

Small Group/Dyadic Discussion Format Questions

Consider the Conversation 2: Stories about Cure, Relief, and Comfort

(Questions for audience members to discuss in small groups or with one other person)

In **Listen**, several patients and doctors talk about the importance of communication within the family unit and between patients and doctors. Unfortunately, Laura Schurman, a woman with Stage III Lung Cancer, says, "I actually told my Mom and sisters I wanted to talk about it and my brother, but they don't want to talk about it." And, Dr. Kerry Case warns, "If we have these kinds of conversations badly, or worse, if we don't have them at all, the impact on the individual can last for decades, and it can echo in the family for generations." *How do you think talking about end-of-life hopes, fears, and wishes can help prevent bad things from happening?*

In **The Dance**, we watch as Arif Kamal, a medical oncologist and palliative care physician from Duke, meets Al Lewis, a retired researcher, and his wife, Amelia, for the first time. Al has kidney failure and is struggling with all the burdens associated with that disease, but makes it clear to Dr. Kamal that what mattered most to him was being given the opportunity to see his only daughter get married. *If you were seriously ill and it became apparent time was running short, what would matter most to you?*

In **Fishing**, Allan Hamilton shares the story of Donald, a young man with a brain tumor who had one request of Dr. Hamilton should his prognosis look poor – "I want you to tell me when it's time to go fishing." Dr. Hamilton honored that wish but the patient died the next day, leading him to conclude that being truthful had robbed Donald of hope and killed him. "What I'd do now," Allan states, "is say, you tell me when it's time to go fishing and I'll be there to support you when you think it's time to go fishing." *What do you think about Dr. Hamilton's assessment of the situation? Did Dr. Hamilton steal the patient's hope by being honest or did he serve him well?*

In **Judy**, Dr. Diane Meier introduces us to a therapist undergoing aggressive treatment for brain cancer in New York City, and her oncologist, Dr. "A". Thanks to a few difficult, but meaningful conversations with Dr. Meier, the oncologist has an epiphany and recognizes that he, as a person, is the most important instrument of Judy's healing, not chemotherapy injected into the brain. *What kind of relationship would you like to have with your doctor? How would Allan Hamilton's Fishing story change if someone like Dr. Meier was involved?*

In **Naming Reality**, we see Dr. Toby Campbell skillfully use communication to navigate the murky waters of severe chronic disease with two cancer patients. In his experience, patients seem to fall in to one of three categories: 1) *those that want to know everything* ("give me my information straight, be honest with me"), 2) *those that want to know things mostly* ("the most difficult because you constantly have to check in to see if they're getting enough information"), and 3) *those that don't want to know anything* ("whom can I talk to then, because we may have some decisions to make"). *What kind of patient would you be and what is your preference for how your doctor should talk with you?*

In **How Doctors Die**, we hear several physicians share their end-of-life wishes. *When it's your time to die, where would you like to be and with whom? What kind of care would you want or not want? If you were unable to make decisions for yourself, who would choose to speak for you?*

In **Get Found**, author Robert Fulghum reads from *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. At its core, *Get Found* is really a story about finding the courage to change something that just isn't working. "Better than hide-and-seek," he says, "I like the game called Sardines. In Sardines, the person who is it goes and hides, and everybody goes looking for him. When you find him, you get in with him, and hide there with him. Pretty soon, everybody is hiding together, all stacked up in a small place like puppies in a pile, and pretty soon, somebody giggles, and somebody laughs, and everybody gets found." *What actions would you be willing to take today to express your end-of-life wishes and allow yourself to "get found"?*