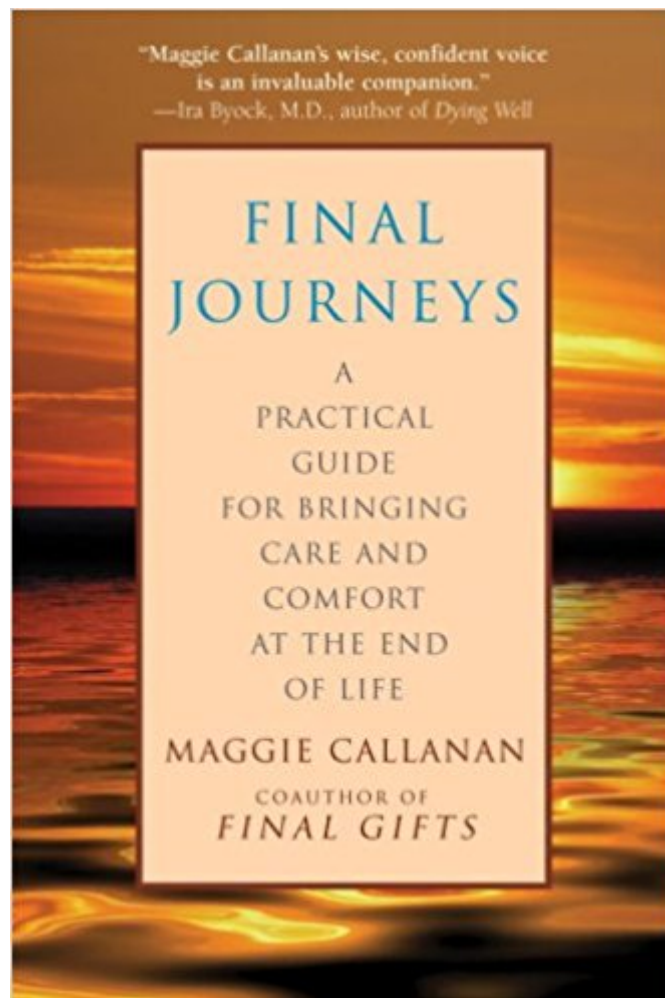




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# Final Journeys: A Practical Guide For Bringing Care And Comfort At The End Of Life



## Synopsis

For more than two decades, hospice nurse Maggie Callanan has tended to the terminally ill and been a cornerstone of support for their loved ones. Now the coauthor of the classic bestseller *Final Gifts* passes along the lessons she has learned from the experts—her patients. Here is the guide we all need to understanding the special needs of the dying and those who care for them. From supporting a husband or wife faced with the loss of a spouse to helping a dying mother prepare her children to carry on without her, Callanan's poignant stories illustrate new ways to meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual challenges of this difficult and precious time. She brings welcome clarity to medical and ethical concerns, explaining what to expect at every stage. Designed to be your companion, resource, and advocate from diagnosis through the final hours, *Final Journeys* will help you keep the lines of communication open, get the help you need, and create the peaceful end we all hope for.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“What do we all want, when we approach the inevitable? For a wise, hilarious, sensitive, and pragmatic nurse to sit at our bedside and tell us truths that are helpful, healing, and humane. Maggie Callanan is just that nurse, and *Final Journeys* is exactly that truth-telling.”—Stephen P. Kiernan, author of *Last Rights: Rescuing the End of Life from the Medical System* “Maggie Callanan is one of the most experienced, smart and fierce hospice nurses I know. Her insights ring true, and her wise, confident voice is an invaluable companion through this unfamiliar and often frightening final journey.”—Ira Byock,

M.D., Professor of Palliative Medicine, Dartmouth Medical School and author of *Dying Well* and *The Four Things That Matter Most* – “Filled with warmth, insight, compassion, and personal stories, *Final Journeys* will prepare you for your own transition, and it is must reading for everyone who has relatives and loved ones who are aging, seriously ill, or dying.” – Bill Guggenheim, co-author of *Hello from Heaven!*

Maggie Callanan, R.N., has specialized in the care of the dying since 1981. She lectures widely to lay and professional audiences on death and dying, bereavement, and hospice care. Maggie is the author of *Final Journeys* and co-author of *Final Gifts*. She lives on the New England coast.

