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Wrestling meaning from death

By David Sunderland

“You’re not the conductor of the symphony but rather one vibrating string within it. That truth situates us within something vast and unknown. We can’t know where we are going, or why we are here (if there is any reason). It leads to three of the most important words in existence: I don’t know” (Klaas).

Jenkinson suggests, “If the meaning of life isn’t necessarily anything at all, then try to imagine you have to make meaning … every day”. Yet we tend to view dying as an angel or executioner, with obituaries suggesting our last days are a battle. However fighting will mean this battle becomes “an intolerant, uninformed mania masquerading as a rational life choice”. Instead we can view death like a sailor views the sea: wrestling with it and making our way.

K?bler-Ross encourages: “try to embrace death and dying as natural parts of life, so that you are better able to face them for others and yourself when the time comes”. Lofland suggests the bureaucratization, secularization and taboo around death is “used, abused and greatly exaggerated”.

Miller and Berger remind us, “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.”

References

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