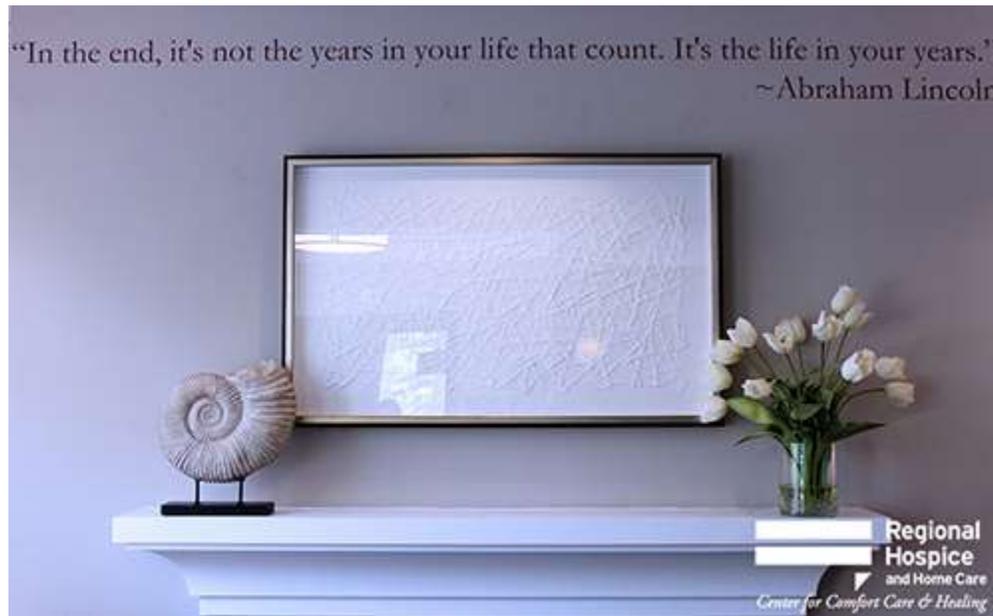


Sample article post: <https://regionalhospicect.org/articles/a-most-natural-part-of-living/>

A Most Natural Part of Living

Support for embracing the end of life



“In the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.” – Abraham Lincoln

When Larry Riefberg visited his father-in-law, [Boyd Losee](#), at Regional Hospice’s [Center for Comfort Care and Healing](#), he knew that a life that had been counted by years and months was dwindling into days and minutes. Although Larry had toured the Center as a fervent hospice supporter, he had never really absorbed the [Abraham Lincoln quote](#) that adorned the walls of the family living room near Boyd’s suite. The words gave him pause and comfort as he realized that Boyd, at 89 years of age, had been blessed with both a long and full life. Regardless, as is generally the case, the loss was difficult for Larry and his family to endure. Although death is one of the most natural and certain parts of life, it is never easy for those left behind. The following words of support may help you embrace the inevitabilities of end of life.

Accepting Death Helps Us Open Up to Life

Regional Hospice and Home Care supports individuals of all ages from infants who are just days old, to elders 104 years of age nearing the end of life. We know that there are no certainties around the timing and circumstances of death. Patients who have been told they have only weeks to live sometimes thrive for months. Unfortunately, the reverse can also be true. This unpredictability can be unsettling and even frightening. However, in our experience, family members and patients who accept that death is not within their control are able to live more fully,

with less fear or limits. Learning acceptance is also helpful in managing the grief and painful emotions that often arise when someone dies. It is important to acknowledge that acceptance is a process that requires time and support. The bereavement and grief counseling services offered through our [*Healing Hearts Center for Grief and Loss*](#) can assist in processing and accepting death and loss.

Everyone Has a Different Path

Every person has their own unique path in life. The same is true for death. It can be difficult to understand why some people die peacefully surrounded by loved ones, while others die alone. This is just part of the mystery and uncertainty surrounding how life ends – it is different for everyone. Many dying patients have a very difficult time saying “Goodbye” to loved ones or having to witness the pain that their illness causes those around them. It is not uncommon for individuals to wait until loved ones have left the room before they take their last breath. Honoring the unique nature of every individual (including yourself) works together with acceptance to “normalize” death and the grieving process.

Focus on this Moment with Mindfulness

Thoughts of death are often uncomfortable as they spark fear and worry. A technique called mindfulness is helpful in halting those negative thoughts. By refocusing your attention to the present moment, rather than thinking about future or past events, you can reclaim your peace of mind. Taking deep breaths, listening to music, going for a walk, looking at a favorite piece of art, spending time in nature, reading a favorite passage or otherwise distracting yourself with pleasant activities can be helpful in refocusing your attention. For more information and resources on mindfulness visit www.mindful.org.



Don't Wait in Considering Hospice Care

The number one thing we hear from patients and family members is that they wish they received [hospice care](#) sooner. If you or a loved one is experiencing a life-limiting illness, you can seek hospice care on your own or through the assistance of your physician as soon as you wish. And, you are not obligated to stay on hospice care if your condition improves. Hospice and [palliative care](#) focus on pain relief, symptom management and emotional support to enhance not just the quantity, but the quality of a patient's life. Hospice care incorporates a variety of support services including [volunteer visits](#), spiritual care, social work and [bereavement counseling](#). All of these comprehensive services are delivered by experienced, compassionate individuals who fully understand the challenges we face at the end of life. [See also: "[Why hospice care could benefit your loved one sooner than you think](#)"]

We don't have to be afraid of death. By living for each moment and embracing the peace and comfort that hospice can bring, death can be a natural and beautiful part of life's journey.