I have terminal pancreatic cancer; in other words, I'm dying. I have searched high and low, read all or parts of many books, searching for something that will explain to my family and friends what is happening to me and how I wish to be treated. In *Final Journeys*, I have finally found something which I wish that all those around me will have read before I die at home with the help of my county's hospice. It is an insightful and sensitive description of what I hope my own death will be like.

In her breakthrough book, *Final Gifts*, hospice nurse Maggie Callanan and co-author Patricia Kelley explored the "nearing death awareness" of last days. That book continues to be for many readers a revelation of what last moments may be like. *Final Journeys* takes a longer view, becoming a travelers' guide for living from the diagnosis of a terminal illness through to nearing death awareness and on to the last breath. Like the author herself, *Final Journeys* is intensely practical and straightforward, flashed with humor and warmed by an all-pervasive empathy. A sampling of chapter titles hints of honest looks at difficult questions: "Don't Tell Mom She's Dying. It'll Kill Her!"

If you are faced with death, or caring for someone who is facing death due to terminal illness (me for wife of 26yrs), this book is very helpful. Neither myself nor my partner are religious, so I really, really appreciated the fact that she does not use god(s) as part of the process of dying. The book is focused in its goal and well summarized through its introduction-- how do we die well ? How do we care for people who face death through a terminal illness that is frightening (eg cancer or ALS). In other words, what is a "good death". I think one of my favorite quotes that I often think about is "It is as normal to die as it is to be born. And yet somehow, when a terminal diagnosis is made, there is often a sense of being robbed. But in truth, dying is our last developmental task. When and how we must confront it is the mystery. The fact that we must is not." I like that.... "last developmental

task" You can read the first chapter online and that will give you a sense of where she is coming from and her writing style. Of her two books, this is definitely the better, although I found the first one useful as well. But *Final Journeys* is a little more polished. Same format -- patient vignettes, used to illustrate the point she is making. Death and the meaning of life of course are incredibly personal things seen through the lens of religion and not. But I think there is enough commonality of experience for all. This book does an incredible balancing act across that spectrum that anyone from the pope to Christopher Hitchens will find its content helpful AND well presented. If you are reading this Maggie Callanan, thanks for the help!

Maggie Callanan shares the knowledge gained from her years working as a hospice nurse. She sees herself as a sort of "birthing coach," at the end of life instead of at the beginning. She eases the dying process by caring for her patients & by giving them information to make their experience feel more normal & less frightening. Chapters of information are enlivened with many personal stories. And like Karen Bell in *Ã Living at the End of Life: A Hospice Nurse Addresses the Most Common Questions*, Callanan models for us a compassionate, no-nonsense, way to talk about death & dying. "...Seeing that death, a necessary end, will come when it will come." (Shakespeare) I enjoyed this book. If there is a Maggie Callanan fan club, I want to become a member. Both Callanan & Bell make the point that a hospice team can do more for the patient (& family) when they are called in sooner rather than later. Hospice care is appropriate any time after a terminal diagnosis; but, obviously, it can accomplish more in several months than in several days.

Dealing with a mother with severe dementia but otherwise relatively healthy at 91. Wanting to introduce an end of life discussion - the soft stuff as she has both advanced directives and POLST orders and DNR and do not hospitalize. The book gave me much dialogue examples to work with but was notably dealing with cancer diagnoses where person knew they were "terminal". This is pretty different than dying of an as yet unknown body failure in the face of not even appreciating one's own demise with dementia - which can lead to death less directly. So generally very useful with the limitation of not addressing dementia.

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