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## Caring is Not Enough for Lafayette Resident

By Cathy Dausman



Nurse and author Terry Ann Black Photo Cathy Dausman

"We plan vacations, education; we even write grocery lists. Why don't we think about this?" asked Lafayette resident and "Caring is Not Enough" author Terry Ann Black.

"This" is the question of how survivors manage a loved one's affairs after death or catastrophe. A nurse, lecturer and author with over 46 years experience in the health care field, Black has spoken to many Bay Area service groups about this type of planning.

Black's passion "for people to be prepared" came out of a combination of work-related nursing experiences and personal experiences, including her father-in-law's and mother's deaths. When Black's father-in-law died unexpectedly in an auto accident in the early 1990s, she helped settle his estate. In the process she uncovered a safe deposit box key. Black thought her father-in-law might have been safeguarding his valuable collection of stamps and coins, but neither she nor her husband ever discovered where the key belonged.

Black's mother also died in an unrelated auto accident. Black said it was "a disaster" to administer that estate. "She [Black's mother] had a 10-year-old [outdated] will, had given away stuff she had willed to people and left behind \$20,000 in credit card debt," Black said. She called the time spent as her mother's executor "confusing, depressing and unpleasant." She was so distracted functioning as executor that she said she never had the time to grieve.

When Black's co-workers suggested she compile a list to help others avoid this confusion, the pamphlet "Caring is Not Enough: A List of 50 Most Important Questions" was

born.

In 1998 her family moved to New York state and she shelved the project. By 2005 the Blacks were in Lafayette and her son suggested she reissue her booklet. When Black asked him why, he answered: "Because of Terri Schiavo."

Schiavo suffered massive brain damage after collapsing in her Florida home in 1990. Schiavo's husband petitioned the courts to remove her feeding tube starting in 1998; her parents opposed the move. She died in 2005. Black discovered a lot had changed since the book's initial publication in the 1990s. At that time deaths were handled in the hospitals through doctor's orders with DNR (do not resuscitate) instructions.

With the creation of Advanced Directives the patient himself could leave instructions for final wishes. This "new stuff" was included in an updated version released in 2005 entitled "Caring is Not Enough: My Last Wishes and Personal Records."

"I couldn't name it 'My Death Plans,'" said Black, inferring that wording was just too strong. Besides, she said, the booklet is not limited to use after a loved one's death - it is also a useful tool after a home evacuation caused by an earthquake, flood or hurricane.

"It's all one big picture," she said.

Work on the booklet was shelved again until Black met Lamorindan Lisa Fulmer at a dinner party in November. Fulmer's social media savvy encouraged Black to reintroduce her message, this time online.

Her current publication, "Caring is Not Enough: A Workbook for Emergency and End of Life Planning" is now in its fifth edition and features 150 questions. Copies are available in Spanish and a Chinese dialect. There even is a specialized copy dealing with questions designed to assist those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. Black said it should take about four hours to fill out her forms, (available online at [www.caringisnotenough.net](http://www.caringisnotenough.net)) provided certain other paperwork (wills and advanced directives, for example) is already in place.

"It's much easier than doing taxes. They're simple questions," she said.

For additional information on end-of-life planning, see the Lamorinda Weekly article, "Organized for the End" at

<http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0624/Organized-for-the-End-Orinda-couple-annually-updates-last-wishes.html>

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