

Why Is it so Difficult to Die?

Note

Health care practice and knowledge are constantly changing and developing as new research and treatments, changes in procedures, drugs and equipment become available.

The author and publishers have, as far as is possible, taken care to confirm that the information complies with the latest standards of practice and legislation.

Why Is it so Difficult to Die?

Second edition

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*To Priscilla, Pamela Lou, Neville and Lewin for their love and support
always*

To my parents who taught me so much about people

*To my brother Lovemore for making me BELIEVE and realise what peace
there may be in silence.*

*To colleagues and special partners who have unconditionally shared ideas,
ideals and experiences, I am greatly indebted to you. Thank you all.*



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Acknowledgements

This second edition would not have been complete without new ideas and the support of a few people. You will see that there are new contributors and insights which I hope will enhance the book and make it more up to date for the reader. Firstly, in a more general way I would like to thank everyone involved for giving up their precious time to share their insights. However, a special mention and thanks must go to all the contributors of chapters in this book: Dr Craig Gannon, a dear friend and colleague of many years; Simon Chippendale, a colleague with a special passion for ethics of care; and Jean Bayliss, my previous Clinical Supervisor, mentor and professional guide. I owe a lot to Jean's belief in me and all her support and encouragement to take on the professional and educational challenges. A special thank you and warm welcome to a new contributor, Drs Hilde de Vocht for offering a Dutch perspective on euthanasia, and increasing the accuracy of our perception of the topic. I am truly grateful to you and your efforts in producing this work.

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Finally I would like to thank all the patients and their families and staff who shared their experiences and stories (often painful ones) with me during my clinical work, from which I gained a lot of knowledge and insight. I am even more grateful now that I am able to share it with others.

Brian Nyatanga
February 2008



Foreword I

Sir George Castledine

I am delighted to write the first foreword to Brian Nyatanga's second edition of his book, *Why is it so difficult to die?* with a focus in palliative care. There is no doubt that the first edition was a huge success and Brian and his colleagues are to be congratulated for achieving so much with such a concise piece of work.

The second edition has been fully revised and updated and there are now two parts and 12 chapters, with a final piece at the end of the book by Brian himself.

This is a book which will be very popular with those nurses who specialise in palliative care, but it is also essential reading for all nurses and health care professionals who want to know more about some of the key factors associated with death and dying. There is a genuine attempt by Brian and his colleagues to try to give some psychological explanations to the question 'Why is it so difficult to die?'. Brian leads the reader into the subjects within the book with a very easy and readable style which will appeal to a wide audience. The book is balanced in that it offers theoretical as well as practical aspects to death and dying.

There are also some excellent contributions and a new chapter on dying by euthanasia by a new author from the Netherlands. This chapter offers clear insights into how the Netherlands manages euthanasia and assisted suicide requests.

I would strongly recommend this book to all those individuals who have an interest in this important subject and in doing so congratulate Brian and his team for not only maintaining the quality of their first edition but managing to improve and develop their work.

Sir George Castledine
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Foreword II

Dr Judy Dale FRCP

Be careful, then, and be gentle about death. For it is hard to die, it is difficult to go through the door, even when it opens

D. H. Lawrence, *All Soul's Day*

The six years since the publication of the first edition of Brian Nyatanga's book have seen great progress in developments towards better care for the dying.

The NHS Cancer Plan, National Service Frameworks and National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance all include strategies for improvement in palliative care services, including care of the dying. The Department of Health's 'Our Health, our Care, our Say' (February 2006) identified the need for investment and training to improve care at the end of life and the importance of choice for patients and carers.

The End of Life Care Programme 2007 aims to improve the quality of care at the end of life for all patients, and to enable more patients to live and die in the place of their choice. Best practice is encouraged in all settings through the use of the Gold Standards Framework and the Liverpool Care Pathway for the dying in the UK. Alongside these improvements in palliative and end of life care, there have been attempts through the House of Lords towards introducing assisted dying, leading potentially to the legalisation of euthanasia.

This book offers an excellent opportunity for professionals to develop their insight into issues around dying, particularly with the new chapter on the concept of death, dying and death anxiety, and the informative chapter by Hilde de Vocht about dying by euthanasia.

To be able to reach out to the dying, to communicate with them, and to understand their fears and anxieties, those caring for these patients must ask themselves the question 'Why is it so difficult to die?'

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