

Suggested Interview Questions

1. What are Conscious Acts of Grace?

They are the touches, words, and actions that let our loved ones know we are there for them at the end of their life. In our culture, most of us poorly equipped to handle loss, grief, and how to be with one another during the dying process. I became committed to gathering stories of what works, how we can be with each other with dignity, in that listening place of support and forgiveness.

2. How/ why did you become interested in this topic?

I have worked in mental health and wellness for the last 30 years. In witnessing my parent's during my father's dying process, and talking with many others that are in this season of life as well, my career took a very unexpected turn. My "mission" now has become being a voice on how to hold the dying process in loving kindness and to provide a roadmap for encouraging proactive choices so we have no regrets.

3. I see you are the "Creator of Celebration Circles." What are Celebration Circles?

One of my life's profound experiences was with my friend, Jerry. As his wife and friend were talking about his service, he said "I want to be there." A pre-memorial service was planned, with him sitting up front, every chair in the worship room filled, and us each going around and saying things such as, "Jerry, this is what you brought to my life. Thank you!"

Celebration Circles are intentional gatherings of family and friends, while our loved one is still here. They are a sharing words, laughter, and stories. Instead of leaving a memorial service and saying, "I wish he/she could have been here," we experience being a part of a memorable event and of having created a living tribute.

As my friend Helen said, after her circle, "Sometimes we wonder if we have made a difference in other's lives and it is good to hear others say that we have."

4. Is training necessary to conduct a Celebration Circle?

Not necessary, but as with most things, with information, guidance, and support, it makes it easier and more likely we will create them. Right now I am facilitating a Celebration Circle Action Group. There are four women, from around the state and country, who are moving through the process together of creating this experience for someone dear to them. The creativity, support and energy is invaluable.

5. What do you hope your readers, and our listeners, will gain from this message?

Talk about this topic now, rather than wait until you are in a crisis situation of losing a loved one. Rather than waiting until the roof is falling down to learn how to use a hammer, learn now. Think about the issues involved, talk about them. Have your "tool belt" full.

Secondly, by being intentional and proactive, we can create a loving and infinitely rewarding experience and can live a life of no regrets.