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For human beings, life is meaningful because it is a story. A story has a sense of a whole, and its arc is determined by the significant moments, the ones where something happens. Measurements of people's minute-by-minute levels of pleasure and pain miss this fundamental aspect of human existence...Unlike your experiencing self--which is absorbed in the moment--your remembering self is attempting to recognize not only the peaks of joy and valleys of misery but also how the story works out as a whole.... The peaks are important, and so is the ending."

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Our most cruel failure in how we treat the sick and the aged is the failure to recognize that they have priorities beyond merely being safe and living longer; that the chance to shape one's story is essential to sustaining meaning in life; that we have the opportunity to refashion our institutions, our culture, and our conversations in ways that transform the possibilities for the last chapters of everyone's lives."

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Technological society has forgotten what scholars call the "dying role" and its importance to people as life approaches its end. People want to share memories, pass on wisdoms and keepsakes, settle relationships, establish their legacies, make peace with God, and ensure that those who are left behind will be okay. They want to end their stories on their own terms. This role is, observers argue, among life's most important, for both the dying and those left behind.

The following questions are focused for a prognosis of short life expectancy. P. 182-183

I wish things were different, but if time becomes short, what is most important to you?

- What do you understand your prognosis to be?
- What are your concerns about what lies ahead?
- What kinds of trade-offs are you willing to make?
- How do you want to spend your time if your health worsens?
- Who do you want to make decisions if you can't?

"I need to understand how much you're willing to go through to have a shot at being alive and what level of being alive is tolerable to you."

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1. Do you want to be resuscitated if your heart stops?
2. Do you want aggressive treatments such as intubation and mechanical ventilation?
3. Do you want antibiotics?
4. Do you want tube or intravenous feeding if you can't eat on your own?

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- What are your biggest fears and concerns?
- What goals are most important to you?
- What tradeoffs are you willing to make, and what ones are you not?