

My thoughts for today

My dear family and dear friends,

Glad you're here today, because I like the thought of being here with you now. Yes, that is indeed the case. Even now, writing down my thoughts about life, which is important to me and also about death, I feel that way.

But nice"? Can this be said here and now, with this sad event ? I think, yes, one can do that. It has always been a concern for me to bring people together, I enjoyed organizing class reunions, planning birthday parties, and I was always happy when many came. Unfortunately, today's occasion is not my next birthday, but still a good reason to get together here and now.

First of all, I would like to give you my reasons why I chose this form of farewell.

For my 60th birthday I received a greeting card with the wish "please stay as unconventional as you are". I liked that. That could be one of the reasons why I have chosen this form of farewell, of which certainly one or the other thinks: "typical Geli, that suits her.". May be.

But the main reason is that at the funeral of my classmate Holde in 2006 I had such a shocking key experience that even then I thought, no, it certainly cannot be that such a process could blossom for me. Of course, it is always difficult for relatives to prepare for the funeral, especially if the deceased is no longer a member of the church. Holde's husband and the three adolescent children were also overwhelmed and certainly grateful, as had a colleague from Holde and a classmate from elementary school agreed to speak a few words.

The further course was a single disaster and hard to bear. I had only one thought: 'No, Holde would never have wished such a farewell. Nothing of what was said suited Holde and her life.' In the end, I was so full of anger and helplessness that I knew that if I did nothing now, I would regret it for the rest of my life.

Although I was not sure if my hoarse voice was like surgery and neck irradiation, I went to the front of the lectern and read from the letter I had written to Holde's husband and her children the night before. I said that Holde and I had a radio/chemo therapy at the same time. She in Heidelberg, I in Marburg and so far we have been in constant telephone contact and exchanged many thoughts, where it must be said that cancer patients talk to each other usually very different and more open than they do with their own family. I asked her then how she was doing with the knowledge of being "exhausted". (*that means, no further medical treatment possible*)

She told me (and that also applies to me today) that this is now okay for her and that she can cope with that knowledge - which I really believed. However, the worst thing for her is that she has to say goodbye to her husband and children and cannot live to see what their future will be like. No professional qualification, no marriage, no grandchildren experience ... but that she was sure that they would find their way and would go, and this is reassuring to know.

Above all, I told those present about Holde's thoughts, her gratitude to her husband and to the children. These are all things that I, too, can pass on to my family. You did everything right, helped me, stood there for me, and I cannot be thankful enough for that.

Also, I spoke at Holde's memorial service of our lives, our experiences, and some I want it to be not good. ". No, that's not right, because we've really have not left anything out, nothing has been bogged down with the thought that I could do that when I'm retired. We did it now! All but good, but life was fun, we lived and loved it. And that's the most important thing! And I want to suggest this also to everyone here: do not move anything, do it now !

Also important is the sense of time. In retrospect, it is hardly credible, as felt briefly e.g. the death of others. Has my sister Bine been dead for twelve years? It seems like last year. And if time in the past seems so short, then the last moment is near. In other words, that means that we do not have as much time as we think. None of us. For me, at the age of 66, the month becomes as fast as a week, the week turns into a day.

I jokingly once made the remark: "No sooner had you showered on New Year's Day, you can think again: what do I do New Year's Eve? ". Reason enough not to waste any more time, rather stop teasing yourself about trivialities, why? Any anger is only as great as it is made by yourself. You look at the onset of a nuisance, there is only one day left to live and you should now list what is still important to you.

If someone annoyed or insulted you - would that be important at this point ? No definitely not. Also do not take the trouble so important. Or the reverse: the other one who annoyed or offended you. Would not this cause him to treat him more graciously and more leniently ? In other words, everything is relativized with death. Forgive and forget the everyday annoyance, none of it is more important.

For the shot, I said goodbye with the words of those present, which I had in another place: "Tell me with laughter, so we were only once - tell the things." So, as I think so synonymous of Wish you. And then, for a small moment, I even felt like Holde was tapping my shoulder and saying, "Thank you, Geli, you saved my last party."

