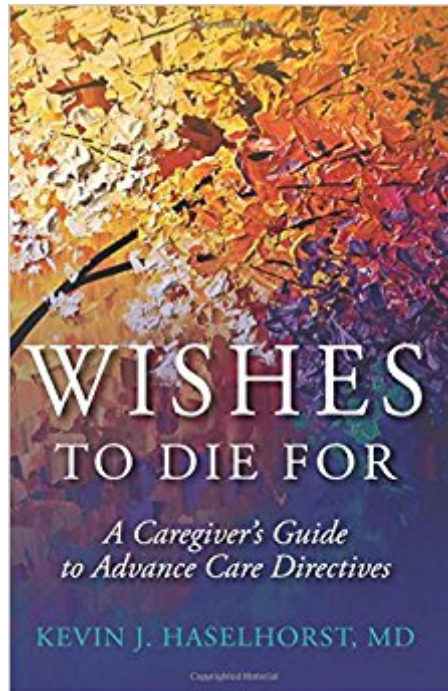




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# Wishes To Die For: A Caregiver's Guide To Advance Care Directives



## Synopsis

How to Let a Loved One Die with Dignity Do you know how to comfort a family member who is dying without letting your own emotions get in the way? Or would you do everything possible to keep your loved one alive because you can't bear the thought of losing them? Do you know how to follow a patient's Advanced Care Directive, a legal document that specifies how their family and doctors are to care for them if they become incapacitated? Caregivers are rarely able to let go of the ones they love. "I'm not there yet" or "I don't know what to do" becomes a cry for help. Dr. Kevin Haselhorst, who has spent 25 years working in hospital emergency rooms, says caregivers need to be prepared, do what is best for the patient and know how to "let go." In *Wishes to Die For*, you will learn:

- How to honor your loved one's final wishes, even if that means no feeding tubes or ventilators.
- How to view death as a spiritual journey.
- Why writing your own Advanced Care Directive helps you become a better caregiver.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In *Wishes To Die For*, Dr. Kevin Haselhorst brings his deep experience as an ER physician to the task of helping us, and those we love, die with forethought, dignity, and peacefulness. --Larry Dossey, MD, author of *One Mind: How Our Individual Mind Is Part of a Greater Consciousness and Why It Matters* It is well worth taking this journey with the author to help us clarify our own beliefs. --Carol Bradley Bursack, author and columnist, *Minding Our Elders* Drawing from his experiences as an emergency room physician, Dr. Kevin Haselhorst has crafted his book *Wishes to Die For* as a

heartfelt and enlightened appeal that 'patients be allowed to die the way their doctors do.' His thoughtful Universal Healthcare Directive should serve as a roadmap for future discussions as we ponder how to honor our patients' dignity and divinity at the end-of-life. --Karen Wyatt, MD, hospice physician and author, What Really Matters

ForewordBy Carol Bradley Bursack, author and columnist, Minding Our Elders"Code Blue!" A voice cries out in the Emergency Department. "Is there a doctor who can 'tube' a patient in Cardiac Cath Lab?"With these first lines of Wishes To Die For: A Caregiver's Guide to Advance Care Directives, Dr. Kevin J. Haselhorst prepares readers for a journey that will help them clarify their personal views about what constitutes life. What decisions do you want made for you as you approach your final days, hours or minutes, or even earlier if an incapacitating event alters your ability to make your own medical decisions even temporarily? Does your spouse know what you'd want? Do your other family members? If you have not made your wishes clear, in written form, often what the medical team may be required to do could conflict with what you or your family wants done - or not done.Why? Because without written guidance, once you or your loved one are in the care of medical personnel their medical oath and directive will prevail. Dr. Haselhorst knows about this subject from the perspective of a compassionate physician. In "Wishes" he describes his own internal battle to balance his training as a doctor who cures at all costs with his patients' desires. Through his book, Haselhorst encourages us, as potential patients, to examine our right to decide how, and under what circumstances, we will be allowed to die a natural death.Haselhorst builds a solid case that a document expressing our end-of-life desires should be fluid, changing with our age, our health and our own fluctuating point of view. The treatment that we would choose when we are 35 years old may be vastly different from the treatment we'd choose at age 80.He writes, "I cannot remember the last time that I wished for a feeding tube, dialysis or ventilator." Haselhorst is not denigrating life-saving treatments. He is simply stressing that we must continually update our health directive so that it reflects our current wishes.Haselhorst challenges us to examine what we would want as our lives evolve. Treatments that increase our chances for survival may be a correct choice under some circumstances. But there often comes a time in our lives where less medical intervention is in our best interest. Unless our current wishes are made known to our health providers and family, we may not be able to choose the manner in which our life comes to a close.While reading the book I underlined,highlighted, and placed colored tabs on pages so that I could remember the most vital information and pass it along. Before long, I realized Haselhorst's words must be read in the

