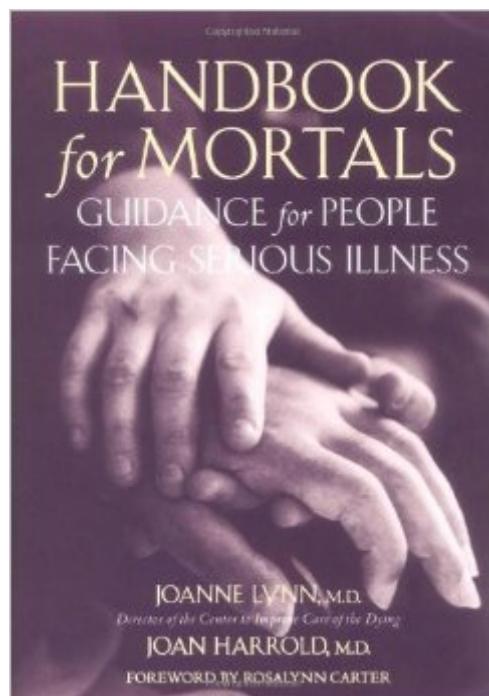


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# Handbook For Mortals: Guidance For People Facing Serious Illness



## Synopsis

Modern medical technology has changed not only the way we live but also the way we die. Until two generations ago, people usually died suddenly, after an accident or serious illness. Now, most of us may expect our dying to take longer, to require more care, and to demand more forethought than ever before. *Handbook for Mortals* is warmly addressed to all those who wish to approach the final years of life with greater awareness of what to expect and greater confidence about how to make the end of our lives a time of growth, comfort, and meaningful reflection. Written by Dr. Joanne Lynn and a team of expert physicians, this book provides equal measures of practical information and wise counsel. Readers will learn what decisions they will need to face, what choices are available to them, where to look for help, how to ease pain and other symptoms, what to expect with specific diseases, how the health-care system operates, and how the entire experience affects dying persons, their families, and their friends. Such practical information is indispensable. But equally important are the personal stories included here of how people have come to terms with dying, how they have faced their fears and made their choices. These give us moving firsthand insights into a profoundly important process, one that is increasingly kept hidden in our culture. From down-to-earth advice on how to talk to your doctor to inspiring quotes from such writers as Emily Dickinson, W. H. Auden, Jane Kenyon, and others, *Handbook for Mortals* encompasses the needs of both the body and the spirit in our final years.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Drs. Lynn and Harrold have created an extraordinary volume: it gives very specific useable advice about options at the end of your or your loved one's life, yet is filled with remarkable poetry, photos, and anecdotes to have an emotionally positive impact on readers struggling with these issues. It is not a book to buy only when the end is near; it is something people should look at because it so directly handles an issue we think about most of our lives. A lot of fiction and non-fiction tends to be uplifting when it comes to dying; most of it is simple-minded and useless. This volume just knocks the socks off other "death" books. If these doctors can articulate their views half as well in person, they should be on every talkshow on TV. Oprah might want to pick this as her first non-fiction book club selection.

I found this book days after leaving the hospital with a two year prognosis for a misdiagnosed illness. My head was spinning. I was making lists of questions and to do lists for leaving my 2 young children. Finding this book was a wonderful gift. It answered my questions and provided a realistic outlook for what to expect of a terminal condition. The book provides sample statements for calling your relatives and helps you to prepare for your doctor appointments. I visited a doctor today and I led the session and all of my questions were addressed before the exam occurred. This book should be recommended to all diagnosed with a terminal illness. Highly recommended book!

I wish I had picked up this book earlier in my step-father's illness. Very useful for those who are facing illness or who love someone who is very ill, telling you the kinds of things to expect and ways of dealing them.

Death comes to us all - whether it's sudden or gradual; whether it's our own or someone close - leaving this garment, quitting this life, passing on to the next Grand Adventure. In each chapter of this detailed, simply written, expressive & compassionate volume, are poignant poems, soothing photos & sidebars of lists to walk us through from Living With Serious Illness to Finding Meaning to Helping Family Make Decisions and Give Care; from getting the Help You Need to Talking With Your Doctor; from Controlling Pain to Planning Ahead; from Hastening Death to The Dying of Children to Enduring Loss & beyond. A huge crew of researching assistants from the Center to Improve Care of the Dying out of George Washington University, put this Handbook for Mortals together & the caring insights, profound realizations & ordinary instructions make for a really useful book you can pick up at any time & not worry about disturbing someone in the middle of the night or during their busy work day.

As the wife of a young man dying of cancer, this book was an incredible aid to getting through each day and learning what to expect. That was 15 years ago. My sister-in-law faced the same situation recently when her husband was diagnosed, and I bought the book for her. She said she couldn't put it down until she read every page. We need to have that helping hand when we're hurting. This book is it!

There are more comprehensive reviews of this book here. I just had to comment on what a treasure this book has been for me. So many of the books of this genre are for those caring for the dying; This addresses the person in the process. I am have an incurable, untreatable progressive muscle disease. I've been looking for some guidance on living the time I have left well and dying gracefully. I needed a guide to help me through the fears and questions about what death may be like. This book has practical information for the changes of the body, but also spoke to my spiritual concerns. It has given me a guidepost for what lies ahead in this journey and for things I can do to make it more meaningful and make my physical self more comfortable. If you or a loved one have a serious illness and need a guidebook on dying with grace and living with the same, buy this book.

I have owned this book for several years and decided to use it as an adjunct teaching tool for those training to become hospice volunteers. Every person in the group gave a high rating to this book. I will continue to use this book in future volunteer training classes. Eileen Urquhart, Hospice Volunteer Coordinator, Visiting Nurse Association Hospice of Cape Cod, Massachusetts

This is a very practical and "user friendly" guide for non-medical people to try to navigate the often difficult and long journey when someone they love is dying- even includes a section on children, babies, and even when there is a suicide. The last chapter is just references- sites that people can go to for specific illnesses and other resources. Very direct and down to earth- addresses issues most would rather avoid- pain, incontinence, etc. A forward by Rosalynn Carter states, "We often put off in life what is important, and sometimes it takes the shadow of death to make us appreciate that love, family and faith are really things that matter." Excellent resource.

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