

Be the Noodle

Story angles

Trend: The last great taboo is talking about dying

Talking about helping a loved one die is still a no-no, viewed as something that you just don't talk about in public. In the 1950s society didn't talk about sex. In the 1960s few recognized the unhappy masses of women until Betty Freidan stepped up. In the late 1970s and early 80s we hid from AIDs and homosexuality. In the 1990s we slowly began talking about menopause and moved from cancer victims to survivors.

Today approximately 50 million largely invisible people are taking care of aging relatives, a topic that needs to be publicly acknowledged so these people get the support, training and recognition they need for doing a job they never wanted.

Author Lois Kelly breaks the taboo wide open, talking about everything from the mundane to the frightening. Reviewers praise her insight, wisdom and humor – going where few have gone when talking about death.

Face down your fears: the rewards of an adventure, even the dying kind

Adventures of any sort – climbing K2, doing a triathlon, sailing around the world, joining the Peace Corps – are defined as risky, dangerous or exciting experiences. Looking back on how they dealt with all the unexpected and challenging things that happened on an adventure, people say they gained a new sense of self-confidence, resiliency, and perspective on the world. These adventurers also say that the impact of the experience affected their life for years to come.

Ditto for helping someone die. It's an adventure that can change your life, giving you new strength and self-confidence when life "returns to normal." Author Lois Kelly was scared out of her mind to care for her mother; she couldn't even help her baby son when he was sick to his stomach. By facing down her fears, she found her experience helping her headstrong mother die at home to be profound in all kinds of unexpected and life-changing ways.

Building resilience: find the sick humor, train like an athlete, call yourself something strong

Resilience is the ability to adapt to adversity and rebound from setbacks and challenges, like the death of a parent. Why do some people rebound and others sink into depression or anxiety?

Why do some people find inspiration and others end up bitter? Lois Kelly provides insights from a native's perspective, sharing how sick humor, music, staying fit, writing a blog, and labeling herself a valet and not a caregiver or nurse helped her stay sane, find grace, grieve with love, and bounce back.