

ABOUT

THE ORDER OF THE GOOD DEATH



THE WAY OUR SOCIETY HANDLES DEATH
AND DYING IS BROKEN IN MANY WAYS.

We believe our deaths should be supported-
emotionally, financially, and culturally- in ways our
modern culture and death care services often fail to
do. The Order has been making more meaningful, eco-
friendly, and equitable end-of-life options possible
since 2011.

THE PROBLEMS



ENVIRONMENTAL

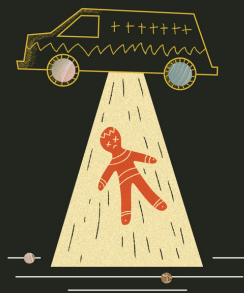
Modern death practices are unsustainable. They create deforestation, carbon emissions, and toxic byproducts. A modern funeral starts with formaldehyde embalming, a preservative process that can be unnecessary. Bodies are then placed in caskets, consuming 20 million board feet of hardwood and 64,500 tons of steel each year. Cremation is a less expensive alternative, but still consumes as much energy as a 500-mile car trip and emits pollutants like mercury, carbon monoxide, and sulfur dioxide into our air.



FINANCIAL

The average cost for a funeral in the United States is \$8,500, a sum which most families will struggle to afford, leaving them in “funeral poverty”. With no help from their state or national government, families turn to mortgaging their home, taking on a payday loan, collecting from their church or community, and starting online fundraising campaigns— which are akin to private donors picking and choosing their favorite deaths in a popularity contest. Americans should have the right to accessible and affordable death care.

THE PROBLEMS



RITUAL

Funerals once took place in the family home, facilitated by the surrounding community. The early 20th century saw the rise of the death industry, replacing family funerals with companies and professional technicians. Turning death into a financial transaction leads to ‘care’ that is profit-centered rather than human-centered, with the corpse itself becoming a commodity. The funeral industrial complex leaves little room for direct meaningful involvement and has robbed the family of valuable hands-on engagement and ritual.

ACCESS

“Everyone is equal in death”— a powerful idea, but rarely true in practice. In order to offer everyone a good death (which remains the goal) we need to acknowledge that some deaths are bad. Gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion, and socioeconomic status affect how we die— from the availability of quality and culturally-competent end-of-life care, to consumer education around funerals, to how we inter and memorialize our dead.



WHAT IS THE ORDER DOING ABOUT THIS?

We are creating a more eco-friendly, affordable, and equitable future of death care through:

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

The Order has created a wide variety of content that includes educational and informative articles, videos, podcasts, and social media content in which we approach the topic of death with respect and curiosity, coupled with science, history and facts.

Our unique approach to topics that our society often avoids clearly resonates with a growing community seeking more authentic, sustainable, and affordable end-of-life care. The Order's educational content has served as the catalyst for social change within the Death Positive Movement.



Over 250 Million YouTube Views



1.3 Million Podcast Downloads



1.5K Average Daily Website Visitors



34.5K Twitter Followers



54.7K Instagram Followers

WHAT IS THE ORDER DOING ABOUT THIS?

We are creating a more eco-friendly, affordable, and equitable future of death care through:

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

The Order is focused on legislation that protects and expands people's ability to have a good death. Our work has played a crucial role in the creation and writing of bills, providing testimony to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, providing public education, expanding awareness, and leveraging public support for legislation on a variety of issues.



RESOURCES

In an effort to counteract a broken death care system, and \$20 billion funeral industry that often centers profits instead of people, we've created a wide array of free resources that inform and educate people about their rights and choices in death, and makes the hidden workings of the funeral industry transparent.



- [Understanding your end-of-life rights](#)
- [Locate value-aligned funeral homes](#)
- [Learn how to have crucial conversations about death that will impact how you die](#)
- [Demystify the process of embalming, decomposition, and cremation](#)
- [Explore new death options like human composting and aquamation](#)

WHAT IS THE ORDER DOING ABOUT THIS?

We are creating a more eco-friendly, affordable, and equitable future of death care through:

SOCIAL CARE



The Order has created numerous social care initiatives that provide practical resources and financial support to nonprofits and individuals working to make death care more equitable in their communities, including:

The Good Death Fellowship

Provides funding, expert support and mentoring, and resources to the people working to change the future of death care.

The Henrietta Duterte Endowment Fund

Scholarships for Black women pursuing careers in the funeral industry.

