

**Ars Moriendi:**  
The Art of Dying

Dean Sharpe MD MHA  
Facilitator Sacred Art of Living Center

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### HISTORY OF LIFE AND DEATH



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### TODAY: DEATH DENYING



When a person is born,  
we rejoice.  
When they are married,  
we celebrate.  
When they die,  
we pretend nothing  
happened.  
**Margaret Mead**

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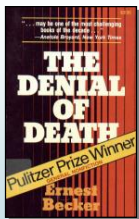
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### TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY



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### TERROR MANAGEMENT THEORY

"We will develop as human beings to the extent that death no longer terrifies us...to the extent that we can rejoice at our near existence...to the extent that we can recognize and greet death as the great transformer."

Willigis Jäger, OSB



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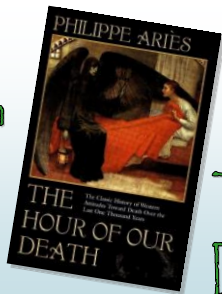
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Good Death



Tame Death

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### ARS MORIENDI

"The Good, Tame Death"

vs.



### MORS IMPROVISA

"The Quick, Unexamined Death"

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### WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

- Death has no intrinsic meaning
- Death is the enemy
- We don't carry those who have died
- We don't learn how to love the end of things

Adults who are racked with death anxiety are not odd birds who have contracted some exotic disease, but men and women whose family and culture have failed to knit the proper protective clothing for them to withstand the icy chill of mortality. -Irvin D. Yalom, psychiatrist and professor (b. 13 Jun 1931)

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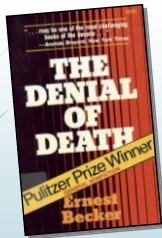
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"Death is psychologically as important as birth. Shrinking away from it is both unhealthy and abnormal... because it robs the second half of life of its meaning and purpose."

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Dr. Carl G. Jung

"Few societies in history have managed to create the *illusion that death is an option* ...such is America's naiveté about mortality which is fed by an unqualified confidence in science."

Memoirs on Visiting America, 1942

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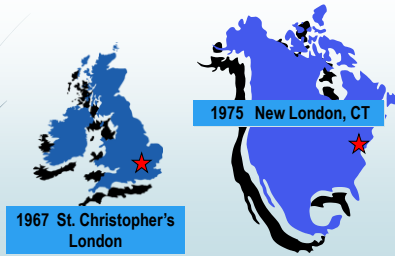
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### BIRTH OF MODERN HOSPICE




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Mother Teresa

**"The most successful spiritual grassroots movement in history..."**



**4500+ US Hospices      More than 20,000 Worldwide**

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St Christopher's Hospice  
51-59 Lawrie Park Road  
Sydenham  
London, England  
SE26 6DZ

August 15, 2004

Dear Richard and Mary:

It is my privilege once again to commend your superlative programs. Since you visited St. Christopher's Hospice last year, I have continually made efforts to enlighten others both in Europe and North America about these excellent training courses. I indeed share your passion and conviction that the...

**Sacred Art of Living and Dying is essential because... spirituality is the most overlooked factor in relieving pain.**



Dr. Cicely Saunders

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### WHERE WE DIE

- In 1900 85% of us died at home, today 80% die in hospital or institutions
- This is true in spite of 80% of us stating we would like to die at home
- A minority of dying patients use hospice care and even those patients are often referred to hospice only in the last 3-4 weeks of life.
- In the rest of the world 82% of people still die at home




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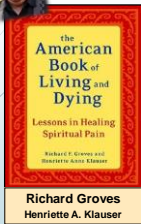
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"Groves' texts reveal ancient-modern wisdom about living and dying..."

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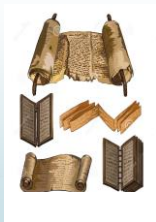
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### ANCIENT BOOKS OF LIVING & DYING

- Prehistoric
- Egyptian
- Celtic
- Abrahamic
- Tibetan
- Iberian
- The *Ars Moriendi*



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### PREHISTORIC DEATH



14,500 BCE

Lascaux Caves:  
Humanity's First Hospices



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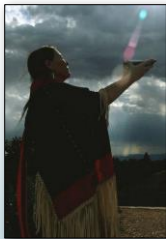
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Native  
Spiritualities of  
Death & Dying

There is no death in the Circle of Life...  
only Great Change



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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#1** THERE IS A UNIVERSAL  
BELIEF THAT SOME FORM OF  
CONSCIOUSNESS SURVIVES  
THE DEATH OF OUR  
PHYSICAL BODY.

