Speaker 1 ([00:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6VDJ-EHuAjlNSGspL3B4MZ-z2gXWEmS8N0sb9yTyBmLfib8Bj4G_EfVowlW7_Wjr6t37WveESA4VulvU6NLL99rOkfE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3.07)):

Hi everyone. And welcome to this episode of ask a death doula. My name is Susan O'Brien. Today is a great episode. I am so thrilled. Most of you know, what I do and how this specific area that we're gonna talk about today, I could talk about for hours and hours. So I'm a very excited here. We have a very special guest. This is a William Peters and William Peters is the founder of the shared crossing project and director of its research initiative recognized as a global leader in the field of shared death studies, he has spent decades studying end of life experiences. Previously Peters worked as a hospice volunteer with the Zen hospice project in San Francisco. And as a teacher and social worker in central and south America, a practicing psychotherapist, he holds degrees from Harvard graduate school of education and UC Berkeley. His work on end of life is informed by his therapeutic work with individuals and families facing the grief and bereavement personal experiences with death and dying across cultures and his family's own end of life journeys. His shared crossings project.com Williams book entitled a heavens at heavens door. What shared journeys to the afterlife teach about dying well, and living better will be published by Simon and Schu worldwide release January 11th, 2020, which is any moment now let's get into it. Okay, welcome. And thank you for being here.

Speaker 2 ([01:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-hfLANAF0GgX21hgf4j0I5qXKvbC_Zp3MTWB5PiPHBjuFqZ0Q6J-q98MACOcspBTUY1AtL-e4Ey6ElF57OwcqR1OIUk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=96.51)):

Thanks Suzanne. A real honor and pleasure to be with you today.

Speaker 1 ([01:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=89J7422RPsxLV1THh-ZB5lLS01aXJph0ChIQUJGw2qfj6Vqwsg0GJhw0npgAGfy7Ro2h3v28EyumZ8vQJFz1_fZzUUw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=100.52)):

Well, thank you. And you know, the more conversations we can have about this specific area of end of life, the better and people I have to share with you. And I was talking about this today. I recently did a newsletter and it was our largest outreach in opening and emails and it, and it was titled, do you believe in angels? And we're gonna talk all about, and I was specifically talking about these experiences that my families have seeing angels. So before we get into that, let's just do a little bit of your background, if you can, about what did bring you on the path to be in this space right now?

Speaker 2 ([02:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QPBWhSIxXrtlvtioqNnB9tamnAp_Gmhb4vzGeTkud8plMlEjWcwOVWNTMlrjxSL0aQFDSTLULMRlycLjhf6_4a6wfvM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=138.89)):

Yeah, great question. I often, I, I often think about that and, uh, I mean, I think it began when I was 17 years old, old, I had a near death experience, uh, high speed skiing accident, catapulted outta my body, uh, saw, you know, moved away from the earth, went into a beautiful galaxy, then saw that light. That is just the hallmark of the near death experience. And, you know, I pled to come back, uh, into this life because I felt I had literally, I couldn't even imagine 17 years old. Why I could have this thought I, I have to go back. I have work to do, I haven't finished what I came there to do, which is very, for a near death experience or, uh, not to just stay in that beautiful realm and say, you know, I'm kind done with earth. This is so great up here, but I was different, you know, I, I came back and I didn't think about that experience for a long time.

Speaker 2 ([03:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-DS0Ptq1Mey8Ox28jUsPQOBEhRtyWhb5g3twDmYR6R6NNdCDP241GBu0LvfBeP69XqKksN7b1Cfk1wilo3ZBSXjROiA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=193.92)):

Yeah. And, but I, it did move me and I was also had a very, um, profound experience as a social worker in San Francisco during the aids epidemic, worked a lot with, uh, you know, primarily gay men who were ravaged by the HIV virus in those days. Very little known about it, very scary, ugly deaths. And I worked with this community for about three years. Uh, one experience in particular that I'll share was, uh, an individual by the name of Brad, Brad, uh, was, I would call, he was a death midwife in a certain way because he would, he lived in a homeless encampment, always with his brothers. These are these, like I said, these gay men who were impoverished by the disease. Yeah. And were living together. Yeah. He, he came in one morning and said, Randy died last night. And I said, oh, I'm so sorry.

