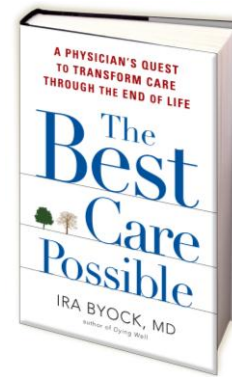


## Early Praise for *The Best Care Possible*



“There is no palliative care physician for whom I have more respect and admiration than Ira Byock. In this strikingly important book, he presents an agenda for end-of-life care that should serve as an ideal template on which to build our best hopes for the final days of those we love and of ourselves --- and a corrective for our society.”

**Sherwin B. Nuland, MD, Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics, author of *How We Die***

\* \* \*

“This is a profoundly truthful book. Ira Byock uses powerful stories about real people to explain the complications, nuances and often absurdity of advanced illness in 21st century America. He shows how courage, shared decisions, wise doctors and nurses and palliative care can make the difference. Above all, he calls for a cultural transformation so we can deal with the end of life as individuals, families and society. Who should read it? All of us who are mortal.”

**Bill Novelli, Professor, Georgetown University and co-chair, the Coalition to Transform Advanced Care (and former CEO, AARP)**

\* \* \*

“At a time when a long life can become a curse as readily as a blessing, this lucid and compassionate book points the way to more humane treatment of a life's last days.”

**Rabbi Harold Kushner, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People***

\* \* \*

“The baby boom generation has transformed every stage of life we've touched. We're now transforming the dying process. And Dr. Byock is leading the way ... brilliantly!”

**Christiane Northrup, MD, ob/gyn physician and author of the New York Times bestsellers: *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom* and *The Wisdom of Menopause***

\* \* \*

“In *The Best Care Possible*, Ira Byock tells us why we need to move beyond medicine's fixation on conquering death to a vision of end-of-life care focused on the quality of the patient's experience. This is a beautifully written, highly personal account that makes real the struggle of patients and families to escape the “high-tech”, more is better imperative that dominates the American way of death. It provides compelling examples of how the physician, committed to reform, can help patients achieve the care they want and need. But Byock goes further: he makes the case that professional reform is only part of the solution; overcoming the medicalization of death will require the mobilization of the wider community in the support of the dying (and those with chronic illness).”

**Jack Wennberg, MD author of *Tracking Medicine: a Researcher's Quest to Understand Health Care***

\* \* \*

“Dr. Byock, one of the country's leading experts in palliative care, shares his wisdom and insights on how to get the best care possible when we are confronted with a potentially life-limiting illness. When my own mother was seriously ill, Ira's words helped our family make the right choices and make sure she got the care she wanted – and no more –during her last months. His words can help you.”

**Elliott S. Fisher, MD, MPH, Director of Population Health and Policy, The Dartmouth Institute**

\* \* \*

"In a world in which politics are polarized and ethical discussions often descend into a food fight, Ira Byock is that rare doctor: a humane guide leading us with honesty and compassion through complex stories about living and dying well. He's a real-life rebuke to those who think palliative doctors are "death panels" and a mentor to every medical student inevitably faced with mortality. This is must reading for everyone trying to make humane decisions in a high tech world."  
**Ellen Goodman, longtime syndicated columnist for the Boston Globe**

\* \* \*

"This is an extraordinary and wise book on how dying people can be cared for. Written by a master clinician, a man of great compassion, Ira Byock has a vision of health care that is brilliant and kind."  
**Roshi Joan Halifax, Abbot, Upaya Zen Center, Sante Fe, author of *Being with Dying***

\* \* \*

"With elegance, compassion, and energy, Ira Byock shows us how to get the best end of life care. He is a great storyteller and a brilliant analyst of health care in America. This is the book to read or give, if you are facing this hard situation. Nobody gets out of this life alive, but Byock shows us how to do it elegantly and well."  
**Jane Isay, author of *Walking on Eggshells***

\* \* \*

"In a world of sound bites, end-of-life concerns are framed politically with emotionally charged rhetoric. Above the clamor Dr. Byock writes a compelling case for consistent, compassionate and enduring palliative care for all people as they reach the winter of their lives. Through vignettes he outlines the challenges for the patient, the caregivers and the medical community, and ably advocates a revolution of care for the end of life. This is a revolution sorely needed and worth fighting for."  
**Pastor Robert Fleischmann, National Director of Christian Life Resources**

\* \* \*

"Dr. Byock lets the stories of patients, families, and medical colleagues open windows into the heart of the issues. He leads the reader captivantly from story to story to *see* and *feel* what the best care through the end of life can be and deftly invites our nation to envision the best care for our culturally diverse society and cultures. Dr. Byock captures the fundamental human impulse to care lovingly for one another at the most sacred and privileged moments of our lives...now and through the end of life."  
**David Lichter, DMin, Executive Director, National Association of Catholic Chaplains**

\* \* \*

"Dr. Byock's book rejuvenates me professionally. In allowing us the special privilege of entering the sacred space of their final journey, people teach us precious lessons about ourselves. Dr. Byock has a gift of sharing the lessons he's learned in a most readable narrative marked by compassion, love of life, and lucidity."  
**Rabbi Bunny Freedman, Founding Director of Jewish Hospice & Chaplaincy Network**

\* \* \*

"Once again, Dr. Ira Byock delivers a message of hope and promise to all of us who will face our own deaths. Dying is always sad, but with proper professional insight and skill, an individual's last chapter need not be dominated by suffering and isolation. Dr. Byock demonstrates that growth and completion are possible in the midst of grief and loss. His clinical stories and commentary point to the resilience people find and the importance they discover in their relationships as they face life's final challenges. This is an important look at the personal, social and political implications of how we care for one another and how we die. *The Best Care Possible* is a rallying cry to all of us who are concerned about the direction of health care in the United States."  
**Donald Schumacher, PsyD, President and CEO, National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization**

\* \* \*

"Having traveled this landscape with loved ones, taking care of individuals at the end of their life is both a privilege and a tremendous challenge, both physically and spiritually. We need a map. Ira Byock has created a map of compassionate intelligence for palliative care with grace. Through the power of story and his own intuitive sense of what dignity means to the dying, this is more than a manual, it is a godsend. It is also a call for health care with heart, conscience, and consequence."

**Terry Tempest Williams, author of *Refuge***

\* \* \*

"A magnificent, moving and deeply important work. Ira Byock is a trailblazer whose life's work has forever changed the way we view dying in this country. But there's much more to be done -- "The Best Care Possible" is Byock's urgent and passionate call to action for the nation. This book is a must read for anyone who thinks there's even a possibility that they someday might die."

**Dave Isay, Founder of StoryCorps, author-editor of *Listening Is an Act of Love***

\* \*