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Into the earth and into the light: practices around death and bereavement

John Lampard, Poppy Mardall and Emma Pavey

Transcript by Way with Words.

Edited by SWF.

Speaker Key:

EP Emma Pavey

PM Poppy Mardall

JL John Lampard

00:00:03

EP Hello, and welcome to this podcast, from the Susanna Wesley Foundation, part of our series on Crafting Hope. My name is Emma Pavey, and today we're starting a series of episodes that relate to a recent research project, cowritten by our Senior Research Officer, Lia Shimada, on Beliefs, Trends, and Practices in Dying, Death, and the Afterlife.

For this first conversation, we're looking, specifically, at funeral trends, so practices to mark death, joined in conversation by Poppy Mardall, and John Lampard. And as is my usual practice, I'll start by asking them to introduce themselves. Poppy, would you like to go first?

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PM Yes, thank you so much for having me. I am founder of a funeral director's called Poppy's, based in Tooting, but we cover the whole of Greater London. Our mission is to bring thought, care, and gentleness to our living and our dead clients, when someone dies, in a sector, and in a society, which thinks of death as a taboo, and certainly, the dead body as an even greater taboo. Our work is all about connecting people, communities, really, with their dead, in the wake of a death, and finding meaning in that time.

EP Lovely, thank you. And, John?

JL I'm John Lampard, a retired Methodist minister. Apart from, obviously, dealing with funerals throughout my ministry over the last 25 years or more, 30 years,



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my reading and research has been in the issues of death, dying, and disposal. Particularly, more recently, well, the last 20 years, on the matter of disposal, how we treat bodies and what we do with bodies, people's attitude towards bodies. I think Poppy and I have a lot of common things to discuss together.

EP Yes, I'm sure you do, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about it. I'm curious to know, perhaps to kick us off, Poppy, what got you into this trade.

PM I think there's an assumption that it must have been a bad experience, but that wasn't the case for me. I grew up in a family that was quite concerned with social issues, and my mum was a social worker, and my dad was a teacher. It was definitely that sort of household, where, as kids we were told stuff, rather than not told stuff, and encouraged to discuss that.

But my interest took me into the art world. I studied art, and I worked as an expert at Sotheby's Auction House. And then, in my spare time, I volunteered as a Samaritan and as a hospice volunteer. It was just one of those things, as your career is progressing and you think, yes, it's satisfying, but it's just not really why I think I've been put on this planet.

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I was looking to do something a bit more frontline and a bit more engaged with everyday life, and went travelling within Ghana for a month, and got typhoid, and then was ill for nine months. Not that I thought I was going to die, or anything, but I think there are many, many downsides to those kinds of chronic illnesses.

But one of the silver linings, for some people I've spoken to, and I definitely felt that, is it reduces you to the ground level. It's actually a very fertile environment, I think, to have new ideas and to think very openly about things.

That time coincided with a number of exposés into the funeral sector. It was 2011, and there were three or four exposés about really bad practice in the funeral sector, so showing really poor care for the dead. Showing racism in the mortuary, or families being told that someone would be dressed in some clothes, but the clothes going into a bag at the bottom of the coffin. People being laid out on the floor because the funeral directors had run out of fridge space.



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And then, on the other side, really manipulative practice with grieving people, so overselling, and mis-selling, and making it really difficult to access affordable options. It just sparked something in me, I think, a sense of this is something that impacts absolutely everyone. It's totally taboo.

I had never seen a dead body before, so maybe we could talk about that later because I think that is really interesting. I really didn't have a relationship with the dead before I set up Poppy's.

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It was more coming from the point of view of there just should be a basic level of care and consideration and professional standards for grieving people when they're going through such a vulnerable time.

And I set up Poppy's very, very slowly, so very much, like, built a website, would visit families in their own homes, hire facilities from another funeral director, and we've just grown from there. And I love it. It's the most meaningful work I've ever done, by a long shot.

EP John, where did your particular interest arise from, if you can pinpoint it?

JL Well, I'd say apart from... Right from very early days as a probationary minister, I was conducting funerals. In the early-1990s, I was asked to join a group preparing new liturgical services for the Methodist Church, and I was quite randomly assigned the funeral services.

And so, I spent my first sabbatical reading up on the issues of funeral services, looking at previous ones, what funerals were... All the reading that's continued since then. And then I did doctoral research over a long period of time in, actually, when people are dying, what prayers are offered when somebody is dying.

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But more recently, it has been very much what you do when somebody has died. I was Vice-Chair of the Ecumenical Churches Funerals Group, which deals with the issues of funerals and disposal. I've just continued to be interested and tried to reshape some of the church's thinking about funerals and disposal, which I think has got very lax.



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EP Poppy, you mentioned, there, talking about the treatment of the dead, and I guess when you come to funerals, there's the living and the dead to consider. I wonder if you wanted to say more about that.

PM Yes. I'm interested in John's point about... I think lots of us in this work... Because we're not shown as young people that caring for the dead or working with the dead, or thinking about the dead is an inspiring path, we're not really shown that. And so, I meet so many people who have stumbled into that part of the work, and then don't want to leave it because it is so meaningful and interesting.

As I said, my background, I'd never seen a dead person before I launched a funeral director's, you could say. I did get some work experience with some very kind funeral directors who let me behind the scenes, but only in the service of setting up Poppy's.

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The thing that has really struck me, over the last 11 years, as someone who got into this work in order to make things more meaningful and fair for grieving people, is how crazy it is that as a society, the dead are so entirely hidden from view. And how damaging that is to our society, to our own relationship with our own mortality, to our own understanding of the cycle of life.

What I've seen in my work, caring for people who've died, and then seeing how those people are, of course, at the centre of this experience for the family and the community, is that a dead person is not what we, based on our popular media, think it, or them, to be.

It is a person whose heart has stopped beating and whose body isn't functioning anymore, but still very much a person, is my experience. That somebody who is Poppy in life is very much still Poppy in death. That's very much how their community sees them, and that we developed, I think, somewhat recently, an attitude, which is that the dead person is an 'it', and is 'the deceased', and often is put in a body bag, and often IV lines are left in, and catheters are left in.

It's very common for us, when we're collecting someone who's died in a hospital, that they'll be still attached to tubes, and lines. And the hospital would say that there's a reason for that, that is to do with if there needed to be an inquest, but it feels to me like a pretty shoddy argument.



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I think it's more the case that we are at our best in society now, where we're advocating for people until they die, and then we want to re-focus our energy on other living people who need our attention. I've certainly heard that from the mouths of people who work in healthcare, it's like, I'm not here for the dead, I'm here for the living.

