



If the only two certainties in this world are death and taxes, then Ben Franklin didn't foresee tax evasion. That leaves death as the only thing one can count on. It represents an absolute finality that everyone must face eventually. The only real question lies in how one feels about it. Religious aspects aside, the Western zeitgeist has amassed a wide variety of stances on the matter.

[Game of Thrones](#), for instance, takes seeming glee in killing off its characters, while [The Leftovers](#) tackles the nihilistic feelings associated with death and dying. [Six Feet Under](#), on the other hand, takes a blunt, matter-of-fact perspective, which easily complements [Slaughterhouse-Five](#)'s famous "So it goes" stance.

Even more than the fact of death itself, Western society is preoccupied with causes of death. Going back to time immemorial, humanity has always striven to limit any and all causes of death. Ponce de Leon was so enamored with the concept, it would seem, that it led to his now famous search for the [fountain of youth](#) in the 16th century.

Flights of fancy aside, humanity has certainly made progress in recent centuries, mostly through medical advances and greater health awareness. In 1900, the leading [causes of death](#) were Influenza, Tuberculosis and Gastrointestinal infections. Today, those have been reduced to a statistical minority, allowing current trends to come to the fore. In fact, the [CDC maintains](#) an annual breakdown on the ten leading causes of death in the United States. In ascending order, they are as follows:

1. Heart disease

2. Cancer
3. Lower Respiratory Disease
4. Accidents
5. Stroke
6. Alzheimer's Disease
7. Diabetes
8. Influenza and Pneumonia
9. Kidney Disease
10. Suicide



Above: Jewish Cemetery - Prague, Czech Republic (source: [Jordan Steinberg](#))

While cancer and heart disease are well-integrated into public consciousness, there are several causes of death that are [generally not considered](#), or at least not taken wholly seriously. Toppling vending machines are one case of this, as they kill a whopping thirteen people a year, while distracted driving causes approximately 6,000.

The Darwin Awards takes a humorous perspective at documenting these odd or unusual manners of death. In 2009, [they reported](#) on a bank robber who attempted to disguise himself by spray painting his face gold. While this did nothing to conceal his facial features, he also asphyxiated on the toxic paint fumes a few hours after the robbery took place. So it goes.

Furthermore, another unexpected source of loss of life is the act of [taking selfies](#). From fatal falls to animal attacks, it should be common sense to not take a selfie while in a precarious situation. Two Russian solidiers took a selfie with a live grenade before promptly being [blown to smithereens](#). In 2015, 49 people died from selfie-related mishaps. Statistically, this makes the trend much more likely a cause of death than the more often thought-of shark attacks.

Conversely, there are commonly held fears in Western culture that are, in fact, [relatively harmless or improbable](#). Compared to the millions of annual deaths from cancer or respiratory diseases, less than 600,000 are murdered. Additionally, while [one in three](#) will die from a heart attack, only 1 in 11 million will die in a plane crash.



Image: Manikarnika Ghat - Varanasi, India

Death is inevitable. Regardless of individual opinions, the media presents a breadth of attitudes regarding death. Even with medical advances, there will always be a cause. As it stands, the lesser causes of death we fear don't actually kill us, while the things we don't fear, do. All this being said, it would be no wonder if society existed in a state of nervous panic, and yet life goes on. Amongst other options, [Life Insurance](#) is a great way to achieve the peace of mind to get on without the constant panic of imminent demise.

Much of said strain is relieved when a policy holder no longer must worry about the future care of his or her family. This includes aid with tuition expenses, debt relief, funeral costs, as well as funds to facilitate the maintenance of current lifestyle. With that, it makes no matter if death occurs in a freak hedgehog-related accident, or through cancer, the deceased's affairs will be well looked-after. Should this form of peace of mind sound appealing, then our [2017 Life insurance reviews](#) are a great starting point.