I'm certainly not proud of everything I've done in my life, but it was me that day. Most of what I did wrong, in the vast majority of cases avenged in the near term and I even had more times, sometimes less to pay for it, because I myself was to blame. I am also glad that, after Bines death, I fought for her last will to be fulfilled and she was allowed to stay in her grave in Breidenbach. Therefore, and because it corresponds to my attitude to life, I wish for this day for the song of Edith Piaf:

"Non, je ne regrette rien", which states:

"No, not at all,
No, I do not regret anything.
Not the good that happened to me,
Not the bad, I do not care ...
...

I have paid,
swept away, forgotten,
I have finished with the past ... "

In other words, I have made my peace. Never again will I be in pain, there will be no fear if and when I will have a painful death or at some point would have to remain unable to act. I do not have to worry anymore about what happens when I'm old, maybe dementia, who cares for me then, no longer afraid of a stroke that threatens me permanently with four life-threatening constrictions in the carotid artery. My pain from rheumatism and too many "side jobs" that I have to endure every day - I can not feel any of it anymore.

I now have my 4 cancer. The first I had in my late 20s, the abdominal cancer. This was followed in 2004 by cervical lymph node metastases in unknown cancer, CUP (*cancer of unknown primary*). And finally in 2016, the colon cancer with - many heavy operations, hampered by the wound healing disorder by the defective tissue and due to the poisoning of radiation therapy in 2004/2005.

Now the throat cancer has also been added. And more and more I had to give another piece of quality of life. How often was it so difficult, and finally the shortness of breath after the last many abdominal operations, after the scar tissue on the belly was as tight as a too tight laced corset. After that I could only walk upright and breathe normally.

I have known for a long time that what has become more and more painful in my throat was the same cancer of the larynx that my father died of at the age of 53. However, I pushed the final diagnosis in front of me, because I urgently needed a break after the colon cancer, besides, I did not want to know it for the time being. Another therapy that might have prolonged my life for me was out of the question for me. Removal of the esophagus or at least parts of it with loss of speaking ability - no, after all that I've been through with the previous cancers, this kind of surgery was not an option for me anymore.

My body would have been too weak, especially since I had already promised my body at the last therapy that I would leave him from then on alone. Therefore, my decision was clear that for me now only a palliative treatment would come into question and I would be spared as much unnecessary

suffering. I am glad that I have chosen this path and I am infinitely grateful to all those who have accompanied me here.

When I was diagnosed with "cervical lymph node metastases in unknown primary tumors" in 2004, statistical life expectancy indicated that I only had 4 to 9 months to live. I remember how shocked my family was by this statistic. My family doctor then said to my husband and me, "In this last time we have left, we have to be honest with each other.

Actually, these statements should have shocked me with information from the internet. I always used to think that I would rather kill myself than do therapy afterwards. Suddenly it hit me. Then, strangely enough, something happened that I never expected. I became incredibly calm and said to all, "I do not know what you all have. At least I'm not there yet. And if it were otherwise, I would know it too. "

At that time only a few believed me. No one, really. Only the glances told me, "maybe the pink glasses that Geli is looking through are easier for her, so she'd better look at everything else". Except Professor Werner in Marburg, who had operated on me, almost all thought so. In June 2005, after all the hard therapy, he opened the new prognosis to me (with a small wink): "So, Mrs. Mund, we are done together, I do not want to have anything to do with you in the future; there is no cancer cell left in your body. "

Everything went well again and I was immensely grateful for that. What was also clear to me, however, could have been a new stove anywhere at any time. My classmate Wolfgang Patzak once told me, "Geli, you're one of over 100,000 patients who survived the 5 year period with this diagnosis. More than how I survive 10 years, that does not appear at this diagnosis in any statistics. From that point of view, I have been given so many years that hardly anyone would have expected.

To this day, I am still amazed by the calm that had suddenly come over me. That was like a huge basic trust. Something gave me a hold. In a sense, I felt safe and protected. Others may call it faith. Anyway, suddenly I was not afraid anymore.

