

# MAY 2022 NEWSLETTER



## ***FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE***

is a small voluntary organisation which aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care

## **OUR LATEST BLOGS ...**

### **Spirituality and Dementia**

This blog was first published by The Churchill Fellowship in March 2022

In 2010 I began the delicate journey of exploring dementia and spirituality. What does it mean to forget, to lose words, thoughts, images of our lives, not recognise the people we love and who love us? Is a pathway towards the end of our lives embedded within us via faith or nature? These were just some of the questions I was grappling with and am still grappling with today.

In 2013, after being awarded a Churchill Fellowship, I was able to pause and reflect. I am truly grateful for this opportunity. It was a critical moment for the creative engagement I was involved in, with people living with dementia. I had so many questions about brain health, memory loss, end of life journeys and belief systems. I have not wholly answered all my questions. The road to good solutions is long and sometimes hard.

I am a curious artist and theatre director. The first show I produced for those living with dementia was an interactive storytelling show called Once Upon a Time and the approach - over a decade ago - was very fresh and new. People asked, "If not reminiscing, then what are you doing?" Trying to explain person centred work, that held sensory engagement with an immersive experience at its heart, was difficult to explain. Today it's in the everyday vocabulary of those working in this area - both caregivers and artists. The show used projection, live music, food, aroma and touch to evoke a response - and yes, sometimes memory. The moments were held and cherished. They were privileged moments of shared laughter, joy, tears and tenderness.

Not everyone liked this show (1 in 15 did not like it), especially those at early stages of dementia. Once Upon a Time had also shown that language was a clear barrier for those with dementia, particularly those at late-stage dementia, as words or their meanings could not be remembered.

Whilst out in Australia in 2014 fulfilling my Churchill Fellowship, I had tentatively tested out my next idea for arts and dementia. I tested out non-verbal communication with people living with late-stage dementia - those who were least engaged with. When residents in the care home engaged creatively, I knew I had found a way to communicate with them on their terms. It became the foundation of [The Garden](#), an interactive installation and performance for people with dementia and their carers.

The experiment was to remove the barrier of language and replace it with slow, immersive, sensory engagement, communicate with open body language, and be led by the person with

dementia as they are the expert. I incorporated a couple of my guiding principles - go with the flow and don't be afraid of silence.

The Garden was a huge success and it toured the UK for years. However, I was acutely aware that we were not reaching or engaging with many from the global majority. From The Garden came these questions: where are the global majority dementia communities and how can we engage with them?

I could only partly answer these questions. I decided to focus on the UK's South Asian diaspora - because I know and understand it.

I conducted research with Elizabeth Lynch MBE, an arts advisor and researcher, working with artists and communities, to ask if dementia is taboo within the South Asian diaspora. Could the arts dismantle this taboo, and how culturally specific does the project have to be? The report is available [here](#) and was kindly funded by The Baring Foundation.

This research encouraged me to produce [Love Unspoken](#) – a show co-created with family carers from the South Asian diaspora and working with artists from the global majority. Sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic stopped it in its tracks. I am considering how to relaunch it, as it is still relevant and vital as we emerge from a pandemic.

During the pandemic I developed a meditative audio piece for [Culture Box Study](#), aimed at a South Asian dementia audience. Again, it needs development and a wider audience to realise its full spiritual, creative and uplifting potential.

Alongside the creative work is further research I have co-researched and co-written with Elizabeth Lynch called Visionaries: a South Asian arts and ageing counter narrative. This report is commissioned by [CADA](#), and will be available shortly. The report highlights South Asian artists and creative communities in England aged 55+, their desires, wants and the urgent need to reflect a truly diverse UK - now, historically and for our collective futures.

It is within this context that I hope to carry on my own creativity within both a creative dementia and creative ageing context and to embed some of the findings into our arts and heritage sectors. So watch this space...

**Arti Prashar, Churchill Fellow**

## **Wellbeing & Covid: Recovering Together**

As the pandemic has progressed, it's become harder to ignore its impact on our wellbeing. We may have endured significant losses, such as bereavement, or longer periods of isolation. Some of us may have found our caring responsibilities changing too. Throughout our friendship groups and family networks, there will be stories of endured the disappointments of separation; missed children and grandchildren's birthdays. Those of us who are newly retired, may have envisaged a very different experience than the one available. We have experienced a level of uncertainty and disruption to our daily rhythms. As I speak to groups on this topic, most will admit; 'I still don't quite feel right.' I like, others, have been surprised at the impact this far in. I hadn't realised how important a regular holiday was to maintain my wellbeing until the possibility was removed. And others have had it tougher. If we live with a health condition that puts us at risk, we might be

feeling a new level of vulnerability as we gauge the balance of connecting with others with trying to keep ourselves safe and well.

