# DYING TO ASK

## 38 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS ABOUT DEATH



ELLEN DUTHIE
& ANNA JUAN CANTAVELLA, PH.D.
ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREA ANTINORI

• If people think you are dead, but you aren't really, will you die in the cemetery? (Laia, 10) • Do the dead have a heart? (Aylin, 8) • Do we like dying? (Sara, 7) • Would you rather freeze, drown, or burn to death? (Irene, 11) • Where do you go when you die? (Anonymous, 8) • Is it selfish to connect a person to a machine for them to keep breathing when they are already dead? (Mateo, 11) • Do we have feelings when we are dead? (Lorena, 10) • Will we all become extinct one day? (Laura, 9) • Does the devil exist? (Anonymous, 9) • When you die, do you miss your friends? (Sira, 6) • Is there any way of knowing if our dead grandparents have feelings? (Mireia, 6) • When I sleep, am I alive or dead? (Fede, 8) • Will I be a skeleton when I die? That's scary! (Sara, 7) • If the world never stops, what will we do when we are dead? (Gael, 7) • Does karma exist? (Anonymous, 10) • When you are dead, do you miss people who love you? (Lorena, 10) • Where do the dead go? (Ian, 6) • Can you die in the middle of a sentence? (Nabroopkau, 6) • Why don't skeletons have a heart? (Rocío, 6) • Is it fun to be a ghost? (Jagbir, 6) • If someone you love dies, how long are you sad for? (Lorena, 10) • Why do we have to die? (Anonymous, 10) • Would I like pizza if I were dead? (Tizziano, 6) • Why do the dead die? (Amèlia, 6) • In hell, is everything burnt? (Cristóbal, 6) • Can you eat even though you can't open your mouth? (Nuria, 6) • How do we know skeletons are dead? (Olivia, 6) • If you die, who is there to greet you? (Anonymous, 10) • How do spirits live? (Mia, 6) • Is it scary to be in a tomb? (Africa, 6) • If you are dead, can't you breathe? (Esteban, 6) • If you are a ghost, can you move things? (Kai, 6) • If you go to sleep and die while you are sleeping, how do they make you understand that you are really dead? (Anonymous, 12) • Why can't skeletons eat? (Kendra, 6) • Could I see the moon if I was dead? (Paula, 6) • Could I eat sweets if I was dead? (Miri, 6) • Can you die in heaven? (Anonymous, 9) • Do you get earth in your eyes when you are dead? (Kiowa, 6) • Why don't skeletons have any flesh? (Dana, 6) • Do you have skin when you are dead? (Manuela, 6) • When you die, do you remember? (Max, 6) • Is it possible to know when you are going to die? (Gael, 8) • Do philosophers die? (Ranbir, 6) • When you die, can you turn into an animal? (Anonymous, 9) • Do skeletons survive underground? (Emma, 6) • Can I see a dead soul? (Sofía, 6) • How do we die? (Leo, 7, and Tina, 7) • When you are dead, do you think of your friends? (Youssef, 6) • When you are dead, can you speak with your family? (Koado, 6) • If you have an eye taken out and then die, does the eye stay alive? (Anonymous, 9) • Can we make dead friends? (Mia, 6) • Is it interesting to die? (León, 7, and Lina, 7) • Is it important to die? (Gabriela, 7) • If you die and go to heaven, do you still feel love for the people you left on Earth? (Anonymous, 9) • When I ask myself "What is there after death?", my answer is "nothing." But I then wonder: "What is 'nothing'?" (Iain, 11) • Why do we die? (Rayan, 7; Eloi, 11, and Àngel, 8) • Why should we consider that death is important? (Adrián, 13) • When you die, do you still go to school (even if nobody can see you)? (Anonymous, 9) • What can I do to make sure I don't die? (Francisco, 7) • Is there really a paradise? Would I get in? (Jóhann, 12) • When do we die? (Zeno, 7) • If you were immortal, what would you do? (Paula, 10) • What age would you like to reach before you die? (Pamela, 12) • What is hell? (Yarmin, 8) • When you die, do you still like pizza? (Anonymous, 8) • Will I die? (Clàudia, 5) • Does our soul fly? (Gabriela, 7) • A question for a skeleton—do you fall apart if you move? (María Cecilia, 9) • When we die, do we go on living? (Lucas, 8) • Am I really dead or is it that my body doesn't work? (Eliana, 8) • Is it always sad to die? (Merien, 