And I do not have it today, when I know that I do not want to have any further therapy and that my capacity for suffering is over, that my strength to fight is over. And how much I finally long for peace. It must have been really bad for my husband when I begged him in intensive care in 2016 to finally get me out and take me to the next hospice. I could not anymore, and I did not want to anymore. Even in the aftermath of that, so often when my physical condition was once again desolate,

I stood by Bines grave and wished I could finally bring her company. Emil, who always caresses Bines grave so lovingly, did not want to hear that. As others did, when I said it was enough for me, I cannot stand anymore, I have no energy left, no strength and I am tired of life.

I had so often wished to be lovingly cared for in the grave by Emil, as he does with Bine. To plant a few flowers in the summer and to give us a warm blanket for the winter. Only: I could not talk to anyone about that. There were always attempts to encourage me, to tell me how strong I always was, how to do it, whether to psycho-psychic my depression, and so on and so forth.

That was all nice and encouraging meant, I understand that. That's exactly what I would have said a few years ago in their place. I would have tried to give others hope and hope. But that was not what I really needed in the last two years. But it is very difficult to find understanding when the strength is simply lacking and the energy is consumed. Both are just not available forever and is not unlimited. Only: why could not I talk to anyone about it?

The answer is probably the fear of the individual before death, that hardly anyone can handle, even though death is inevitably and naturally part of life, like birth, and unfortunately, in our society, unfortunately, is so frightening. We have forgotten to deal with it or have not even thought about it, rather pushed it far away. I have to admit that these three letters "death" (*in German Tod*) with soft "d" or even harder "dead" with hard "t" (*in German tot*) already have something about them like a "pistol shot" - the little word literally pops in your ears. But can't you see him differently ?

In 2016, I was facing an angiography, and two days before I received a warning from the examining doctor that I had the option of not surviving the procedure. Then I had to inform my family, and the next day I said to my (13 years old) nephew Noah, "If death (*the Grim Reaper*) came to me tonight and asked, 'how is it, Geli, are you ready?', Of course I would ask him for alternatives ask.

The answer could be, 'well, about 20 more years, and every day it gets harder.' "- I asked Noah," what would you answer in my place? ". Noah thought for a moment and said: "I think, Geli, I would go too." - That impressed me very much, and then I thought, yes, he understood it. I also told him to never forget that when death comes to me, he comes as my friend. That's what I said in 2016, and nothing has changed about it until today.

Only: in my environment, I have learned not to cut the topic. And I was pretty much alone with my thoughts. Nevertheless, there were a few very few friends who had less fear of contact. At least I could confine myself and leave. Like me, there are certainly many others in my situation. Back in 2002 I tried to give hope to my mother.

But then I realized that that was not very helpful for her. Blocking was not what she needed. She was clearly better off when she was finally able to express her last needs and talk about her death and fears. And then I was the only one who could understand her. Not only do you have a dumb disease like cancer, you also become lonely because others have a big problem with it.

That's why I picked out George Moustaki's song "Ma solitude" for today. The better someone has dealt with the topic and perhaps has thought through their own attitude, the better everyone can handle it.

My first encounter with death - for which I am incredibly grateful to this day - was already at the age of 5, when my great-grandmother "Ella-Granny" suddenly lay in bed for a few days and did not get up. One evening, she let us all come to her bed to say goodbye. I could not understand that. Lie in bed and travel? And not even packed bags? I will never forget what she herself explained to me: "Geli, where I go, I do not need a suitcase. I'm going to God tonight, and we'll all meet again. " - I could not imagine anything like that at all. Of course, I wanted to know how she could manage to do that.

So she told me that she is now very, very tired, then falling asleep, and then it would be like a dream that she is going to another country to the good God. That was too fantastic for me, too incredible. That's what I wanted to know more and asked if I could wait so long. Actually, I should have left after saying goodbye, but since she said I could stay a bit, no one of the adults contradicted. Then everyone was quiet, and I stood by her bed, watching her closely. At some point I whispered, "Are you already with God?" And then she smiled and whispered back: "Not quite yet, but soon ...". After a while, however, I was taken out of the room because it was bedtime for me.

