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HELP CORNER 

EDITORIAL

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT MORTALITY

Mortality is an inescapable truth of human existence. From the moment we gain self-awareness, we understand that life is finite—that one day, our consciousness will cease, our bodies will decay, and the world will continue without us. This realization evokes a range of emotions: fear, acceptance, sorrow, and even inspiration. How we process mortality shapes our lives, relationships, and philosophies. Some avoid thinking about death, while others confront it head-on, seeking meaning in its inevitability.

Here are some of my thoughts and feelings about mortality:

1. The Fear of Death:

Young people fear death and elderly fear dying. Fear is perhaps the most immediate reaction to the idea of death. This "thanatophobia" stems from our instinct for survival. The thought of our own end triggers anxiety and unease. Some are obsessed about health and longevity to delay death, while others avoid the topic altogether. Religion and spirituality often emerge as ways to cope—offering hope of an afterlife or rebirth.

Uncertainty about what lies beyond life causes great fear. I believe in the soul's immortality and its reunion with the Divine. **As the Bhagavad Gita (22) says: As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, the soul similarly accepts new bodies, giving up the old and useless ones.**

2. Mortality as a Motivator

Keeping death in mind can help us live with purpose. Awareness of mortality encourages us to create our own meaning rather than waiting for rewards. Artists, writers, and innovators often channelize their awareness of life's brevity into their work, leaving behind legacies that outlast them. It urges us to take risks and cherish the present.

3. Grief and the Mortality of Others

Losing loved ones brings mortality painfully close. Grief, though universal, is handled differently across cultures. Some cultures accept death as natural, while others avoid talking about it.

Beliefs shape how we cope—those who believe in life after death may find solace, while those who don't, may feel hopeless. Either way, losing someone teaches us to value our limited time with others.

4. The Paradox of Mortality: A Source of Beauty and Terror

Mortality is both terrifying and beautiful. The fact that life ends makes it more meaningful. The knowledge that everything is temporary gives each moment value. Poets and philosophers often reflect on this paradox.

5. Acceptance and the Art of Letting Go

The healthiest response to mortality may be acceptance—not resignation, but a conscious acknowledgment that death is part of life. Many spiritual traditions emphasize detachment and letting go. Buddhism teaches that suffering arises

from attachment, and liberation comes from accepting impermanence. By focusing on the present rather than fearing the future, we can reduce anxiety about death.

6. Legacy and the Desire to Be Remembered

One way humans cope with mortality is through legacy—the hope that something of us will remain after we're gone. This could be through children, creative works, charitable contributions, or even simple acts of kindness that ripple through time. The desire to be remembered is powerful; it drives people to build monuments, write books, and make scientific discoveries.

Yet, legacy is a double-edged sword. Some become obsessed with posthumous fame, neglecting the present. Others realize that even the most enduring legacies fade—empires crumble, books are forgotten, and names vanish. This realization can be humbling, but it can also free us from the pressure of leaving a mark. Perhaps the best legacy is a life well-lived, regardless of who remembers it.

7. Mortality as a Teacher

Mortality is not just an end; it is a great teacher. While fear of death is natural, it doesn't have to dominate our lives. By confronting mortality, we can live with greater intention, gratitude, and compassion. Death gives life its meaning. Rather than fearing the inevitable, we can choose to see mortality as a gift—a reminder that every moment is precious, and that the true measure of a life is not its length, but its depth. **The whole of human life is meant not only to learn THE ART OF LIVING but more importantly THE ART OF LEAVING.**

8. Concept of good death

Good death or dying well refers to a death that is peaceful, dignified and aligned with the person's wishes and values. Key elements of good death include effective relief from pain and distressing symptoms, patient's autonomy, emotional and psychological well being, treatment with compassion and without dehumanization, spiritual and existential peace, support from loved ones and naturalness of death avoiding unnecessary prolongation of life through invasive measures.

9. Spiritual Concerns

The ultimate question is—can I face death in peace? Can I die without fear, resentment, or regret? Spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, and reflection prepare the soul for the final journey. They bring inner clarity and reduce fear.

Whatever state of being one remembers when he quits his body, O son of Kunt , that state he will attain without fail. (Bhagavad Gita (8.6)). The shloka reminds us that how we live and what we dwell upon shapes our final moment.

Dr. A. K. Dewan
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