Speaker 2 ([04:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XnqZ-8g9uDwsFrCLRBblap3fLhH5WS_hS126moDozS1_ANie4CqhwBCbkHKGFE0wWpFJdCoi09MXvGylDVanV6y6Lw8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=248.93)):

And he said, uh, he says, well, but it was so beautiful. I said, oh, it was so beautiful. Tell me more. And he proceeded to tell me that, uh, while Randy will was dying, he rose out of his body through a beautiful cylinder of light. And as Randy was at the top of that light, he looked down at his brothers and said, thank you for caring for me. And he was healed. He was beautiful. He was radiant. And he was happy. That was the first share death experience that I heard. Um, I had others in my life since then, and maybe even one before, but that's for another conversation. So those experiences really got me into this. Then I worked in hospice and saw more. And as a psychotherapist, I was focusing in end of life. And people started coming in for grief and bereavement therapy and would share these experiences. And I, and they would be discounted by most mental health professionals. But I would say, please share more. I want to hear

Speaker 1 ([05:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=m3DkeZ1P5_Xo0j5kHlyG1AHcUFiTj_kwGssoJyAIsrWMve4c3pEldULJ-MQX0Ky5akonGLvDqaMTma05g5VXbTZDwTw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=308.34)):

We are here to share this with the world because they, people need to hear this. This is, this is the defining threshold that changes everything. Because just like that wonderful man who was at doula, his life was forever changed from that experience for the better. So I wanted to share something about your 17 year old self having the near death and kind of forgetting about that for a while. Right. But knowing in that, in that timeframe that no, I, my eye have work to do I have to go back. Um, so there's different parts of us, you know, there's like four different parts. There's this higher wisdom. There's, you know, different parts that are, you know, part of our journey. And it's interesting how we sometimes switch them up. Like, we'll have that awareness, but then we'll forget about it. It kind of gets tucked away for safekeeping or another time, or when we're more evolved in that space.

Speaker 1 ([05:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7F4TvipfM2jexyWBvn0mhnIUq4NWAHR2G8q_rSOdCUVp8w1sfpjZ_gqP_btDBJd6WSGssGc7IaGJ3RbOYcITRN4uONo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=357.74)):

So I, so I just love that, cuz I study this a lot and this is gonna come to later in our conversation, we're gonna talk about the spiritual wisdom of the shared crossing, the access to a, um, a universal oneness and energy that is all knowing that is all loving. Um, and again, there's a part of us that has that now, but you have to access it. So I love, I love what you just shared now. Um, then you started getting into it and you started hearing the recurring, um, same things. And again, the sad thing that I, that I hear is that people were discounted that their stories were not. And so it shuts us down. I've even had patients who don't wanna tell you always what's happening because they, they don't want their families to think they're nuts that their mother's in the room or that they see whatever. So we wanna make this a more of again, a natural experience because it, it is. And it's so common that we're gonna share today. Um, so we do have to collect for our listeners. What is a shared death experience? Would you call that S D E correct? Correct. Can you just, all right. So give us a definition of that, please.

Speaker 2 ([07:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MnV3aPog97MfRxGEWTmhKrjV4-3_aqJSxfBnd6hZ7EGQaQ1FOX_ckm3H5Wb1xVbtauY_Wm1hgFv9kM4y3SWsXq39zdY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=427.81)):

Yeah, thanks. So a shared death experience occurs when somebody's dying and a caregiver loved one. And in some cases, just a bystand reports that they feel like they shared in this transition. And in some cases, most observed the initial stages of the afterlife of where, where they see the dying there, or at least sense that that's where the dying's going. So that's, it, it is in the dominant mot for a shared death experience is journey. When I'm working with people, I'm always checking in, what are you sensing and feeling about this experience? And if they say something like it was static, or it is just a visitation or a vision, that's a profound experience pre death or post death, but that's not a shared death experience. A shared death experience has implicit in it, a journey, a movement from this human experience through the portal of death, on to another realm of existence. And the experiencer says, I feel like I shared in that journey.

