

# AI-00194 What is a “living wake”?

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What is a “living wake”?

A "living wake" is a gathering of friends and family to celebrate the life of someone who is still alive but may be nearing the end of their life. It is an opportunity for the person who is dying to say goodbye and express their feelings to their loved ones, and for their loved ones to do the same.

A living wake is sometimes held as an alternative to a traditional funeral or memorial service, which takes place after the person has passed away. The living wake is a way for the person who is dying to be present and participate in the celebration of their life, and to receive the love and support of their community while they are still alive.

Living wakes can take many different forms, depending on the preferences and personality of the person who is dying. They may include music, storytelling, sharing of memories and experiences, food and drink, and other activities that are meaningful to the person and their loved ones.

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A living wake is also known as a "pre-funeral" or a "goodbye party," and it is becoming increasingly popular as people seek more meaningful and personal ways to say goodbye to their loved ones. Some people choose to have a living wake in addition to a traditional funeral or memorial service, while others prefer to have only a living wake.

In addition to providing a meaningful way for the person who is dying to say goodbye and for their loved ones to express their feelings and memories, a living wake can also

help to alleviate some of the stress and sadness that can come with planning a traditional funeral or memorial service after the person has passed away.

It's worth noting that a living wake is not appropriate for everyone, and some people may find it too emotionally difficult or uncomfortable to attend. It's important to consider the wishes and preferences of the person who is dying, as well as the feelings and needs of their loved ones, when deciding whether to hold a living wake. If you are considering having a living wake, it may be helpful to speak with a funeral director, spiritual advisor, or other professional who can offer guidance and support.

What are the psychological benefit of living wake?

A living wake can provide several psychological benefits for both the person who is dying and their loved ones. Here are some of the potential benefits:

1. Closure and acceptance: A living wake can provide an opportunity for the person who is dying to say goodbye and to express their feelings and wishes to their loved ones. This can help them to feel a sense of closure and acceptance as they prepare for the end of their life.
2. Meaningful connection: A living wake can allow the person who is dying to connect with their loved ones in a meaningful way, and to share memories and experiences that are important to them. This can help to create a sense of intimacy and closeness that can be comforting for everyone involved.
3. Emotional support: A living wake can provide emotional support for the person who is dying, as well as for their loved ones. It can be a time for sharing feelings and offering comfort and reassurance to one another.
4. Celebration of life: A living wake can be a celebration of the person's life, rather than a somber event. This can help to create positive memories and to focus on the good times that have been shared.
5. Personalization: A living wake can be personalized to reflect the personality and wishes of the person who is dying. This can create a sense of control and agency for the person, and can help to create a more meaningful and authentic event.

It's important to note that the psychological benefits of a living wake can vary depending on the individual and their specific circumstances. However, in general, a living wake can provide a unique and meaningful way to say goodbye and to celebrate a person's life.

Aren't we all dying?

In a way, yes, we are all moving towards the end of our lives. However, when people talk about a "living wake," they are typically referring to a gathering of friends and family to celebrate the life of someone who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness or who is facing a life-limiting condition. The purpose of a living wake is to allow the person who is dying to say goodbye and to share meaningful moments with their loved ones while they are still alive.

It's important to note that not everyone who is facing a terminal illness or a life-limiting condition will want to have a living wake, and that's okay. Some people may prefer to spend their remaining time in a more private and intimate way, while others may prefer to focus on their treatment and care. Ultimately, the decision to have a living wake is a personal one that should be made in consultation with the individual who is dying and their loved ones.

Why not implement "living wake" all the time?

The concept of a "living wake" is typically reserved for people who have been diagnosed with a terminal illness or who are facing a life-limiting condition. The purpose of a living wake is to allow the person who is dying to say goodbye and to share meaningful moments with their loved ones while they are still alive.

While it may be tempting to implement living wakes all the time as a way to celebrate life and create meaningful connections with loved ones, it's important to consider the emotional impact of such gatherings. Living wakes can be emotionally intense and may be difficult for some people to attend, particularly if they have recently experienced a

loss or are facing their own mortality. Additionally, holding a living wake too frequently may diminish the impact and meaning of such gatherings.

It's also worth noting that living wakes are not the only way to create meaningful connections with loved ones and celebrate life. There are many other ways to stay connected and celebrate life on an ongoing basis, such as regularly spending time with friends and family, creating meaningful traditions, and sharing memories and experiences.

Ultimately, the decision to have a living wake is a personal one that should be made in consultation with the individual who is dying and their loved ones. While it may not be appropriate or desirable to implement living wakes all the time, it's always a good idea to create opportunities for connection, celebration, and meaningful reflection in our lives.