

MOLLY CARLILE AM

RN, FACN, FAICD, AFCHSM, MAIPC, MACA

Molly Carlile is “*The Deathtalker*®”.

Molly has been a passionate advocate for dying and grieving people and for building compassionate communities for the bulk of her eclectic career. She is a sought after speaker because she talks about death in plain English, without all the medical jargon with the aim of returning ownership and control to ordinary people.

“We are happy to talk about the intimacies of our lives, who we “hooked up” with on the weekend and our credit card debt on our mobile phones so that everyone within twenty metres can hear and yet we are paralysed when it comes to having meaningful conversations with the people we love about the one thing that will eventually impact us all.....death” she says.

As Ambassador for “Dying to Know Day”, a national day of action (launched in 2013) Molly tours the country on August 8th each year supporting local events that encourage communities to “have the conversation” in ways that are locally relevant.

A published author, her first book, “Jelly Bean’s Secret”, has been used widely as a tool for introducing the concept of death and grief to young children and her book, “Sometimes Life Sucks” addresses the complex needs of young adults when experiencing death and loss. She is currently working on an additional three manuscripts for publication in 2016-17. Her website deathtalker.com facilitates death and grief awareness online and explores the broader questions of meaning and life purpose.



Molly has embraced the use of the arts as a vehicle for empowering people to come together and be entertained while also being challenged to think about their fears and anxieties about death. To

this end, she collaborated with celebrated Australian author and playwright, Alan Hopgood on the plays, “Four Funerals in One Day” and “The Empty Chair”, exploring multiple issues including end of life, grief, dementia and relationships and both plays continue to tour nationally, recently being performed internationally. She has also appeared in a number of documentaries and short films.

Molly not only speaks about these issues in the community but in the media and in the health and education sectors, appearing regularly on television, including on Network 10’s “The Circle” and “The Project” and on ABC’s “The Weekly with Charlie Pickering”¹. She is a regular commentator and studio guest on national radio, with multiple interviews on Radio National, ABC Local (NSW, WA, Vic, TAS, NT and Queensland), and commercial and community radio.

“I firmly believe that our undisclosed and very personal fears about our eventual death, permeate and influence every aspect of our lives; our career choices, our relationships, our workplaces and our engagement within our communities...absolutely everything. Until we explore this deep part of ourselves, we will continue to make choices based on those fears rather than take control and make choices based on how we want to LIVE”, Molly says.

But death is not all Molly talks about. She actively promotes the idea that if we build communities that are caring and compassionate, we would all feel supported and be better equipped to support others during life challenges and periods of emotional turmoil. “Relationship breakdown, workplace conflict, physical and mental illness, work overload, compassion fatigue, burnout and more broadly the complex, technological world we live in, often causes us to feel completely powerless. Ultimately these

¹<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6jwwAq-h-w>

challenges have an impact on our ability to see a positive future, both for ourselves and our children” she says. Molly believes that by empowering our local communities (be they workplaces, professional, school or residential communities) to explore the concepts of “connection” and “empathy”, we can create a groundswell of change that can have wide ranging impacts on our quality of life.

Molly brings to these topics extensive senior management and executive experience in both rural and metropolitan health services. She has an extensive clinical background in specialist palliative care nursing, counselling and education. In her most recent role as General Manager, Integrated Cancer Services at the Olivia Newton-John Cancer and Wellness Centre, Austin Health (2014-2016), where she previously held the positions of Manager, Palliative Care Services and Manager, Arts in Healthcare (2011-2013), Molly’s passion for the arts saw her establish an innovative program that encompasses visual, performance and participatory arts as an integral component of the model of care provided in the Cancer Centre. She has also been an active participant in a number of research projects that are evaluating the impact of the arts on patients, families, visitors and staff. Molly has also been an Honorary Research Fellow for La Trobe University.

As a leader in her field, Molly has previously held a variety of regional, state and national positions in the healthcare sector. She has sat on multiple government advisory committees and has represented the sector in numerous policy and strategic development initiatives locally, nationally and internationally. She has sat on numerous health and peak body boards, was Chair of the North and West Metropolitan Region Palliative Care Consortium, Victoria (2011-2013) and is an inaugural member of the Board of the Australian Centre for Arts and Health (2012-present) and is on the management committee of the Natural Death Advocacy Network (NDAN).

As of February 2016, Molly has resigned from her fulltime, acute role to focus on the ever increasing demand for her services as a speaker, author and consultant. Her private practice, established in 2000, has grown to the point where her contribution to service development, education and capacity building has become both extensive and diverse. As The Deathtalker®, she now inspires, drives and supports change in areas as diverse as community development, health promotion, aged and acute care, academia and nursing leadership.

Molly has presented keynote addresses, workshops and orations for the past fifteen years at national and international conferences and festivals. Molly delivered the 11th Annual Vivian Bullwinkel Memorial Oration in 2012.

Molly was the recipient of a 2008 Churchill Fellowship, awarded the inaugural Arts and Health Australia Award for Health Promotion in 2009 and was presented with the International Journal of Palliative Nursing, Educator of the Year 2012 Award in London. She received the 2012 Deakin University and Health Super Award for Leadership in Nursing and Midwifery in addition to the Minister’s Award for Outstanding Achievement at the 2012 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.

Molly is a Fellow of the Australian College of Nursing, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Associate Fellow of the Australian College of Health Service Managers.

Molly was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List in 2014 her citation reads “ *for significant service to community health through seminal contributions to organisations providing palliative care and to the performing arts*”.

Sample testimonial: “Molly is an entertaining, informing and inspiring speaker who brings energy and empathy to her difficult subject areas. She leaves audiences feeling curious, empowered and entertained, no matter her topic. Her authenticity and integrity inspires others to challenge the status quo and ask the big questions relating to all aspects of life.....and death.”

