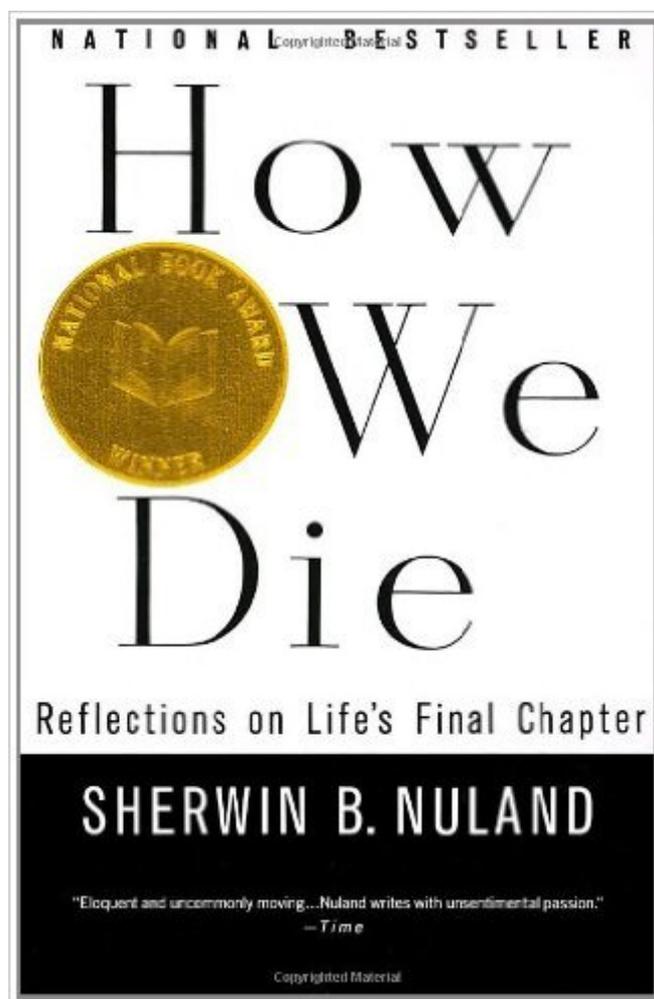


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# How We Die: Reflections Of Life's Final Chapter, New Edition



## Synopsis

New Edition: With a new chapter addressing contemporary issues in end-of-life care. A runaway bestseller and National Book Award winner, Sherwin Nuland's *How We Die* has become the definitive text on perhaps the single most universal human concern: death. This new edition includes an all-embracing and incisive afterword that examines the current state of health care and our relationship with life as it approaches its terminus. It also discusses how we can take control of our own final days and those of our loved ones. Sherwin Nuland's masterful *How We Die* is even more relevant than when it was first published.

## Book Information

Paperback: 278 pages

Publisher: Vintage; 1 edition (January 15, 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679742441

ISBN-13: 978-0679742449

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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## Customer Reviews

Humans are probably the only animals capable of understanding their mortality and envisioning the day of their death. Sherwin B. Nuland shows, however, that while we conceptualize our eventual demise, most people have unrealistic expectations of their death. Misconceptions abound. The expectation of a noble death with loved ones gathered, final farewells, and then eternal slumber forms a common though inaccurate mental image of what many people look forward to in their final moments. There are several themes that permeate Nuland's books. One theme is that death, like birth, is a messy process. Though we may wish for the noble death, more likely we will die slowly from a lack of oxygen in the brain. This, in turn, will result from a failing heart, lungs, or blood vessels. Death does not come easy, and although the final moment is sometime serene and tranquil, months or weeks of painful physical degeneration often precedes it. The second theme in Nuland's book is that death is not only inevitable, it is necessary. While life should be fought for as

long as possible, we should all realize that ultimately the battle will be lost. We will die. Nuland takes a dim view of heroic attempts to extend life beyond the point where the body has simply failed and death becomes not only inevitable, but also the proper way for nature to renew herself. Nature uses death to clear the way for new generations, and just as we cannot experience the green buds of spring unless the leaves from last season fall to the ground, the very nature of life demands that when death becomes inevitable we exit the stage for the next generation. Nuland's third point is that the measure of a life is not found so much in how we die, but in how we live and how we are remembered.

What actually happens during "clinical death"? Why do we age, and what happens to the body? This National Book Award winner Particularly recommended for anyone in a position to explain these difficult processes to others. This award-winning account describes in frank yet compassionate detail just what most of us are likely to face when the time comes, Sherwin B. Nuland's *How We Die* combines erudition and eloquence in a refreshingly unsentimental look at the processes of death. A distinguished surgeon and gifted writer, Nuland illuminates the mechanisms of cancer, heart attack, AIDS, and Alzheimer's disease with precision and compassionate awareness. Why read such a book? Taking away the fear of the unknown can bring courage and peace in the face of a difficult time. This book presents unpleasant facts in simple language that anyone can understand. Chapters cover different types of death, making clear the physiological changes and medical choices that go along with each one. It addresses both medical and emotional realities of common conditions such as cancer, heart disease, AIDS, Alzheimer's, severe trauma, and just plain wearing out. (Be prepared to cry, since reading this book may make you experience feelings associated with people you love.) What makes this book such compelling reading is that Nuland brings to this subject all of the depth and breadth of his background AND his deep concern for the human condition. His long career at a high-powered academic medical center (Yale), his knowledge of the history of medicine, of literature and philosophy, and his own personal losses are all woven into his thesis.

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