

# Spiritual Care and the Critically Ill: Embodiment, Limitation, Human Flourishing and the Five Big Questions

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# Preliminary Clarifications

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- ◉ Our time together: interactive, questions, conversation
- ◉ My background and work
- ◉ Who are you?
- ◉ Explain Spiritual Care

# Overview

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- ◉ Who are the critically ill?
- ◉ The experience of the hospital bed: embodiment and limitation
- ◉ The Five Big Questions
- ◉ Human Flourishing

# Who are the Critically Ill?

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- ◉ Intensive care settings, hospice
- ◉ Symbolic reference for all of us

# The Experience of the Hospital Bed

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- ◉ Attention and Envisioning
- ◉ Embodiment
- ◉ Limitation: we are mortals subject to limitation.  
We ignore this truth at our own peril.
- ◉ Omnipotence challenged

# Great Wisdom Literature

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- ◉ Icarus flying too close to the sun
- ◉ Sisyphus trying to cheat death
- ◉ Adam and Eve trying to displace God
- ◉ The Israelites building a tower to reach the heavens

# A Personal Account

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- ◉ Sudden reversal
- ◉ Fear/Confusion
- ◉ Acceptance
- ◉ Blessing
- ◉ The real “heart” surgery

# Expressions of Spiritual Need

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- ◉ Why is this happening? Why is it happening to me?
- ◉ How do I make sense of everything?
- ◉ How do I feel about changes in my life?
- ◉ What does it all mean?
- ◉ What do I call “good” in my life? What do I call “bad”?
- ◉ What am I grateful for?
- ◉ Where is God in all of this?

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- ◉ I have led a “good life” and been a good Christian, Jew, etc., so why is this “bad stuff” happening to me?
  - ◉ What do I trust? Who do I trust?
  - ◉ Who/What gives me comfort and hope?
  - ◉ Who is my “beloved community” -- who loves me and is loved by me?

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- ◉ What or who -- beyond myself -- do I believe is important in my life?
  - ◉ What do I want to be/do/have in this lifetime before I die?
  - ◉ What is next?

# The Five Big Questions

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- ◉ The Five Big Questions:
  - ❖ God, The Divine, The Sacred...
  - ❖ Identity
  - ❖ Meaning
  - ❖ Morals
  - ❖ Death

# Human Flourishing: A Suggestion

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- ◉ Whether we be patients or caregivers our daily central task is to embrace and work with the life we have: making sense, making do, making love, making room for all of our life in all its details