



The Best Care Possible: A Physician's Quest to Transform Care Through the End of Life

Ira Byock MD

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A palliative care doctor on the front lines of hospital care illuminates one of the most important and controversial ethical issues of our time on his quest to transform care through the end of life.


It is harder to die in this country than ever before. Statistics show that the vast majority of Americans would prefer to die at home, yet many of us spend our last days fearful and in pain in a healthcare system ruled by high-tech procedures and a philosophy to "fight disease and illness at all cost."

Dr. Ira Byock, one of the foremost palliative-care physicians in the country, argues that end-of-life care is among the biggest national crises facing us today. In addressing the crisis, politics has trumped reason. Dr. Byock explains that to ensure the best possible care for those we love-and eventually ourselves- we must not only remake our healthcare system, we must also move past our cultural aversion to talking about death and acknowledge the fact of mortality once and for all.

Dr. Byock describes what palliative care really is, and-with a doctor's compassion and insight-puts a human face on the issues by telling richly moving, heart-wrenching, and uplifting stories of real people during the most difficult moments in their lives. Byock takes us inside his busy, cutting-edge academic medical center to show what the best care at the end of life can look like and how doctors and nurses can profoundly shape the way families experience loss.

Like books by Atul Gawande and Jerome Groopman, *The Best Care Possible* is a compelling meditation on medicine and ethics told through page-turning, life or death medical drama. It is passionate and timely, and it has the power to lead a new kind of national conversation.

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