

How End of Life Doulas Transform the Final Journey

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“What if someone could walk beside you through life’s hardest moments before, during, and after loss?”

Meet Lisa – an End of Life Doula who walks beside individuals and families through life’s later stages. When I tell people I am an End of Life Doula, I am often met with a curious smile and the question: “I’ve heard of a birth doula... but what is an End of life Doula?”

“What if someone could walk beside you through life’s hardest moments before, during, and after loss?”

The role may seem simple at first, yet its impact is profound. Just as a Birthing doula supports families at the beginning of life, an End of Life Doula or Death Doula walks alongside individuals and their loved ones through life’s later stages. We are non-medical companions, offering presence, guidance, education and reassurance. Helping people reflect on their lives, encouraging meaningful conversations and assisting with navigating grief and loss with care, long before the final moments arrive and long after.

How This Role Found Me

I did not choose this path. My journey into End of life work grew from my personal experiences with grief, loss, and transformation. I discovered through my own moments of grief, heartbreak and reflection, that what people need most through this journey is someone to walk beside them, to witness, and to hold space without judgment.

In this work, I find profound meaning. Each story, each home, each journey, each life reflected upon, each family supported reminds me why this path matters. It is both humbling and inspiring to witness the courage, love, and humanity that shows up in life’s final chapters. It is a privilege and an honour to work in this sacred space.

Walking Beside Life’s Final Chapter

Dying is not only a medical event. It is an emotional, spiritual, and deeply human experience. In our modern world, death often happens behind closed doors, leaving families feeling unprepared, unsure, or overwhelmed.

We provide a steady presence during this vulnerable time. We complement medical teams and caregivers by offering emotional and spiritual support, practical guidance, and a calm, compassionate presence.

Every person’s journey is unique, which means the support of a Doula is tailored to the individual and their family. Here are a few ways we walk beside people:

- Life Review and Storytelling: Supporting individuals in reflecting on their lives, acknowledging joys and regrets, and creating meaning in their final chapter.
- Advance Health Care Planning: Helping people explore and record their wishes so families are not left guessing.
- Legacy Work: Assisting with letters, recordings, memory boxes, or creative projects to leave a lasting gift for loved ones.
- Vigil Support: Being present during the final hours and providing reprieve for loved ones when they most need it.
- Grief and Bereavement Guidance: Providing comfort for families before and after the death, helping them navigate the early days of loss.

This work is not about fixing what cannot be fixed. It is about creating safe, soulful spaces where dignity, connection, and meaning are honoured.

Final Reflections

End of life Doulas are part of a growing movement to restore humanity to honour life until death arrives. We remind people that while we cannot control the timing of death, we can choose how we approach it, with dignity, compassion, and love.

For seniors and those with terminal diagnosis who are beginning to reflect on their own journey, the presence of an End of life Doula offers peace of mind. It is not about giving up, but about ensuring that your story, your choices, your legacy, your autonomy are honored until the very last breath.

As you reflect on this and your own journey, I invite you to ask yourself:

- Have I shared my wishes with my loved ones?
- What kind of legacy do I want to leave behind?
- Who do I want beside me at the threshold of my final chapter?

In the end, what most of us want is simple: to be remembered, to be surrounded by love, and to know that our life and our leaving mattered. Walking with a doula can help strengthen those connections, bring clarity to your wishes, and ensure that every moment, every goodbye, is held with care and presence.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about my role as a Doula. If you have a comment or question, do add them in the comments section below.

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