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I think that's not good for us, as a society. I think that's something very grounding about caring for our dead, and it's certainly something we've been doing as a species for a very, very long time, for a reason. Because when we care for our dead, we are building a relationship between ourselves and our ancestors, and our past, and our future, and our own acceptance that one day we'll die. And so, living with that in mind, I think can give us a very powerful way to live.

JL What Poppy says chimes in very much with my thinking, about respect for the dead. The great breakthrough in my thinking came when I realised that the classic question, first question, which comes from an undertaker after a death, is to say, 'Is it a burial or a cremation?'

They are false alternatives. If there's a cremation, there is still the remains of the body. With burial, the body finally goes out of sight and touch, with cremation, it doesn't. And so, a lot of my concern has been how remains are used after cremation and what happens to them.

I'm very aware when my father died in 1972, had a church service, rushed off in cars to the crematorium, the old pattern, and his body disappeared at the crematorium, and I never gave a second thought about his remains. My thinking has moved on enormously in more than 50 years, the importance of remains.

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My understanding of cremation is that it is preparation of a body for burial. I know people do all sorts of other things with ashes, but speaking as a Christian, cremation is a preparation of the body that the body may then be buried, it dies with Christ so it may rise with Christ. A somewhat countercultural view in today's society, but this is what I uphold. And the sacredness of ashes, rather than treating it as just a bit of dust.



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PM One thing that's very interesting, because I grew up in a Christian family, but I don't have a specific form of faith myself, but connected to what John's just saying, is the experience of delivering ashes back home.

You know the family and you know the community, and you've been alongside the community, and then you have this moment of bringing ashes home, and how the experience, from my side, is really mixed between the people for whom... And lots of these people probably would describe themselves as secular, but some of them would describe themselves as Christian and other faiths. Sometimes you bring the ashes back home, and it's like, oh, my goodness, dad's back. It could be a falling to the floor, tears, it's like he's come back in the house.

And then, for other people, very much a not feeling that way, not feeling like the ashes are the embodiment of the person, and very much of putting them over in the corner and making a cup of tea.

I think that speaks to... John, I know you've done some work, and I read your fascinating paper. It's my experience, too, that we are at this point in society, where for so many people, the ashes are an afterthought.

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That's why there are so many ashes still at the crematorium, that's why funeral directors often have walls and walls of ashes going back for decades. Because in a world that doesn't prepare for grief and death, and doesn't have so many familiar rituals anymore about what to do, a family might get themselves through the funeral, and they might feel somewhat obligated to do that because you have to do something with the body, there's a push.

But when it comes to what to do with the ashes, it can just be something that then isn't dealt with, ever. It can be handed down in responsibility in generations. I think that is really interesting that we've got to this point of there are just ashes hanging around in all sorts of places.

EP I'm interested, then, in how we perceive the person, the body, after someone has died, and the theological input that, John, you can speak to, in terms of how we treat that body. For example, some people might say, well, the soul has left the body, therefore, it's just a body. Or no, no, we need to preserve the ashes, in order



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for the resurrection, and these things, so how afterlife beliefs, in a sense, tie in with how we perceive the dead body.

JL I've never resolved in my mind, and I'm not the only one, about body and soul, whether or not it's a mistake to talk about them as two entities or one. I don't think of a soul leaving the body and disappearing upwards. But there is a sense of integrity of body and soul, almost as one word, we are body and soul. And so, this is why I want the ashes to be treated with the same respect as one would, or would wish, the body is treated.

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I'm always quite surprised at the number of committed Christians who are quite happy to have their ashes scattered all sorts of different places and different ways. Where, as a Christian, I think your ashes should be buried. It's a way in which they can be treated sacredly.

I think I'm partly influenced by the Medieval attitude. When a person, a criminal, was hung, drawn, and quartered, their body was scattered, so its place knew it no more. And for those who were not sinners like that, their bodies were treated with a measure of reverence and were buried.

We seem, now, to have gone back to a Medieval attitude, you can scatter a body anywhere, as long as it's ashes. But you wouldn't scatter human remains in the same sort of way, all over the place. I think there's a disconnect going on at the moment of society, which, in due course, will be resolved.

PM I'm interested to check in on that, though, because there are, obviously, different faiths for who it's essential that the body is dispersed. That there are other faiths that you're not meant to be in any one place. To truly return to the natural world, and maybe, reincarnation, you can't...

JL Zoroastrians.

PM Yes, Zoroastrians. That you shouldn't be located in one place. And so, maybe that's one of the huge privileges of supporting people of different faiths in my role, is you really get to see the power of different rituals, and how they mean so much.

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JL Yes.



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PM And I guess for a growing secular population, there is something about... One of my great concerns is in a world that's getting more secular, we can't live without ritual. I live without a formal religion, but I couldn't survive without ritual, and I'm really concerned about a world that throws out ritual. You can disagree with a specific religion, but I think it's a human need to have some ritual.

I'm really interested in, I'm sure we'll talk about it, things like direct cremation, where I think there are people... I think there is a world for direct cremation. We do support families a Poppy's for whom it does feel like the right choice, for a number of different reasons.

But something like 20% of people are choosing direct cremation now, I think off the back of some quite intense TV advertising. I think they're doing it off the back of an idea that you're saving your community a burden. You're saving them from a burden, you're saving them money, and I don't know how we live without goodbyes and with that complete disconnection from the dead body.

I'm really interested in how many of the people who say I don't care what you do with my body because I'll be dead and I won't be there, how much of that is because we live in a world where we don't see the dead.

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And actually, if you see the dead, if you hang out with the dead, they are undisputedly the people that they were. I'm not suggesting that they can feel pain or that they have any kind of soul or personhood, but even if it's just the shell of the person, that shell is symbolic and is representative of who they were.

JL I'd be interested to know, Poppy, what percentage of people want to see the body after they've died, to visit your funeral home and see the body.

PM Forgive me for always taking a brief question and expanding on it, but I think it's important that... Poppy's, it's about 40%, but in my family, the family I grew up in, we never went to see the dead body. I think that's because we were scared of the funeral directors.

The funeral director's can feel like quite a spooky unwelcoming place, the blinds on the window and the stonemasonry in the window. The funeral director is not necessarily a place you want to go into, so how much of our relationship with our dead is being disrupted by a model that just isn't very welcoming and warm?



