**Death Plan Worksheet**

*Creating a “death plan” sounds ominous and overwhelming. What we discovered though is that it’s really just a matter of intentionally thinking through what you would like your last days to look and feel like and what you want to happen immediately after you die.*

*Below are the main guiding questions we worked through as we began more actively planning Cassie’s final days. Dan is now in the process of answering the same questions. These are not intended to be “all” of the questions one might consider or even the most important questions, but they are the questions that helped us get unstuck and write our thoughts down. We drew many of these questions from the death doula led workshop that we attended as well as from conversations with people in our respective support networks. We wanted to share these questions in case they can be even just a little bit helpful to others. Try to be gentle on yourselves as you think through all this – We found that really helped.*

 *Cassie and Dan Cramer, August 2020*

**Thinking About Your Final Days**

1. Where would you ideally like to die? Home, hospital, hospice facility, etc.
2. If home, where in your home – what room?
3. What would you like on the walls?
4. Do you want music playing in your room? What?
5. What would you like the room to smell like?
6. Do you want visitors in your final days and hours?
	* Who?
	* How many visitors at once?
	* Do you want alone time with anyone?
7. Are there any rules or requests for visitors (ie: “Please don’t touch my face”)
8. Do you want time alone each day or hour without visitors (this may help provide some peace and make it easier to “let-go”)? How much time and how often?
9. If you are dying at home, are you comfortable with people in the house even when they are not visiting you?
10. Do you want to create an easy and clear way for people to share private thoughts with you (ie: something more private than a Caring bridge site like a box people can leave notes or a designated place they can send texts or emails)?
11. Do you want a faith leader present towards the end? Who?
12. Any other requests that you want to communicate now (ie: make sure my glasses are always close so I can see even if I am not fully aware of what’s going on)

**Thinking about what needs to happen post death**

1. Do you want an obituary? If so, what do you want included in your obituary? (NOTE: you can write this well in advance if you want control over exactly what is said about you).
* Where do you want this published?
1. Do you want to be buried or cremated?
* If cremated, what do you want your urn(s) to look like?
* If cremated, do you want your remains buried? If not who would you like to have some/all of your remains?
* If buried, what do you want your casket to look like?
* If buried, what clothes do you want to be buried in?
* Where do you want to be buried if that is your choice?
* What funeral home do you want to use?
1. What would you like your funeral/memorial service to look and feel like?
* Where will it take place? Church/synagogue/mosque/other? (Zoom?)
* Who will preside?
* How soon after your death do you want it to take place?
* Approximately how long would you like it to last?
* Do you want flowers there? What type?
* Do you want pictures of you or other remembrances present?
* Do you want a handout that describes the funeral/memorial program? If so, what do you want included in the handout? What picture do you want used?
* What music would you like? Recorded, performed, etc.
* What reading would you like and who would you like to read them?
* Would you like friends or family to share reflections? Who?
1. How do you want to handle the burial (if relevant)?
* Is it an open burial where everyone who was at the funeral/memorial is welcome to attend or is it more limited?
* If limited, to whom?
* Will there be a procession to the burial?
* Who will preside over the burial?
* What would you like read, said or sung at the burial?
1. Gatherings
* Do you want a wake, Shiva or other gathering before or after the service?
* Where would you like this to take place?
* What do you want present there – pictures, other remembrances?
1. Outside of your will do you have wishes for your personal items or clothes that you want to communicate? Are there special things you want left to certain people?
2. Communication
* Who do you want to make sure knows about your death? How will you communicate (Caring bridge, email, text, etc.). Who will do this communicating? Does your designee have emails or phone numbers? NOTE: You don’t need to figure this out in advance (we haven’t) we just flagged it as something to remember to do at some point as it will help relieve some of the burden on the immediate family

**Other Considerations**

1. Make sure somebody knows about this plan and where to find it. Go over the plan (or relevant parts of it) with key family members and/or friends so people are not surprised by your wishes. Note you can also have a caregiver do this for you.
2. Make sure you have a will and health-care directive and that they are up to date. Make sure somebody knows where they are.
3. For the health care directive or in addition to it, provide any additional details or wishes beyond statements like “no invasive measures/no help breathing.” What do you want the premium placed on in your final days (comfort, prolonging your life, etc.)?
4. Make a list of all passwords and make sure somebody has them all or use a password manager and share them.
5. Designate (or have your caregiver) designate people to play specific roles over the final days and beyond. These are the people who will help you and your loved ones navigate this said and painful period.
* Do you want to work with a death doula? – if so interview and decide on the person well in advance.
* Do you want people to help with communication, coordinating food, managing visitors, etc., for the final days? Who will play these roles?
1. If your hope is to die at home, make sure you think through room set-up, hospice resources, etc.
2. Write good-bye letters or videos to friends and family. Same with communications for future special occasions (ie: nieces/kids birthdays, graduations, etc.)