

Sacred Goodbyes:

understanding the dying process &
supporting yourself through grief

Rhonda Osborn | Founder, This One Life

End-of-Life Educator & Guide
Grief Coach | Caregiver Coach
Spiritual Director



This One Life

Disclaimer

I am not a medical doctor, lawyer, or financial advisor. All messages and ideas in this presentation are generalized from my own personal experiences and learning. Please consult your personal doctor, lawyer, or financial advisor for questions related to your specific situation.

Resources

References

Barbara Karnes, R. (2024). *Always Offer, Never Force*. Vancouver, WA: Barbara Karnes Books, Inc.

Karnes, B. (1986). *Gone From My Sight: the dying process*. Vancouver, WA: Barbara Karnes Books, Inc.

O'Connor, M.-F. (2025). *The Grieving Body*. New York: Harper Collins.

A G E N D A

- Understanding the physical, emotional, & spiritual signs and general timeline of the dying process
- Explore anticipatory grief and how to support yourself as the caregiver through the process

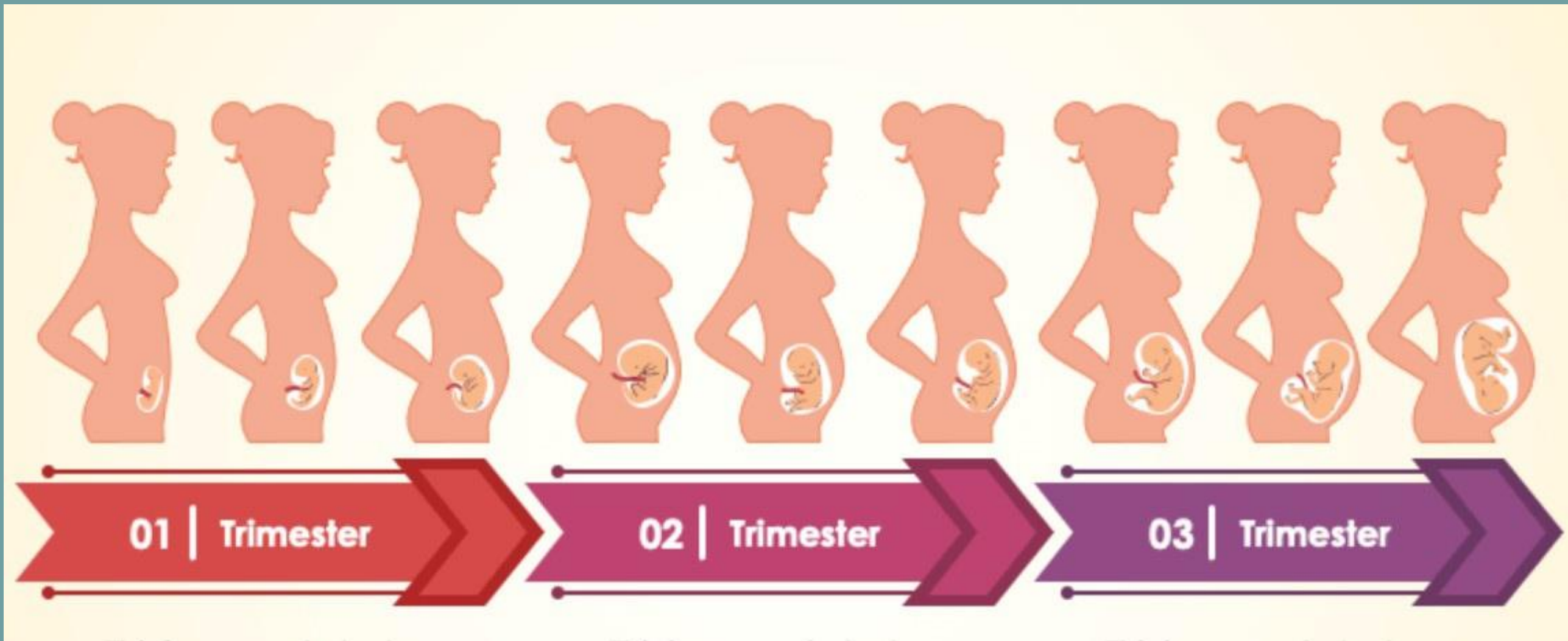
THREE UNIVERSAL TRUTHS

We die the way we've lived (our personality)

