



ICCFA Magazine subject spotlight



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► Gail Rubin, CT, CC, is certified in thanatology: death dying and bereavement, is author of "Kicking the Bucket List: 100 Downsizing & Organizing Things to

Do Before you Die." She also is author of the award-winning book "A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die" and The Family Plot blog.



www.AGoodGoodbye.com
<http://agoodgoodbye.com/the-family-plot-blog/>

► She is a death educator, Certified Celebrant, and pioneering Death Café host who uses radio, television and

funny films to help start funeral planning conversations.

► Her 12-episode TV show, also called "A Good Goodbye," helps bring the funeral planning conversation home. The four-DVD set is available.

<http://agoodgoodbye.com/radio-tv-a-good-goodbye-tv-series/>

Rubin's book encourages all kinds of preneed planning

Last year, Marie Kondo, author of the best-selling "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," was named one of Time's 100 most influential people. Bucket lists, from "10 places you must visit before you die" to "100 essential movies to see," have proliferated online.

Gail Rubin's new book, "Kicking the Bucket List: 100 Downsizing & Organizing Things to Do Before you Die," combines these two popular preoccupations in a book that promotes preplanning. Rubin's book encourages people to undertake downsizing and organizing not because it's a dreary obligation, but because it will make their lives better. (Sound familiar?)

The tie-in to our profession begins in the forward by funeral director Amy Cunningham, who notes we're taught that "staying busy and accumulating things will lead to a better life," and that our fear of death begins early, "as well-meaning parents seek to shield us from the inevitable by avoiding funerals."

But decluttering our lives and preparing for our deaths can be an uplifting experience, Cunningham says, and all this organizing will enable our families to focus on their grief and/or our "send-off" when we die: "They won't have to wonder what we would have wanted, where the car title is or what our Facebook password might be."

Rubin's book doesn't provide a checklist of steps to take, one by one. Instead, it provides options and ideas. Frankly, if you take care of #91, "focus on joy" (which involves following the KonMari method of tidying up *everything*), you don't need to do #93, "evaluate your stuff," or #92, "list what you need or don't need," because you will have divested yourself of "stuff" you don't need.

But #93 and #92 do provide alternatives for those not enchanted by Marie Kondo's method. Rubin's list gives people options for finding the downsizing-organizing method(s) that work best for them, as well as ideas for making the job less tedious. She includes URLs for more information about ideas and methods that do appeal to you.

The list includes every way you might want to get rid of things, from selling them online or at yard sales to donating materials to Habitat for Humanity and giving vintage clothing to local theater groups. It also lists



"Kicking the Bucket List: 100 Downsizing & Organizing Things to Do Before You Die," by Gail Rubin, Rio Grande Books, ISBN: 978-1943681150.

ways to dispose of potentially hazardous items such as old medications and paint.

Decluttering and organizing is designed to help you live a less stressful, more joyful life, but it also has an impact on estate planning, since it will make things easier for your executor and heirs, as will the advice to have art, jewelry, musical instruments and other items appraised.

The end-of-life list of things to do

The list counts down from #100 to #1. Number 39 is "get organized for end-of-life issues." She says that "fear of death is why more than 70 percent of adults don't make these arrangements." Yet death comes to us all, she notes, urging people to finish the list "so your loved ones won't have to scramble to gather vital information and make expensive decisions under duress of grief."

End-of-life issues listed span everything from doing estate planning and making a will to writing your family history and recording online passwords. Number 15 ("shop before you drop") advises visiting several funeral homes to learn about options.

The list also includes making your funeral plans and arrangements to cover funeral and cemetery costs. She does advise people *not* to write a check directly to a funeral home: "Make sure you buy a preneed funeral insurance policy you own and can transfer to a different funeral home if you move."

Rubin suggests writing an epitaph, and says she hopes hers will fit on her marker: "Talking about sex won't make you pregnant, and talking about funerals won't make you dead. Start a conversation today."

Number 1 on her list: "enjoy your life and start your bucket list today." After all, your stuff isn't going to organize itself. And your funeral isn't going to plan itself. □