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THE END: DEATH AS PART OF THE LIFE STORY

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WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY, EMORY PALLIATIVE CARE CENTER, AND
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Each of us has a dynamic life story composed of myriad autobiographical memories and lifetime periods. Research has focused on how and why we recall a variety of important life events but one critical event has been neglected; every story has an ending. I provide a conceptualization of death as part of the life story in two ways: (i) how memories of other peoples' endings become part of our continuing life story, and (ii) awareness of our own death. Applications of this work in our own lives, in healthcare settings, and in community death awareness initiatives are woven through the talk.

Dr. Susan Bluck is Director of the Life Story Lab and a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America. She obtained her BA (Psychology) from the University of British Columbia, her PhD (Social Ecology) from the University of California, Irvine, and did her postdoctoral work at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. She is a lifespan developmental psychologist; her research examines how individuals use memories of life's experiences to serve adaptive psychosocial functions. Her most recent work examines how and why people recall death-related events.