



The Wellness Column by Amanda J. Butler

In the quiet heart of Mallorca, amidst the stone villages and winding caminos, lives a woman who has made it her life's mission to guide people through life's most important frontiers — marriage and death. Glynis German, a self-described "Hippy High Priestess," is both a celebrant and a death doula, providing practical, emotional, and spiritual support to individuals and families as they navigate the often unspoken terrain of dying.

"I arrived in Mallorca in the autumn of 1992," Glynis begins. "After a summer working on a superyacht in Italy, I decided that yachting was not for me. My sister lived here, and I had a degree in Spanish. It felt like the right place to pause." That pause turned into a calling — one that led her into ceremonies, rituals, and eventually, end-of-life work.

Glynis's work as a death doula is deeply personal and profoundly varied. "This week, I accompanied someone to hospital — not because of logistics, but because they needed someone beside them. I was their voice, their coach, their cheerleader," she says. "Sometimes I'm on the phone with families, sometimes I'm explaining palliative care options, or holding space in person. I offer practical support, emotional listening, and sometimes spiritual ceremony."

For Glynis, it all comes down to presence. "Being there. Being fully there. That's the job."

While the role of death doula may be unfamiliar to many, Glynis is quick to explain it as the bookend to birth doulas — guiding people not into the world, but out of it, with dignity and compassion.

Death doula and celebrant

A celebrant as well, she performs weddings, funerals, vow renewals, and baby namings. "Whether I'm marrying a couple or helping someone say goodbye, it's about honouring the story at the heart of the person," she says. "Grief is personal, and I can't change someone's grief — but I can celebrate a life well-lived."

Her own life has been marked by spiritual curiosity and independence. "I was raised in a Christian home — my Jamaican mother, my British education — but the church didn't feel like it represented me. I left religion young but never left God," she explains. Her moniker, "Hippy High Priestess," is a nod to her mixed heritage, her modern values, and her love for ritual.

Death is not a taboo for Glynis — it's a teacher. "We're all going to die... eventually!" she laughs. "So let's have fun before that moment comes." Avoiding conversations



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PHOTOS BELOW: JOSE PHINE ELVIS

"Question life. Question death. And if there's someone you've fallen out with, and there's still love there — call them. Say sorry. Life's too short for mala leche."

about death, she warns, is like ignoring red-ink envelopes in the post. "Eventually something important gets switched off."

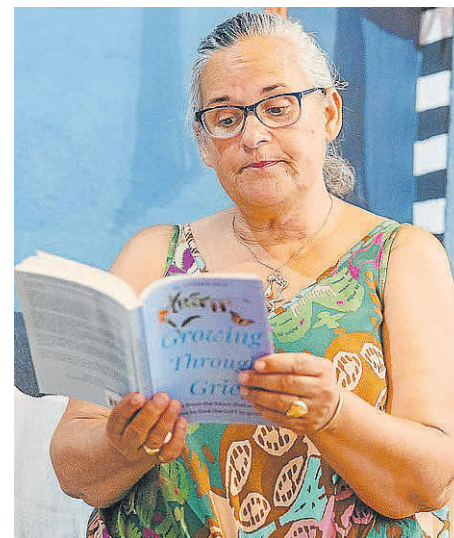
Giving Life to Death Festival

In 2020, when pandemic lockdowns shut down travel, Glynis launched the **Giving Life to Death Festival** in Spain. Inspired by UK-based events like Dying Matters Week and the Good Grief Festival, her local version spans six days around All Saints' Day, offering open talks, death cafés, workshops, and even crematorium visits — all free and welcoming.

Now in its sixth year, the festival has earned the respect of Spain's top healthcare professionals. "We've had support from day one," she says. "We even provide sign language interpretation."

A champion for inclusivity, Glynis acknowledges Mallorca's multicultural makeup, yet points out that she often works in two spheres — local and foreign. "I would love to work more with underrepresented communities — refugees, Muslims, prisoners — but I have to be mindful of not burning out. It's a balancing act."

She draws great strength from the island's supportive networks. "Age Concern, Cancer Support Mallorca, DIME — we have some incredible, non-profit lifelines here." In one case,



when a patient had no family, she put out a call to the English-speaking community. "A dozen people stepped forward. They visited this person in hospital almost daily for six months. It restored my faith in humanity."

When asked whether her work is spiritual, Glynis is clear: "My personal relationship with God underpins everything I do — but it's not something I impose on anyone. My beliefs are mine. My role is to meet people wherever they are."

One of the most satisfying parts of her work? "Seeing peace return to someone's face," she says. "Especially when I first met them in a state of shock. That moment of stillness — it's a gift."

For those wanting to approach death more mindfully, Glynis has practical advice: "Sort out your paperwork. Write your will. Share your passwords. Make your wishes known. If you don't, decisions might be taken out of your hands. Once that's done — live!"

She urges readers to not fear death, but to face it. "If you're scared, get help. If you're grieving, find support that fits you and let yourself feel it. Grief is not a weakness — it's love continuing."

And in true Glynis fashion, she leaves us with a final reminder: "Question life. Question death. And if there's someone you've fallen out with, and there's still love there — call them. Say sorry. Life's too short for mala leche."

Glynis has contributed to the book "Growing Through Grief", an anthology inspired by Linda Ledwidge, on Amazon or Kindle. For more information go to glynisgermanfunerals.com.

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