### **Mental Health Challenges on the rise**

There's more. Steadily, we have seen a continual growth in the number of reported mental health challenges requiring active help. Many of us are part of a generation raised on a mindset of resilience, and we have not stopped serving and helping in our communities. For some, there have been seasons of great connection and purpose. Yet increasing numbers of us are experiencing anxiety and depression, and other complex challenges. Those of us who have previously struggled in this area will have faced new challenges in this past season. Collectively, we are discovering that it's no longer sufficient to just focus ahead, as we look to brighter days. Optimism has a shorter shelf-life, it would seem. It soon fades if our period of difficulty becomes extended. We need to draw from deeper roots. In a collective trauma such as this, it will take us time to recover. In the words of Dr Naomi Rachel Remen:

"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water and not get wet."

### **Reconnecting together**

Collective trauma is a phenomenon that occurs when a community is impacted by a series of adverse events. Not all of us will be equally impacted- our experiences throughout covid have been very diverse. Some of us even report improved wellbeing. Yet, if we think about our responsibility to one another, we can recognise that we might all have a role in responding, even as we live with the adverse impacts.

To recover from collective trauma, community reconnection is a vital part and rebuilding together. If we've fallen out of the habit- this might seem like an effort. For those of us in faith communities- we have an important task ahead. We need to get together to share our experiences and look ahead. Our first task in this may be to mourn, listen and celebrate together. We need to make sure no-one is left behind. Yet it is also true that many of us who have been serving throughout the 2 years are weary and are in need of rest. A consistent picture Sanctuary hear from churches is that the need is seen, yet many are at capacity. Churches have served their communities tirelessly.

### **Next Steps**

Talk of a mental health crisis may feel paralysing if we're tired. It's vital that our initiatives help us all- by supporting and resourcing leaders and members rather than creating extra burdens.

The Sanctuary Course offers a way to recover together. It's free- a small group course which helps churches explore mental health through the eyes of faith. Written by experts, with stories of real lives, it offers the best way to learn about mental health to support one another. Our patron, Justin Welby says 'Sanctuary's resources are particularly needed as we recover from the pandemic. I would encourage Christians to seek out the Sanctuary Course and run it in their community.' We invite you to prayerfully join us on the journey. You'll find many other free resources to help you and your church to support mental health and wellbeing.

<https://www.sanctuarymentalhealth.org/uk/>

**Corin Pilling is UK Director of Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries**

**ALL OUR BLOGS ARE AVAILABLE TO READ ON OUR WEBSITE –**  
[www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

## FIOP EVENTS

### ANNA CHAPLAINCY SEMINAR

The second seminar to raise awareness and understanding of Anna Chaplaincy was held in April and we were delighted that 75 people registered for this event. The importance and relevance of Anna Chaplaincy is evident as over the two session FiOP has held over a 100 people have expressed interest in the development of such a service. Debbie Thrower in conjunction with Julia Burton Jones from the Anna Chaplaincy presented the session which was warmly received. The key issue in relation to next steps was to make training available in Scotland and this will be discussed with a view to taking this forward in the next few months.

### TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

This workshop aimed specifically at churches and those providing pastoral care was led by Gill Yellowlees and provided information about the issues facing people with different diagnosis of mental illness and how it affects both the individual and those around them. This small workshop enabled there to be plenty of discussion and reflection. The aim was to build knowledge and understanding and confidence in providing support to individuals experiences mental ill-health.

Another seminar in the autumn is being planned.

## SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

### Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People

The consultation on the Scottish Government's Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People is now live and available at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/consultation-health-social-care-strategy-older-people/>

<https://consult.gov.scot/healthcare-quality-and-improvement/health-and-social-care-strategy>

**There is a deadline of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2022 for responses**

## MENTAL HEALTH



**Our new film is ready for you to watch and share - [here](#)**

Last week we put the finishing touches to a new trailer for *The Sanctuary Course*, to help spread the word about the launch of the course across the UK as we enter Mental Health Awareness Week.