8) • What are the most important things in your life? (Joana, 10) • What do they do in hell? (Yarmin, 7, and Wiorne, 8) • Do the dead burn if they are set on fire? (Anonymous, 9) • Is death sleep? (Jana, 7) • If you could choose, how would you die? (Yarmin, 7) • When we die, does all our body die at once? (Ariadna, 6) • Is paradise real? (Eliana, 8) • Can the dead hear if you talk about them? (Anonymous, 9) • Can a rabbit go to heaven? (Jana, 7) • Can you think when you are dead? (Mencía, 8) • How long does it take for our body to decompose after dying? (Iain, 11) • How can I live in peace if I know that I'm going to die? (Anonymous, 11) • How do men and women go up to heaven without wings? (Sira, 6) • How do mosquitoes die? (Clàudia, 5) • Do the plants that die in floods know they are dying? Do they feel any pain? (Gael, 7) • What happens if you go to hell and then come back to life? (Anonymous, 9) • Two questions for a vampire—do you have any blood in your body? How old are you? (Isabella, 5) • When you die, does your thinking stop? (Isaí, 5) • Are Death and the devil in cahoots? (Anonymous, 10) • When someone says, "I'm starving to death," are they really dying? (Sebastián, 5) • Where do you go when you are killed in an accident? (Anonymous, 10) • Can a dead person have fun? What does a dead person do for fun? (Elena, 5) • Is it reasonable for politicians and people to think euthanasia is bad without taking into consideration how much the person is suffering? (Mateo, 11) • What would you do if you were immortal? (Joana, 10) • Are we sure that at night we don't die and then come back to life in the morning? (Anonymous, 10) • How do we know that a dead person is really dead? (Eliana, 8) • How many times can a dead person visit their family? (Isabella, 5) • A question for a skeleton—how can you move if you don't have any muscles? (Florrie, 11) • When you die, do you remember everything? (Anonymous, 8) • Why do they put a picture outside (on the headstone)? (Sira, 6) • When you die, do you miss your body? (Yuma, 11) • If heaven and hell exist, is it possible to move back and forth from one to the other? (Guillermo, 15) • In the world of the dead, do people have emotions? (Aylin, 8) • Can you die from love or laughter? (Anonymous, 9) • Are there any animals in the world of the dead? (Sofía Eliana, 5) • A question for a vampire—would you like to die? (María Cecilia, 9) • If you are dead, can you think? (Anonymous, 9) • How do they make tombstones? (Sira, 6) • Does a skull ever get hungry? If it does, what does it eat? (Isabella, 5) • When we go up to heaven, does all our body go up? (Clàudia, 5) • Can you poop when you are dead? (Anonymous, 8) • With animals, is it the same as with people but without flowers? (Sira, 6) • How can we achieve absolute happiness in life? (Luz Mary, 13) • Where does a body take longer to decompose, in a graveyard or in a mausoleum? (Miguel Ángel, 13) • When you go to heaven, do you start a new life? (Anonymous, 9) • A question for a vampire—did you ever think you were going to die? (María Cecilia, 9) • If I die, who will get to keep my game console? (Gael, 7) • Should we fear death? (Adrián, 13) • When a hospital's resources are scarce because of a pandemic, does it make sense for them to give priority to treating the younger people? (Mateo, 11) • If you die and they hurt your body in the real world, do you feel it in heaven? (Anonymous, 9) • Will we go to heaven or to hell? (Hugo, 13) • When you die, do you become invisible? (Sofía Eliana, 5) • A question for a skeleton—Miss Skull, if one of your teeth falls out, does it grow back? (Isabella, 5) • Can you die while you are talking? (Anonymous, 8) • Why must there be something after death? (Adrián, 13) • If we die, will we meet our relatives? (Hugo, 13) • Would you prefer to die and for people to remember you when you are dead or to stay alive but for nobody to ever know who you are? (Africa, 13) • In the future, will there be special machines that bring the dead back to life? (Núria, 11) • Do dead people have feelings? (Anonymous, 9) • Is it true

