experiencing an open-air funeral pyre in Colorado. For many people, Buddhist traditions around death hold a special fascination and attraction because the philosophical awareness of death and the acceptance of the idea that nothing remains forever and change is inevitable, more people are turning to Buddhist instruction, which asks you to meditate on death and impermanence as a powerful corrective to our narrow-minded concerns. The New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care takes a Buddhist approach to death and provides a program for training doctors, nurses and caregivers in contemplative end-of-life care to handling the bereaved family and friends. Many travel to immerse themselves in cross-cultural death traditions and experiences, a kind of "death tourism" for instance to the spiritual capital of Hinduism in Varanasi, India, where millions of Indians travel to die and be cremated on the banks of the Ganges with the intention of achieving liberation from reincarnation and to get into nirvana
9. **The death-accepting Stoics are trending** - Stoicism teaches the development of self-control and fortitude as a means of overcoming destructive emotions. Stoicism, a philosophical tradition has its roots in ancient Athens but popularized in Rome by Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus and Seneca, is recently attracting serious interest as a set of practices to live well. The word "stoic" is casually meant for a ailing patient, but Stoic philosophy is actually a set of real life practices that involve constant acknowledgment that most things are beyond our control except the control of our minds and that trains us how to achieve calm indifference toward chaotic, cruel, frustrating and uncertain external life. Stoicism has been described as the original "self-help" book and "Buddhism with an attitude," and it's majorly trending with online communities, conferences and workshops as well as being the hot topic for mental wellness approach among Silicon Valley executives, entrepreneurs, elite athletes and politicians. At the core of Stoicism is acceptance and management of the fear of death. While we recollect the richness of the ancient thinkers' meditations on death, the point is that

a Stoic confronts the inevitability of death constantly, meditating on it in a practice called “memento mori,” which involves a “death rehearsal” or actively contemplating your own death and the death of your loved ones daily. You meditate on the vastness of the universe and putting your own brief existence in context of death.

10. **Psychic mediums & spirit guides** - We need to acknowledge how a new age of mediums, whose eventual purpose is to get people the messages and guidance from their deceased family and friends and their “spiritual guides”, is very much trending. Mediums, such as Tyler Henry, Laura Lynne Jackson or Erica Korman, are the new wellness gurus, and they’re leading group, connect-with-the-dead happenings in cities all over. And whether you’re a believer or not, anyone that has experienced them will likely feel that they function as a kind of empathic group therapy where people work out unresolved issues with those who are gone and collectively explore loss and death. Because these “new mediums” have had a starring role at Goop conferences (Goop’s website has an entire section on death and wellness), they have been eviscerated by some corners of the media as an example of the wellness world exploiting and commodifying death. But rather than snarkily dismissing the phenomenon, it obviously expresses some real need. After all, famed French sociologist Emile Durkheim in his seminal work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* wrote: “The...most fantastic rites and the strangest myths translate some human need, some aspect of life, either individual or social,” and the new spirit-guide-summoning medium experiences evidence a hunger to make sense of our beloveds’ deaths and to hash it out as a community. And the world—and the wellness world—should ponder hard why the most passionately sought-after (yes, trendy) wellness experiences right now involve the “switching on” of belief—whether shamans or crystals or mediums. The new genre of architects and urban city planners are re-imagining new, eco-friendly public spaces to accommodate and remember the dead. Columbia University’s DeathLAB has created projects like the Constellation Park, where glowing pods are illuminated by the organic energy given off by a loved one’s biomass. The pods get suspended from a Manhattan bridge and would twinkle for a year and the entire city could experience their presence from miles away. I

11. **Travelling and preparing to die well** - The term “death tourism” typically refers to people travelling to places (such as the seven US states, the Netherlands or Switzerland) where the suffering and terminally ill can arrange medically-assisted suicide, for instance Dignitas, of the Swiss society has helped over 2,100 people die humanely. Though unusual but the term may start to mean much more than it seems to be. GWS keynote speaker and renowned wellness-spaces designer Clodagh has stated, “If I found out I had a few months to live, I would go to a spa.” And in talking to wellness travel insiders, we found out that a rising number of people with terminal diagnoses do, in fact, do just that—either for a healing, peaceful, stress-reducing retreat before they return home to face death—or even to die there. This is not something a wellness resort will reveal or promote—we couldn’t get any names.

Conclusion and the future of Dying Well

Death is a growing business. This is not a bitter and devious statement but a devastating fact. Life spans are growing worldwide, much longer than ever before. There is an increase by 30 yrs in the last century. The World Health Organization forecasts that global deaths will jump from 56 million in 2015 to 70 million by 2030 which is a staggering 25 percent growth. Looking at the developed countries, the 80yrs - 90 year-old category is the fastest-increasing population, which means we are both living longer and dying slower. It is perceived that most of the population will die from chronic diseases, along with physical and mental wellness issues, such as cognitive decline, loneliness and a craving for spiritual support. How to care for these people at the end of their lives is one of the

biggest wellness challenges the world faces. As we've seen during the research, there's a whole new movement brewing about being more open about death, with people actively working on their fears, approaching to make the dying better and more humane. In this scenario death under review will ramp up the funeral proceedings.

Some disagree that "wellness" is by nature an ever-shifting concept that serves to fill the missing gap. It is a fast-growing market because it addresses the needs that are unmet. The medical fraternity has not put sufficient resources into the end-of-life care and research. The medical experts suggest that demand for analgesic care is expected to rise by 50 percent by 2040. There are remarkable instances in the traditional wellness world, such as the Wellness for Cancer Initiative headed by Julie Bach that trains hotels, spas and beauty companies about how to deliver the right therapies the right way for people that have suffered cancer. (ref 2017 trend, "Embracing the C Word") to understand the role of wellness in cancer treatment. There is a need for new wellness solutions tailored made for the ailing and dying people.

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