We are immensely grateful for Archbishop Justin's patronage, and for his candour in this

film. His words are powerful, and it is my hope that it encourages us all as we listen to the

story of Simone. She's one of many people whose stories are shared throughout the course with courage and vulnerability. I hope you find the film encouragement on your journey, if you are impacted, and also if you are seeking to support others.

We hope that the timing of the release of the film will mean it will reach a wide audience. In turn, as churches run *The Sanctuary Course*, we want to see the mental health conversations move out of the back rooms and into the heart of church.

View the film here <https://vimeo.com/706722437>.

We'd also be grateful for your help in sharing it.



Introducing The Sanctuary Course for churches in the UK

We would love to reach anybody in your congregation, diocese or network who is concerned about the issues raised by the course. Pastors, small group leaders, training officers, wellbeing leads, pastoral carers, and interested friends are all people we would love to contact. One in four people will be affected by a mental health challenge at some point in their lives, yet the stigma surrounding these experiences often prevents faith communities from responding compassionately and effectively. The Sanctuary Course is a small-group resource designed to reduce stigma, raise awareness, and engage communities in meaningful conversations about mental health and faith. Each session examines a key mental health topic, and the accompanying films feature insights from mental health professionals, church leaders, and theologians.

Once again- we're incredibly grateful for your support on this journey. It means a huge amount to us. Wishing you a meaningful Mental Health Awareness Week.

With grateful thanks,

**Corin & The Team, The Sanctuary**

## **Mental Health - SANCTUARY MENTAL HEALTH**

*The Sanctuary Course* is a study guide for small groups, designed to raise awareness and start conversations in local churches regarding mental health. Your group might include:

- *People with questions about mental health*
- *Mental health professionals with a wealth of knowledge to share*
- *Leaders who want to engage their community in mental health conversations*
- *People supporting loved ones with mental health problems*
- *People living with mental health problems*

*The Sanctuary Course* is for anyone who wants to learn about faith and mental health. It requires no previous training or expertise—just a willingness to engage in dialogue with other believers. This course and films address difficult and sensitive topics and may not be appropriate for a young audience. It is not recommended for people aged 17 and younger.

### **How does it work?**

*The Sanctuary Course* is an eight-week study guide for small groups. Each week participants will gather together, read through the content out loud or listen to it on audiobook, watch a film, and engage in conversation, reflection, and prayer. The course is designed to be run by small group

leaders in your church or organization. With a free subscription, the course is available for you and your church community for life.

### **What does it cover?**

Over the course of the eight weeks, participants will explore topics such as:

- Understanding mental health and illness
- Challenging stigma
- The recovery journey
- Companionship
- Self-care
- The role of community in mental health recovery

Each topic is explored from a psychological, social, and theological perspective. Additionally, each session is accompanied by a compelling film featuring the story of an individual who has journeyed through mental health challenges as a person of faith.

**Corin Pilling**, National Director, Sanctuary UK  
[corin@sanctuarymentalhealth.org](mailto:corin@sanctuarymentalhealth.org)

## **Mental Health Awareness Week 9-15 May 2022 - Loneliness**

Hosted by the Mental Health Foundation

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/event-map>

Mental Health Awareness Week is an annual event when there is an opportunity for the whole of the UK to focus on achieving good mental health. The Mental Health Foundation started the event 21 years ago. Each year the Foundation continues to set the theme, organise and host the week. The event has grown to become one of the biggest awareness weeks across the UK and globally.

### **Why loneliness?**

Loneliness is affecting more and more of us in the UK and has had a huge impact on our physical and mental health during the pandemic. Our connection to other people and our community is fundamental to protecting our mental health and we need to find better ways of tackling the epidemic of loneliness. We can all play a part in this.

So, in May 2022, we will be raising awareness of the impact of loneliness on our mental wellbeing and the practical steps we can take to address it.

Reducing loneliness is a major step towards a mentally healthy society.

[Read more about the theme](#)

## **MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS**



**Mental Health  
Awareness Week**  
9 - 15 May 2022

### **Welcome to Mental Health Awareness Week.**

We've launched the research and other assets. .

It's lovely to see the support of so many organisations and individuals on social media, and there will be shareable content to engage with across the week, via the @MHFScot Twitter and Instagram accounts.



