

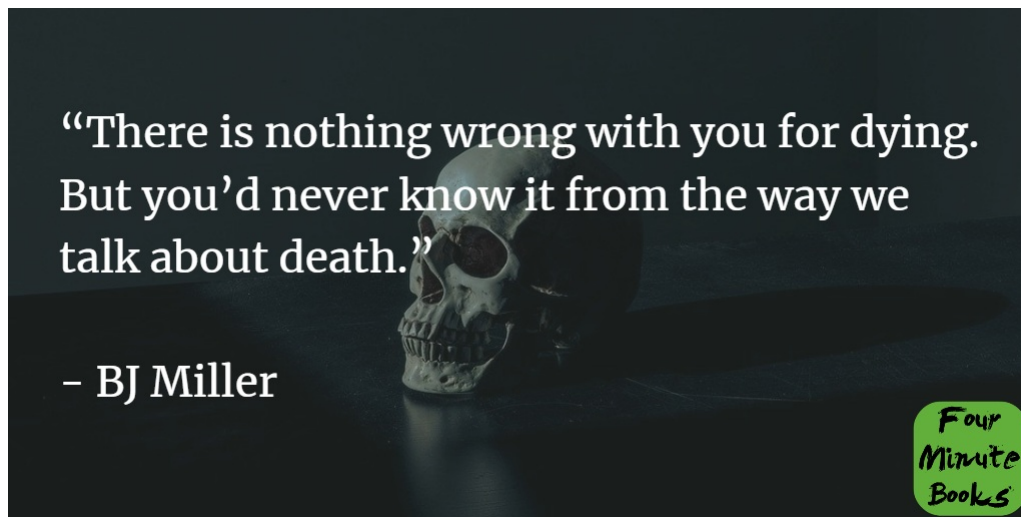
A Beginner's Guide To The End Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *A Beginner's Guide To The End* is your guide to using the principles of stillness, cleaning, and grief to prepare for your own or a loved one's death.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



It's something that's often in the top fears of people. Nobody wants to talk or even think about it. The subject has the power to take our breath away, paralyzing our thoughts.

I'm talking about death.

Whether you choose to think about it or not, you and those you love will die someday. I don't say that to be morbid, but rather because acknowledging and talking about it actually makes death a little easier. That's because knowing what to expect helps you not be so blindsided when it finally comes for you.

BJ Miller and Soshana Berger's *A Beginner's Guide to the End: Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death* contains the advice you need to prepare for death. Although it may sound intimidating to think about death, I promise that doing so will help you live a better life.

Here are the 3 most helpful lessons about preparing for death that I've learned from this book:

1. Take time for yourself when you receive the news that you have a terminal illness.
2. Prepare for death by cleaning out your stuff, reconciling any secrets or regrets, and leaving something meaningful for your loved ones.

3. When one of your loved ones dies, don't pressure yourself right after, let the grief come and go without resistance.

Are you ready to have some of your fears about death squashed by learning some ways to prepare for it? Let's begin!

Lesson 1: After learning of your own terminal illness, it's best to take things slow.

All four of my grandparents had cancer at some point. About 10 years ago my dad got it, too. Receiving the news really shook me up. I had to take the time to process what was happening so I could function properly. It's a gut-wrenching event that most can't get a grasp on at first. You're not a bad person for needing time to take it all in and stabilize yourself.

When I got the news about my dad, I was halfway across the world. I remember going to the beach and walking along the shore of the Isle of Man where I lived at the time, just thinking. **After learning of a terminal illness, it's best to take some time to relax somewhere that you feel the safest and comfortable.**

Once you feel that you've come to terms enough to do so, call your family and friends. They will be the most supportive and help you get through this. It's much better to do it with their help than trying to deal with it alone. Make sure to focus on them and not outside sources like the Internet. Googling your condition isn't a great idea at this point.

Additionally, don't try quitting smoking, drinking, binging on chocolate, or whatever coping mechanism you've got. Find relief in whatever makes it easier to deal with it. Avoid dramatic decisions, and don't commit to any treatment until you can think more clearly.

Lesson 2: Take care of your secrets and stuff before dying, and make sure you'll leave something meaningful to those you love most.

When you die, you'll take nothing with you. So clean up after yourself to not leave so much for your family to take care of after you're gone. Give your relatives the gift of being able to focus solely on you after you go, instead of having to clean out your attic.

It also helps your loved ones to leave behind meaningful items, like a letter for them to read in the future. Also, throw away the junk. Only leave what you want to pass down.

When one of my grandma's had terminal cancer she would put a piece of tape on items and write the name of the person to whom she wanted it to go. That made things a lot easier for all of us after she was gone.

You'll also want to make sure and reveal any big secrets and clean up any regrets or hard feelings. It's painful for children to learn about an affair and half-sibling only after your death. And even though the pain you've caused others may not affect you after you're gone, it sticks with those who you leave. That's why it's vital to say things like "I'm sorry" and "I love you."

Lesson 3: Give yourself a break and let grief come and go like a wave when someone close to you dies.

My dad and his parents all survived cancer. My other two grandparents weren't so lucky. My mom's dad succumbed to his illness before I was born, but I still remember when her mom died. It was shockingly painful. The best thing to do for me is what anyone should do after a loved one dies-focus on gentle self-care.

You can and must take time to grieve. It's okay to cry, get angry, or do whatever your feelings dictate. Think of it like letting a wave washing over you. My mom once told me that when my grandpa died all of her siblings handled it differently. One punched a hole in the wall. Another held it all in until watching the Lion King and then cried like a baby. **You do what works best for you, and don't be afraid of emotion.**

Immediately after your loss, there will be some official tasks to complete in preparation for the funeral. Other than this, don't pressure yourself. Do whatever makes you feel at peace. Whether it's binge-watching your favorite shows on Netflix or eating ice cream, do it. Don't demand too much of yourself.

When my dad's mom died I was right in the middle of my first grad school class. I had homework and an upcoming test. On the day of her funeral, I went fishing with my cousins instead of worrying about all I had to do. I didn't even complete the homework assignment. It helped me cope and get back on my feet sooner.

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A Beginner's Guide To The End Review

A Beginner's Guide to the End is a book that will really make you think about your life. I've often thought about different aspects of death in preparation for it, and I'm grateful for the new ideas this book gave me to prepare. It was hard to read because I've had so many loved ones die from cancer, but I'm grateful for the added level of everyday mindfulness it's given me.

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Who would I recommend The A Beginner's Guide To The End summary to?

The 34-year-old who just lost their father, the 58-year-old who is caring for their dying mother, and anyone who is going through, or has a loved one with, a terminal illness.