

- **Be still and hold a hand**

Sometimes this is all that is needed, and this is a loving gesture. We can meditate or pray quietly.

- **Remember this moment is about them**

It is important that we leave our own personal agenda out of this space. Being fully present means we are here unconditionally and in service to another.

- **Leaving the space**

A dying person may not be communicative but they will sense your presence. Gently say goodbye, and if and when you will be back.

- **Reflection and sharing**

It is often helpful for a companion to reflect and share on this experience . . . this has always to be done in a confidential and respectful way.

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Each and every person has his or her own unique, and miraculous life story, and it is vitally important that we honor that life story when someone is coming to the end of his or her life.

There is no right or wrong way to die, only what is right for that person given their life story.

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**The Janki Foundation**  
for Spirituality in Healthcare

# Shining Light: Being With The Dying

## The Last Days of Life

Life is a miraculous cycle of life and death. Death is not separate from life itself but part of its continuum, a new beginning. As we face the end of our life journey there is an opportunity for us to experience the true depth of our being and our connection to all of life. We can also care for one another from this authentic place of unconditional presence, with love and compassion.

There is a phase in every unique and precious life when we enter a time of dying – this is usually weeks to days to hours before death occurs. The dying process engages us on all levels of our being. It allows for a gentle unraveling of the physical and emotional self, and simultaneously a surrendering into transformation of the spiritual.

## Creating a space for the Dying

The place or space within which the dying person is cared for is a sacred space. A space – tangible or otherwise – that enables those who acknowledge and accept it to feel reverence and connection with the spiritual.

When we attune ourselves to this sacred passage of death, we can companion the dying in a helpful healing way. Everyone shares in the experience in a deeply connected way.

When we are beside a dying person, a loved one or a friend, when we just sit quietly to “be” there with them, we are connecting from a deep inner place, soul to soul, allowing love and compassion to flow in divine presence.

This is a gift, and it is from here we can catch a glimpse of God, Love, Grace, the Sacred, the One, the Great Mystery, however we might define our chosen path.

## Companions to the Dying: A Shared Experience

Companions are those who lovingly spend time with the dying and their family in a voluntary non-medical way. When we are beside the dying person we give care and comfort, we become a healing presence. We share in the experience in a deeply connected way. This requires us to step mindfully into the sacred space, courageously, wisely and unconditionally.

## Here are some guidelines for being a companion.

Entering the sacred space

- **Respect the space/conscious awareness**

Wherever our friend or loved one is dying, we can bring our full awareness to the fact that we are entering sacred space and this present moment with them, exactly as it is.

- **Bring an open heart and open mind**

Acceptance of things just the way they are is a loving act of an open mind and open heart.

- **Enter quietly**

In the last stages dying people are fragile and they often have heightened senses to noise, to touch, therefore we are bringing ourselves consciously and calmly into this space.

- **Come close, speak softly, introduce yourself, say why you are here.**

Sometimes we have to overcome our own fear of being close to someone who is dying. A dying person can be disoriented to time and place as they are beginning to transition from this life. It can be helpful to very gently say who you are, and that you are here to just to “be” with them for a little while.

- **Be OK with doing nothing/stillness and silence**

This is often a time when nothing much needs to be said or done, and the dying person may not want to engage with us . . . they are on a journey. This is a time of “being.” Stillness and silence allows an opening for deep connection with God/Grace/Love/the soul.