

## Draft Course outline

# Empowering end of life citizenship

**Facilitator: Dr Peter H Cock**

The workshop will be co-facilitated with Sandra Cock a psychologist and with input from members of the Natural death advocacy network

### **Format of Workshop:**

**Residential three days and night's**

**One post review night.**

**Post workshop gathering to check in and review**

*The format could be adapted to one-day or two days*

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Any proceeds from the course including my fee will go towards the death advocacy network

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### **Three days and nights format:**

#### **First Night : Introduction**

Our approach of empowerment. We are all part of a community of species who live and die. We celebrate our difference of consciousness with other species and yet fail to use it to resource our dying and death for our life.

*Our group as a heart circle, exploring your life cycle experiences. Who are we? You're why and what for. Hopes, fears.*

#### **Day one: Your Biography to date of Dying and Death**

Morning: *Mapping and sharing Biography's*

Journal your personal remembering of: Childhood experiences, Adulthood, old age, losing a pet, friend, family member.

#### **Afternoon session:**

*Exploration of learning's: How has your thinking/feelings about dying and death evolved. What enabled this?*

Reflecting in Nature while walking

Night journal after dinner: Consider what you expect and would like to happen? What would you like? What needs to change? What can you change? Notes towards a contract with yourself and significant others.

## **Day 2 The Context of my Death and life**

**Morning:** *Anthropology of death through time and cultures.*

Death and dying as cultural and natural? It was and is for much of the world still an everyday event, accepted, ritualized and honored beyond the grave in many different ways.

What are some patterns and what is new?

Sharing knowledge/experiences of other cultures approaches.

*Our Death dealing culture in denial of dying.*

Because we live so long we can afford to pretend that death is for some other species, some other person, somewhere else.

A paradox is that we are living longer and yet our future as a society is threatened with extinction. We don't face and how can we face our own mortality or that of our culture, society and its institutions.

Personal is political in life and in death?

*The consequences of denial: A funeral business as professionalized and under monopoly capitalism*

Industry of death. Corruption of monopoly, professions and profit. Cost of a culture of denial leaves us in the hands of corporate professionals. It's our death with those who matter, and yet 70% die in hospitals and only 14% at home despite of contrary desires.

*Sharing experiences of the industry of death as part of your biography to date?*

**Afternoon:** *Empowering death and dying citizenship*

Death and dying's ecological footprint; live longer so others can't live!

How long before enough is enough? Inequality in death. Drug costs. Cost of lingering, the pain and the separation that comes, the loss of memory and experience of whom and how that person was becomes over shadowed by a long painful death.

Our coming future? Most likely we have peaked in our species life span and to even sustain it will require more of us to be less human and more machine like.

*Group Sharing: explorations of context within which our biography of death occurs.*

*Dying and death activism for a natural death*

Challenging professionals and changing laws that suppress citizenship: collective action.

Where and how you die; Where you are buried? When you can die? Making death citizenship legal throughout life choice.

Meeting the challenge of empowering all players to build synergy appropriate to their significance.

How to enable productive empowering dialogue between family, oneself, professions without leaving the decision to any one person or profession?  
What can we take charge of with the help of those who matter?  
Where do you stand? An exploration.

### **Day 3: Empowering you're dying, death and life**

Before breakfast: Meditation and Time in Nature alone.

*Morning: Exploring your death*

Lie down and image your dying experience.

Given what you know of yourself and your significant others project your likely experience of dying and death.

Ask yourself:

When from now, how long does it take, is it painful?

How are you feeling? E.g. are you fearful? Relieved, ready to go, guilty,

Likely causes

Where are you?

Who is there and who is not there, why not?

What is being said and not said?

What's new, or been sitting there for a long time,

Bucket lists inner and outer not achieved, e.g. personal issues haven't been able to shift or life hasn't, forgiveness still not, conversations wished you had,

What is the state of your affairs, business, unresolved?

*Planning your end of life. Drafting a contract for your journey and your significant others.*

What was your unwritten contract before this workshop?

Consider and write alone:

What would you like, need?  
What don't you want?  
Who will support you and who won't?  
What needs to change?  
What really matters?  
Reflections. What work didn't you do? Still to do?

### **Afternoon: Having your conservation**

Card game to help to ask questions of a group such as your family

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Having your conservation about dying and death by a *trial sharing in this group of your contract*

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### **Reviewing**

Update your contract for your self and your significant others.  
Exploring how working through the challenges of death enables exploring the opportunities for renewed life.

Sharing the positives

Closure and review

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### **Resources:**

Below is the link to some interesting conversations on this topic from Conversations

<http://theconversation.com/au/topics/euthanasia>

<http://theconversation.com/au/topics/talking-about-death-and-dying>

Below is the link to a summary of death and dying in the context of different cultures

<http://lmrpcc.org.au/admin/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/Customs-Beliefs-Death-Dying.pdf>

The complexities of course are that there are an increasing number of people who may have been born into a particular culture or religion that they do not embrace or follow.

Having the conversations with people from different cultures is terrific but some respect and understanding of their cultural and religious believe is important.

**Here is the link to great organizations, which encourages, supports and**

## **facilitates discussion on death and dying**

<http://www.thegroundswellproject.com/d2kday-ambassadors/>

This is an event, which they organized in Sydney

<http://www.thegroundswellproject.com/reflecting-on-life-and-death/>

I love the title "Love in our own time"

Having a movie at the start could be a good introduction and catalyst for conversations

<http://loveinourowntime.com/>

Because it is not just about dying but also about living a meaningful life.

### **References:**

Doctor death

Your journaling

Tools. Reading, remembering journal, each other