Prehistoric Culture



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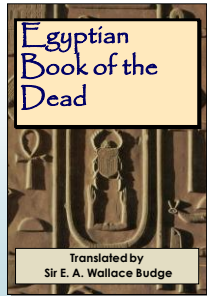
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1240 BCE



**"When the eye of the body is shut, it opens to a Greater Light"**



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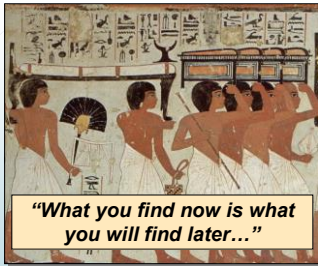
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### LIFE AFTER DEATH



**"What you find now is what you will find later..."**

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***O Lord of Light, grant that I not enter the place of destruction...may my body never know the decay of death.***



**Prayer of Ra... Recorded in Psalm 116**

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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#2 IT IS A PRIORITY THAT HUMAN BEINGS ASSIST EACH OTHER THROUGH THE MANY STAGES OF LIVING & DYING.**



Egyptian Book of the Dead

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### ABRAHAMIC TRADITIONS



**4000 YEARS OF SPIRITUAL TRADITION**

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### HEBREW TORAH



**1240 BCE**

**"I set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life..."**

**Deuteronomy 30:19**

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### CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES



1<sup>ST</sup> Century

**“Blessed are those who weep and mourn...”**  
**“Whoever loses their life will save it...”**  
Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 5 & 16

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### ISLAM & THE QUR'AN



7<sup>TH</sup> cent CE

**“Die before you die...”**  
*(So that when you die, you will not die).*



**Mohammed**

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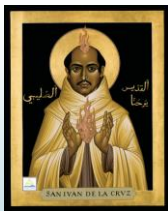
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### JUAN DE LA CRUZ



**“I DIE BECAUSE I DO NOT DIE”**

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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#3 "THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR THE DYING ARE ALSO LESSONS FOR THE LIVING."**  
from the Gospel according to Mary Magdalene



Abrahamic Traditions

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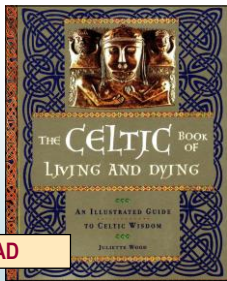
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### THE ANAMCARA TRADITION

**500 — 1000 AD**



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### Middle Eastern — Celtic Connections



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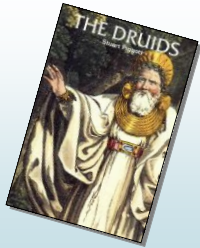
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### ANCIENT DRUIDS



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Abbot Fintan of Clonenaugh  
990-1089 AD

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### Fintan Travels to Europe



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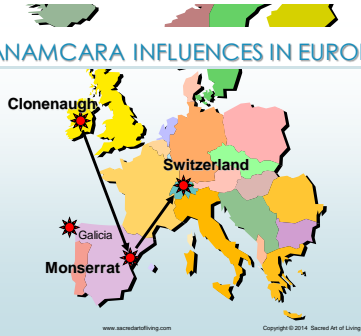
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### ANAMCARA INFLUENCES IN EUROPE



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### Medical-Spiritual Manuscripts



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Engelberg  
Stiftsbibliothek

Sacramentary  
of Fintan  
ca. 1082 A.D.

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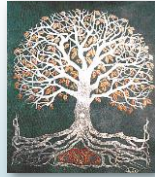
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"May you have the commitment to know what has hurt you, to allow it to come close to you and in the end, become one with you."  
**Fintan's Blessing**



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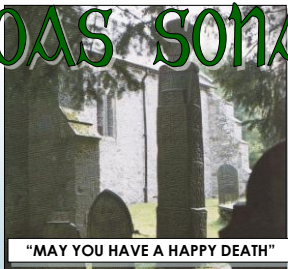
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**bas sona**



"MAY YOU HAVE A HAPPY DEATH"

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WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#4 THE ONLY HEALING FOR SPIRITUAL SUFFERING IS TO LEAN INTO THE PAIN**



Celtic Books of Living & Dying

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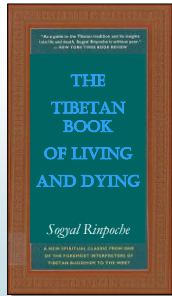
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### BARDO THODOL