The next morning my mother said: "Today there is no raging in the house. The Ella grandma died. " I said, "No, she's with God now." Then came what has unfortunately become unimaginable today: Ella-grandma stayed in the house until the hearse came to pick her up. Not hidden in a quiet chamber, no, laid out in the hallway under the stairs. And everyone, whether employee, worker, customer of us had to pass the dead grandma. It was also natural that her face was not covered. So I could still experience, touch and "understand" (and in the truest sense of the word).

I felt with one finger her cheek, where then held a small dent. What surprised me was the coldness of her skin. So I went to my mother and said, "By God, it's damn cold." My mother gave me no further explanation, put a blanket in my hand and just said, "Try this." So I went downstairs again, covered it expertly, waited a moment and found that the temperature had not changed. But I also had the impression that you did not mind this cold anymore. "

So it was fine with me, too, and I went over to the agenda and play with my girlfriends. What I remember was the fascination that there seem to be two types of lives. In a way, it filled me with pride that I had such a granny who had managed this feat of going from one life to the next. Of course, I shared this with my girlfriends, who of course all were allowed to pay a visit to the dead Ella grandma. And no one objected. So I really wonder, why did it have to come to the point that death, as it was in the 50s, has become such a taboo topic today and why it is so scary.

On the third day after her death, the black carriage with dark green tassels, so magnificent in my eyes, came around, pulled by Shank's "Fanni". The glossy-black draft horse actually belonged to the Breidenbacher shoemaker. It was decorated and had velvet covers over its ears. While the grandma's coffin was invited to the back, I was sitting on the horse so long and was really proud. It would have just been missing, that I would have come ridden so in the cemetery.

So it explains itself in any case that I was decisively influenced by this experience for the rest of my life. I am very sorry that not everyone was able to encounter death like me in this way. Much would be so much easier. In addition, in later years I often and naturally was allowed to be involved in the transition from earthly life to the next dimension (or whatever one would like to call that for himself). I say intentionally "allowed", because it has shown me how much peace has repeatedly shown on the face of the deceased.

I was later with my mother's mother, I was present with both parents, my sister and my husband's uncle, who was something of a "second father" to me. And besides, one day before he was sedated I was in a hospice in Mainz, where I could say goodbye to my cousin Hans-Martin. That too was a very special experience and a farewell, which was easier for me than if I had not been there.

We had an actually peaceful, merry-reflective afternoon together, telling a lot of childhood memories, until we both got tired. Then he told me that he was now very happy to come "home", which did not mean his house. I could really believe him and was reassured that I could make the visit before he was sedated in the evening. He was only 52 years old. So much younger than I am.

How many times in the last two years have I been thinking about what I would do if the next diagnosis came to me if I were "self-absorbed"? I've gone through all sorts of options in my mind - yes, I have to admit, too, to end my life myself. Quickly this possibility was excluded, because I know from other cases how hard this is to be accepted for the relatives. That would never end my family. Nobody should do this to his sweetheart.

To join the Society for Human Dying ? Going to Switzerland, buying death? That too is out of the question for me. How should I have implemented that ? Going to Switzerland alone, putting all the facts in front, asking Bernd to accompany me? Going to Switzerland with a live Geli and then back alone ? This is so cruel that I could not have expected that from anyone.

That I did not want to die at home was for me always firm. I've been thinking about a hospice for a long time. Already in 2005, when I visited my cousin Hans-Martin on his last day in a hospice in Mainz and got to know the peace and atmosphere there. Then I knew that I could imagine my own end just like that. With horror, this device was never for me. Dying is part of life like childbirth, I cannot emphasize enough.

And fortunately, there are these facilities where they understand something of the near end, where I know that my relatives can get their comfort and be a little caught. I have looked at the hospice house Emmaus a long time ago. Then I knew immediately: yes, here I am in the best hands. That was reassuring to know, this decision is the only one for me. What should be another therapy?