We're asking people to share their own experiences of loneliness too using the #IveBeenThere hashtag as a way of bringing the range of experiences of loneliness to life and create a sense of solidarity to address the stigma that our research still tells us stops people from talking about loneliness. **Here are so direct links to the assets – we'd love to hear what you think.**

**Our Animation:** <https://youtu.be/XCnJ8s69LIU>

**All the campaign assets are at:**

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

**The Scotland Research Report and Policy Brief is at:**

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week/loneliness/policy-recommendations-scotland>

**Chris O'Sullivan** (he/him), Head of Communications and Fundraising (Scotland and NI)

Phone: 0141 226 9854 Email: [COsullivan@mentalhealth.org.uk](mailto:COsullivan@mentalhealth.org.uk) Website [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

## SPIRITUAL CARE EDUCATION

**The Spiritual Challenge of Health Care. Edited by Mark Cobb and Vanessa Robshaw  
Publishers Churchill Livingstone 1998**

This book comprises thirteen papers written by well-known authors in professional healthcare. The question that all of them ask is the same question that has been troubling researchers for the past thirty years. ***What is spirituality and how does its presence or absence affect people who experience life changing situations?*** Each author presents their theory based on specialist knowledge, without coming to a definitive solution. However, in the debate they are able to give thought provoking statements which have fueled and inspired the next generation of thinkers to move to another level.

As these papers are now twenty- four years old, perhaps the most interesting point to note is the fact that in the third decade of the twenty first century it appears we have barely moved on in present day thinking. While this is somewhat disappointing, it is heartening to note that spirituality is still on the healthcare agenda although as yet undefined with various definitions around the globe. In these papers it is variously described as 'life extending into the unknown' (Cobb and Robshaw); 'airy-fairy' (Speck); 'not an inherent human process' (Reed); 'a fundamental characteristic of being human which is affected by the impact of illness, injury and loss'(Cobb); while Whipp quotes Baroness MacFarlane's definition of spirituality from Micah 6:8 where the Jewish prophet says 'this is what Yahweh asks of you, only this, that you act justly (an obligation to share resources equitably); love tenderly (a call to compassion); and walk humbly with your God (renewing spirituality at its source). This seems to be the platform from which all the authors in this book aspire - albeit in different guises.

I was alternately frustrated and inspired by these papers. I found within them some solid academia which articulated present day thinking and yet wondered why we have not moved on from this point in two decades. The editors of this book have been unafraid to put into print the life and death taboos, questions of existentialism, the God and spirituality question and many other subjects that are not being addressed today. This is despite the call for spirituality to

become a theoretical taught subject in Higher Educational Institutions. Recent papers by Jaquet (2018); Aird and O'Neill (2019; 2020;2022); Ali, Snowden, Watts, and Rogers (2018) are making the same recommendations as these papers have called for - **so who will take notice?** Hopefully we will not be reviewing the same articles in twenty years' time asking the same questions.

Ruth Aird  
Faith in Older People Research Associate

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **JUNE 2022 IS A MONTH OF AWARENESS RAISING AND CELEBRATION THE MONTH OF COMMUNITY**

The Month of Community is a time when we come together to celebrate everything that makes our communities great. It's an opportunity to bring our neighbourhoods closer, give back, and shine a light on the amazing communities we live in.

There's a big splash at the beginning of June with The Big Lunch (and Big Jubilee Lunch), Neighbourhood Watch Week and Volunteers Week, but the fun continues throughout the Month of Community as we get together to share friendship, have fun and support a variety of charities and causes.

Last year, over 15 million people took part in the first ever Month of Community, so don't miss out, [join in this June](#) - whether you want to say cheers to volunteers, connect with your neighbours, support a cause you care about, or simply to say thank you, it's all part of the Month of Community!

CLICK ON [Month of Community | Eden Project Communities](#) to find out more and how you can participate

### **What is Loneliness Awareness Week?**

Hosted by Marmalade Trust, Loneliness Awareness Week is an annual campaign which raises awareness of loneliness and gets people talking about it.

Marmalade Trust is the UK's leading loneliness charity for all ages and the only charity in the world specifically dedicated to raising awareness of loneliness. We launched Loneliness Awareness Week (LAW) in 2017, and each year, it grows in momentum. We want to encourage people to see loneliness as a blank canvas on which they can fill their lives with new friends and experiences – and we're here to help them do it.

Our aim is simple: to reduce the stigma of loneliness and encourage people to talk more openly about it.