what they say, that we go to heaven or hell? (Alejandro, 12) • Is there anything about your life that you would like to change before you die? (Pamela, 12) • In heaven, do you keep getting older or do you stay the same age? (Anonymous, 8) • A question for a skeleton—would you like to have skin? (María Cecilia, 9) • Would you like to reincarnate as a cat or a rabbit? (Fernanda, 8) • What would you do if you knew when you were going to die? (Joana, 10) • When you are dead and underground, can you breathe? (Clàudia, 5) • Why do we have to die? (Fazeel, 8; Gael, 7, and Jóhann, 12) • Would you like to live someone else's life? (Joana, 10) • What would you do if you were going to die in an hour's time? (Tatiana, 11) • How long are you in heaven for? (Anonymous, 9) • What happens if when we die, we have issues pending or unresolved? (Uzinga, 11) • Can animals see ghosts? (Miguel Ángel, 13) • How can we be sure that we are going to be OK when we die? (Anonymous, 11) • Does hell exist? (Francisco, 7) • When you die, do people remember all the things you used to do with them? (Sira, 6) • Why isn't life forever? (Francisco, 7) • Do the dead die? If they don't die, where are they? (Anonymous, 11) • If a device's batteries have run out, is it dead? (Fausto, 5) • Why will everyone die some day? (Sofía Eliana, 5) • Is death alive or dead? (Mariana, 8) • Why do some people die at a younger age than others? (Olmo, 11) • How many times do you have to behave badly to be sent to hell? (Anonymous, 9) • If my parents die, is it true that they'll look after me from heaven? (Álex, 9) • Before I was born, where was I? Was I dead? (Maya, 9) • When you die, can you see death? (Vania, 8) • Can you eat when you are dead? (Sofía Eliana, 5) • When you die, do you meet up with your ancestors? (Anonymous, 9) • Is death with me, watching me? (Sara, 11) • Why do we use flowers to remember the dead? (Sira, 6) • When you die, your soul goes to heaven, but where is your soul when you are alive? (Anonymous, 11) • Will life on this planet last forever? (Ander, 11) • Does each person feel death differently? (Pablo, 11) • Does death die? (Juan, 11, and Mireia, 6) • Who takes care of the children when parents die? (Sofía Eliana, 5) • What am I going to do when I'm dead? (Anonymous, 9) • If death is with us from the moment we are born, when you die, does death stay by our side? (Tere, 10) • A question for a vampire—when you weren't immortal, were you afraid of dying? (Gael, 8) • Am I going to see my dead relatives when I die? (Anonymous, 9) • Is there anything you want to do before you die? (Pamela, 12) • Is death watching us? (Sara, 11) • Does the memory of vampires last as long as the memory of humans? (María Cecilia, 9) • Do the dead gradually become invisible? (Anonymous, 8) • When we faint, do we die for an instant? (Álex, 9) • If death is nothing, who is death? (Ander, 11) • Do the dead have fun? (Aylin, 8) • Do you think it's possible to resuscitate? (Guillermo, 15) • Would you like to be a vampire? (Fernanda, 8) • Is there an age limit? (Maily, 10, and Santi, 11) • How long are you sad for if you die? What about if your mother dies? (Anonymous, 10) • Why exactly do we die? (Marcos, 15) • When we die, are we aware at that exact moment in time of what is happening to us? (Isabel, 14) • What things bring meaning to your life? (Tatiana, 11) • If ghosts exist, what shape are they? (Anonymous, 8) • Would you like to be immortal? (Pamela, 12) • Why should we talk about death? (Anonymous, 11) • Is it possible to dream of the real feeling of death? Or is it a feeling that only manifests itself once? (Isabel, 14) • How can you tell that you will die soon? (Eloi, 11) • Can you die when you have only just been born? (Maily, 10) • Can the dead see? (Aylin, 8) • What happens with everything I have to do if I die before I was meant to die? (Anonymous, 11) • Do you think your life has as much meaning as a millionaire's life? (Tatiana, 11) •

