

“It’s incredibly healthy to have a conversation about what’s most important to you.”

Christchurch Mayor Lianne Dalziel has spoken about the importance of having conversations with loved ones about what’s important to you at the end of life.

Ms Dalziel recently discussed books she’d read with RNZ’s Jesse Mulligan, including *Being Mortal* by American surgeon, writer and public health researcher Atul Gawande.

“It’s about dying and the fact that doctors don’t really get trained in that conversation about how people want to live the rest of their life if they have a limited life span.



“He wants us to have better conversations with ourselves and with those caring for us and to feel comfort in having those conversations.

“It was good because there were three or four of us who read it and then we had a conversation about dying. That’s not a conversation I’ve had with my husband before, but I’m really glad we had it. I know what’s important to him and he knows what’s important to me.

“It’s incredibly healthy to have a conversation about what’s most important to you.”

Ms Dalziel says it’s important to make sure your loved ones know how you want to be cared for.

“Do you want extreme measures to be taken to see if your life can be extended, or would it be more important that you had time to spend with people that you want to say goodbye to, or pass on messages to?”

“What would be important for me is not being in a lot of pain – and medicine can manage pain.

“Not everyone gets these choices, of course. My dad died very suddenly and we didn’t get a chance to have any of those conversations.”

She says while many of us would like to pass away peacefully in our sleep, “that doesn’t necessarily mean a better end to life for everyone else who’s involved and who would like the opportunity to say a few things.

“Death is inevitable. It’s about working with people to make each day as good as it can possibly be for you under the circumstances.”