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JL It is partly where you live in the country. My wife comes from Derbyshire, a little village there, and when the generation before her died, the body was brought into the home just before the funeral. I know some parts of Lancashire, used to be brought in the day before and stayed in the home, in the front room.

But it has traditionally been more of a connect with the body after death than there is now. I think a lot of this is to do with the rise of cremation, and the feeling of disposal, get rid of it as quickly as possible, which you mentioned earlier.

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PM And even that word disposal, it's like, we've got to find a better word, you know what I mean?

JL You've got dying, death, and disposal, the three Ds go together quite neatly.

PM But disposal means throwing away, doesn't it, it means chucking something in the bin, and I think that's really interesting. I know it's really complicated because it's got lots of connections through archaeology and the law, and it's a word we've been using for a long time.

But yes, if that was my life's work, I'd like to replace that word because it feels like that is sometimes what it feels like is happening. People are being wrapped in plastic, put in a box, and put in the cremator. I don't know that that's helping us.

JL Yes.

EP What word would you replace it with?

PM Well, I've spent a really long time on this, in America, they use the word disposition, the meaning isn't correct, but it is less offensive than disposal. I've been playing with the word reposal, which is a new word. But it's got really lovely connotations, for someone to be in repose, and repose is to place something carefully.

The Law Commission are doing a piece of work, at the moment, about upgrading the law around some of this stuff, and their project was called, it was like A Modern Framework for Disposal of the Dead, and how they've turned it into, I think, Burial and Cremation, and New Funerary Techniques.

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But I think we have to find new language. I feel the same about the deceased, I've probably spent too much time thinking about this. But when I get to see behind the scenes a lot of other funeral directors, and I think this how many 'deceaseds' did you collect today, we're just taking the humanity out of the dead, and it's not helping us.

JL I'd be interested to know your views, Poppy, on the latest possible method of disposal, Resomation, or what is called water cremation, where the body is put in a mixture of water and some sort of acid, and then heated, and the body disappears, and only the bones are left. And then, the water is sufficiently suitable that it goes straight down the drain. In my cruder moments, I think you either go up the chimney, or you go down the drain.

I actually made contact yesterday with an organisation which deals with Resomation, and although the Co-op have announced Resomation will be available very soon, it is still not possible to have your body 'resomed'.

To my mind, it is a good method of disposal. Ecologically, it is better than tonnes of carbon dioxide going up a crematorium chimney. Burial is expensive, both in terms of land and money, so to me, Resomation seems a good possibility. It took cremation about 100 years to get popular in this country, so I don't expect Resomation in two years' time.

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PM Didn't Desmond Tutu... I think Desmond Tutu went through that.

JL That's right, yes, indeed.

PM Also known as alkaline hydrolysis. Yes, I think it's an alkaline solution, as you say, with water.

JL Yes.

PM I agree with you. I think because we are so squeamish about this stuff, because it is so hidden from view, I think it will take new technologies time. But I go back to that sense of we have to do something with the body. I care that what we do with the body... I care more about how it's done than what precisely is done.



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When something is done with consideration and care, and respect, it basically always feels good. You could bury someone in an amazing tomb, and you could do it disrespectfully, and without care or thought, and I've seen that happen, and it's grim. I think new choices are good.

I'm also interested in this, I'm sure you've read about, the human composting that's happening in Seattle. There's a service there called Recompose, that are, effectively, turning people to soil. And I went to visit them, which was amazing. I think the more choices we have the better.

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I don't know how those choices fit with theological standpoints, if there's any sense of one thing being preferable over another, but I think the more choice the better for people because it comes back to that sense of making meaning, what is meaningful to you.

I'm sure there would be some people for whom the idea of being dissolved in an alkaline solution would be petrifying, but I've also spoken to a family that says she loved to swim. You make your own meaning, don't you?

JL You do, yes. Yes. One of the problems with cremation, if you try and do a service, a Christian service for cremation, the imagery of fire is both a positive and a profoundly negative one. Disappearing into the fires of hell. That's why my view is that cremation as an act is theologically meaningless. We try and put services around it, but it is a meaningless act because there are still remains to be buried. It is act of preparation, rather than a final act.

PM Am I right to say, John, I think you'd know this better than me, the crematoria weren't really built to be ceremony spaces because the idea was, when they were built, you would have your ceremony in church, this was a place to be cremated.

JL Absolutely. Yes. In fact, the very earliest crematoria, the body was taken down to the crematorium, ashes put in an urn, the urn then put in a coffin, a grave was dug... This is late-19th century, the body was then put, the ashes, in a full-sized coffin and buried.

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We now have cemeteries that have large areas and small areas. Small areas, where there are little plaques where the ashes have been buried. This is 100 years, you just don't know what the next 100 years will produce for us.

PM And it is a global problem because I know we've also had this issue when we're working for communities where the ashes are going to go abroad. Someone going to be taken home in ash form. Some countries view the return of the ashes as if you're trying to repatriate the body, so there'll be real nerves.

I think this is actually quite funny because it's not about the personhood, it's more about that they can't wrap their heads around the biology of what's happening in there. Because actually, ashes are totally inert, so as something to transport from a practical point of view, there's no risk. But I think it's changed.

But I remember it used to be you couldn't take ashes on Eurostar because they perceived it as you're trying to take your dead mum's body on Eurostar, which is ridiculous, and makes life deeply complicated for people who are trying to do something meaningful for their family.

But I think it's interesting this idea of, even just from a practical point of view, we don't know how to consider ashes. Is this the person, or is this an inert substance that can do no harm?

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JL Yes. I quite agree. Society looks on the ashes in very, very different terms. To me, they are to be respected, however that can be understood. An area we haven't looked at, Poppy, I'd be interested in your views, about green burials. I understand, now, there more green burial sites than there are crematoria in this country. I don't know if you've used them at all.

PM Oh, we do.

JL What do you think about them?

PM Definitely. One of the really tricky things in the city is, obviously, they're not sprouting up around us because there's no green space. The Royal Parks have not opened their first natural burial ground, yet. I don't think that's going to happen.



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The communities we support have a choice. If they're choosing natural burial, they're often choosing that, it's so important to them that's happening half an hour away, or so.

My experience of natural burial, just ritually, is because of how they're structured, they create this incredible space. The thing that I hate about the crematorium is that 20-minute, 30-minute... Which everybody hates, and of course, you can have a double booking, and we encourage that, but there still is that conveyor belt sense.

JL Yes.

PM And what can be lovely in a natural burial ground is no doubt they've built some peaceful glass pavilion in the woods, and you can arrive as early as you like, you mill around, you can stay as long as you like, you can have tea, and that facilitates so many of the small rituals that often happen in a spontaneous way.