Padmasambhava



8th Cent. CE



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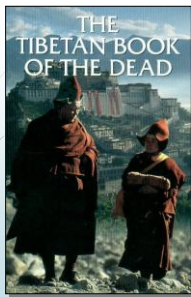
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Unbroken  
spiritual  
lineage of  
twelve  
centuries



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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#5** A "GOOD DEATH" IS THE  
ABILITY TO MAINTAIN CLEAR  
CONSCIOUSNESS DURING THE  
LIFE-TO-LIFE TRANSITION

Tibetan Book of the Dead



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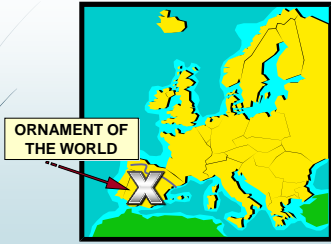
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### IBERIAN BOOKS OF LIVING & DYING



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### INTERFAITH MELTING POT



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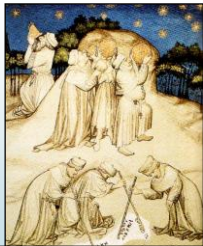
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### ISLAMIC PHYSICAL SCIENCES



PHYSICS ASTRONOMY ARCHITECTURE HYDROTHERMICS

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### ARABIC MEDICAL SCIENCES



SURGERY ANALGESIA DENTISTRY VITAL SIGNS MORPHINE

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### SPANISH INQUISITION: 1492-1834



**30 MILLION  
VOLUMES  
DESTROYED**  
*"In the name  
of Faith..."*

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### EXPULSION OF THE JEWS



**Forced Baptisms = Los Marranos**

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IT IS GOD'S WILL...



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WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#6** THERE IS A CLEAR  
 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE  
 CAUSES AND HEALING OF  
 PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND  
 SPIRITUAL PAIN.

Iberian Books of Living & Dying



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MONASTIC BOOKS OF DYING



*"Ars Moriendi"*



1000-1492 AD

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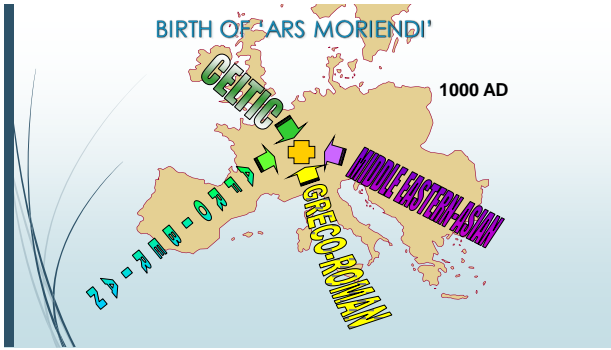
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**WISDOM FROM THE ARS MORIENDI**

**The dying are our teachers...**

**So we live with greater meaning and purpose**

Monastic Books of Dying  
11<sup>th</sup> century



*"Magistri nobis moriendi sunt..."*

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**WISDOM FROM THE ARS MORIENDI**

**Having visited the depths of your own soul, the caregiver realizes that ultimately...**

**We are the medicine**

Ars Moriendi Tradition  
11<sup>th</sup> century



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WISDOM FROM THE ARS MORIENDI

We are not wounded alone nor do we heal alone...

Ars Moriendi Tradition  
11th century



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WISDOM FROM THE ARS MORIENDI

Always help another to diagnose their soul's suffering before responding to it...

Ars Moriendi Tradition  
11th century



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PRESCRIPTIVE PRACTICES



SPIRITUAL — MEDICAL SCIENCES

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### Bonn Hospice



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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#7 IT IS NECESSARY FIRST TO DIAGNOSE SPIRITUAL PAIN BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO RESPOND TO IT.**

Monastic Books of Living & Dying  
"Ars Moriendi"



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### WISDOM FROM OUR ANCESTORS

**#1 A UNIVERSAL BELIEF THAT SOME FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS SURVIVES THE DEATH OF OUR BODY**

**#2 PRIORITY THAT HUMAN BEINGS ASSIST EACH OTHER THROUGH THE STAGES OF DYING**

**#3 THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS FOR THE DYING ALSO APPLY TO THE LIVING**

**#4 THE ONLY CURE FOR SPIRITUAL SUFFERING IS TO LEAN INTO THE PAIN**

**#5 A "GOOD DEATH" IS THE ABILITY TO MAINTAIN CLEAR CONSCIOUSNESS DURING THE LIFE-TO-LIFE TRANSITION**

**#6 THERE IS A CLEAR RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CAUSES & HEALING OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL PAIN**

**#7 FIRST DIAGNOSE SPIRITUAL PAIN BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO RESPOND TO IT**

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