### **When is Loneliness Awareness Week?**

This year's Loneliness Awareness Week will take place between the **13th – 17th June 2022.**

**How to get involved in Loneliness Awareness Week.**



To get involved in this year's Loneliness Awareness Week campaign, head to <http://www.marmaladetrust.org/law> , or to find out more via social media it's @marmaladetrust .



Talk available on the link below

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/thought-leader-talk-bridging-the-gap-in-a-post-brexit-post-covid-society-tickets-311021542807>

Issues of generational connection have been thrown into sharper focus by Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes in economic, social and family life are also taking place within the wider context of environmental degradation and climate change. The benefits for present generations may stand in conflict with the inheritances of future generations. This has complex and wide-reaching implications for generational fairness and intergenerational justice and solidarity.

## Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care

### Demystifying Death Week: Communications Pack

Demystifying Death week takes place next week (2-6 May). It is about shining a light on death, dying and bereavement in Scotland. The success of Demystifying Death Week is reliant on the efforts of people/organisations promoting the week and its messages, so your support makes real difference.

Here are some resources to help:

- This Communications Pack includes key messages suggests ways you can spread the word: **Communications Pack**
- A template press release is available here: **Press Release**
- Ways to get involved on social media, including images and a tweet sheet, are available here: **Social Media**

**Please feel free to share these resources with the appropriate people within your organisation.**



**Interfaith Scotland Spring Newsletter**

If you haven't caught it yet, we are delighted to share about interfaith events that have been taking place across Scotland over the past 6 months in our Spring newsletter. With COP26, Scottish Interfaith Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, and World Interfaith Harmony Week, we at Interfaith Scotland along with the local interfaith groups and faith communities across

the country have put together a variety of events.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter and look forward to receiving any stories/ articles for our Autumn edition.

CLICK [HERE](#)



### New bereavement-friendly workplaces resources launch

[Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief :: New bereavement-friendly workplaces resources launch today \(goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk\)](https://goodlifedeathgrief.org.uk)



## ALLIANCE

The ALLIANCE Weekly Bulletin [CLICK HERE](#)



**SILVER SUNDAY**  
CELEBRATING OLDER PEOPLE



Be part of the National Day For Older People

**SILVER SUNDAY**  
2 OCTOBER 2022

Emerging from the shadow of the pandemic, we are excited to be looking ahead and making plans to hold the biggest celebration of older people yet.

So, if you haven't already, make sure **Silver Sunday on 2nd October** is firmly in your calendar and join us and thousands of others to celebrate older people this year!

**[Download info pack](#)**



E-bulletin

The national intermediary and network for voluntary health organisations in Scotland



To read our latest bulletin please click [HERE](#)

## EDINBURGH INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION

See our latest news [here](#)

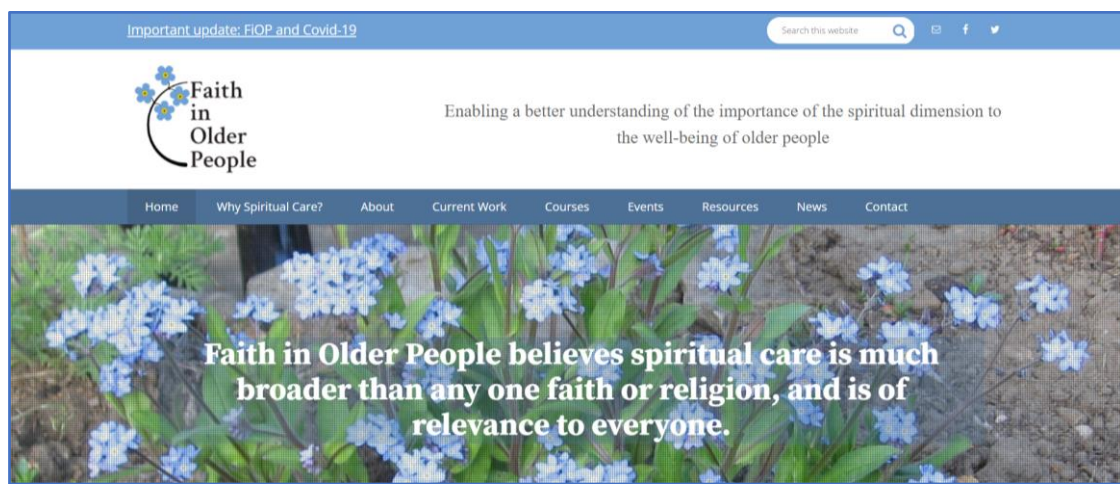
UPCOMING  
EVENTS...

