Advance Care Planning (ACP): A Gift for Your Loved Ones

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Best Gift…

What’s the best gift you’ve ever received?

- Love
- Children
- New Car
- Someone else’s AD
What are the benefits of planning?
Why we call it a Gift...

- A person’s voice can be heard. (Even when they cannot speak!)
- Family and health care providers can be relieved of a challenging moral burden.
- Receive the treatment you want that honors you!
- A reliable document to guide health care agent and is stored and retrieved as needed
Why Should We Plan???
Prior to antibiotics, people died quickly of infectious disease or accidents.

Medicine focused on caring and comfort.

At some point everyone passed away.
Today . . .

We can keep you alive for thousands of years
Today...

- New advance “magic” technology
- Death “may be” an option
- Yet at some point, everyone still passes away
So... Why Don’t We Plan....
How People See Themselves

Photo by Tom Hussey
How People See Themselves

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How People See Themselves

Photo by Tom Hussey
Or We Think....

We’re Too Young & Nothing will Ever Happen to Us!
Why is Advance Care Planning So Important?

It puts you in the drivers seat of your own health care journey.
Why is Advance Care Planning So Important?

It helps protect against back seat drivers making uninformed decisions.
What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance Care Planning is a process to allow competent adults to guide their medical care at times when they are unable to speak for themselves.

Advance Directive = The Outcome - Noun
A document, a tool for healthcare decision making.

Advance Care Planning = A Process - Verb
A journey, honoring patient wishes
Why are People Hesitant to Begin the ACP Process?

These crucial conversations can be challenging!

And we often wait until life is hanging by the threads
These conversations should begin far in advance of a medical crisis

...around the kitchen table

...rather than the ICU bed.
Who Can Speak for the Patient?

Selected family member or friend

Guardian or conservator

Closest available relative
Carefully Select and Inform a Health Care Agent (ONE primary person)

The person that you select should be someone who...

- Is 18 years of age
- You can discuss your values and goals.
- Is willing to accept this responsibility.
- Is able to follow your wishes.
- Is able to make decisions in stressful situations.

The person does not have to...

- Be local
- Be a spouse or the oldest child
If You have a Serious Illness...

Create a more detailed plan that includes the likely progression and what the desired medical interventions

Begin talking to your health care provider early
Life Sustaining Treatment

- CPR
- Ventilation
- Respirator
- Dialysis
- Artificial Feeding
- Artificial Hydration
- Pacemaker
- Surgery
- Chemo/Radiation
Know with Confidence...

My healthcare agent clearly understands...

- Your wishes
- What matters most to you
- What’s quality of life to you
- When medical treatment should be continued or discontinued.
The Advance Healthcare Directive

There are many… There are No Magical Documents
Put Your Preferences in Writing

There’s no “magical” document.

“Color Outside of the Lines”

Caregiving & EOLOA desires

Have it properly witnessed

Utilize a wallet card.
When Your Written Plan is Completed, Make Copies for...

- Your health care agent
- Your physician
- The hospital you would most likely utilize
- Register AHCD with CA Secretary of State
Review and Update Your Plan

Review your plan when any of the “Five D’s” occur:

- **Decade** of your life.
- **Death** of a loved one.
- **Divorce** or major family change.
- **Diagnosed** with a serious health condition.
- **Decline** in your functional abilities.

As long as you have decisional capacity you can change your advance directive at any time.
Remember...
The Conversation is the most important part

So Talk to These People!!!
POLST

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment
What is POLST?

A physician order recognized throughout the medical system.

Portable document that transfers with the patient.

Brightly colored, standardized form for entire state of CA.
Who Would Benefit from Having a POLST Form?

Someone with a...

- Chronic, progressive illness.
- Serious health condition.
- Medically frail.
- Someone who definitely does not want to be resuscitated.
When Your POLST is Completed...

Place on refrigerator or other visible location

Your health care agent.

Your physician.

The hospital you would most likely utilize.

CA ePOLST Registry
The Advance Directive, POLST & Dementia
The Advance Directive, POLST & Dementia

My Mother’s story...