GAIL RUBIN, CT, THE DOYENNE OF DEATH®

A Light Touch on Serious Subjects

Gail Rubin uses humor, film, television and audience participation to make conversations about mortality, grief and end-of-life planning engaging, memorable and surprisingly entertaining. Programs can be customized for professional conferences, employee education, community outreach, faith communities and general audiences.

SIGNATURE MORTALITY MOVIES PROGRAMS

Laughing in the Face of Death: Funny Films for Funeral Planning

Can comedy help us plan better for death? Absolutely. Using clips from comedy films and television programs, Gail illustrates the decisions families face before and after a death. Audiences learn practical ways to reduce stress and conflict, save money, communicate their wishes and create a meaningful "good goodbye." Just as talking about sex won't make you pregnant, talking about funerals won't make you dead, and your family will benefit from the conversation.

The Many Faces of Grief: Mourning in the Movies

Grief doesn't follow a tidy timetable, and people don't all mourn in the same way. Using memorable scenes from popular films and television programs, Gail explores different grieving styles, disenfranchised grief, mourning rituals, resilience and other concepts from thanatology, the study of death, dying and bereavement. Film provides an accessible way to recognize the many ways grief can look and feel.

Ashes to Ashes, Dust in Your Face: Cremation, Comedy and Creativity

Cremation has become the leading form of disposition in the United States, but many families know surprisingly little about what happens before, during and after the process. Using funny and serious film clips, Gail explains the choices families need to make, what can be done with cremated remains, and why discussing those choices before a death can prevent confusion and conflict afterward.

The Funeral Director on Film

Hollywood has portrayed funeral directors as everything from solemn professionals to comic eccentrics and downright creepy characters. Through scenes from comedies and dramas spanning decades, Gail explores the history of undertaking in the United States, changing perceptions of

funeral professionals and practical lessons about funeral planning. It's an entertaining look at "the last person to let you down."

Movies, Medicine and Mortality

What happens when patients, families and healthcare professionals need to talk about serious illness, treatment choices and death? Film and television offer powerful examples of conversations that go well, and spectacularly badly. Gail uses dramatic and comedic scenes to explore doctor-patient-family communication, advance care planning, treatment decisions and the questions patients need to ask when the stakes are high.

Estate Planning: Hollywood Myths Versus Facts

According to Hollywood, the dramatic reading of the will settles everything, funeral instructions belong in the will, and long-lost relatives regularly inherit fortunes. Reality is considerably messier. Clips from comedies and dramas illustrate common misconceptions about wills, executors, inheritance and funeral instructions while demonstrating why estate planning needs to happen today, not "someday."

Jewish Funeral Traditions on Film

What happens between a Jewish death and the unveiling of a headstone? Using scenes from film and television, Gail illuminates Jewish traditions surrounding death and dying, care of the body, funerals, burial, shiva, mourning and remembrance. The program highlights both differences and similarities with Christian practices and is especially valuable for interfaith families and communities.

Lessons on Grief and Mourning in Animated Films

Animated films may be made for children, but their lessons about loss are anything but childish. Through scenes from popular animated movies, Gail explores death, grief, significant life changes, resilience and the eventual return of joy. These familiar stories provide an approachable way for audiences of all ages to understand how we adapt to loss.

Mortality in Popular Culture

Movies and television give us a common language for talking about subjects we might otherwise avoid. In this customizable multimedia presentation, Gail uses carefully selected scenes to spark conversations about funeral planning, grief, healthcare decisions, estate planning and other mortality issues. Programs can be tailored to the interests and educational goals of a specific audience.

PLANNING & DEATH LITERACY PROGRAMS

Kicking the Bucket List: Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die

Do you plan to live forever? Do you ever plan to move? Depending on where you're going, you can't take it with you. Based on Gail's book *Kicking the Bucket List*, this practical and entertaining presentation offers manageable ways to downsize possessions without becoming overwhelmed, organize essential information for your executor and loved ones, and address important end-of-life planning tasks while you're alive and well.

We Can Do That? New Trends in Death Care

The American funeral is changing. Gail explores evolving options including green and natural burial, home funerals, alkaline hydrolysis, natural organic reduction and other emerging disposition choices, along with changing cremation practices and increasingly personalized memorial services. Audiences come away with a broader understanding of what is possible and the questions to ask when making funeral arrangements. Available with or without film clips.

Your Customers Are Discussing Death. Where Are You?

Death Cafes, Before I Die Festivals, Death Over Dinner, death-positive gatherings and other death-literacy initiatives have attracted people around the world who want to talk openly about mortality. What can businesses and organizations serving these same people learn from the movement?

Drawing on her experience as a U.S. Death Cafe pioneer, coordinator of the Before I Die New Mexico Festival and creator of Mortality Movie Nights, Gail explains what makes death-literacy events successful and how funeral homes, cemeteries, healthcare organizations, financial professionals and other businesses can use educational community outreach to build relationships, start meaningful conversations and ultimately encourage planning.

What Are Your Ethical Will Life Lessons?

A traditional will passes along possessions. An Ethical Will passes along something potentially more valuable: your stories, values, wisdom and life lessons. Gail introduces this centuries-old practice and shows participants how to begin putting into words what they want future generations to know. Available as either a presentation or a longer participatory workshop.

INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS & WORKSHOPS

Laughing and Learning: A Practical End-of-Life Workshop

We all have a 100% mortality rate, yet far too many people leave important end-of-life decisions until a crisis occurs. This hands-on workshop replaces procrastination with action. Participants begin outlining funeral or memorial preferences, drafting obituary ideas or famous last words, considering advance medical directives, and identifying the conversations they still need to have. Expect practical information, useful exercises and, yes, laughter.

The Newly-Dead® Game: How Well Do You Know Their Last Wishes?

Inspired by the classic television program *The Newlywed Game*, The Newly-Dead® Game turns end-of-life planning into an entertaining audience experience. Couples discover how well they know each other's final wishes, while the Singles Edition allows everyone to play along. Newly-Dead® Bingo offers another interactive option. Behind the laughter is a serious purpose: helping people discover the questions they need to discuss before there's a death in the family.

About Gail Rubin, CT



Gail Rubin, CT, The Doyenne of Death®, is a pioneering death educator, author and two-time TEDxABQ speaker who uses humor, film and television to get end-of-life conversations started.

A Certified Thanatologist and Certified Funeral Celebrant, she is the author of *98.6 Mortality Movies to See Before You Die: Remarkable Films and TV Shows to Discuss Death and Plan Ahead*, *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die*, *Kicking the Bucket List: 100 Downsizing and Organizing Things to Do Before You Die*, and *Hail and Farewell: Cremation Ceremonies, Templates and Tips*.

Gail hosts the *Mortality Movies* television series and *The Doyenne of Death* podcast, coordinates the award-winning Before I Die New Mexico Festival, pioneered Death Cafes in the United States, and created Mortality Movie Night programs for funeral homes and community organizations.

The Association for Death Education and Counseling honored Gail with its 2024 Community Educator Award, and *Albuquerque Business First* named her a Woman of Influence in 2019.

Her motto sums up her approach: **"Talking about sex won't make you pregnant. Talking about funerals won't make you dead."**

Bring The Doyenne of Death® to your audience.

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