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A family that, maybe, were feeling very nervous about the burial, suddenly decide that they would like to help backfill the grave, and then the natural burial ground will get some spades, and the children help. I think it's just more the unrushed nature of the experience that just facilitates something that can feel more healing than the quick, rushing through a eulogy.

I think natural burial has helped us be a bit thoughtful about how, with traditional burial, we might not be... Things like natural burial grounds, it's quite common to buried three or four foot down because, actually, that's where the aerobic decomposition happens.

Whereas in a London cemetery because of the need for space, you're often burying people even 9 ft down, or certainly, 6 ft down, because you want to make space for other people. I'm not sure, that idea of going back to the worms, there are no worms 6 ft down.

These are really practical matters, but I think, actually, when you start speaking to people in the public, they are interested. Or the fact that lots of funeral directors line their coffins with plastic because they're so afraid of fluids escaping. People are unknowingly going into the ground, where there's no oxygen, wrapped in plastic. It's like, people don't know that.



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JL No.

PM What's been wonderful about natural burials, I think, is because it has some very ecological... It cares very much about the ecological functions of what's happening down there, including, ideally, not being embalmed. It's forced people to think well, hang on, why are all these other things happening over here, and I think that's been a really good thing. What do you think about natural burial?

JL I've only been to one near here, I thought it was quite a beautiful site. Looked very well organised. I have two hesitations about natural burials, and it is more practical and economic, rather than theological. The theology is fine with me.

One is, there is really no regulation of natural burial sites, and the land is not, necessarily, inalienable, so in 20, 30 years' time, a farmer could buy it and plough it up, and plant crops there. Now, that might be perfectly all right. I don't know how families would feel about it.

The other is the great burial grounds around London ran out of money because not enough people were buried there, and so, the maintenance of them, as you well know, absolutely collapsed and vast cemeteries were sold for a pound to get them off the local authorities' books because they needed so much money spent on them.

I know the maintenance of a natural burial ground is probably less than that of a cemetery, but if the move towards natural burial declines, you've then got the problem how do you maintain it in a condition in which family who may still want to visit find acceptable. Those seem to me, the two concerns about natural burial. And they're not theological, they're economic and practical.

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PM Yes, and, maybe, underpinning all of this is that thing that's so few people really understand, which is that you don't buy a grave, you lease a grave. It's a lease.

JL Yes.

PM I don't think that's true in other parts of Europe, I think there is more... Those European countries with a history of the ossuary, that there's a sense of you go into the ground... A bit like your idea of cremation is preparation for burial,



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in some European countries it's been that you go into the ground in order to decompose, at which point, your bones get moved to the ossuary. But it's a place for a process.

I think we have this view in this country of this is your bit of England, forever. And actually, that's not the contract that you've signed, you've signed a lease that ends, at which point, there is a right for you to be exhumed, and lifted, and the bones buried lower. I'm such a fan of just these conversations because I think there's just so much that people don't know yet about the process they've been going through.

JL Yes. Could we go back to the inexpensive pure cremations, where the funeral director collects the body from the hospital, has it cremated at a time when no one knows, it fits in at a quiet time. And then, if the family wish it, ashes are returned to the family, and any ritual, ceremonial church service, whatever it might be, is then in the hands of the family.

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I do see certain advantages in this, obviously, if it was a member of my family, if we had pure cremation for them, I would then have a church service. But I now lean towards... I used to go for cremation first and then a church service, I now value the presence of the body in church. Although, I don't think it's then necessary to trail down to the crematorium for a five-minute service padded with extra for ten minutes at the crematorium. I don't think what happens at the crematorium needs to be, or should be, a church service, a Christian service.

I'm coming back to having the body in church, rather than a photograph or flowers from the coffin, whatever, symbolically, is put in church. I've never been to a funeral service that's actually had the ashes present because, normally, because of the delays that take place.

PM The thing I don't know is, as someone who doesn't follow a formal religion, to what extent, when you have a specific faith... What I imagine is that the structure is deeply soothing to your grief and gives you clarity, and gives you expectations that then get met, which is something that when you're secular, can be a really difficult struggle because you're slightly floundering. You probably sense you



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really need something, you know what you don't want, but you don't know what else there is.

The thing that I see with direct cremation, which concerns me, is it's really different, a death... These are huge generalisations because, of course, someone who dies when they're 101 can be the greatest grief you've ever experienced. But there's a really big difference between my granny who died in her mid-90s, after 10 years of dying, I said goodbye to her about 150 times.

00:33:10

I did have time with her body because I did the funeral, and it was lovely, but I didn't really need it because I had so much time with her dying body that my brain had wrapped itself around what had happened. We had a lovely funeral for my granny, but if we had had a direct cremation, I probably wouldn't have hugely missed the presence of her body because I would have gone through that.

Whereas if my child is hit by a car tomorrow, the need for their body is, I presume, going to be immense, and that's going to be extended over a long period of time. And so, you can have your theology around ritual, but I imagine there's also context of what are the actual needs in that moment.

And that's what I don't like about direct cremation is hard selling something to, I say, often, vulnerable people, on daytime television, off the back of an idea that what you're saving your children, or your community, or your nephews and nieces is money and some sort of burden of processing your body. When actually, you have no idea what the circumstances of your death will be and what they will or won't need from the experience themselves.

There's a lot to be said for saying to your children do what you need to do, and if that's something really simple and cheap, I do not care, you do what you've got to do.

00:34:26

But I have a friend, at the moment, and I know quite a lot of people who are going through this at the moment, where their mother organised a direct cremation without her knowing, and when she died, it was something she found out about. That really robbed her of her need for certain rituals. Those rituals might be very spontaneous.



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It's very common when we're working with a family at Poppy's, when we first speak to them, they don't anticipate they're going to want to spend time with the person who died. But five days later, once they've learnt to trust us, and once they've had a bit of time, and space, and rest, they decide they do want to come in and see their dad, and then they come in, and then they come in every day for ten days. So that's the other thing I don't like about direct cremation is it disrupts the opportunity to figure out what you need as you go along.

JL Yes. If it's been planned beforehand, it's different than, perhaps, with a sudden death. One of the issues you have raised is, of course, prepaid funerals, where the deceased decides what sort of funeral they want. And then the family, sometimes, have difficulty in getting anything changed, certainly, they have to pay more for it if they want anything changed.

