



Endnotes: An Intimate Look at the End of Life (End of Life Care: A Series)

Ruth E. Ray

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In the summer of 1996, Ruth Ray, a gerontologist in her forties, befriended an eighty-two-year-old man suffering from Parkinson's. The two remained close until the end of his life, sharing stories and memories while building a deep relationship. Part memoir, part biography, *Endnotes* explores how people construct meaning through their interactions with others. With grace and wit, Ray situates her friend's past experiences and present relationships within the theories and literature of gerontology, providing a deeper understanding of autonomy at the end of life. She also delves into the complexities of sexuality and intimacy in old age, communication across disabilities and age groups, the disabling nature of nursing homes, and the trials of death and dying. Writing as both a woman and a gerontologist, Ray finds that the "quality of care" we provide for others requires not only an understanding of the relationships that have given a person's life meaning but also a willingness to accept and share deeply in the emotional process of physical and mental decline.

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