

ADVANCE DIRECTIVE for CONSCIOUS DYING

This form is secondary to the *Advance Directive for Patient Care* or *The Five Wishes*. It assumes that medical, legal, financial, and physical issues have already been addressed. This directive is the next step for those wishing to embrace dying as a spiritual passage for themselves and for their loved ones. It is not meant to be a legal or medical document. It is purely an expression of one's desires in anticipation of an imagined end-of-life scenario.

The *ADSD* focuses on individualized ways to enter the dying experience as a consciously spiritual transformation, and as a means to more deeply involve others. It is a directive to those who will attend to the dying process, including family, friends, caregivers, and spiritual advisors. It describes how you wish to die in terms of your emotional, mental, and spiritual well-being. Death may allow enough time for the implementation of these wishes. If time is insufficient, this directive can be useful for those planning the memorial or funeral services.

A. THE PEOPLE

1. Who do you most wish to be with you? These are in your inner circle.

2. Are there any people you do not wish to have present?

3. Name those you'd like to personally contact by phone, internet, or other means regarding your situation and condition.

4. What message you would like to be sent out to friends and family upon your death?

5. Would you prefer to have others present with you as much as possible, as little as possible, or somewhere in between?

6. When your time of death comes, would you prefer to be alone, or with company? Would you like someone to conduct vigil for you so you are not alone?

7. Would you like to appoint a person or persons to be the facilitators for your spiritual care?

8. Are there any relationships to which you want to bring to resolution through forgiveness, honesty, embracing, or other means?

9. List those to whom you would like to express your blessings, advice, gratitude, love, etc., in person, or by other means.

B. THE SETTING

1. Describe the physical setting in which you'd prefer to die.

2. Describe the details in the room. These may include lighting, decorations, photographs, artwork, incense, flowers, furnishings, etc.

3. Are there special garments, jewelry, blankets, wraps, and the like which you would like yourself and/or others to wear?

C. THE CONTENT

1. List readings, poetry, scripture, prayers, which would be helpful for you. These can be read live, or be pre-recorded and played as needed.

2. List some of your favorite songs, chants, and music which could be performed live for you or be pre-recorded to be played as needed.

3. List other activities which could be useful to you, such as massage, energy work, visualizations, communion, movements, postures, artmaking, and so on.

4. What is your desire as far as the optimal level of pain medication for you? To what degree are you willing to sacrifice comfort for awareness? At what point do you want pain medication if it begins to interfere with your level of consciousness?

5. How strictly do you want your wishes to be adhered to by your loved ones? Do you want them to do exactly as you say, even if they may feel uncomfortable? Do you want your loved ones to do what brings them the most peace, or somewhere in between?

D. YOUR INTENTIONS

1. Describe your views on death and dying. What would you like your loved ones to know about your life and death? You could write this as a message to your survivors.

--from a work in progress by Steven Spiro, Chaplain

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