



PRESS RELEASE

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Connecticut physician publishes memoir on what death can teach us about life

As a physician, Marianne Bette recognized that the man sitting next to her was having a seizure, most likely caused by a tumor in his brain.

Since she was also the man's wife, she was terrified of what medical tests would find.

And as a mother, she dreaded having to explain to her two young daughters that their Dad had a terrible illness.

In *[Living with a Dead Man: A Story of Love](#)*, Bette tells the story – from three perspectives – of the year spent coping with a dreadful diagnosis and its effect on her family.

“Those three parts of my brain gave me very different views of the situation,” Bette said. “And sometimes they got in big arguments with each other.”

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Bette, a family physician who was born in Southbury and returned there with her family in 2000, published her frank, sensible and humor-filled memoir this year.

A book launch party will be held on Thursday, September 15, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Bette's office, 77 Main St., in Southbury. This event is open to the public and books will be available for sale.

Bette will also speak at the annual convention of the Connecticut Academy of Family Physicians held October 19-20 in Southington, Conn.

Living with a Dead Man, published by [Emerald Lake Books](#) of Connecticut, details the arguments Bette had with herself, the toll that a terminal illness takes on a family and, ultimately, the insights into life that such a journey provides.

"There are important points people can take away if they want them," Bette said. "There is a lot of opportunity for spiritual growth, emotional growth and closure. I learned not to stick my head in the sand. Get going! See what you can do."

Bette's husband, Thom, was a psychotherapist who specialized in helping clients cope with death and dying. He contracted lung cancer that spread to his brain and proved to be untreatable through surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. Her book chronicles the momentous decisions, big and small (from deciding what Christmas present to get for a dying man to having "the conversation" about his prognosis) that define a life as it's being lived.

Watching her husband slowly succumb to the disease was wrenching, Bette said, but with Thom's help, she was also able to observe and appreciate the experience. He also urged her to write about their shared experience and suggested the title for the book.

"I'd never known how good a death and its process could be until I learned that from Thom," Bette wrote. "It was an intensely intimate and gratifying experience. Now that time has gone by, I can look back without all the raw pain and impending loss. Thom's dying was a gift. It sounds weird, but this truth is coming from my core."

Bette said physicians, patients and families of patients have thanked her for sharing her unique insight.

"Lots of physicians won't talk about death," Bette said. "It represents failure. On the other hand, it's easier to talk about if you're not the one whose family is going through it. But we all are going to go through it."

As with all families impacted by the death of a loved one, Bette wasn't the only one affected by Thom's death. Their three daughters, Sarah, Caitlin and Justine, shared the journey with her and each handled it in their own way, as you can read in the story.



Today, Bette's step-daughter, Sarah, is living in California with her three children and her husband, who is a chef. Her older daughter, Caitlin, is finishing medical school with plans to become a family physician like her mother. Younger daughter Justine is studying to be an equine-facilitated psychotherapist.

In addition to her practice, Bette is a clinical professor at the medical schools of University of Connecticut, Quinnipiac University and the University of Vermont.

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Press release distributed by Emerald Lake Books. To schedule an interview with Marianne Bette or to have her come speak to your organization or book club, visit <http://emeraldlakebooks.com/bette>.

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