Speaker 1 ([08:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o2Iu26I4JGsnoV3Is_75iyfPNWbBNecxAown22vALII3jTp9H_sCSM_6L6CX3bprV3UFxENGBfSwvVSFJEMmEfPLxQ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=505.72)):

Okay. So we need to take this a step further now, so, okay. Thank you for that. Now it's a, it's a journey I'm hearing you are there different types of journeying?

Speaker 2 ([08:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XSoI8qF6nFUuOg0b9GQKtjT3iTAljGxoiR7jR-KB9Mq9gE2x0XHPuqehJVlNTmyJq308jWmDHN-pf7VB3O7MrWGTlV8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=518.41)):

Yes. A great question. Oh, I love that. That just shows you've, you know, this stuff inside now. And that, with that question, I appreciate, well,

Speaker 1 ([08:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_lP0ej8CT-wHfz5Sxkv21gks3JM7c1D-K7EFt_jtfOoL8UWve5v9a5z3oRTFXmdyU1Uywf07Rb9qqqXYHSvo9AB61Bw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=525.7)):

I think like I try and do

Speaker 2 ([08:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kl_RFQNxGHmGqE3fx2ihlu-MtJNofJzcBg1GrjEpdLvucUa4XOVShfBXTIR9D0Q9NW2vtZHKyh_j4Cym2bIWwIrfdsY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=526.62)):

My best. Yeah. That's just beautiful question. So there are four types of, of shared death experiences and, and I call them modes of participation for the experiencer. There's four ways that they can experience themselves in the share death experience. This is caregiver loved one bystander. The first one, uh, by the way, these are not mutually exclusive. Okay. The first and most common one is sensing, sensing that a loved one or some person is transitioning is dying. Okay. And that can be remote. Okay. It's most, it's most commonly remote and it can also be bedside. But the reason why sensing is so important is because you can have this experience and not even be at a bedside, you can be halfway around the globe and get a sense that someone you love is ha is transitioning. You might not even know that that they're actually dying, but you may get a sense that something's happening for someone.

Speaker 2 ([09:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KYzEGjEPRFxjFORVaHIv-LgXYjDIbH77B01-Hahgb1wajVA0JGFqJfriQIYMMGW6Vcx06CjscRAIVvUmO0FkBpU0ZiM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=596.06)):

Yeah. And the way these usually come out is they get a call from someone a few hours later, Hey, I didn't wanna tell you your mother died. And they're like, what? I just had this experience. So, and the type of experience we're talking about here is usually for the sensing, it's highly energetic. There's a sense often not clear, but a that something has gone. It's an intuitive something in your gut, in your body. Something's not right here. Something's happened to so and so or something. Yeah. It's just this knowing and, and people, as you already identified, people are afraid in our culture to share these experiences. So when they get an opportunity to share with, with us and you know, my research team really encourages this, you'll hear there's a lot. There's a lot of phenomena there experiencing, okay. So that's the first one mode.

Speaker 2 ([10:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rdoBtu0wk2JnT2qeoGmMN8WCIQlpNObee9f0tVBOR1w0eRfhmCbiJhKrgSnkGaVNcZT0K5OoecV7WdFvxeOC2ytaTG4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=646.13)):

One of, of, uh, participation of our modes of participation is sensing usually at a distance. Second one is witnessing phenomena to nearing death or are just death in general. These phenomena are really, if you were to boil it down, this is the near death experience phenomena. This is witnessing deceased, loved ones, um, or witnessing the dying in this transition or witnessing elevated being you referred earlier to angels. Yes, that would be a, something to witness also heavenly realms, also the brilliant light, this luminous light, um, and also a boundary they'll witness a boundary to which they can, they can get close to, but they realize, oh, the dying is gonna pass over over that. And I have to go back to my life. That's witnessing a phenomenon and there's more phenomena, but those are the main ones. Okay. And then the third way that you can experience this is our third mode of participation is accompanying.

Speaker 2 ([11:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_eFvAex7QgpxOEWy5jx9X1fecKrIf26eFcpqV6nxFUAp4EQRrLqP-1F8b75kpXSbgquLzqpkLVgfMVwff5tJQE-yzc4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=713.74)):

So you can accompany. That means the way we test for this in a certain way is that you move along with the dying on this journey. You actually are moving along this pathway to the afterlife for lack of a better term. And that, that include, of course the sensing and the witnessing of unusual are death related phenomena. So there's that one accompanying. And then there's a last mode, which is just spectacular, is guiding the experiencer reports that I felt like I was brought into this experience to guide the dying in this pathway. So those are the four modes right there.

