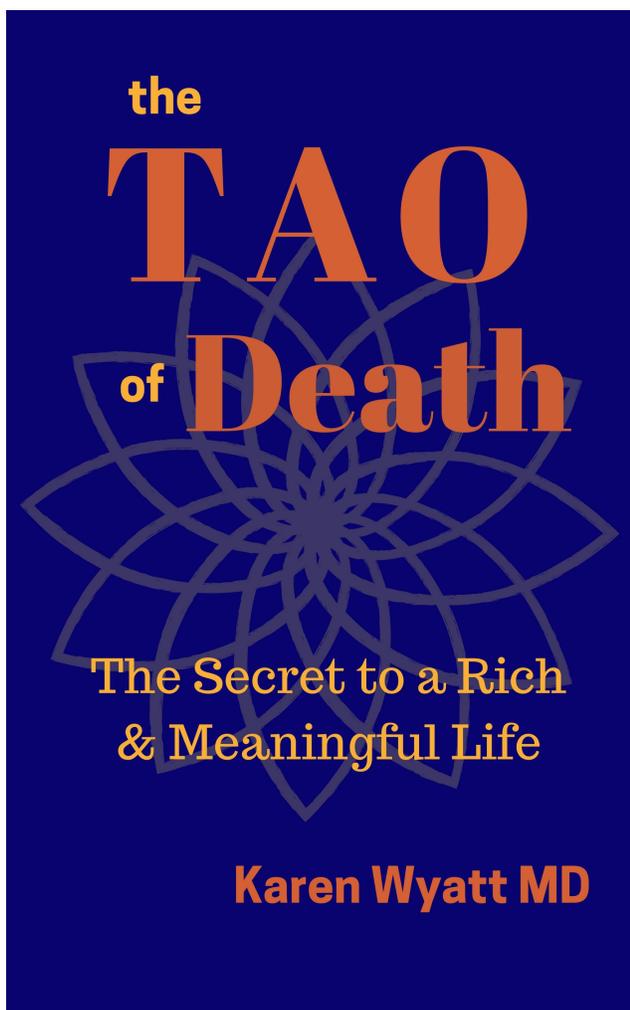


the TAO of Death

Companion Journal



*A guide for daily
reflection on:*

Life,
Death
and
What Really
Matters

Welcome to the **Tao of Death** Companion Journal

Congratulations!

By choosing to download this journal you are taking the first step toward greater awareness of the realities of Life and Death AND ensuring that you will experience less fear and more peace as you approach your own later days of life.

Each prompt in this journal is paired numerically with the corresponding verse in *The Tao of Death*. You might want to read one verse each day and journal about that verse, using the suggested prompt for guidance. The choice is yours: you can proceed through the verses in numerical order or randomly—whatever fits your needs the best.

By spending a little time each day contemplating Death and its importance for Life, you will be increasing your own appreciation for the fleeting nature of existence. This daily practice will soon bring you the rewards of greater joy and less fear as you learn to be present and fully engaged in all of Life.

Best wishes to you on this journey!

Karen M. Wyatt M.D.

The Tao of Death

Companion Journal

1. The study of Death forces you to look at your deepest fears. What do you fear most?

2. Life consists of both “good” and “bad” experiences, which provide balance and contrast for one another. What aspects of life do you reject? How do they help you appreciate what you love about life?

3. Death focuses attention on what is most important in life. What do you value most in your life?

4. Death is a necessary part of life. How has death touched your life up to this point?

5. Contemplate the necessity of death in nature. How does your own existence depend upon the death of other beings?

6. Death is inevitable. What would you like to know about it?

7. Death can change everything in your life. Where are you resisting change right now?

8. Death teaches us to slow down and allow life to unfold. What are you trying to force into existence in your life? Where do you need to slow down?

9. Death erases all illusions. How do your desires for wealth and success dictate your actions and control your decisions for life?

10. When you think about death what fears arise within you? Can you recognize anything positive about death?

11. How has your life been “emptied” in the past? What have you lost?

12. The pleasures of life are not the same as true joy. When have you been able to experience joy even when pleasure is absent?

13. Think about the possibility that some part of you will survive even after your physical body dies. Can you sense the presence of that part of you right now? What is it like?

14. Practice being in the present moment by taking 3 deep breaths and focusing only on the breath. Reflect on how you feel physically, emotionally, and mentally after this exercise.

15. Think about the fact that life is fleeting and yours could end at any moment. What is most precious to you if this is your last moment of life?

16. What expectations do you have for your life? How attached are you to those hopes and dreams?

17. When you think about the fact that you will one day die what emotions arise for you?

18. Do you follow your own inner wisdom or look to others for guidance?
Practice listening for your own intuition by spending time in quiet contemplation each day.

19. What practices do you follow in order to stay healthy live a longer life?
Are they motivated by fear or love?

20. What worries occupy your thoughts right now? When you think about the fact that you will die one day does it change how you see those problems?

21. What gives your life meaning right now? How would that change if you were told you had only a few weeks to live?

22. Think about the statement: Surrender is the path to attaining everything.
What does that mean to you? What do you need to surrender in your life?