But the other side, of course, again, is the financial one, these awful prepaid funeral plans that go bust, and there's no money there for the burial to take place. I think there's something to be said for prepaid funerals, but with flexibility of instructions.

00:35:54

PM Yes. And in the context of... The reason the funeral planning market has only just been regulated is because just nobody's got their eyes on the whole subject, so that's one of the reasons why we're having this conversation today. It's just all so taboo and no one wants to go anywhere near it. In the darkness, there are cracks and there are weeds, and they're not getting weeded out because nobody's looking.

Yes, I agree, I think there's something very powerful about having a discussion about what you might want for your funeral, about having that conversation with the people who are going to be there to enact it. There's no point making a funeral plan and then not telling your kids, it doesn't make any sense.

JL Yes.

PM I think we live in a capitalist world, and we're putting the emphasis on the wrong thing, we're putting the emphasis on having the money put away, which is really important for some people. But the other bit of it is that you've explained to the people around you what matters to you, and what you want, and what you don't



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want, and what you don't want them to have to go through because of what you experienced when you were a kid.

I agree, I think funeral plans can be really powerful, but yes, make sure you're putting your money somewhere that's safe. And also, make sure you're not missing the other half of it, which is the actual conversation.

00:37:04

JL Yes. Something I'm sure we would both agree on, what's come out in this podcast, is that it is good to plan your funeral, and to let your family know what you want, so that they're not saying, 'What would mum want? What hymn, or what reading, or do they want a natural burial, or where do they want their ashes?' Sometimes we all know it very well, sometimes the family haven't got a clue what the person who's died wanted.

PM And it can be a source of great... It can be one of the saddest sights, watching siblings battle. It can be sad.

JL Yes.

PM Yes, and I'd extend that, too, to say, yes, get practical about your funeral, but also, can we just be thinking and talking. Death is in front of all the time. It's rare that I walk to school with my kids and don't walk past a leaf that's fallen off a tree, or an orange that's gone mouldy in the drain, or a fox that's been hit by a car. We have all these opportunities to talk about death and think about death before it becomes a crisis moment for us.

JL Yes.

PM And I think, back to this thing of so many of us haven't even seen someone who's died. I always liken it to imagine if we lived in a world where no one has seen a newborn baby? That we lived in this society where you only saw one and up, if you saw a newborn baby, your mind would explode. It would look very strange. We need to get back to a world where just seeing a dead person is okay, and the first person you see who's dead isn't necessarily someone you adore.

00:38:40

JL Yes. One of the things I discovered in my research surprised me, and that is accounts of lack of respect for bodies and funerals back in history, when we



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thought people had great respect.

I was reading, I think it was, a late-18th century account of a funeral, where the priest conducting it kept having to tell the mourners to shut up so he could say the words. And children were sitting on the wall of the church, shouting out rude remarks.

Now, you wouldn't find, I think, in a funeral, there's a new sort of respect, perhaps you might say it's a false respect in funerals today, I don't think you would have that sort of behaviour. I may be wrong.

PM No, that's so interesting. It's so every day, it's boring and on one's really paying any attention, do you think that's what's going on, in that time?

JL I don't know. There were, of course, far, far more funerals then. The church I go to, Wesley's Chapel, is opposite a great, now closed, cemetery, called Bunhill Fields. And almost, certainly, that is a corruption of what it used to be, Bonehill Fields. The place had so many bodies buried in it, you were buried 6 ft above normal ground level because you were shoving a body among other bodies. What sort of respect people felt, I'm not sure, then.

00:39:59

PM Yes, it's interesting, isn't it? Because I think, for me, as someone who's hopeful about our capacity to find more humanity, and life, and death, I want people to be kind to each other in life and in death.

JL Absolutely.

PM I'm sure there's information throughout time of people tearing each other apart in life. I'm interested, there's a difference, isn't there? I know there are still societies where the dead is hugely taboo, and that is part of their indigenous faith. The dead body is seen as a bad omen, and that's not a modern capitalist, consumerist thing, that's a part of the faith. It's a very different thing to imagine a world where death is so normal that you just can't get the kids to be quiet during the funeral.

JL No. No.

PM That's interesting. You're right, we don't see that now. Now we're slipping... There is this expectation that when a hearse goes by, people quieten down, or even



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bow. And now, when that doesn't happen, I think there's a sense in society of society's falling apart, we can't even take a moment in our day.

Something I feel quite strongly about is there's a really big difference between the optics of respect and dignity, the superficial... One of the things I'd criticise the funeral sector for is it's very shiny on the outside, so there's lots of bowing, and there's lots of the smart suits and the shiny shoes, and the perfectly polished cars.

But what we see from the exposés, and what I see from my work is, behind the scenes, it's a conveyor belt of capitalism. The bodies are laid out in their hundreds, in an industrial estate, and not taken out of the body bag, and not totally clear if that person's a woman or if that's person's a man, and on one's called a person.

00:41:34

I particularly hate that. I particularly hate those double standards. I want to get to a place where the way we treat the dead is the same out front as it is in the back.

JL Yes. I'd be interested, Poppy, in your judgement on one of my favourite quotes, about what a funeral is for. The purpose of a funeral is to get the body to where it should be, and to get the people to where they want to be.

PM Is that Thomas Lynch?

JL I didn't get the name. Quite possibly.

PM I love it. I totally love it. It's exactly right. And also, that sense of being pushed, always, to try and remember, yes, who is the funeral for, is the funeral for the dead person, who isn't there, or is it for the living people, who have to remake their lives, sometimes, from scratch?

Yes, I see the funeral, and all of the experiences around a funeral because it's not just the day, it's the way you're treated from the dying, through the death, in the days, and weeks, and months afterwards, and I see that as being a collaboration from health care to social workers, and coroners, and the police, and bereavement support, and the wider community.



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Death is a transformation, and it's not just a transformation for the person who's died, back into the soil, it's a transformation for the community, and particularly, for the people heavily impacted by death.

00:43:09

I think, again, like other rites of passage that we've lost rituals around, it's so often the lack of validation of that transformation that causes so much of the pain. All of that thing that's happening now of, okay, the funeral's happened, time to move on, and when are you coming back to work, and really underestimating the level of destruction and transition that's taking place.

JL Yes. I'm very aware at funerals that, very often, among the people present, there's a core group of people deeply affected by the death, immediate family, and so on, but there are many people who are sorry to see them go, and go out of a sense of respect, and it's part of life. So that there are almost circles of emotional involvement in the funeral.

And it's easy sometimes, I think, to forget how deep the sense of death is for the immediate group when old friends meet up after the funeral, and we haven't seen you for years, how are you doing.