Speaker 1 ([12:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JAQzX5F2okm4sYqcwy8nM8QDPBVKhtcnPX4UQf1qe41x36_hIQeJ7ktiYZRYMsK88uw_1Vx_-XpqXUhGpFHn67_isPI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=756.77)):

Yeah. All right. Beautiful explanation. I have a lot of questions for you please, because I've been with a lot of people, right? I've been honored and privileged to be with a lot of people. And some of this is overlapping, but I wanna talk about some of the experiences I had and see where you put this in, in the bucket. One of the things that is so beautiful is that we, I call it the universal language of death, right? That there's so many similarities that happen towards that end, that happen in all different religions and cultures. And in my, um, experience. And what I believe is that my patients many times go back and forth before they, they leave be because they wake up from these naps or sleep with all this new information. And there's just this energy and this piece and, and serenity. But a lot of times too, they'll talk about past loved ones being in the room with them or angelic figures, mostly it's past loved ones. Um, so let me ask you this, the, the that's sitting bedside, the caregiver, if your mom is in the bed and she says, my mom is here, is that a shared death experience? Or that is yeah. More just witnessing what they're

Speaker 2 ([13:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bMZrVWkwI2bOkRvf3YLj-WkqALW4AYJ8K55i8TEjC3DeBEJ2pcck4sZpp_LZzAw0DoL5g1P8sXgZ-6CjvVYZEITMPlE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=825.99)):

Doing. Boy, that's a great question. And I want to just say, you know, we have a whole spectrum of end of life experiences that, uh, as a hospice worker and studying in this field, that we have like seven different experiences. And, but once again, uh, I wanna be really clear these, the shared death experience and whether, uh, labels I'm gonna give in a moment here. These are very loose handles. In other words, we don't wanna get too hung up on them. I, I, I like to say these are handles that can help us navigate this terrain. One thing you said that is so, um, I mean, spot on is that there seems, there seems to be that the dying is titrating back and forth between this earth realm and into what lies beyond. Yes. Yeah. And like, you know, you having sat with so many people have seen and witnessed this.

Speaker 2 ([14:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1WgEPy0_sTDaMAn3dQCj-HYtluKRTQzQQSODmuhue9YOnAnMbDc8nRiNJBTZ6o45udu2LPDM0afNydAak-PV1O2G_rY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=884.62)):

So to be really clear, one thing we look at, because what you are describing could be a pre-death dream vision or visitation, and they're, as you know, they're very common. Uh, I mean the most up to date research is on, this is from Dr. Christopher Kerr and he says about 80% of his patients at the Buffalo hospice, inpatient have a pred dream revision. So I actually don't like the term pred death dream. It's not a dream. A dream is something different. That's right. Yeah. So what you're describing sounds to me like a visit or a vision from a deceased loved one that the caregiver is observing. Like if your mother's there and you know, the daughter is there, the daughter's caring for the mother and she observes her mother talking to a deceased relative, or even better yet she, uh, her mother wakes up and says, oh, I was just talking my mother, um, that's a pre-death vision or visitation. Now at some point, the dying process begins and a journey begins. Now what's so important in the literature is that when you get pre-death visions or visitations, what often happens is one of the main communications is get ready. That's right.

Speaker 1 ([16:16](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bqlJwKjEqH6WWnshFgJkskO2Pm4eOON34a6STiEXbpfuuf0HU0favx6x4aePoNOf5DdVmK2wAzNt-hYSaji0FUB7Jr8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=976.42)):

That's prepare yourself.