23. What losses are you coping with in your life right now? Can you see them as part of a natural cycle of life?

24. What are you striving to achieve in your life? How might you base your goals more on love than on accomplishment?

25. There are many “small deaths” that occur in a lifetime as we experience change and growth. What “small deaths” have occurred in your life to allow new things to arise?

26. How have the difficult times of your life helped you to appreciate the joyous times?

27. When have you been a student in your life and when have you been a teacher? Can you recognize that every person and every experience has something to teach you?

28. How has life has been shaping you through all of the difficulties you have experienced? How has your path been changed?

29. In what ways are you trying too hard to control life? What plans are you trying to force in your life that may not be working out as you wish?

30. What aspects of your life are flowing well and which are not? Where can you use more rest and less control in your life?

31. Do you know anyone who lives life to the fullest? What can you learn from that person? How might you enjoy every moment of life?

32. What are you clinging to in your life? Is it really important or do you need to learn to let it go?

33. In what way do you “already have what you need?” Are you content with what you have or longing for something more?

34. Why is this the right time for you to awaken to an understanding of Death?

35. Think of the fact that everything in your life is fleeting—what you have right now you may soon lose. How can you enjoy the little pleasures of life fully before they are gone? Choose at least one thing that you will make the most of today.

36. Think about a time of distress in your past. How did the situation grow worse before it improved? What can you learn now from that experience?

37. How might your life change if you felt satisfied with what you already have? How can be more content with things exactly as they are right now?

38. Are your actions generally guided by ego or by Soul? How can you tell the difference?

39. What aspects of your life are like “the common stone” and which represent “the polished jewel?” What do you value most?

40. Think back on your own life as part of the cycle of life and death. How can you find peace in your own journey from birth to your eventual death?

41. How has your life actually benefitted from the suffering you have endured in the past?

42. Write about the parts of your life that you have labeled as “good” or “bad.” How can you embrace what appears to be negative and see it as part of the whole?

43. What does it mean to you to do silent work in the world? Where in your life can you be of service to others without being seen?

44. What is missing from your life? What will it take for you to feel content with what you have?

45. Think about all of the losses you have experienced in life thus far. How have they made you more whole?

46. Imagine that you have been told you have only a few weeks to live. How would you like to spend your days?

47. What questions are you seeking to have answered about your life? Reflect on the idea that the answers are already within you.

48. In what ways do you need to give up trying to control your life? What expectations are you clinging to?

49. Who are you unable to find a connection with? Who do you reject and why?

50. What does it mean to embrace the reality of physical death? How might this realization help you live more fully?

51. How might it be possible to cherish everything in your life without clinging to it?

52. How has your own path through difficulty led you to greater enlightenment?

53. Where have you taken detours in your life from the path of your Soul? Where has the ego been in charge?

54. What needs to change within you in order to have a positive impact on the world?

55. Have you been caught up with excitement about an event in life, only to be disappointed later? What would it take to view everything from a more neutral stance?

56. What resentments are you carrying with you from the past? Write about each one and how you can begin to let them go.

57. A recurring theme of the Way of Death is that “less is more.” Where in your life might you do less or let go of some of your control?

58. “Blessings are only apparent against the backdrop of tragedy.” What blessings can you find in the tragedies of your life?

59. As you recognize that life is precious, what simple things do wish to enjoy to the fullest today?

60. What is unfolding in your life right now? How can you step back from trying to control it and be at peace with whatever happens?

61. Where could you use a little more humility in your life?

62. Reflect on this thought: "Everyone is on an equal playing field at the moment of Death."

63. Think about a big task you are facing. How can you break it down into small, doable steps?

64. What fears do you need to overcome as you face the later years of your life?

65. What do you “know” within yourself that you have not learned from books? How can you listen more for this inner wisdom?

66. Where can you become more humble in your life? How could you lead others by being a servant to them?

67. How can you have more compassion toward others in your life? Choose three things you might do to develop your own capacity for compassion.

68. Think about the extreme polarization that exists in our society—political, cultural, economic, and philosophical. The middle path finds a way to embrace all diversity. Where do you see yourself fitting in and how could you get closer to the middle path?

69. What “enemies” have you identified in your life? How can you change your mindset to view them with more compassion, presence and surrender?

70. The suffering we experience during our lifetimes helps prepare us for our eventual dying process. What have you learned from suffering thus far in your life?

71. What answers do wish you had about your own health and illness? How can you live in greater peace without knowing those answers?

72. Draw a timeline of your own path of spiritual development. What experiences have led you to this point in life?

73. Think about the choices offered in this passage: fighting against an illness in hopes of prolonging life or allowing Death to come naturally, without a fight. What would you choose for yourself and why?

74. Examine your daily habits and activities. Are you doing any of them out of fear? How could you make love your motivation instead of fear?

75. This passage tells the difference between ego-driven and Soul-guided behaviors in life. When are your actions governed by greed, fear or judgment?

76. What changes in your life are you meeting with rigidity and stiffness? How can you become more flexible and “bend with the winds of change?”

77. How can you find deeper meaning in your life right here, right now?

78. This passage says: “Our suffering shapes our transformation.” How has that been true in your life?

79. What do you expect to receive in return for your acts of generosity? How can you let go of those expectations?

80. What simple things can you emphasize in your life to make the most of every moment?

81. What gifts do you feel you have for the world? How can you offer those gifts more fully than ever before?