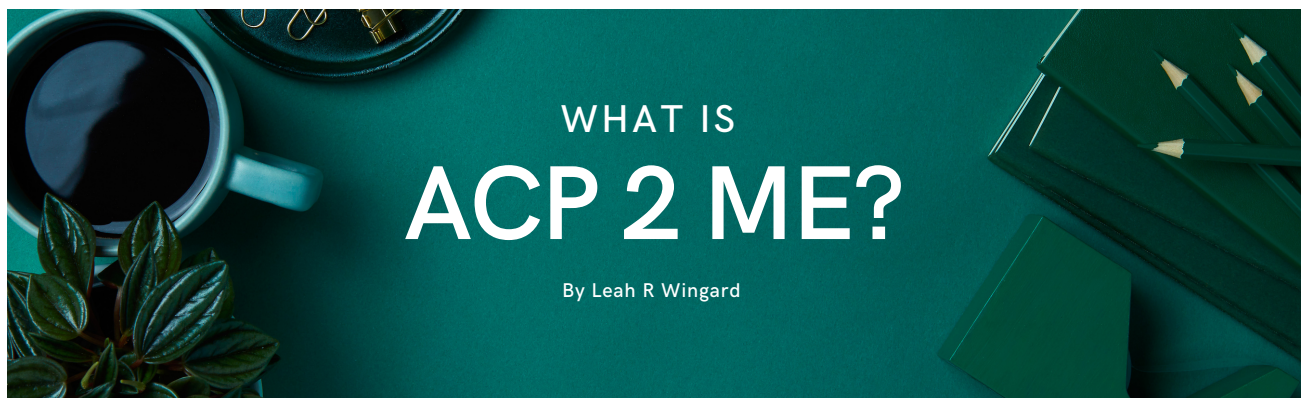


## A question came to my mind...



As an Advance Care Planning (**ACP**) **facilitator**, I am tasked with helping the client steward one of the most important moments of their life. My goal is to help them understand their healthcare choices and **steward their legacy**.

There are dress rehearsals for many important things in life, but there is only one moment that, we will never repeat.

I believe **a life well lived involves some planning**. We plan for everything birthdays, holidays, graduation day; marriage day and we spend the rest of our life in complete denial about an event that most humans will experience.

In Dr. Barker's office **this may be** the only moment that patients will have enough peace and quiet to explore what their real priorities are. I must **responsibly steward every moment of our meeting** so that **they can realize their best ending to their life story**.

None of us have any guarantees and these clients, are in an especially serious chapter of their life, which may be the final one...Or this could just be **a dark valley on their journey of life**.

I was at my mom's assisted living center in a church service a few weeks ago and the pastor asked the Residents of the assisted living center congregation a question. He said "We've talked for several weeks about what heaven will be like, but How do we get to heaven?" Without missing a beat. My mom said **"you have to die! And nobody wants to do that."** Initially I thought the question was risky, but I had no idea how funny it would be. "Thanks, Mom!"

ACP facilitation **requires bravery & empathy to lean into the awkward**; to ask hard questions & then listen long & well. Sometimes there is laughter & sometimes tears. I aspire to be the person who **listens to them the best**. I hang on their every word because I know **their time is precious** and it is a touching experience as they share their hopes, dreams & fears in my presence. I am privileged to listen with my heart and assist them with documenting their wishes.

Every patient, I view as a divine appointment. I aspire to be ready for them.

To me, this is a **sacred trust**.

*Leah R. Wingard*