Speaker 2 ([16:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gECFlF3TMaQ3wj_IZMXGmbfJm2U1g7N6IWxV0biM_1UeORDj3N6iSH9iVGQXqX9zc-G4I2RqQjxiYdA9qlc2AcDgCps&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=977.3)):

That's exactly right. Yeah. We're

Speaker 1 ([16:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Gbkb8b8gDHRCVUBaoG7uNYf2sRJvL9rO2RK2BaM8GEYGO2orPpl9U_Nv1GCTLJCOrlSdXYbn4TM8UAhHOjxRoxGJphg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=979.5)):

And there's time

Speaker 2 ([16:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uaimTgvdiWj7aT4kKNfej86pTcWC9esExgNgEZbtysZAG1XLvTiFuCN80jb_YadE6HIok0RXBPmfJPaRpgZXEaXPANo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=980.34)):

Stamp there. That's that exactly right. The journey hasn't begun yet and got

Speaker 1 ([16:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dp7zHPlB4AUdh_DpSVgeqtsZgJr43g2NfYDzLUREyL6VTGFkE9ITbrknicCFAbhbEJCcEkSMcNkpqafJeHDdaMAS0cM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=987.67)):

Right

Speaker 2 ([16:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PIiV5V-Ak8q8TclRV3mbYZ8D_e5BgsXhEgPf3BExIddmJrcB8K__dAe319rRlATQOZV9wpVO1JQf6OZfhrGA3AvYRuE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=988.02)):

There. It's right there. So, so yeah. So your question is great. I mean, in a certain way, it doesn't make it a, a difference in a certain way, but it, but the idea is that we denote, um, the shared death experience begins when that journey begins. Got it. And, and where there's ways that we can figure it out. And it's fascinating, but I think the ultimate, um, teaching here is that our loved ones are in communication with departed loved ones on the other side, they're getting assistance and it's all seemingly arranged and kind, and loving and organized and

Speaker 1 ([17:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3L2zRcVlBumcApESLgsKKWjjoxjEW6Zjh2Lrvnr0Mlly8LmsMgdoeic72uwm99WxIQlzaJLm_tfiQtCkUAM4AhMdWaE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1029.96)):

Natural and universal. Yes. I, I love when you said let's not, let's not like be so attached to the, the title and the label. And I love that. And that's really important because that's how we live our world with like tagging everything and making it fit in a box. And that's, this is more of that universal, um, you know, awareness consciousness. It's really all about unconditional love and connection. So I, I love that. And I think that we really want listeners to hear that there is this period of time where there are certain things that happen with many people around the world at that end of life, that being visited by loved ones, which I'm told they come to help cross you over, which makes perfect sense and is so beautiful, is really letting you know, to get ready for that departure. But also I wanna explain and share what I believe is happening from a scientific standpoint, because just like you said, when people are, you tell a story, and I remember telling these stories early on in my journey, and it was beautiful story with the person said at the end of life.

Speaker 1 ([18:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rKUmEeiPiyKCfjKTfMNWHRmyn3nd68g_-f5od6X3ItUT_VJoAB5aYSMStS1VuruSJVR0NxndmA_V6igAZmTHDM39zFU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1090.65)):

And I remember this person came up to me after, and he said, that was so beautiful, but can you prove it? And I was like, can I prove it? And I didn't even think cuz it's so NA it's so like real to me. And I was like, well, I can't prove it, but can you prove that it didn't happen? But then I did look into it and the science of physics, you know, studies, energy and energy cannot by a scientific di definition cannot be destroyed. It can only change form and they've they've measured the megahertz and everything. So what I believe is happening as our we're four bodies of energy, physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual, and as the physical starts to diminish and decline that spiritual starts to grow. And I believe that's where it, at one point people have one foot in this world and one foot in the next and it is incredibly powerful.

Speaker 1 ([18:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ud87WCOee1fp18L1ys9p4xj6BWsnKCXf1Rq50IM6tO9cEEhJM4DHvc3Oz37BfLbkEzz3q5gBVF3EGweVeuzdcJLjEMA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1135.09)):

And I think just letting us understand that has just again and listening to the wisdom when, when people share, they have all this new knowledge, it's almost like they were able to now pass a threshold of infinite and intelligence making sense of everything that happened in their lives. You know, I understand now it's all about love forgiveness. I know why that happened. There's a, there's a real beautiful, organic, natural window of opportunity there that when people are honored to bear, witness and privilege to be in that space of end of life and experiencing that their whole life from that moment on changes. And the fact that we've removed one of our greatest teachers about how to live, which is death, um, is to me contributing to the major chaos that we have out there. So you really alluded to that. Um, you know, these things that say get ready, but I think there's a much big your meaning to what we see here about what, how we can live and what, what is happening. So I'd like to go into that direction if we can, please. All right. So I wanna share with you and ask you, what do you think the benefits to our world would be if we, again, brought back the natural and sacredness of this end of life experience and these shared crossings and things that happen at the bedside, how do you think our world could benefit from that?

