

End of Life Planning by Care Lengel

Recently, a beloved family member passed away. It wasn't a surprise, but it was still hard. I have to ask, what would have made it easier for our family to make decisions in his behalf. And the answer is simple. What was in writing, we knew. What wasn't in writing, we didn't. No one can address all possibilities, but if we think, talk, and write out our end-of-life choices, it can provide guidance to loved ones and to medical professionals faced with making decisions in our behalf.

Talk about Plans & Put Them in Writing Whatever ones personal views on the subject of living and dying, it's important to think about those views and to provide family and friends with direction for many possibilities. Clearly, an open discussion with loved ones is the place to start. Saying what one wants, and does not want, for one's care helps us to address a variety of circumstances beforehand. But to ease one's own concern and the stress imposed on one's decision-makers, it is critical to put such planning into writing. The best way is to consult an attorney to draw up exactly one's wishes, but there are less expensive ways to formalize end-of-life care plans.

Arizona Helps The Arizona Attorney General's Office provides information and forms to use for end-of-life-planning. While not comprehensive, <https://www.azag.gov/seniors/life-care-planning> offers a packet of forms to download, including Medical Powers of Attorney, Living Will, and guidance on a Do Not Resuscitate Order. What is not included is a General Durable Power of Attorney so one can allow another to conduct business. Though highly individualized, these forms are available at any care facility, financial institution, or through any attorney.

Arizona also provides a Registry for Advance Directives so that any individual may place end-of-life documents on file and allow loved ones and medical professionals immediate access. This service comes with an Arizona Advance Directive Registry wallet card. http://www.azsos.gov/adv_dir/Default.htm.

A Good Death My family agrees about making our end-of-life choices known. Four generations of women in my family had Alzheimer's. A good death for me would be to have the greatest quality of life for as long as I can with the most comfort, and then the easiest death at the least cost. I am pretty extreme in those views, and so was my mother, a life-long LWV member. So I belong to both Compassion and Choices <www.compassionandchoices.org> and the Alzheimer's Association <www.alz.org>.

But because I'm a boomer, and because there are So Many Boomers all getting old at once now, every family should have conversations about what's a good death and what one's end-of-life choices are. We are all more prepared for the inevitable if we address living and dying together, as individuals, as families, as states, and as one nation.