Being present (or not present) for a person's death

People don't die like they do in the movies





WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN DEATH IS NEAR

Food & Fluids

Sleep

Withdrawal



FOOD & FLUIDS

2-4 months

stop eating meat: beef, chicken, then fish

stop eating fruits & veggies

stop anything that takes energy to digest

only want soft food like pudding, ice cream, soup

then only want protein supplements, water, gatoraide

ALWAYS
OFFER,
NEVER
FORCE

NO
FEEDING
TUBE

NO IV

SLEEPING HABITS

months before death: usually take an afternoon nap

then morning and afternoon nap

then morning, afternoon, and evening nap in front of TV

then asleep more than awake

(sorting out all the “junk” of life)

WITHDRAWAL

2-4 months before death, no longer interested in world, sports, news, etc

processing their life

may start pushing people away, hostile, aggressive

they are grieving their losses

“Thank you”

“I forgive you”

“Please forgive me”

“I love you”

“Goodbye”

*Dementia

(doesn't play by the same rules)



LABOR OF DYING

1-3 Weeks

ASLEEP WITH EYELIDS PARTIALLY OPEN

PUFFING AIR

“DEATH RATTLE”

AGITATION

RESTLESS

LABOR OF DYING

Days to Hours

MOTTLING: BLUISH HAND & FEET

PEE AND POOP A LOT

LABOR OF DYING

Hours to minutes

NON-RESPONSIVE

“FISH OUT OF WATER” BREATHING

This is sacred space



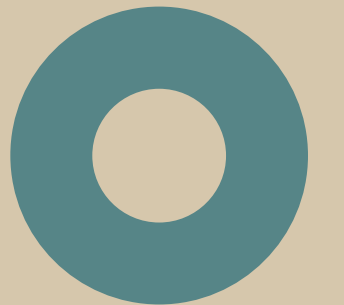
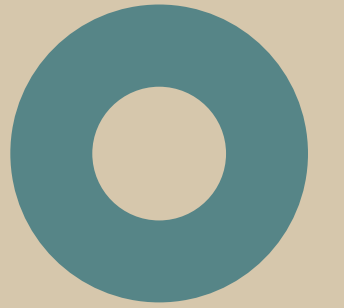
CARING FOR YOURSELF IN ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Guilt, anger,
sadness, relief

tight shoulders,
racing heart,
shallow breathing

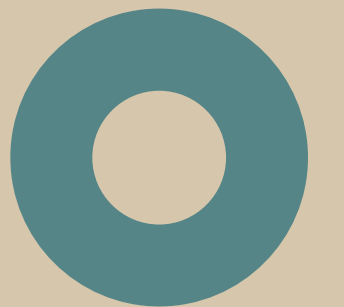
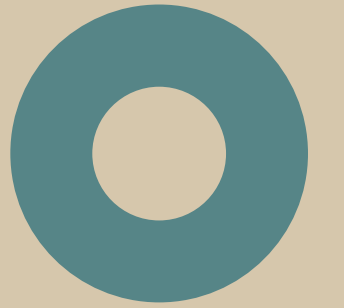
CARING FOR YOURSELF IN ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

-
- **attend to your own health & body**
 - **coping toolbox: breathing, prayer, journaling, walking**
 - **prioritize rest & nourishment**
 - **let others support you**



CARING FOR YOURSELF IN ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

-
- **Small rituals: light a candle, pray, journal**
 - **practice compassion for yourself**
 - **balance caregiving with self-care**



Thank you!

Rhonda Osborn | Founder, This One Life

(913) 954-8574

rhonda@this-one-life.com

www.this-one-life.com

End-of-Life Educator & Guide
Grief Coach | Caregiver Coach
Spiritual Director



This One Life