Speaker 2 ([20:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SAp4lv6XKECkg4YQ6zNHBVLHOCH3sLiq__4_L1g6mi8CGkvYKoowAW2yu2RooVKGzQNlwOA9J4nRI8qDQ5V-kuwYO2c&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1224.15)):

Wow, that's a beautiful question. Hmm. You know, I think it's the most basic level. I think we would come together as families, as communities and, and simply talk, connect, express, uh, love each other with death as part of life. Not as something that we push off, I'm not saying that, you know, we want to hasten the arrival of death. What I am saying is that with the knowledge of these experiences and others that we've already discussed, we can bring the mystery, the grandeur, the beauty, the awe inspiring reality, that death is right into the center of our families and communities. And talk about that. We can share stories with one another and as we share the stories that, um, some of which we're talking about today, it, it really makes death more human and less something. That's a failure of some medical or, or a, an unfortunate reality, right?

Speaker 2 ([21:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=rylvpZDWz2m9MEuAswP6h16o5CA1_PeIvzxh4e1fDZtp48ORb9DkHiTOIbzfgbz7HABmDeh_SJcxtWtRJHglNqqNB3o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1314.06)):

It's, it's not, it's, it's it's as integral to life as birth is, and we need to honor it. And what the practical changes could be would be that, um, weed share these stories with one another and as communities, we would totally redo the rituals around death completely. And, and I do think there are some Mo models for that, which I know you're a well of aware of Suzanne, something like, you know, the whole, uh, ours, Moe work that in the middle ages of Europe, when the people gathered at the monasteries to honor the dying and there was all the music and all the ritual and you know, it, and these were multi, um, cultural experiences because this was a crossroads that brought in Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Celtic wisdom. So we have a, we're not gonna go back and do that. But the idea is that this one, what we're doing is not natural.

Speaker 2 ([22:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AbzRntdjYtk4WcDlzTz7WpSY44IcDqJ-uqRl09TIhDLsniWXhKCEdC7R0_VbiDpjXAuG7veRs7zJMF57N2JVopwrTUg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1376.58)):

This is really, uh, protracted, inefficient, unhealthy response to fear of death and anything we can do to bring death and, and all its grandeur into our everyday conversations, the better we're gonna be. And the most practical level medical care would have to change. In other words, our relationship, yeah. To end of life care, um, would change dramatically in the most common area. And you could speak to this far more wisely than I can having, having, you know, been an oncology nurse, um, is that people would not choose a lot of the interventions that are going to maybe give them a bit more time, but, but cause them a great deal of pain, not just for themselves, but for the loved ones who have to endure watching their beloved suffer for a few more days, weeks. What have you, when the is, Hey, let's accept death. Let's talk about how we wanna live this final chapter together. Let's bring our loved ones together and let's celebrate the life you've had and choreo choreograph, the, the death that you want.

Speaker 1 ([24:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NIGQhW0bOOmOVSUuPKV6Y9Uuy_ulcS2_RamrdocNesnBTMu27y9CQcXtNlq2Hiz_v3hUdEocFHZsJUccSzHJ_Dpgmas&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1458.77)):

Love, love, love. So it's so funny because when I got into hospice care and oncology care and I, and I feel very, um, again, privileged that I worked worked, I lived in a medical family. My father was a doctor. My mother was in the hospital and I always heard from a very young age about illness and about people dying. So I was not, uh, shielded from that. I knew that that was a reality. And so then when I got into nursing and it was not going well, I, oh, let me go to hospice. I was called there. And um, I know we'll be better there. Right? Cause hospice is end of life. And it wasn't, and it wasn't. And I said, how in the world did something that is a hundred percent guaranteed in our, in our journey become so far removed. So feared. And then it took about a year and a half before I saw a really beautiful death.

