

# How to Start the Most Difficult Conversation in the World This Holiday Season

*Talk about End of Life Care this holiday*

PHILADELPHIA, PA, UNITED STATES, November 25, 2024 / EINPresswire.com/ -- According to a Caring.com Survey only 32% of Americans have a will. This Thanksgiving take advantage of this year's holiday gatherings to plan for the inevitable.



Turkey, Stuffing and End of Life Chat

Starting the Deathcare Conversation

"There isn't one right way to approach

this topic. It really depends on the person you're talking with," says J.G. Sandom, CEO of Cremstar, a leading online cremation service.

For example, if you know your person doesn't like to be taken by surprise, give them a heads up,

says Kate DeBartolo of the Conversation Project, an initiative of the Institute for Healthcare Improvement.

Planning a visit with your parent(s)? Let them know beforehand that this topic is on your mind and that you'd like to talk about it with them. This gives them the opportunity to think about what they want, if they haven't already.

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Here are Four Tips to ensure a successful dialogue:

1. Your questions won't be solved with one conversation. The more you discuss it, the easier it will be for someone to talk about it and to share their thoughts. Try to be patient, gentle, and attentive.
2. Don't wait until the end of someone's life to talk about their wishes. There's a misconception that this conversation should happen with older adults. Everyone over 18 should get their arrangements in order or at least start talking about it. Keep in mind that the information will need to be updated whenever you move, get married, divorced, or have a child.

3. Don't start the conversation with financial questions. You might give a person the wrong impression — that you only care about their money. Sometimes a little levity can help break the ice: "How many of us here around the table happen to be immortal? Anyone? Any gods out there? I know you think you are, (Mom/Dad/Bro/Sis), but seriously; I'd like to talk about something that's going to impact all of us one way or another at some point. I want to talk about what happens to me after I die." Or you might want to reference a recent TV show or movie that deals with the topic of death in some way, and use it as a springboard to begin the conversation.
4. Be an active listener. The person you're talking with might not give you a straight answer. A grandmother might say that she wants "home" to be a part of her end-of-life care. Ensuring that Grandmother is at home might not be feasible, but "home" could mean having home-cooked meals, living in a facility that allows her cat, or having personal effects with her.

Letting your family know what your final wishes are is a gift — your final gift to them. You'll make it easier for them during a difficult period by providing them with a detailed plan for them to follow. Additionally, studies show that planning your own deathcare enhances peace of mind. Approaching the subject of mortality with these positive outcomes in mind, you'll be surprised how often family and friends will want to share their plans and wishes too.

Sylvana Joseph  
Cremstar  
+1 267-888-8015  
sylvana@cremstar.com

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