

Personal Death Awareness Worksheet

Few of us think in any systematic way about our own deaths. Some days we act and think as though we were going to live forever. On other occasions we sense that death may occur at any time, leaving so much undone. The purpose of this worksheet is to help you think about the fact of your own death. Some people discuss their responses with their spouses, family or friends. Others put this questionnaire in safekeeping for future reference.

Do not hurry; be reflective and honest with yourself. No one will see any answer you do not wish to reveal. If a question is bothersome, go on to another item and return to it later. Keep in mind that the purpose of this questionnaire is to help you learn more about yourself.

PERSONAL DEATH HISTORY

Please complete the following sentences:

1. The first death I experienced was the death of my _____.
2. I was _____ years old.
3. At that time I felt _____
_____.
4. I was most curious about _____
_____.
5. What frightened me most was _____

_____.
6. The feelings I have now as I think of that death are _____

_____.
7. The first personal acquaintance of my own age who died was _____.
8. I remember thinking at the time when I heard of his/her death that _____
_____.

9. The most traumatic death I ever experienced was _____

10. I remember reacting as if _____

11. I personally came closest to death when _____

REACTIONS TO DEATH

1. To help you identify other reactions to thoughts of your own death, respond to the following questions by using the words **agree**, **not sure** or **disagree**.

- _____ I prefer to avoid death at all costs.
- _____ The possibility of the total aloneness of death frightens me.
- _____ Death is a release from earthly suffering.
- _____ Life is so short.
- _____ The unknown aspects of death bother me.
- _____ I do not expect to die completely; some part of me (soul, spirit, life force) will live on.
- _____ I expect to join old friends and family in death.
- _____ I have little fear of death.
- _____ My religious convictions satisfactorily explain to me what happens after death.

2. My overall response to death is: (check the most appropriate response)

- I fear death more than dying.
- I fear dying more than death.
- I fear neither to a great degree.
- I fear them both equally.

3. Did you mind answering questions about death? What, if anything, is most bothersome about these questions?

REACTIONS TO DYING

1. What frightens me most about dying is: (check the most appropriate response)

- My own pain
- Progressive deterioration and disability
- Being left alone
- Overwhelming emotional responses
- Not knowing what is happening
- The pain it caused others
- Not having adequate medical care
- Other: _____

2. I wish to maintain as much control as possible over my dying by: (check all appropriate responses)

- Being told as much as I can understand about my diagnosis and prognosis.
- Participating as much as possible in my own care and treatment
- Being involved in deciding who else should know the facts
- Other details: _____

3. I would like to spend my final days: (place a 1 by your first preference; 2 by the second, etc)

___ At my own home

___ At another home (specify) _____

___ At a nursing home or wherever there is adequate treatment for pain and provisions for physical comfort

___ At a hospital

___ Some place else: (specify) _____

4. Suicide ___ is ___ is not an alternative I would consider. If so, under what conditions?

LIVING OUT THE TIME REMAINING

1. Imagine that you have just been told you have only a few weeks to live. Take a moment and think of how you would like to spend your time. The briefly answer the following questions.

With whom would you like to spend the most time? What would you like to do with them? _____

Where would you like to spend most of the time remaining? _____

Is there any unfinished business in your life you would like to complete before you die? _____

Is there someone whose forgiveness you would like to seek? For what reason?

Is there anyone you would like to forgive? _____

What changes, if any, would you make in your will? _____

Are there any special possessions you would like to give or designate to be given to anyone? (specify) _____

Who would you most like to have as confidants? helpers? (specify name and role)
ex: financial advisor; spiritual guide; support for family; etc _____