Speaker 1 ([25:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MLF82Almuy6DpGOJ6IGRF24qAVzkafcIZ6OkaEyiWKUCs-i7X4pdEtIHTZilm8v9BBa4t0QzVGjaaF2hpxvgpQa6q4E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1509.49)):

And I said, I remember it was in the oncology unit. And I remember walking out of that room and I said, if people knew death could be like that, if they knew that they would never be afraid, so I'm gonna tell them. So it kind of started my journey, but I wanna also just go back on what you said about how it will change our lives. I think one of the things that I was most struck by early on is how we are all so similar. It does not matter where you live in the world, how much money you have, what color you are, your religion, we all die the same way. We all have that same humanity in us. And if we new, if we just absorbed that, that we're so much more similar than different and brought that into our world today. Well, first of all, that would be a game changer.

Speaker 1 ([25:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1MLp25MZu5KyzcPXWAY_4z8jJjR5sEdfEa0OjWdbv2sxYP3oXXBE3D1dG8VNJD-EaFafOgUeLck81Vx0mlfzjCi9a48&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1557.35)):

But then death has taught me that, you know, time is our most valuable commodity and it's not about, and it's about connection. It's not about the goals it's about right here together right now. Um, there's just so much that this could teach us. And you said all of that. I mean, it's really a game changer and I love that we've been dying for thousands of years. We know how to do this. And in fact, one of the greatest awarenesses that that is ever come is, wait a minute. Death is not a medical experience. It's actually a human one. And I think, and every time I say that to our groups, cause I'll ask is death and medical. They're like, oh yeah. And I'm like, no, it's actually you one. They're like, oh, wait a minute. It's great to have medical support and care, but it's a human experience. And if we bring back that awareness into it and it's a holistic one, this could change the whole dynamic of what we're doing here and take pressure off the medical profession, which we're looking at. If you have a patient die, you failed. And that is, you know, that's horrendous. So there's a lot of learning within this space that I love.

Speaker 2 ([27:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KYkD9Mc3u9w_7CQ9EEUU4lXspH9AnJCWJTxwTNlOCb90faLyjQEaB_Qv4sOpYDIhx2rZD9a2Y6a4EA3i2m-DDPNR0cw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1624.43)):

I, I love hearing you talk about it because you're, you're spot on everything you're sharing. I have, you know, witnessed in my own way for my own interactions. And boy, you know, as a psychotherapist, it is so sad for me to have know loved ones who are grieving they're in bereavement therapy with me, talk about how painful the end of life experience they've had with their loved one is and how they wish they'd done it different, but not having had the knowledge or the choices or yeah. Or, or the guidance for, from our culture and, you know, from, you know, a lot of parts of our medical system. So, uh, so yeah, I, I mean, I hope that, that the research that, you know, I and my team have done and bringing these shared death experiences and other end of life experiences, what we discussed into the, the, the consciousness of the general public, that two things will happen.

Speaker 2 ([28:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2RxU-TeO69LjDDQ_wSBUXOnuv3lPMXwHOW1K52ZX6_5LrkNf8VtM89-920swrP4sLZYc1Sg0cJsHEUz3tF0SeEcIzI0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1686.29)):

Primarily one people are gonna realize that they've had these experiences. Yeah. And that there was never a name for them. And that they were actually kind of afraid to bring it up in the setting they were in, or just didn't know how they'd be looked at. And that this body of work can AF them. Yes. Give them the validation that they can say I had this, it was meaningful. Yeah. And then the second thing is for these people and others to say, I want to have this experience for myself and for my loved ones. And I want to work with people who can help me have that, you know, the increase, the possibility of having not just shared death experiences, but be ready for the things you've brought up. Oh, wait a minute. I, I think I see her, you know, we've seen this a ton, Suzanne, the reaching out, I think she's reaching out for somebody. I see her eyes glaring into the distance. Yeah. And I think, you know, Hey, you know what, mom, you know, I notice you're reaching, um, I'm, can you tell me what's going on here? Or, and, and to recognize that there's, this is not a, a need to call for medical intervention to calm mother down. It's an opportunity to engage or to observe whatever feels most appropriate. But to know this is a pre-death vision that she's having and you are privy and blessed to observe it

