

Excerpt from The Distance Between Us and 'Loss' (Zaobao [zbW], 3 Nov 2019)

Things to do before we leave

Life will come to an end, it's inevitable, so should we prepare for death?

In the transient life, preparing for death is an important task to do for ourselves and our loved ones.

When faced with unknown diseases and death, are we prepared? Before we depart this world, what are the things we need to settle? If we settle these, what's the impact on ourselves and our families?

The interviewees include care professionals, doctors, nurses, social workers, artists, funeral staff and lawyers who will guide us in planning and facing death, so that we and our loved ones can 'heave a sigh of relief' when confronted with death.

Are you afraid to talk about death?

Brahm Centre's CEO, A/Prof Angie Chew opined, "Singaporeans are more willing to touch on this subject, our talks on related topics have been well received by the public."

Angie Chew said, "We don't know when we will die, but death is inevitable. We should approach it with an open mind. The more we talk about death, the more people get to hear about it, the less inhibitions we have."

To A/Prof Chew, the root of inhibition lies with fear. She said, "People with strong ego may be afraid that they may cease to exist in this world one day. My view is that those who are more egoistic, their fear of death is stronger."

Originally from the IT industry, Angie Chew once felt exhausted physically and mentally caring for her mum who had dementia. Her mum's death and work stress triggered a series of panic attacks. That's when she started to practise mindfulness and started Brahm Centre in 2012, to promote happier and healthier living and to provide assistance for those who may have emotional or psychological issues.

Angie Chew said, "Our time is limited. Recognising this helps us determine how we want to live our lives. A good life is premised upon kindness, magnanimity and generosity in our daily living. Not hurting others nor ourselves, so we leave without regrets. Those who fear death may be afraid that they have no time to make amends or

that they may go to hell after death. But for those who are kind, regardless of religion, they will not go to hell.”

Angie Chew has prepared for her death. With LPA and ACP done, she has told her family that she is willing to donate her body for research and her ideal funeral style. She wishes that those who attend can celebrate her life in a joyous manner through good food and live band.

If you want a good death, Angie Chew suggested, “Start with yourself, tell your loved ones what kind of funeral service you want and how you want others to remember you.”