MAY

Click [HERE](#) for our latest news

## BOOKS and RESOURCES

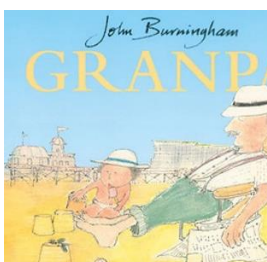
Faith in Older People's website offers a full listing of resources, including a wide range of books at [www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)



### Topics include:

**Ageing, Care Homes, Chaplaincy, Church and Dementia, Mental Health, Music, Palliative Care, Spiritual Education**

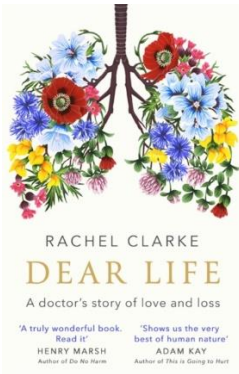
**THE FOLLOWING TITLES ARE FIVE BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY KATHRYN MANNIX to help us think about dying, death and grief – AVAILABLE FROM AMAZON #InAGoodPlace**



### **Granpa by John Burningham**

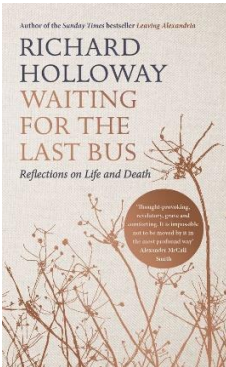
A picture book for younger children (and all of us) remembering happy times with Granpa, now that he has died and his chair is empty.

A great way to engage in family discussion about the death of a person we love.



**Dear Life by Rachel Clarke**

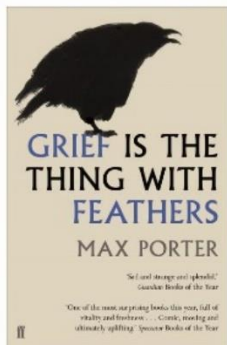
A palliative care doctor reflects on her work, on how dying can be made bearable, and the importance of talking about death realistically.



**Waiting for the Last Bus by Richard Holloway**

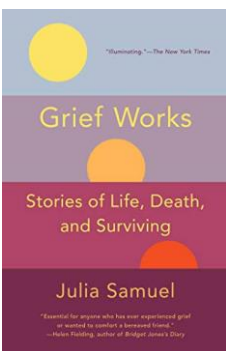
A wise and humble exploration of older age, and the approach of life's end.

How should we face our own mortality?  
Warm, kind and gentle



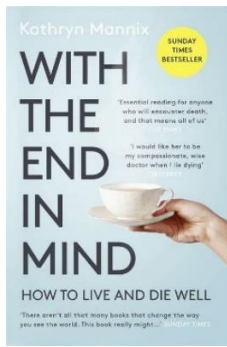
**Grief is the Thing with Feathers by Max Porter**

A fictional blend of poetry and prose describing the grief of a widower and his young sons following the death of their mother. A beautiful and validating exploration of grieving, laced with wry humour, suitable for teens, young adults and grown-ups.



**Grief Works by Julia Samuel**

Using stories from her practice, an experienced grief therapist talks us through the pain and challenge of grief and offers tools that all of us can use to help us cope with bereavement.



**Kathryn Mannix author of *With the End in Mind***  
A collection of stories to show us how people live the last part of their lives, described by readers as surprisingly uplifting!

## BECOME A FRIEND OF FIOP

**IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY - we'd like to ask you to become a FRIEND OF FIOP**  
An annual contribution of, say, £25 would make an enormous difference to our small organisation. As a Friend you will receive our regular eNewsletter and invitations to our regular events.

**PLEASE CONTACT US FOR AN APPLICATION FORM – [info@fiop.org.uk](mailto:info@fiop.org.uk)**  
You can find out more about our work on [www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

**OUR GRATEFUL THANKS TO THOSE WHO PREVIOUSLY SIGNED UP**

**IF YOU WISH TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM OUR NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE EMAIL  
[info@fiop.org.uk](mailto:info@fiop.org.uk)**



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