PM Yes, a chance for a catchup.

JL Yes.

PM And it is. It's that thing, isn't it, of you, often, will only see your cousins, say, when there are family funerals, once everybody got married, all the other rituals have finished happening.

00:44:13

JL Yes.

PM Yes, I agree. And again, in my work, we have the curious privilege, I guess, that we parachute in for that short period of time. And then, of course, we love staying in touch with our clients, but once the funeral's taken place, and we've made sure they have what they need, we're not bereavement counsellors, and we don't really stick around in that way. I don't think they particularly want us to stick around.



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Because another way I'd love... I absolutely imagine those concentric circles, and I think one way we could use that model in a way that would be more effective, would be, and this is community, to say the whole reason that the circles beyond the inner circle come to the funeral is to bear witness to what that inner circle is experiencing.

And because they are not destroyed, they're impacted but they're not destroyed, they have this incredible opportunity to really support that inner circle through the next years.

That bit in the marriage ceremony, where it's, I can't remember the words, does everyone here promise to uphold this union, it should be the same a funeral. Which is like, you've all come here today, your job for the next three to five years is to keep showing up. Because one day, your turn will come and you'll be in that inner circle, and you'll need the people who are currently in the inner circle to be in the outer circle, with their hands at your back.

00:45:49

My sense is, just in very everyday ways, speaking to grieving people who will say goodness, there were so many lasagnes and there were so many messages, and so many cards, and then suddenly, it was like a vacuum, and everyone had returned to their daily life, and that's when the work really began.

I think we could get so much better at... I had this funny conversation with my mum because she had a friend who died, and she wanted to make sure the children were supported, and I said I really think, rather than any kind of showy gesture in the short term, if you just keep reaching out to them, over time. And then I spoke to her, and she said, oh, they never got back to me. It was like, that's not their job, this is not a moment for a two-way relationship, this is one-way support.

JL I really like your idea of the funeral service placing a responsibility on the wider body of mourners. Next time I'm involved in writing a funeral service, I'll bear that in mind, a promise from the mourners to support the immediate family. I really like that. It's excellent.



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EP I'm interested in this idea of celebrations and funerals. Celebrations of life, thinking about respect and how we are supposed to feel. I'm wondering if you sense that people almost feel like they're supposed to have a celebration of life these days, or something like that.

00:46:56

JL The biggest change that has taken place in funerals, one of the biggest, is that they have moved from being forward-looking, to being backward-looking. The old 1662 prayer book, the name of the person who had died was not mentioned, but the joys of future life, resurrection life, life with God, was the focus of the service. Now, so much, the focus of the service is around the eulogy.

I was interested, I went to a funeral on the Monday, for the first time for a long time, the printed order said the funeral of, rather than a service thanksgiving for the life of. It's split between eulogy, remembrance of the person who's died, and for me, a Christian affirmation of life with God to eternity. The second has disappeared from so many funerals, including many Christian funerals. I regret that.

We live in hope. I've no idea what happens, but we live with hope that we experience something of God's love for us in this life. I find it hard to believe it ends at the moment of death. We continue in God's arms, and in God's love. And that's the affirmation I would wish to make.

PM You interviewed June Boyce-Tillman, I think, as part of the project, and maybe she's going to be on the podcast too, and she's got at thing, which I love. Because she knows I'm not religious, and we're friends, she's like, you've got everlasting life whether you like it or not because you go back into the soil. We know that from physics, nothing is destroyed.

00:48:32

And so, I'm interested, too, John, in that sense of that even, say, for me, looking forward would be about your encompassment back into the natural world, and what the natural world could offer.

JL Yes.

PM I find the celebration of life thing as complex. A forced celebration of life is this unhelpful as this forced... There's no point in having a miserable funeral if,



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actually, the person who died was an absolute crackerjack, and everyone in the congregation is waiting to be reminded of his hilarious raucous jokes, and all they're getting is sombreness.

JL Yes.

PM That's just as unfulfilling as being told that she wouldn't have wanted us to cry, when actually, everyone just feels ruined. I hate all of this... To me, it's the same as direct cremation, it's slapping a sticker on something and saying this is what this is. The whole nature of ritual is it's an opportunity to feel whatever you feel. I think a good funeral does create space for all of the feelings you happen to be bringing.

Some of them are more complex than any of those things, sometimes it can be rage. We know that through working with people who died by suicide, it's real-life, and the best funerals I've been to, so often conducted by people of faith, are the ones that can make space... Because people, I think, they want some truth-telling. They want some acknowledgement of some truth, and that truth might be theological for them, or it might be natural, or it might be about the circumstances that everybody finds themselves in in the congregation.

00:50:07

I guess the celebration of life trajectory, one of the things it does is it gives people who are, effectively, scared of the Dickensian funeral, permission to do something their way.

JL Yes.

PM I think that's one of the reasons it's been embraced so hard. I think the way people perceive it is it can feel like that, it doesn't have to feel like we're giving over the experience to someone else, whether that be a person of faith, or whether that be a slightly scary celebrant, who's dominating at the front.

JL But was it Marshall McLuhan who said that everyone should have 15 minutes of fame. I think for many people, the 15 minutes of fame can be the funeral service.

PM A bit late, though, isn't it?

JL Well, yes.



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PM My sense is I don't like a eulogy that reads like a CV. I always find that's a bit depressing, that kind of she got three As because it never feels like the full truth. I'm like, yes, but what else? Give me something. I don't know, my sense is, because I've been to funerals that have been, as you described, John, 95% about the faith rituals, and they have really served the congregation well, in that instance. I don't think one model fits all. I think there's something about doing something with integrity.

00:51:15

JL Yes. I must admit, I do like hearing about people's lives. I always read the obituaries in the newspaper. And very rarely have I been a funeral where there's been, as you say, a CV, where I've not learnt something interesting about that person's life, which I wished I had known before. But is that part of the funeral, or is that part of a wider acknowledgment of their life?

PM Would you say that's more for the party afterwards? The party afterwards is a place to remember the personal stories.

JL That's a Roman Catholic tradition, very much, where there is no eulogy, at all, but it's the knees-up afterwards when you remember the person who's died, with hoots of laughter, and joy, and sadness, as well, but it is a very... The funeral tea, as we used to call it in the old days, can be an extraordinarily healing part of the process.

PM Yes.