# DYING TO ASK

## 38 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS ABOUT DEATH

*For Iain*
Ellen

*For Clàudia and Gael*
Anna

# DYING TO ASK

## 38 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS ABOUT DEATH



ELLEN DUTHIE & ANNA JUAN CANTAVELLA, PH.D.
ILLUSTRATED BY ANDREA ANTINORI

tra.publishing

# Contents




About this book.....10

1. Will I die?.....14

2. How does skin go away?.....18

3. When you die, does your thinking stop?.....22

4. When we die, does all our body die at once?.....24

5. How do we know that a dead person is really dead?.....28

6. How do we die?.....32

7. When do we die?.....34

8. Is there an age limit?.....38

9. Why do we have to die?.....40

10. Who takes care of the children when parents die?.....44

11. What is there after death?.....48

12. Where do we go when we die?.....52

13. Before I was born, where was I? Was I dead?.....56

14. Is there any way of knowing whether our dead grandparents have feelings?.....58

15. Will we all become extinct one day?.....60

16. Why do some people die by suicide?.....64

17. Why do we bury the dead?.....68

18. If someone you love dies, how long will you be sad?.....72

19. Is it bad luck to die?.....74

20. Why do they dress the dead in white in India and Pakistan?.....76





21. Does death have a physical appearance?.....80

22. How do they make tombstones? .....84

23. Why aren't children allowed to see the dead? .....86

24. Why do people find it uncomfortable to talk about death?.....88

25. Is there any fate worse than death?.....90

26. If I die, who will get to keep my game console?.....92

27. How can you tell whether you will die soon?.....96

28. Is death scary?.....100

29. What does it feel like to be poisoned?.....104

30. When I go to sleep, how do I know that I haven't died?.....106

31. What's the meaning of life if we are going to die?.....110

32. In the future, will there be special machines that bring the dead back to life?.....112

33. Why don't they give people an injection to help them die when they are sick, like they do with animals?.....116

34. Why do some people donate their organs when they die?.....118

35. Is there anywhere where you can look up when you are going to die? .....120

36. Is it true that if you are decapitated, your body can run around headless?.....124

37. Is there anyone I could ask, please, can I please not die?.....128

38. Why do people say, "rest in peace" and not "rest in fun"?.....132

Who made this book?.....136

## About This Book



Dear mortal,

Thank you very much for choosing this book and congratulations on being brave enough to open it!

Death is a peculiar subject matter. We feel curious and intrigued by its mystery, but it can also be scary and unsettling. Have you ever covered your eyes in the middle of a scary movie? Have you then opened your fingers, slowly, to peek through the gaps, before quickly closing them tight again? Look at that finger choreography! You want to look, and you do not want to look; you want to know, and you do not want to know.

The wonderful thing about a book is that you can close it whenever you like. Bam! And you can then decide to open it a minute later because, in fact, on second thought, you do want to read a little more, or perhaps you want to try a different chapter. Or you might want to leave it closed until another day, another month, or another year, when you are more in the mood for a book about death.

But before experimenting with opening and closing these pages, we would like to tell you a bit about how this book came to exist.

Like most human beings, the writers of *Dying to Ask* (Anna and Ellen) find death fascinating, but also scary. Many human beings try to avoid thinking about death at all costs, hiding it away and very rarely discussing it. This is true among adults, but especially when it comes to their talking about death with children and young people. However, in our literature and philosophy workshops with children and teens, whenever the subject of death comes up, we have noticed how interested everybody is to explore questions and talk about issues regarding death freely and deeply. So, we set ourselves a challenge: Could we write a book that might spark the same kind of interesting and varied conversations about death as those that take place in our workshops? We thought so!



We knew from the start that we wanted to build the book around real questions from real mortals. So, we set to work.

We organized a series of workshops designed for thinking, imagining, and wondering about death. When we had perfected the workshops, we created a booklet *(DYING TO ASK! Vital Ideas for Sparking Mortal Questions)* for anyone to download for free, and invited families, schools, and libraries across the world to do these workshops and to take part in the project by sending us all their mortal questions.

We received hundreds of questions from different locations across the world (Spain, Italy, Finland, Germany, United Kingdom, United States, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, and Turkey).

Once we had gathered all the questions, it was time to sort them and choose. Can you imagine how hard that was?

Look at the Contents page to check out our final selection. You will see questions of all sorts: scientific, philosophical, anthropological, psychological, as well as very practical ones. You will also find funny and sad questions, hard and easy questions, uncomfortable, brave, surprising, and playful questions. The thirty-eight questions that are the titles of each of the chapters are a representative sample of the rich variety of interests, curiosities, and concerns about death voiced by the living beings between the ages of 5 and 15 who took part in the project.

Before or after reading this book, you can also download...
... the question-provoking booklet *DYING TO ASK! Vital Ideas for Sparking Mortal Questions*. Enjoy!
trapublishing.com/pages/resources

Once we had chosen the questions, along came the illustrator (Andrea) with a mission. Without reading any of the answers to the questions, he set out to give his own kind of interpretation and reaction to each of them, through his drawings. So, one way of reading the illustrations in this book is to think of them as answers or playful explorations of the questions.

Then, with all the drawings finished, we wrote the final versions of our answers. We particularly enjoyed being able to play and interact not only with the questions but also with Andrea's illustrations.

It has been a truly fascinating and fun book to create. In fact, it was so much fun and so fascinating that it took us three years to finish it. Three years! We knew it would take a while, but we now have irrefutable proof that you simply cannot answer questions about death in a hurry. Most questions about death don't have a satisfying, straightforward answer. We had to dive in and explore different possible ways of answering and thinking about things. The answers you will find in this book are the accounts of our particular explorations.

