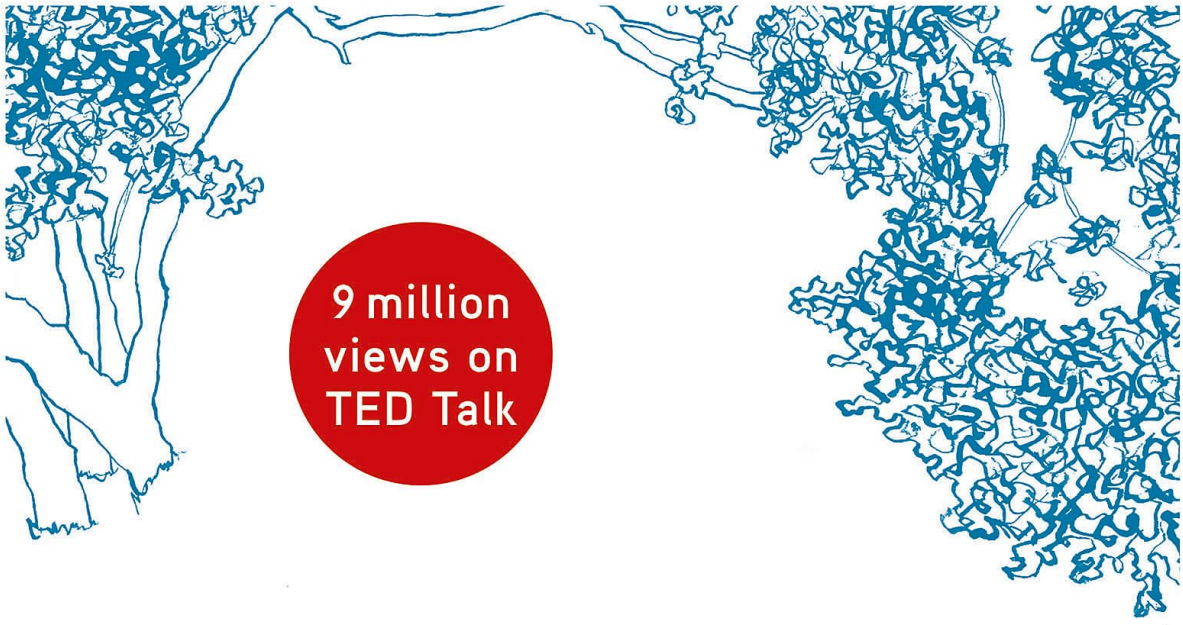
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A Beginner’s Guide to the End: How to live life and face death



A Beginner's Guide to the End

How to live life and face death

'I'm happy this book exists because everyone will need it at some point or another'

ELIZABETH GILBERT, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*

BJ Miller, MD and Shoshana Berger
Illustrated by Marina Luz

BJ Miller and Shoshana Berger. 2019. Quercus. 428p

“If we had our way, along with driving lessons and sex education, we’d all get a course in death ed before leaving school”. Miller and Berger’s tome, also subtitled Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death, is a comprehensive and user-friendly manual that provides practical and thoughtful guidance – providing a de facto death ed curriculum.

In 24 chapters and 5 sections (Planning Ahead, Dealing with Illness, Getting Help Along the Way, When Death is Close, and After) it explains in clear language what to expect and ‘how to’ approach and do it. Many parts, such as the chapters on Symptoms and Hospital Hacks, or a section on how to interact with doctors, provide useful general knowledge at whatever stage of life you may be in. Other sections emphasize the care and love that has gone into it, for example ‘13 constructive ways to cope’ and ‘How to talk to kids’. There is also a well-stocked 30-page resources section at the end.

While the first chapter, Don’t Leave a Mess, points to the reality of the inherent messiness of human life, the book reminds us that only a small proportion of us (10-20%) will die without warning. This means “we do have some choice about how we orientate ourselves towards the inevitable. Where we’ll die, maybe. Around whom. And, most important, how to spend our time meanwhile.”

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