The Order of the Good Death Volunteer Program

A nationwide program that provides free, in-person workshops on funeral consumer rights and options.

Giving While Living Campaign

A merchandise fundraising campaign for nonprofits addressing death-related issues within their communities.

Mortals Market

A virtual artisan market to support death positive artists during the pandemic, while raising funds for community-based death positive organizations and initiatives.

THE ORDER IS CREATING A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT

The Founding of The Death Positive Movement

In 2011, Caitlin Doughty founded The Order of the Good Death to reframe what was possible at the end of life, gathering together a community of funeral industry professionals, academics, and artists who were at the forefront of changing these perceptions. She also began Ask a Mortician, a web series on death questions and issues of death positivity that has been viewed almost 200 million times. This community grew and expanded into the Death Positive Movement, a term that began here at the Order. In the years since, 'death positive' has become an international Movement that includes everyone from high-level practitioners to members of the public.

One of the ways the Death Positive Movement expanded was through The Order's Death Salon events. These events, referred to as "the Coachella of Death" by some attendees, brought together the general public and the biggest thinkers and innovators in death, to learn and share in multi-day events held around the world, packed with activities from immersive tours, hands-on workshops and experiences, to live performances, funeral food catered events, and thought-provoking lectures. Death Salons paved the way for the abundance of Death Positive events and conferences we see today.

In 2014 Caitlin teamed up with Sarah Chavez, now the organization's executive director, to further expand what the Order of the Good Death's offerings. These now include educational content, guides and resources, information on how to protect your rights before and after death, in-person and virtual events, grants for death positive practitioners, and advocating for legislation to legalize greener death options.

THE ORDER IS CHANGING THE WAY WE DO DEATH

60.5%

of Americans are interested in green burial options

90%

of people say that talking with loved ones about their end of life is important- yet only 27% have actually done so

72%

of cemeteries report an increased demand for eco-friendly options

36.6%

of Americans want a modern casketed burial (an all time low in U.S. history)

57%

of Americans want a flame-based cremation (an all-time high in U.S. history)

5

states have legalized Natural Organic Reduction (also known as Human Composting) since 2012



7

states have legalized Alkaline Hydrolysis (also known as Aquamation) since 2012

Sources: National Funeral Directors Association, The Conversation Project

The Order's work results in:

- Funeral industry transparency so people can avoid paying for goods and services they do not need, or becoming a victim of funeral poverty.
- New legislation that creates more eco-friendly options, protects people's rights in death, and preserves and protects the remains and burial grounds of marginalized communities.
- A rise in hospice use and demand for better end-of-life care; a result of more people planning for their end-of-life.
- Doctors being more open to conversations about what constitutes a "good death."
- Replacing industry-led funerals with family-led funerals allowing for authentic and meaningful engagement with dying, funerals, and grief.
- Increased consumer demand for eco-friendly and low-cost funeral products and services.
- End-of-life and death care that is affordable, accessible, and culturally competent.
- A society that is able to engage with their mortality, make informed end-of-life decisions, and have affordable funerals that are imbued with meaningful engagement.

PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

“

The Order Of the Good Death provides resources that help people accept and engage death. Everything from human composting, water cremation, taking care of your own dead, low-cost funerals.

”

-The New York Times

["The Order believes that the sacred task of caring for the dead should be a normal part of life."
-The Guardian]

“

The death positive movement includes vital work that fights back against cultural appropriation, systemic racism, anti-LGBTQ sentiments, and general fear and lack of preparation for a certain event.

”

-Nerdist

GET INVOLVED

Invest in a more meaningful, eco-friendly, and equitable future of death

FOR INDIVIDUALS

Become a Member

When you donate to The Order of the Good Death you will have the opportunity to build a relationship with our staff. We are a small, tight-knit organization, and our donor program reflects this with the perks you receive.

[Membership Page](#)

Make a One-Time Donation

Just want to make a quick one-time donation? You can make a donation and we promise not to show up in your inbox uninvited (except to thank you!) and we'll get busy putting your donation to work.

[One-Time Donation Page](#)

Host a Fundraiser

Ask your friends and family to make a donation to The Order—for your birthday, anniversary, or in honor of someone special.

[Fundraiser Page](#)

FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Become a Sponsor

Reach out to the Development Director at Ericka@OrderoftheGoodDeath.com to discuss how your organizations can support our work