What we would really like is for these exploratory answers to bring about good conversations, and many more questions. Questions never die.

Long live questions!



## When to Read This Book

We generally only read or think about death when a loved one dies or when death touches us in some other way. We can read this book at those times if we wish, but it is not a book created specifically for times of grief.

It is an invitation to think and talk about death naturally, at any time, and from many different points of view.

In other words, you can read it whenever you like!



## How to Read This Book

You can read this book alone or with others, but even if you read it alone first, you are likely to want to talk about it with other people, because that is what tends to happen with all things mortal. You want to share them.

You can read it from start to finish, one answer after the other. Or you can skip, jump, and go back and forth, as you like, letting your curiosity, your interest or your fear (boo!) be your guide.

(You will also find suggestions for chapters to jump to at the end of each answer).

Another way of reading this book is thinking of your own questions as you read it and writing them down somewhere special or sharing them with anyone you like.

Each of the chapters contain details, stories, or pieces of information you might want to know more about. You can make your own inquiries and complete each answer with other information, ideas, or readings that you look for yourself.

In other words, you can read it however you like!



This book...
... contains questions by mortals from various parts of the world, but not from every part. It is likely, or at the very least possible, that this book might be quite different if it contained questions from other areas of the world.

Dying to Ask...
... deals primarily with the death of human beings. Many other kinds of beings die every day. That would make for another fascinating book, or several.

Our most enthusiastic thanks...
... to all the lovely mortals between the ages of 5 and 15 who took part in the project and came up with the intriguing questions in this book that will spark interesting conversations among its readers. Thank you!

# 1. Will I die?

Clàudia






Dear Clàudia,

Lucky you! Yours is one of the few questions about death that has a perfectly simple and straightforward answer. In one word: yes.

But even though "yes" is the exact right answer, don't you think it feels a bit too short?

Certain questions deserve more than the right answer. So, let us say a little more.

The statement "I will die" is as true as this other one: "2 + 2 = 4." In other words, there is no way of escaping death. If you are a human being, you will die. You can say it loud and clear, with no fear of making a mistake or lying. I WILL DIE!

But don't worry, Clàudia. You are not alone! When it comes to mortality, you have plenty of company. Sooner or later, death arrives for all human beings. One day (hopefully in a reasonably distant future) the writers and the illustrator of this book will die, and so will our families, our friends, our pets, and our plants. We are mortal.



What if...
... instead of a human being, you were an immortal jellyfish (*Turritopsis dohrnii*)? Well, you may manage to escape the claws of death, but it is very unlikely that you could ever read this book.

What is particularly difficult for us humans (and not so difficult for our pets or our plants) is that not only are we mortal, but we know it!

The first time you think of your own mortality, the idea might feel scary. The second and third time it may well have the same effect. Shudder!

When you think of a question like "Will I die?" sometimes, if you scratch a little, you might reveal other questions or concerns underneath that, which are more difficult to answer:

Might I die soon?

Will it hurt or will it not hurt?

What will it feel like to be dead?

It feels strange and unsettling to know in such certain terms that something will occur, but not to have the faintest idea of when it will take place, how it will happen, or what it will feel like.

The uncertainty is unbearable! On the one hand, we might be tempted to cover our eyes and ears and never ever think about death again. We are scared. On the other hand, we are probably dying to know more. We are curious.

Home experiment
Close your eyes and try to imagine the feeling of not being alive. Do you think it might be impossible?



But think about it. Would you really want to know more? How much more would you want to know? And what would you do with the information? There are no easy answers.

So, what can we do with all these questions about death that pop up in our minds every now and then, some of them without answers?

Here is a suggestion: one of the most comforting things we can do with our own mortality and our questions about death is to share them with other mortal beings. This way, the twenty-fourth time we think of our own mortality, we might find the idea slightly more normal and just a little bit less scary.

PS What a great question to open the book with, Clàudia!




Mortal knowledge questionnaire
Would you like to know the exact date of your own death? Why? What advantages and what disadvantages would there be in knowing the date? Would you live your life differently if you knew you were going to live a short life? What about if you knew with absolute certainty that you were going to live a very, very long life?

You might also be interested in questions 9 and 37.

# 2. How does skin go away?

Nacho



Dear Nacho,

What an elegant way of asking about skeletonization!