JL The meeting up of long-lost friends and family. The remembrances. I always feel what happens when the tea has been drunk, or whatever has been drunk, and again, the immediate core family... Everyone has departed and said lovely to see you, we'll keep in touch, disappear off, more and more, until sometimes just the widow, or widower, is left. What do they do then? I think that's very hard.

00:52:50

PM Yes. I think the thing that's really interesting you're getting at is realising, as you were describing cremation as a process, it's a process, and realising all these things, it would make total sense that you would have a ritual, say, in the Catholic Church, which is like you're stepping very close to the veil, or the edge. It's the



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bit that it's overwhelming and intimidating, but very real, and then you would retreat from that, and return to life, and that's eating, and that's laughing, and that's being amongst others.

I think, ideally, you then have a situation, where that is another beginning, so that a new phase begins, where the community steps forward to acknowledge that this one person, or these few people are in a very vulnerable place and need very delicate handling. In a dreamworld, the workplace understands that, too, and the taxman understands that too.

JL Yes.

PM We're not quite there now.

JL Something we've not looked at, I think, directly, is the impact of funeral practices of people from Africa, and Asia, in this country. I've been very much involved in funerals of people of African extraction, in this country, and the funeral process is far, far wider than the half-an-hour in church, or hour in church. There are deeply meaningful experiences beforehand, with families gathering together every evening, for a week before the funeral. And then some party, sometimes two, three months later, marking the end of the mourning period.

00:54:36

I went to one recently, hundreds of Ghanaian friends together. It was a joyful occasion. A serious, but a joyful occasion. I do think we have failed, partly in the Christian church, but also in the secular world, of marking out phases. The 40 days. I advocate burial of the ashes 40 days after the day of death. That's the time between Jesus's death and his transformation into heaven. And so, 40 days, a profoundly biblical 40 days.

Again, the burial of ashes 40 days later is marking a new phase in the post-funeral process, and a new phase of the mourning process. Mourning doesn't end after 40 days, but it is another way of marking it.

PM If you think about all the different ways that rituals are practised all over the world, what you realise is they've come about in reaction to our need to create some structure from our needs and feelings. If you are told that you are meant to feel intense grief for X number of days, then when you feel that intense grief on



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day 40, you think, well, this is normal, rather than the world seems to want me to be better, and I'm not, and so, maybe, I'm the problem.

I totally agree that there are very powerful structures in all sorts of different places, and coming from all sorts of different cultures and faiths that reflect back at us that we're missing something in our world. It maybe doesn't make enough space for spirituality and faith, and also, just doesn't make enough space for twists and turns of being a human. The reality of being human.

00:56:12

I'm not meaning to be provocative because nothing's perfect, but I wonder if you spoke to someone who came from a faith group who had those very strict and clear, defined guidelines on feelings, whether they create as many burdens as they provide blessings. They probably won't work for everyone, but maybe there's something about having them set out that says expect to feel destroyed for a bit because that's normal.

JL Yes. I think that's right. Nothing fits everybody.

PM That's right.

JL Perhaps my last question to you is about the practice, I don't know how common it is, where a person's been buried, where, by the grave, you can go to the grave and press a button and hear something about the person's life, and even, possibly, hearing their voice.

PM Oh, my goodness. I don't think I know anything about this. I do know a little bit about there are some cemeteries, I think, that have been producing QR codes, where you can, effectively, scan something with your phone and that could tell you something about the life of the person. You're right, there's no end, is there?

JL No.

00:57:34

PM To the potential personalisation. Would you go for that, John? Would you?

JL If I did do it, I would want to have when you press the button on my grave, quoting the great words of Spike Milligan, I told you I wasn't feeling well.



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PM Fantastic, I love that. This is much more personal for me, but I think I really love the idea of going back into the earth, and I love the idea of making space for other people and other creatures. And so, I'm not judgemental, but I'm a little bit mindful, I wonder how some of those innovations track with those Silicon Valley executives that want to have their brains frozen, or whatever, or their heads cryogenically frozen.

I feel like there's something important about facing mortality that you are special, and also, everyone is special, and this isn't about you, you're one of many, and you're part of something much greater. And so, I'm a little bit wary, back to your 15 minutes of fame, I'm a little bit wary of that. Kind of like creating a cult of the person that doesn't do much for our role modelling, good ego management.

JL Yes.

PM And like all those conversations that are now about legacy, and that we don't stop to think maybe my legacy is shuffling up to make space for other people.

JL Yes, absolutely. Yes.

PM That's something I like about formal religion. I feel like there's an almost similar universal sense of. That's my uneducated sense is that there's a sense of you being amongst many. There's something deeply reassuring in realising it's not all about you. Like a huge weight...

00:58:59

JL Yes.

PM Maybe one last... I say this with a giggle, but I really felt it. A friend of mine, who I really admire, who's worked in this field for a long time, describes... He's a celebrant, so he's not a funeral director, but he would sometimes be at the funeral directors, meeting the person who's died, or seeing the person who's died going into the coffin. He had this sense of looking at something in their coffin, and the language that came to his head was like, you lucky bugger.

And of course, there are a million circumstances where that's not the case, and there's a million deaths, where it's awful, and it's traumatic, and it's tragic. But there is also life can be quite tiring, and the idea that there is a moment



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where... Is it so bad that we all die? Is that something we should be trying to [overtalking]?

JL Yes, there are fewer funerals where people die out of time. Death of children, young people, anybody below the age of 60, you feel they've not had as long as they ought to have had. But there are more and more funerals of very, very elderly people, where the children are doddering when they come to the funeral.

There is that less sense of grief, I think, over somebody who's lived a very, very full, and good life, over an untimely death. And of course, in past history, vast numbers of untimely deaths. Perhaps this is partly, I'm just thinking on my feet here, why there is less grieving today than there was in the past. And less grieving and mourning traditions because we feel they've lived a good life, well into their 80s, that sort of thing, it's natural, that's it.

01:00:50

PM That's so interesting. My experience of grief, and I've sometimes been caught out by this, is that it's so complicated because it's so much about... There is, absolutely, a side of it which is about their life and their experience, but of course, it's also hugely about our loss.

I remember going to collect someone who'd died, and they were over 100, and their daughter had been caring for them for the last 20 to 30 years, and she was in her 70s.

JL Yes.

PM By your logic, and I think it is sometimes true, well, the whole she's had a good innings type thing, but the loss for her, she didn't have a life that wasn't caring for her mum, and it was her and her mum against the world, and they'd lived together for decades. Really, her grief was intense, and she really didn't have the validation because everybody just kept saying, well, how wonderful, she'd had such a long life.

