

# LAST FLIGHT HOME

(dir. Ondi Timoner, 2022)

## Viewer Discussion Guide

### This discussion guide will...

highlight the core concepts of this feature documentary film, and lead viewers to examine their connections to the topic.

### Synopsis

Behind a white picket fence, on an unremarkable suburban street, Eli Timoner is about to die. Just as he lived, he will do so surrounded by his loved ones, on his own terms. Lucky enough to live in one of the few states that allows medical-aid-in-dying, the Timoner family embarks on a mission to help their beloved patriarch exit the world with the same grace and dignity with which he lived.

Through stunning verité footage recorded by his middle child, LAST FLIGHT HOME takes audiences on a moving journey through Timoner's life during his final days, illustrating a modern day success story built on the power of human connection. As the family opens up to provide an enlightening view of a universal experience, this intensely intimate film also offers a lasting legacy of one man's life and his commitment to both living – and dying – with agency and grace.



### KEY THEMES:

- Love and human connection: these are what ultimately give life meaning and are the lasting legacy you will leave behind.
- Bodily autonomy: one cannot truly respect human life without respecting the right of terminally ill people to pass away without undue pain and suffering.
- Mortality: death is inevitable, but in a life well lived, every day can be spent making peace with yourself and those around you.
- Community: Coming together to support our loved ones at the end of their lives is a chance at sacred moments and wisdom.
- Jewish rituals: Practicing a vidduyi (final confession), washing the body, singing together, and tucking handfuls of dirt in the grave are all rituals that can provide comfort in a time of bereavement.

### About Jewish Story Partners

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## Discussion Questions

- What elements are most important for a good and peaceful death? What kind of death would you wish for a loved one? What kind of death might you want for yourself?
- How do we judge whether someone has lived a good life? How might the things that we value during our lives differ from the things that become important right before our deaths?
- Would the knowledge of and control over a specific day and time of death make the last days of one's life easier or harder? Would that foreknowledge make preparing for the loss of a loved one easier or harder for friends and family?
- In LAST FLIGHT HOME, a lot of emphasis is placed on the importance of being able to say farewell to a loved one who is passing away. How important is it for a dying person to have control over their last interactions with friends and family?
- Is it ethical to deny a terminally ill and suffering person the right to end their life? Would your answer differ if the person were suffering but had a chance of recovery?
- What are the main arguments against medical-aid-in-dying and how do you feel about them? Has watching LAST FLIGHT HOME changed any of your opinions on this topic?
- Many religions disapprove of medical-aid-in-dying because it's considered to show a lack of respect for the blessing of life. Reform Jewish Law changed its position to allow medical-aid-in-dying, stating that "a law without tenderness is wickedness." Does respect for life imply avoiding death at all costs? Does respect for life contradict a respect for someone's right to choose death?
- All religions have special rituals and ceremonies for both the end of life and the days that follow. What are some rituals you might like to incorporate in your own passing or in the transition of your loved ones? How can similar practices occur in a secular society or for people who are non-religious?

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## Additional Resources

- In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss by Amy Bloom ([link](#))
- Compassion & Choices' My End-of-Life Decisions: An Advance Planning Guide and Toolkit ([link](#))
- Finish Strong: Putting Your Priorities First at Life's End by Barbara Coombs Lee ([link](#))
- What Kind of Death: The Ethics of Determining One's Own Death by Govert den Hartogh ([link](#))
- This is Assisted Dying: A doctor's story of empowering patients at the end of life by Dr. Stefanie Green ([link](#))
- The Inevitable: Dispatches on the Right to Die by Katie Engelhart ([link](#))