Let us start politely, with a greeting. Look at your body, all covered in skin. Take one of your arms and touch it. Feel the skin and the flesh underneath. Press down gently to feel your bones. Now touch one of your cheeks. Does it feel nice and bouncy? Yes, but feel for the bones nearby, the cheekbone above, the jaw below. Move up and touch the skin around one of your eyes and feel the socket in your skull. Hello, skeleton!

Skeletons are very familiar to us, and not only through touch. They are everywhere: in movies, stories, museums, and festivities. They operate as a symbol: as soon as we see them, we understand that they represent death. But it is one thing to think of those skeletons and another quite different thing to think of *your own skeleton*. Visualizing ourselves as skeletons reminds us that we are mortal. Oh, woe!

But let's shake off those spine chills and cut to the chase.

Unless we choose to be cremated after we die, it is highly likely that, one day, all that will be left of our body is our skeleton. And another day will come, in the yet more distant future, when even our bones will be gone. Puff! Bye-bye, body. But how? How does flesh disappear? How does skin go away?

Can you imagine watching a body from the moment it dies until there is nothing left but bones? It would take a while (weeks, months, maybe years!), and it might not be the most pleasant experience, but it would certainly be fascinating.

The heart has stopped. The body's cells start breaking down. As they break down, they begin to release gases and other substances that smell awful to human beings but announce a banquet to other living beings along the food chain. The first to arrive are the bacteria that were already in the body, led by those that were hanging about the intestines, which start reproducing quickly and spreading. Almost immediately the insects arrive (flies are particularly speedy). And finally, the worms (the larvae of those insects) join in too, together with other bacteria, fungi and microorganisms that come from outside. They all gradually make their way through the soft parts of the body. The process of putrefaction is under way. It happens little by little and in different overlapping phases.

### Variable speed

A corpse that is out in the open decomposes twice as fast as a corpse in water and eight times faster than a corpse underground. A corpse in a coffin or in a niche grave also takes longer to become a skeleton. This is because the insects involved in the decomposition of bodies have easier access to the corpse if it is in the open or on the ground.

### What about the bones?

Bones take much longer to disappear. A skeleton can last anywhere between twenty and thousands of years!



The body's internal organs start to liquefy first, little by little, before "vanishing"—the liver, the spleen, the intestines, the heart… until there is nothing left of them.

In the meantime, the skin has started to dry up and crack, and comes away bit by bit. With the skin, off come the nails, the hair… until there is nothing left but the skeleton!

This process can last anywhere between a few weeks to a few years. In areas where it is hot and humid, a body can become a skeleton in just two weeks. In areas where it is freezing and the air is very dry, however, the bacteria and the bugs find it harder to sink their teeth in (in a manner of speaking) and the putrefaction process is slower. Sometimes, it can even come to a halt altogether. In these cases, the skin comes off, but rather than drying up, it sticks to the bones and stays there. What do you think we call skeletons with skin that never went away? Yup, mummies!

And so, the time has come to say goodbye. Not all bodies turn into skeletons. If someone chooses to be cremated, their body does not even have time to decompose, let alone become a skeleton! Also, the cremation temperature is so high that not even the bones remain. What is left is ashes. Bye-bye, skeleton!




You might also be interested in questions 4, 17, and 36.

# 3. When you die, does your thinking stop?

Isaí





Dear Isaí,

Your question is a good one, and like most good questions, it happens to be an incredibly old one too.

Science tells us that there are two types of death: clinical death (when the heartbeat, blood circulation, and breathing stops); and biological death, also known as brain death (when the brain stops receiving oxygen and no longer has any activity). Normally, brain death takes place a few minutes after clinical death. And just then, yes, we could say that our thinking stops.

But with questions about death, scientific answers are not always fully satisfying, are they? In this case, many other questions remain. The body dies, yes, but aren't human beings more than just a body? You can touch your body, but not your thoughts. Is your brain the same thing as your mind? What about everything we cannot touch but still feels part of us? Could it be that some of what we cannot touch might somehow stay around after we die?

It is true that it is impossible to answer these questions with any certainty (no dead person has ever come back to let us know whether they are still thinking or not!). But thankfully we can always resort to imagination.

**What do you think?**
Does our thinking stop when we die? And if it does not stop, how does it all work? What does your imagination tell you? And what do people around you think? Try conducting a survey. When we die, does our thinking stop? Or not?

**And who do you think...**
... will win the game? The skeleton or the half-bodied man? Why?

You might also be interested in questions 4, 5, 32, and 36.