I think the flip side of that is I have worked with families, where a child has died in circumstances, the family, where they knew the child was, potentially, not going to survive the birth. And then, the child did live for a number of years, and they had always known this is the outcome. And of course, they were entirely



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grief-stricken, but there was a different sense of gratitude for the time they got, which isn't true for everyone, there's no generalisations.

01:02:12

But I think the lack of grief ritual is simply because we've not prioritised very much in our society around feelings. We've prioritised making money, and working, and those things are great and good, but I think... And looking at the way so many of our death rituals just got, absolutely, ploughed out of the way without any thought during COVID. It's only now people are looking back and saying maybe that was not the best idea to not allow people to be with their people if they died, or not go to the funeral, or touch the coffin at the funeral.

Yes, I really hope the tides are changing on that because I think so much of the mental health... There's some statistics, and I'm not going to get it right, so I won't put an absolute pin on it, that the charity Cruse shared about the number of suicides pre-empted by a bereavement was very high.

JL Yes. A lot depends on how much support the bereaved person has. The case you illustrated, it might be a single daughter, no siblings, and nobody else to support them in life. All of the meaning in their life has been in caring for mum. And when mum had gone, all the support disappeared, and there was no prospect of support. That's very, very tragic. I've come across that, certainly.

01:03:17

PM My sense is, obviously, I'm a bit biased because this is my work and this is what I see, the rituals around the death is the beginning of the opportunity for support needs to be flagged up. It's the opportunity to tell the story, and when we miss those rituals... I definitely saw that through the pandemic, it's like the whole thing got cancelled, and then there is no network, and there is no sense of my right to not be okay about this.

EP It's interesting we're talking about shuffling off and making space, we may need to do that electronically. But also, thinking about this emphasis on support, I'm wondering, just as we close, how lifegiving your job is because you're dealing with people who are, really, emotionally wrought, in one way or another, most of the time, particularly you, perhaps, Poppy. But perhaps you, too, John. I'm



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wondering if that energises you, in a sense, or how you sustain yourself in that kind of role.

PM John, I imagine your faith is a huge part of that, isn't it?

JL For me?

PM Yes.

JL Yes, certainly. And through difficult times in ministry, particularly if you have a faith, and family, and friends all combined to support you and uphold you. I'm sure all of us, when we've faced our own griefs, it has been faith, family and friends, or a combination thereof, which have sustained us and supported us.

PM I'm obsessed with this because I definitely was someone, I think... Because of my upbringing, my mum was this really impressive social worker, and she dealt with all these difficult things, and I got this real sense of this strength. It's only been in the last few years, I think, that I've got to the point, through having children, where I've thought I can't sustain that approach. I can't go on like that, or I'm going to crack. I need to find ways of leaning on people more and getting more support.

01:05:31

It's so interesting that I don't have a formal religious faith, but I have found over the last few years faith, for me, is defined by looking up at the Moon, at night, and looking at the stars, and thinking how many generations of my ancestors have found themselves looking up at the Moon in quiet desperation, and thinking this is hard and I need something. I need something from you, the natural world.

I certainly feel the same about my friends and my family, there's something about acknowledging that you're carrying other people's pain, a little bit, and not underplaying that. That that's a big thing.

Also, for me, actually creating little rituals. I started practising this a few years ago. Because one of the funny things about my job, and it must be the same with John, is you'll just get a call out of the blue from someone who's in crisis. And you can find yourself, one minute you're playing with your children, or you're having dinner, and then within a minute, you're right in the midst of someone else's crisis.



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And just for your nervous system, I think, over time, that can just start to be a bit punishing. I started doing this thing... Where a call would come in from a friend of a friend, and someone's died by suicide, and they don't know what they're doing, and everyone's in crisis.

I started doing this thing of taking the call, I would say I'm going to call you back, and I'd go outside, if the weather was bearable, and I'd light a candle, and I'd go outside, I'd take the call outside, particularly when I have kids. I'd have the call, and I'd finish the call, and I'd blow out the candle, and I'd come back inside.

01:07:06

It was really interesting how this tiny ritual created this protective space, where I could do this hard stuff. I don't know if you've ever had anything like that, John, or if there are anything things like that, tricks of the trade, in the church.

JL Not tricks of the trade, it comes with the faith I hold. Whenever I go into a situation like that, my awareness that God is already there. Not God coming into the situation, God is already there. God's prevenient grace, the grace that goes before. And so, God is present in that situation, and my task is not necessarily talking about God, but demonstrating, by what we say and our demeanour, the presence of God.

I'm sure you do very much the same sort of thing. You bring a measure of calmness to a situation. I'm very aware that when somebody dies, the two people who know what to do are the minister and the funeral director. Everybody else is in chaos. We are the two points of focus, where people can find knowledge and meaning and hope. We're very much complementary work together.

PM Totally. I know through my work, too, I'm sure it would be true for you, I'd add to that palliative care nurse, and there are some people who are the people who parachute in and can say, 'This is normal'.

01:08:19

The funny thing about death is, in a way, the crisis has begun, but the emergency is over, particularly if you've been in a healthcare environment, where, maybe, there have been blue lights, and maybe, there has been feeling of emergency. That, often, I think is one thing that people really need, to be held and told, this, actually, is a time where you can take time and recover a little bit,



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in a world where it can be a bit like, oh, we've got to organise the funeral and do things quickly. And actually, you could take your time and could get some rest.

JL Some people immediately get out their iPads and make a list of things to do, and other people just can't face it, you have to nudge them towards what are we going to do now.

PM Well, I think it's a moment where people's coping mechanisms really come to the fore. I know lots of my family are doers, they don't really like to be, and so, they'll get out a to-do list. It's a very good way, for some people, I think, of coping, is actually, to...

JL Doing things.

PM Yes, quickly create a massive list of things to do.

JL Yes.

01:09:35

PM I think for those people, it can be very... That's why post-funeral time can be so hard, it's actually all the doing is done, it can be really powerful to just get the photo albums out and put on some music and relax a little bit.

JL Yes. That's right.

EP Well, I want to thank you for your presence here. I hope you've enjoyed the conversation. I think it's been really fruitful, and I really felt that sense of permission and listening that you've conveyed, from both sides of what you do, that I think will really carry forward with people. I want to thank you both for giving your time.

PM Thank you so much.

JL You're welcome. I certainly enjoyed it, Poppy, thank you very much, and all good wishes with your work.

PM I've loved it, John. A new friend. A new friend.

JL Yes, indeed.

EP Very good.

01:10:22