context of the book in order to reveal their full meaning. Haselhorst believes strongly that people have a right to change their minds about end-of-life care right up to their last breath. To address this belief, he has designed a wristband similar to the ubiquitous Livestrong Foundation wristband. Haselhorst's wristband is bright yellow and embossed with the words 'Alpha Care' on one side meaning that the patient wishes doctors to keep trying all possible treatments to keep him or her alive. The reverse side is a subdued blue and embossed with the words 'Omega Care' indicating the patient's wish to be allowed a natural death. With a twist of the wrist band a patient can communicate his or her current feelings on whether or not to use life extending treatments. Haselhorst sums up his message with the words, "Death with dignity is only realized through the empowerment attained from engagement of the patient. This thought-provoking book offers you a method of engagement and a map to that empowerment. I strongly recommend that you take this opportunity to learn more about exerting as much control as possible over your own final experience.

A discussion on Advance Directives can be difficult but Dr. Haselhorst takes this walk with you as he discusses the options with a philosophical, psychological, practical and medical focus. An advance directive is a legal document stating an individual's medical choices on what s/he chooses to have or not to have if in a terminal medical condition. This document permits your loved one to "Die with Dignity". If you have your advance directive document completed this is still a necessary read to review your choices. If you do not have your advance directive completed Dr. Haselhorst leads you in this process by asking you the questions you need to consider.

If you are unsure whether to create an advance directive, then read this book. If you are certain and want specific guidance regarding the details to put in an advance directive, look elsewhere. This is not a guide. And it could be condensed to a fourth the size and have more relevance.

When it comes to books, people have likes and dislikes; some love romance and poetry while others prefer self-help, fiction, history, and so on. This gem, on the other hand, is one of the rare books we all need to read. Why? Because whether it's for ourselves or our parents or loved ones, we will all eventually face the dilemma of end-of-life conversations and decision-making. I think what makes this book so valuable is that it comes from a doctor that needs to navigate in and around this subject on a daily basis. He has seen many of the common mistakes and understands the ins and outs of preserving one's dignity. Somewhere in the book, Dr. Haselhorst writes: "The uncertainty that

plagues death and dying is only reconciled through the heart. The certainty of honoring life pays tribute to the heart and generates gifts of gratitude, love, and peace."Homayoun Sadeghi, MDSadeghiMD.comAuthorThe Art of Healthy Living: A Mind-Body Approach to Inner Balance and Natural Vitality

A much needed read. A lot of people never think of what they need, and their wishes are not known to people close to them.

Excellent discussion of a difficult topic. The need for "the discussion" about advanced care planning will become increasingly important over time. This book will be an excellent tool for some circumstances. Well written and very direct.

Well reasoned and informative. Worth reading before completing Advanced Directives. Aid in informing family members of your final wishes.

Brilliantly written and a book that needs to be read by many as we will all face these issues at some time. A subject that needs more attention.

I have been reading Dr. Haselhorst's book and so far I find it is a straightforward "talk" toward caregivers regarding advanced directives. He stresses it is just as important for the person being cared for and the caregiver to have a type of road map to help both on the journey. The title may seem a bit insensitive but the book certainly is not! It is a thoughtful and interesting take on how each person's desires should be taken into account. The caregiver may be a concerned relative, friend or employee and have every intention of helping their 'charge' be comfortable and of good spirits. It may be painful for them to help make and abide by the dying person's wishes. (I just had trouble writing "dying". This shows I would possibly be a lot less objective, although I did well when confronted with the loss of a close relative.) I was not the one who helped a loved one decide what her wishes were. Of course, that made it a bit easier for me as I am very emotional. The privilege of being present while my loved one was visited by a member of her church was actually wonderful! We were the only people in the hospital room at that time. As they prayed together I tried to speak the words along with them but wasn't able because of being on the verge of sobbing tears. But I was able to witness the joy and surrender to the faith my loved one practiced and experience how the church member became a conduit connecting her to that joy. I was also comforted by what

appeared to be a transformation that even involved the sun!.My relative who was the caregiver - had done her best to follow what had been decided years ago. Of course. it was difficult for her. To this day she wonders if she did the right thing by letting go. I believe she did. However, I also believe Dr. Haselhorst's book would have made following through a bit easier.I will come back to this review upon completion of the book.

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