Extend my life, and then soon face the fact of inevitability again ? And only weaker and more tired ? I can think of a quote from George Bernard Shaw: "Do not try to live forever. You will not succeed." (Do not try to live forever, you will not succeed)

Now, if you have all been so patient, then I really urge you to re-examine your attitude to life and death, that you may find such a way to handle it more easily. I do not want to say more. You have to find out for yourself.

Surely, one or the other will ask, as I have done in writing, whether it is not terribly sad to sit down and write about your own death. I have to admit, I really would have preferred to have you invited to a big birthday. And yes, sometimes I was sad. But only when I had to think about the parting that I can spare neither me nor my sweetheart. That's how one or two tears flowed by.

Only: no one can spare his loved one such a thing. I had to tell them four times that I have a life-threatening diagnosis. Those who have to stay now and go home alone will not be spared missing, which I cannot share with you, because I already live somewhere else and maybe now know already more than you.

On the other hand, I do not want to say: I'm waiting now, until you're all dead, and I am the last one left. It was bad enough for me, that Bine, 4 years younger than me, had to die before me and did not keep the so-called order. In the natural order, I now had to be the next one to go. Otherwise, I hope that perhaps the thought can comfort you, what is spared me from now on everything, that I no longer have pain and is up to the farewell from you all right, as it came.

Please make peace with it, as I have mine. And believe me: time heals all wounds. We all have the right to our grief, but then you should be comforted as soon as possible. It would be reassuring for me to know this. I thank you wholeheartedly for being here and enriching my life so much. But now please let me go, as well as I have to let go of you and please allow me my peace and my peace, that's the last thing I ask you yet.

I would be glad if you did not diverge now but could take the opportunity to meet you afterwards.

Unfortunately, I did not quite manage to squander all my money. That's why I invite you to extend your stay a little bit and to meet you at the inn "Gasthof Röttig" and maybe drink a glass or two on me. I would like to suggest that to you with a small wink.

In this spirit I greet all of you warmly and stay with love and in friendship,

your Geli

Bernhard's remarks:

Dear beloved Geli, Thank you for letting us share your thoughts today, that gives us the final reassurance that we acted right during your last hours and that you are fine now.

Shortly before Christmas 2019 Geli received the diagnosis of larynx respectively throat cancer. She decided not to get any further medical treatment.

After we visited the hospice Emmaus together in December 2019 and had chosen coffin and urn from Mrs. Hainbach (the undertaker), we went to Denmark over New Year's Eve; Geli wanted to ride on Sölvi (an island pony) again and could do so with great pleasure. By the stove fire in the cottage we could talk about everything in peace. I would have gone with her to the Netherlands or to Switzerland (where help with the dying is not punished), if there had been no other solution.

In January 2019, Geli learned that laryngeal cancer can be lasered at the University of Göttingen. Geli took courage again, drove her car to Göttingen and was operated on by Professor Beutner. The operation went very well, the cancer was out, the larynx still in there. Geli was full of joy.

When drinking coffee (with her nose probe) Geli has then coffee in the lungs and as a result, get pneumonia - intensive care. Back on infirmary she has risen again and looked forward to the upcoming rehab. It could have been worse.

And it got worse - breakthrough of gastric ulcer, blood coughing and into the lungs, further pneumonia - intensive care with artificial coma.

When Geli woke up from the coma, she refused any further treatment.

Before she had fallen into the coma she wrote in one of her last mails that I should call Erwin Müller a classmate, he knew. She had asked Erwin in December 2018 to present her (already written) thoughts during a possible funeral service.

In the hospice Emmaus to Wetzlar she did not make it anymore.

Geli died on Sunday morning March 10, 2019 in the intensive care unit 1026 of the University of Göttingen.

Even though the ambience was not as pleasant as in the Emmaus Hospice, the care provided by doctors and nursing staff and medical care in Göttingen were excellent; Thanks again.

She could fall to sleep peacefully without fear and pain.

I was with her until the end.

Geli has now got off the train, we'll probably have a few more stops before getting off also, let's see where our journey is still going.

.....

we miss you
knus

Breidenbach, March 22, 2019.

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