

## *Lessons Learned on Death & Dying Literature*

*By James Allen Lippold*

Read in preparation for my own death... Jim Lippold. This is a brief summary of highlights from the wisdom of the authors of the following books:

- The Five Invitations by Frank Ostaseski;
- A Beginner's Guide to the End by BJ Miller & Shoshana Berger;
- Preparing To Die by Andrew Holecek;
- Advice On Dying by His Holiness the Dalai Lama;
- Final Journeys by Maggie Callanan;
- Advice For Future Corpses by Sallie Tisdale;
- On Life After Death by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross;
- Live your best life with insight and intention-LivingWisely  
<https://www.livingwisely.org/individuals>;
- Japanese Death Poems written by Zen Monks & Haiku Poets on the Verge of Death;
- The Art of Dying Well by Katy Butler, Legacy Letters from the Heart by Beth LaMie.



- "Love & Death are the great gifts that are given to us, mostly, they are passed on, unopened." -Rainer Maria Rilke
- Don't Wait. Make good use of your time, have a sense of urgency.
- Try to be a good person with a good heart, help others. Life's biggest lesson is to learn to love. Cultivate love and compassion. The purpose of every life is to grow in wisdom and to learn to love better.
- Look Forward, Let Go, Relax, especially at the time of death.
- Practice mindfulness, minimize distractions, live in the present and go with the flow.
- Cut desire, attachments, and self-cherishing.
- Welcome everything, push away, avoid, resist and deny nothing.
- Accept the impermanence of all things. The truth of life is that it's one constant is change. A tomorrow when you are gone is undoubtedly coming. Try to reflect on a tomorrow without you in the world.
- Death is definite, the time of death is indefinite. A good death is one free from avoidable distress and suffering for patients, families and caregivers; in general accord

with patients' and families' wishes and reasonably consistent with clinical, cultural and ethical standards.

- Do no harm.
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: At the moment of death, we are met by our guardian angel and those who have passed before us to guide us and protect us and to surround us with total & absolute unconditional love, understanding and compassion. They meet us to help guide the transition from this life to life after death. No one ever truly dies alone. Death does not exist. We know from the thousands of people who have had near death experiences and who have come back from death that this is not merely a mental projection or wishful thinking but reality and a fact. I truly know not just believe that these existences beyond the realm of our scientific understanding are true, are reality, are something available to all human beings.
- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross writes: "My real job is, and this is why I need your help, to tell people that death does not exist. It is very important that mankind knows this, for we are at the beginning of a very difficult time. Not only for this country, but for the whole planet earth. Because of our own destructiveness. Because of nuclear weapons. Because of our greediness and materialism. Because we are piggish in terms of ecology, because we have destroyed so many, many natural resources, and because we have lost all genuine spirituality. I'm exaggerating, but not too much. The only thing that will bring about the change into a new age is that the earth is shaken, that we are shaken, and we are going to be shaken. We have already seen the beginning of it. You have to know not to be afraid. Only if you keep a very, very open channel, an open mind, and no fear will great insight and revelations come to you. You do not have to have a guru, you do not have to go to India, you don't even have to take a TM course. You don't have to do anything except learn to get in touch, in silence, within yourself. Get in touch with your own inner self and learn not to be afraid. One way to not be afraid is to know that death does not exist, that everything in this life has a positive purpose. Get rid of all your negativity and begin to view life as a challenge, a testing ground of your own inner resources and strength. There are no coincidences. After you make the transition, you will not be judged by a judgmental God, but rather you will judge yourself by reviewing every single action, every word and every thought of your life."
- If we are duly prepared, I can promise that the moment of death will be an experience of rejoicing. If we are not prepared, it will surely be a time of fear and regret. -Anyen Rinpoche
- Sharing the voice of your heart and what truly matters in your life is a meaningful and cherished gift you give to yourself, your loved ones and your community. What: An Ethical Will or Legacy Letter helps you share your values, faith, beliefs, life lessons, hopes for the future, gratitude, love and forgiveness with family, friends and community. They are often referred to as the voice of our heart or a love letter as they can provide personal insights to help inform our life decisions, align our values and wishes along each stage of our journey, and share what matters most in our life.
- When you create an Ethical Will/Legacy Letter, you learn a lot about yourself as you journey through this self-reflective process. It is a way to affirm the past and live more

purposefully today and in the future. It allows for putting your personal signature on what universal values mean to you (e.g., love, truth, etc.). It opens the door to forgiving others and being forgiven, which may heal strained relationships. We all want to be remembered, and we all will leave something behind. If we don't preserve and share our values, no one else will, and future generations will be deprived of this precious perspective. What: Life Reflection Stories help you discover the insights, life lessons and nuggets of wisdom gained from your unique experiences, culture and history. They prepare you to live more intentionally going forward, deepen family relationships, and provide loved ones with meaningful examples to help guide them along their life journeys long after you are gone. Unlike lengthy memoirs, life stories or data-driven genealogy reports, Life Reflection Stories are typically comprised of a continuum of short reflective narratives or master stories written any time during your lifetime and shared along the way.

- Stories are what make us human and your personal Life Reflection Stories distinguish you from all other humans. The impact of writing, reflecting and sharing your stories and experiences is profound on two levels. It gives you, the writer, greater perspective and understanding of your own life, even helping you find significance and purpose along each life stage. And it provides your loved ones with insights and wisdom, a connection to their past, a richer understanding of who they are, and tangible examples to help inspire and guide them along their life journeys.
- So many profound gifts result from the generous act of sharing our life lessons, wisdom, culture, resilience, and what truly matters. However, much of what we learn throughout our lifetime is not shared or fully utilized, either personally or by our loved ones.
- House by the Side of the Road (This poem had a strong impact on me as a young man and inspired my simple but profound goal to, " Live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend of man."

### **House by the Side of the Road**

by Sam Walter Foss (1858-1911)

There are hermit souls that live withdrawn  
In the place of their self-content;  
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart,  
In a fellowless firmament;  
There are pioneer souls that blaze the paths  
Where highways never ran-  
But let me live by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.  
Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
Where the race of men go by-  
The men who are good and the men who are bad,  
As good and as bad as I.  
I would not sit in the scorner's seat

Nor hurl the cynic's ban-  
Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.  
I see from my house by the side of the road  
By the side of the highway of life,  
The men who press with the ardor of hope,  
The men who are faint with the strife,  
But I turn not away from their smiles and tears,  
Both parts of an infinite plan-  
Let me live in a house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.  
I know there are brook-gladdened meadows ahead,  
And mountains of wearisome height;  
That the road passes on through the long afternoon  
And stretches away to the night.  
And still I rejoice when the travelers rejoice  
And weep with the strangers that moan,  
Nor live in my house by the side of the road  
Like a man who dwells alone.  
Let me live in my house by the side of the road,  
Where the race of men go by-  
They are good, they are bad, they are weak, they are strong,  
Wise, foolish - so am I.  
Then why should I sit in the scorner's seat,  
Or hurl the cynic's ban?  
Let me live in my house by the side of the road  
And be a friend to man.



All I ask of you is forever to remember me as loving you.