

What can you do if you only have six months to live?

1. First things first, remember you're not dead yet. 2. Recognise that your body is only a part of who you are. You are greater than the sum of your physical parts. So don't be preoccupied with your body or illness. 3. Watch reruns of *The Simpsons*. 4. Lie in bed and feel sorry for yourself. 5. Laugh. 6. However, avoid using humour to put yourself down. 7. Eat as much Char Kway Teow as you like. 8. Find joy in the mundane. Sit by the window and pay attention to the song of birds. Even a chore like doing the dishes can be a source of wonder if you allow yourself to marvel at the myriad of colours in soapsuds. 9. Spend a morning at the Botanic Gardens and watch the trees sway in the wind. 10. Read *Tuesdays with Morrie*. 11. Gobble up samples in shops. 12. Purchase a notebook. 13. Record your anger and frustrations. You can gain distance and perspective by writing down what you are going through. 14. Run your walking stick along public railings. In the middle of the night. 15. Wear purple with a neon green hat which doesn't go. 16. Talk openly about your illness. Don't keep what you are going through bottled up inside. Don't shut out other people. Don't isolate yourself. 17. Let someone feed you peeled, seedless grapes. 18. Listen to an audio recording of Tolstoy's *War & Peace*. 19. Resist the temptation to think of yourself as useless; belittling yourself will only lead to depression. 20. Remember no one can make you feel inferior without your consent. 21. Be useful. Set goals for yourself. Even if they are small ones like cutting out some newspaper articles you've been meaning to save. 22. Set bigger goals like teaching your grandchildren to read. Or starting a book you've always wanted to read. 23. Come to terms with the fact that you may not be fully physically fit again. 24. Seek out and attend to what is divine, holy or sacred to you. 25. Learn to pray. 26. Eat a kilo of sausages at one go. 27. Settle financial matters like CPF and insurance. It's important to ensure your family is well looked after. If you've not prepared a will, you should have one drawn up promptly. 28. Mourn, grieve, and cry for yourself. Ordinarily we think of mourning for our parents and our loved ones, but not for ourselves. Crying helps you gradually come to accept the end: the irrevocable fact that all living things die. Mourning and grieving help you achieve some level of composure. 29. Bathe in champagne. 30. Share your grief. Cry in front of someone, and cry with him or her. Witnessing grief gives others the permission to grieve. 31. Tell someone the story of your life, sparing no details. 32. Wake them up, if they fall asleep. 33. Have an entire tub of ice-cream. 34. Love yourself. Be gentle, be patient, and be kind to yourself. Love yourself the way your parents loved you when you were a child. 35. Plant a tree. 36. Ask the people whom you've wronged to forgive you. 37. Forgive others. 38. Forgive your parents. 39. Forgive yourself. 40. Sit down on the pavement when you're tired. 41. Be a witness to yourself. Be an observer of your own physical, emotional and spiritual states. Develop the ability to stand outside, and watch what's going on. By detaching yourself, you can look at the way you habitually think and behave. Through self-analysis comes self-knowledge. 42. Identify behaviours you want to change, and change them. 43. Start small. For instance, if you don't want to be a grouch any more, the first step may be as simple as saying 'good morning,' 'please,' 'you're welcome,' and 'thank you' more often. If you want people to talk to you, work on being more attentive and a good listener. If you want people to visit you more, work on making their visit pleasant. 44. Do the cha-cha in the street. 45. Plan your own funeral. 46. Fall asleep under the stars. 47. Decide where you want to die. If, like the majority of us, you'd like to 'go home' from home, a hospice home care service can make your wish a distinct possibility. Over half our patients get to 'go home' from home. 48. Call 1800 333 6666 and talk to someone about hospice care or visit www.lifebeforedeath.org.sg 49. Find out that hospice is a concept of care that encompasses medical, nursing and psychosocial care for patients and their families. 50. Take a clean sheet of paper and write down another 50 things to do.