



Four Things That Matter Most

Ira Byock, MD, FAAHPM, knows the transformative potential of saying “please forgive me” “I forgive you” “thank you” “I love you”. As a doctor caring for seriously ill patients for nearly 15 years of emergency medicine practice and more than 40 years in hospice and palliative care, he has taught hundreds of patients who were facing life’s end to say these four things. In this video Dr. Byock provides practitioners with practical tips for supporting colleagues and families in navigating the difficult emotional terrain of life-threatening illness.

MAIN POINTS

Help practitioners assist patients and families in leaving nothing unsaid in their relationships.

- Opening people to the potential for relationships to heal, even when that seems unlikely
- Normalizing previous misunderstandings and hurt feelings
- “Wondering aloud” about the value of saying the four things, rather than telling people what they should say
- Exploring who in their lives it feels important to complete relationships with
- Beginning the conversation; helping people who ask, “How do I start?”

RESOURCES

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Byock, I. A Crash Course in Being Mortal <https://irabyock.org/articles-and-op-eds/#> Published April 14, 2020. Accessed May 14, 2021.

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