Speaker 1 ([29:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=f7-3DjU4HfEIoKotKMf9kBGRPULTAUiVqLgAO-IYFDSuELXvk75l3KrU2ihttZuzvYU56XECOlVpiNh_GGT5FP3Hrpo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1773.37)):

And to feel it and to know it. And this is the univer, this is the universal language of death. This happens everywhere in the world. And wow, isn't that just, we are so together in this. Yeah. Um, so I love that. And again, a hundred years ago, a grandmother used to hand down this skill of caring for somebody at the end of life, to a grandchild. We've removed that for multiple reasons. You know, life expectancy, doubled medical advances, this fear of death developed. And we don't know the thing about most of us, how to care for someone at the end of life yet, that's what we ask families to do. Even on hospice care as the hospice nurse, I came in, I managed the care, but you know, it's up to the family to do it. It's not a very solid model right now. We've gotta get this conversation and teaching and whatever we can share out into the world you're doing just that. So William, I love it. So very much. Can you please tell our listeners how they can learn more about you and how they can get your book?

Speaker 2 ([30:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AebPiIOSp4ggtt99UKv85l5DIGbK0V0V4ZNi0giV3PdgABBuvbp-ir2NeTndWAcT1XhecaeS-YVEhSbYlohKggU7jdc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1829.83)):

Thank you. Uh, well, so I'm the director of the shared crossing project and we have a website, uh, shared crossing.com. Uh, so you can find me and my staff there as well. And I also wanna, uh, encourage your listeners to go to our shared crossing story library because we have just launched, uh, a series. It's a library that has videos of people sharing, right. Their shared death experiences. So this is the first time this has happened. You can just go and you can see a series of ordinary people like you and I talking about their shared death experience. And it's really, it's a good, um, it just gives a good explanation description for these experiences. So there's that, um, and my book, um, is at heaven's door. What shared crossings, excuse me, what share journeys to the afterlife, teach about dying well and living better, and you can get it wherever books are sold. Um, you know, I always encourage people if you can't, if you have a local bookstore, someone sure who, you know is in your community, go to them and ask them if they'll carry it or order it for you. Uh, this is so wonderful to, I always try to be low and close to home. Yeah, totally.

Speaker 1 ([31:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wylLjrbTaKJpud48MY9HT06H5iDPXwzU6i_vXyQ0AXjeVmnDzH6uYyKFPlmpiIXy4PkAtUO7XypHk8p8gie72iMcru0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1906.15)):

Yeah. We'll have all your links down below everyone. Um, because this, again, for me in my space, when I talk about any of this subject, the sacredness of it, it, it really brings so much peace to people. It helps heal their grief and it helps inspire them about this life's journey. That can seem very heavy at times. So let's, let's have this conversation, let's share what we know so that we can bring healing and peace to one another and know that we're in this together.

Speaker 2 ([32:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=C4C1iBPc5A3KWWq0agiXAKRp9GpPseERVFp7HOijDH55aNZXSjjtOPHvwEipBkhnHJSN1ApB0xvg6r1516D_3ZHPwdA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1934.23)):

Uh, yeah, I'm so glad Suzanne, that you are doing what you're doing. You know, you are one of the most respected pioneers in the, in this, in this field of doing, you know, know you call yourself a death, doula, death midwife. Um, and I can't tell you how many people have done your trainings and have shared with me. This is, this has changed my life. And I know you have such a wonderful vision for bringing your work to the world and I'm a hundred percent behind you. So thank you for having me.

Speaker 1 ([32:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WCm5BDNMMnO7-2Kawy4622UhmMcO_SVIf-tZZfwsa_UrSRzU4z3RXM2KQLP9hvNjZeBOa_6s-Ar8hF4fIQO9RCrEBlk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1963.44)):

It's an honor. Thank you so very much so to be continued with you. So thank you for being our guest. I am so inspired. We will have more again, I'm sure we're gonna be doing lots of things together in the future, but for now, everyone. Thank you so very much again, William Peters for this inspirational, um, talk and I have the book and I love it. So we will again, continue this conversation. I wanna thank you for being a guest on ask a death doula, and we will see you all in the next episode.