



Your Local Community Hospice Since 1981

## WHAT MATTERS MOST: BEING MORTAL EDUCATIONAL SERIES PART TWO OF TWO

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Hospice of North Idaho will host a free community screening of the Frontline documentary “Being Mortal” on Wednesday, Nov. 8, at 10:30 a.m. at Coeur d’Alene Public Library. The book and documentary by Atul Gawande explores the unique approaches patients choose along their end of life journey.

As Gawande spurs a national conversation, Hospice of North Idaho prompts the community to share thoughts about “what matters most,” and start making their wishes known.

For 36-years Hospice of North Idaho has cared for thousands of families along the end of life journey. Community members often reveal their wish to have started the conversations about end of life wishes well before crucial, final moments charged with anxiety.

“The whole experience is easier on everyone if the family has discussed this. We hope that people talk about their wishes, and that it comes up in conversation.” said Kim Ransier, executive director at Hospice of North Idaho.

Hospice of North Idaho helps people discover the array of choices they can make now, which helps make the process unfold more gently.

“Being Mortal” offers an in-depth look at various approaches to the end of life journey, revealing both emotional trials and medical approaches. Through the example of several families, the film exposes viewers to common choices that we all may face. The film spurs viewers to self-reflect and often kindles ideas about choosing an approach.

Most end of life decisions expand far beyond the considerations of finances, estates, and life-saving measures. “There is more to consider, but because we’re not used to talking about it, it can be hard to know where to start.” expresses Kelly Rey, director of social services at Hospice of North Idaho.

In the age of modern medicine, end of life is more of a journey than an event. Consider facing a disease that may not be curable, but treatable after a significant amount of time or significant health effects. And consider, would you choose machine assistance to keep organs functioning,

in hopes that treatments revive the body; would you want that? When the end comes, do you want a chance to goodbye or "It's O.K." or "I love you."? In what atmosphere do you want your friends and generations to say goodbye to you? What matters most?

Gawande writes a telling article in the New Yorker comparing personal approaches to devastating news. In his August 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010 article, "Letting Go, What should medicine do when it can't save your life?" Gawande introduces Sara. Married and young, Sara delivers her baby a week after cancer diagnosis. She told her family on several occasions that she did not want to die in the hospital. Meanwhile, her family couldn't believe there wasn't a cure, and said they never discussed stopping treatment. They wished to talk only about the next treatment options. Sara eventually subscribed to their way of thinking, becoming eager for unending treatments regardless of the severity of health effects. What mattered most for her was being cured. Sara continued every treatment until she passed, not discussing the final moment, or that one could be possible.

Next, Gawande writes about a man named Dave, in his early forties who is married and has a three-year-old daughter. Dave develops pancreatic cancer and a massive tumor. Having experienced on-going abdominal pain, he sees his doctor. His physician delivers hard news; he can be admitted into intensive care or go home with hospice. His wife was supported by hospice to clean his wounds and manage his pain. They were there for emotional support and to help them have the good-bye they wanted. What mattered most to this man was his piggy-tailed daughter and wife. How he chose to honor that love was in saying goodbye at home, living as close to a normal life as possible.

After the documentary screening, a panel of hospice experts will hear audience questions. "It's a profound documentary. We want to be available to answer people's questions and let them know we are here for them now, and during the end of life journey." assures Ransier. "We will also give examples of how to begin the conversation." she continues.

Hospice panelists offer first-hand experience of caring for the dying and their loved ones. In 2016 over 1,000 community members received Hospice of North Idaho Hospice Care, and over 2,000 friends and family received counseling support. Panelists include Dr. Robert Ancker, Kootenai Health palliative care physician and Hospice of North Idaho co-medical director; Cindy Reed, R.N., certified hospice and palliative nurse, and director of the Schneidmiller House, executive director Kim Ransier, director of social services Kelly Rey, LMSW, and board of directors member, oncologist Dr. Kevin Mulvey, M.D..

Attend the free viewing of Frontline Documentary "Being Mortal to Coeur d'Alene Public Library, 702 East Front Street, November 8th at 10:30AM. Refreshments provided by the Friends of the Library.